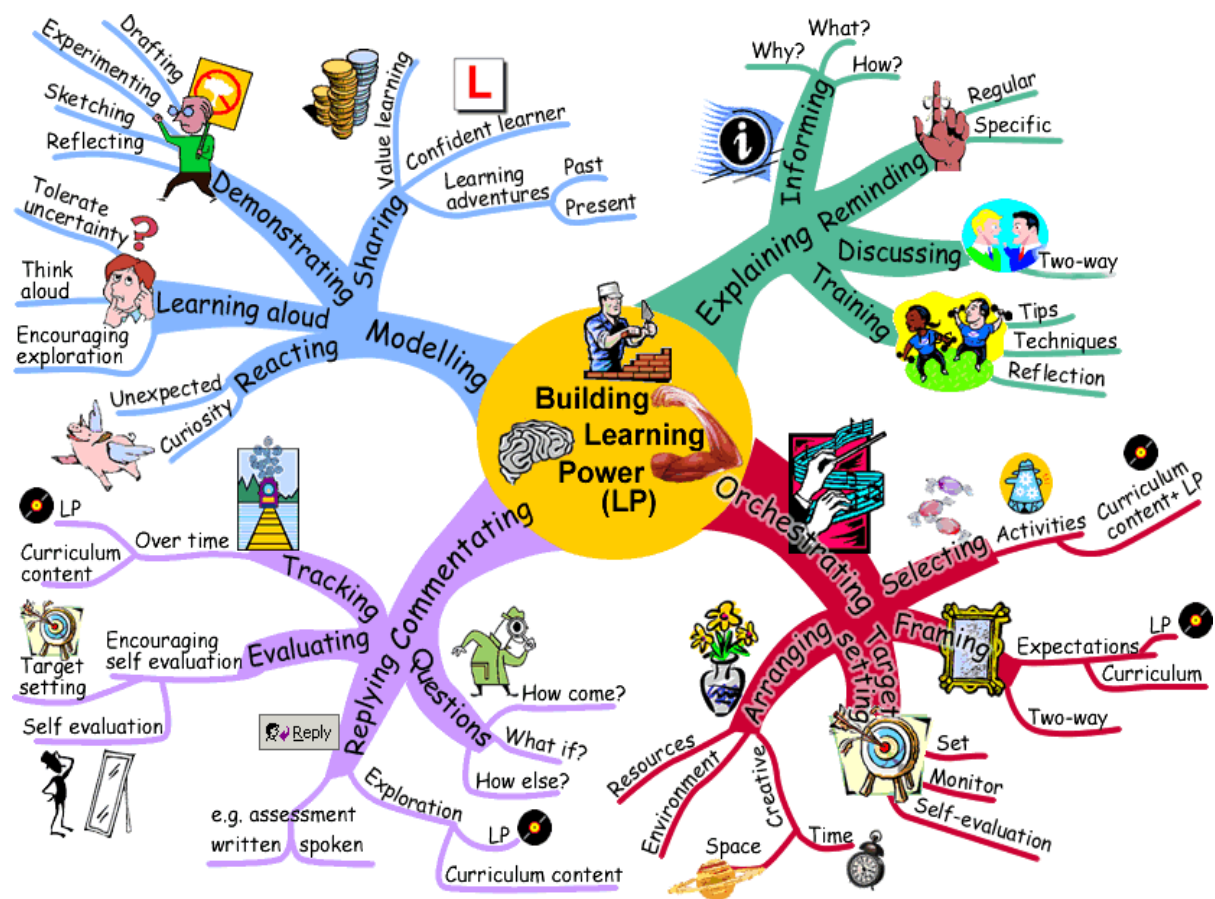


Effective 21st Century Learning



**An approach to successful
incorporation of *the new learning***

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Preface

With this research I aim to explore the theories and practice on how to incorporate and organize the 21st century learning, referred to as *the new Learning*, approach in language teaching in the lower years at my teaching practice school, Carboon College Location Broekland in Hoensbroek, the Netherlands.

This research has been carried out as the final project of my EFL teacher training programme at Fontys University of Applied Sciences, in Sittard.

I would like to thank Heidi van den Tillaar, my supervisor, for her guidance throughout the process of writing this thesis as well as my internship supervisors, Afke Zondervan and Claudia Hendrix for their participation and guidance throughout the process of my research. Furthermore I would like to thank Andrea Plantaz, Thomas Baaij and Jeroen Vegter who were willing to share their expertise on how to incorporate and organize *the new Learning* approach in language teaching as well as my colleagues Silvy Rockacher, Danielle Offermans and Emiel Muijtjes for their hard work and participation on the pilot.

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Ouafâ Mhaoui

Introduction

Do not confine your children to your own learning for they were born in another time.'

Hebrew Proverb: <http://www.leading-learning.co.nz/famous-quotes.html>

Motivation

As the pace of change in the 21st century continues to increase, the world is becoming more interconnected and complex, and the knowledge economy is craving for more intellectual quality. Thus in this environment it is critical that the focus is shifted from education to life-long learning. The immediate result of this change is that parts of the educational system need to be re-conceptualized.

What makes learners learn better nowadays? What does the work field require nowadays? The answer is quite obvious as in this environment individualism among learners is very important. Every learner has his own learning style and has to be challenged and given an opportunity to develop, grow and be prepared for their professional field and a rapidly changing society. The only way to offer this kind of learning is to involve learners' interests and needs and to meet the requirements of professional fields and the knowledge economy. This is introduced at schools as *the new learning*. *The new learning* makes education more complete for learners and gives learners the opportunity to achieve their full potential in further education or future profession thus to succeed in the fast-changing society. For me as an EFL teacher, it is really important to offer learners this kind of education and be a part of an effective educational system. Hence it is interesting to do my final project on this topic.

Goal

The new learning can be organised and implemented in different ways from one school and subject to another as long as the main goal is to challenge learners, meet different learning styles, encourage autonomous learning

and prepare learners for professional fields, labour market and successful participation in the rapidly changing society. A few teachers in the Modern Foreign Languages Department at my teaching practice school Carboon College location Broekland are interested in teaching in accordance to *the new learning* approach in the lower years. Language teaching from a course book traditionally involves training the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and linguistic skills (grammar, vocabulary, useful phrases and pronunciation), either individually or in collaboration and group tasks and ICT supported tasks integrating a few or all language and linguistic skills.

One of the ideas of *the new learning* approach is that learners should be offered a variety of challenging tasks and activities to learn the language, thus the lessons offered should be differential. Learners should learn to learn the language autonomously with guidance from a teacher and learn by exploiting already existing knowledge to obtain new knowledge. The only problem is that the teachers who are interested in teaching in accordance to this concept at Carboon College location Broekland cannot implement this concept yet as they do not quite know how to incorporate *the new learning* in language teaching and how to organize it in the current school setting.

Research questions

The teachers' (cp. p.VI) question is: how best to incorporate the new learning in language teaching and organize it in the current school setting?

I am to find out how this concept works in everyday school practice, how it should be incorporated in language teaching and organized, and formulate recommendations on the best way to implement and incorporate it. To organize this concept accurately and feasibly the following ten components should be taken into careful consideration:

1. How to integrate your course book in this concept and how to allocate tasks among pupils?
2. Clear time management; how long should they work on a task and when should it be finished?

3. When and how to give instructions?
4. When and how to give grammar presentations?
5. Task evaluation; how and when to evaluate?
6. How and when to plan oral or written tests on vocabulary and useful phrases?
7. Assessment; how and when to give a test on the chapters?
8. How to motivate autonomous learning and guide the learners in their learning process?
9. Is classroom assistance required for better guidance? What is the role of the classroom assistance?
10. Are the facilities necessary to support this kind of learning available at all times?

The outcome will be: either the concept is feasible or not in the current school setting at Carboon College location Broekland.

The *New Learning* concept was first introduced to and tried out with first year VMBO-T learners in March till April.

Set-up thesis

The outcome of this paper is based on practical research and a pilot of the concept at Carboon College location Broekland (for readability's sake from here on called 'Broekland'). Furthermore I organized an interview and drew up eighteen open questions (Appendix 1) on the best way to organize *the new learning* approach. I used these questions during a visit to two schools who had already embraced this approach, knowing Carboon College location Rombouts (Brunssum) (from here on called 'Rombouts') and Herle College (Heerlen). These open questions were about how other schools organised *the new learning* and whether it works for VMBO learners since I am going to try it out with VMBO learners. I spent one whole day at each of these schools so I would get a good impression on how the concept works. I interviewed two teachers of the language department and one manager at both schools.

The modern foreign language teachers who are interested in teaching language in accordance to *the new learning* can use the recommendations

in this paper as a step-by-step plan to implement *the new learning* approach in their lessons successfully.

In chapter one *the new learning* approach and its main focus are explored and defined. Chapter two investigates necessary requirements to incorporate and implement *the new learning* approach successfully. Chapter three summarizes the results of the interview.

Chapter four describes the pilot and its outcome. In Chapter five final recommendations of incorporation are documented. Chapter six illustrates the concept suitability study in the school setting. In chapter seven the conclusion is drawn and possible further research is recommended.

In this thesis where it says 'he' I mean 'he' or 'she'.

Summary

A few teachers in the Modern Foreign Languages Department at my teaching practice school Broekland are interested in teaching language in accordance to *the new learning* approach in the lower years.

The new learning is the term used to refer to *new learning* outcomes, new kinds of learning processes, and new instructional methods. The existence of *the new learning* arose from two different factors knowing recent psychological and educational theories about learning and a fast-changing society.

The teachers' question (cp. p.III) was: *how best to incorporate the new learning in language teaching and how to organize it in the current school setting at Broekland?*

I found out how this concept works in everyday school practice, how it should be incorporated and organized in language teaching, and formulated recommendations on the best way to implement and incorporate it. To organize this concept accurately and feasibly three main conditions need to be met first and ten components were taken into careful consideration. I organized an interview with two teachers and one manager who had already embraced *the new learning approach* at Rombouts and Herle College. I used the outcome of this interview and recent literature to meet the three main conditions and to set up recommendations on ten components as a step-by-step plan to how to incorporate *the new learning* in language teaching at Broekland.

I came to the conclusion that this concept is definitely feasible in the current school setting at Broekland and suitable for LWOO and VMBO learners if mixed with one or two traditional classroom session.

I can conclude that nothing much has changed dramatically the past years in education; organisation and content are pretty much the same. What has changed is the didactical aspect of education, which is the approach to teach learners what they need to know in accordance to recent psychological and educational theories about learning and adjusting to a fast-changing society.

Chapter 1. What is *the new learning*?

The new learning is the term used to refer to *new learning* outcomes, new kinds of learning processes, and new instructional methods. Thus the existence of *the new learning* arose from two different factors recent psychological and educational theories about learning and a fast-changing society.

1.1 *The focus of the new learning*

Traditional uniform and group learning is out. A concept known as *the new learning* has taken its place. Many teachers keep asking about *the new learning*. Is it really a new way of learning? Are there really new learning outcomes? Is this current hype really different from traditional learning? *New learning* research (Simons, Van der Linden & Duffy, 2000, p. 7) shows at least three important developments, namely:

1. **Recent psychological theories:**

First, *the new learning* theory is mainly based on recent psychological research of learning and instruction. Constructivist learning hypothesis and empirical studies on active learning show that we now know much more about the capacity and the motivation to learn than before.

2. **Active learning**

Second, there is currently a much greater emphasis on the combination of active learning, so-called learning to learn, and collaborative learning than before. *The new learning* research shows that active learning is only possible if learners have learned how to actively learn, how to monitor their active learning, and how to communicate about their active learning. Cognitive, meta-cognitive, social, and affective skills are prominent in developing the combination of active learning, so-called learning to learn, and

collaborative learning. Learners learn these skills with the right guidance and instruction of their teacher.

3. **Fast-changing society**

Third, there is much more attention to and hence much more emphasis on the role of active, independent, and self-directed learning than before. Many governments are stimulating active ways to learn. Professional fields are now in favour of active learning in school and on the job. This is the result of an increased recognition of the importance of and need for life-long learning and of a rapidly changing society and economy.

Next these three developments are explained in more detail.

1.2 Recent psychological theories about learning

1.2.1 Multiple intelligences

Learners have different intellectual abilities. Intellect is the ability to understand and think in an intelligent way or the ability to do things to a high level. Professor Howard Gardner, a cognitive psychologist who works at the University of Harvard in the USA, refers to these abilities as Multiple Intelligences (MI). Professor Gardner therefore prefers to question in which ways human beings are intelligent hence he introduced a framework. He states that we have at least seven intelligences which work in combination and not alone. Thus human beings are a mixture of the following Multiple Intelligences.

1. **Bodily-Kinaesthetic:** "body smart"

Ability to control body movements and handle objects skilfully. These learners express themselves through movement. They have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination (e.g. ball play, balancing beams). Through interacting with the space around them, they are able to remember and process information.

Their skills include:

Dancing, sports, hands on experiment, using body language, crafts, acting and using their hands to create or build.

Possible career paths:

Athletes, physical education teachers, dancers, actors, fire-fighters.

2. **Interpersonal:** "people smart"

Ability to relate and understand others. These learners try to see things from other people's point of view in order to understand how they think and feel. They often have an ability to sense feelings, intentions and motivations. They are great organizers, although they sometimes resort to manipulation. Generally they try to maintain peace in group settings and encourage co-operation. They use both verbal and non-verbal language to open communication channels

with others.

Their skills include:

Seeing things from other perspectives, listening, using empathy, understanding other people's moods and feelings, counselling and establishing positive relations with other people.

Possible career paths:

Counsellor, salesperson, politician, business person.

3. **Intrapersonal:** "self smart"

Self-knowledge and the understanding of their own feelings. Allows them to reflect on their experiences and learn from them. Ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being. These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses.

Their skills include:

Recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses, reflecting and analyzing themselves, awareness of their inner feeling, desires and dreams, evaluating their thinking patterns, reasoning with themselves, understanding their role in relationship to others.

Possible career paths:

Researchers, theorists, philosophers.

4. **Linguistic:** "words smart"

Sensitivity to sounds, rhythms or meanings of words and to language. Ability to use words and language. These learners have highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers. They think in words rather than pictures.

Their skills include:

listening, speaking, writing, story telling, explaining, teaching, using humour, understanding the syntax and meaning of words, remembering information, convincing someone of their point of view, analyzing language usage.

Possible career interests:

Poet, journalist, writer, teacher, lawyer, politician, translator

5. **Logical-Mathematical:** "number-reasoning smart"

Ability to use reason, logic and numbers. These learners think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns making connections between pieces of information. Always curious about the world around them, these learners ask lots of questions and like to do experiments.

Their skills include:

Problem solving, classifying and categorizing information, working with abstract concepts to figure out the relationship of each to the other, and performing complex mathematical calculations.

Possible career paths:

Scientists, engineers, computer programmers, researchers, accountants and mathematicians.

6. **Musical:** "music smart"

Ability to perceive, appreciate and produce rhythm, pitch and music. Having a good musical ear, being able to reproduce a tune. These musically inclined learners think in sounds, rhythms and patterns. They immediately respond to music either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g. crickets, bells, dripping and taps)

Their skills include:

Singing, whistling, playing musical instruments, remembering melodies, composing music and understanding the structure and rhythm of music.

Possible career paths:

Musician, disc jockey, singer and composer.

7. **Spatial/visual:** "picture smart"

A three-dimensional relational sense, which enables us to perceive the visual world accurately. Enables thinking in pictures, seeing things in relationship to others. Ability to perceive the visual. These learners tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. They enjoy looking at maps, charts,

pictures, videos and movies.

Their skills include:

Puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts and graphs, a good sense of direction, sketching painting, designing practical objects and interpreting visual images.

Possible career interests

Navigators, sculptors, inventors, architects, interior designers, mechanics and engineers.

Gardner suggested possible additional intelligences¹

The following additional intelligences are not included with the seven original intelligences because they are arguable. These intelligences are highly subjective and complex.

- 1. Naturalist:** "nature smart"
- 2. Spiritual/Existential:** "Religion and ultimate issues smart"
- 3. Moral:** "Ethic, humanity, value of life smart"

1.2.2 Multiple Intelligences and *the new learning*.

The Multiple Intelligences form the basis of learning as all human beings depend on their intelligences to process the information around them. Each learner has an individual intelligence profile made up of a *combination* of each type of the seven intelligences described above. Most learners tend to use some intelligence more than the others but always in *combination*. This means that learners are intelligent in a different way and teachers have to address all the individual MI profiles of each learner for learning to be successful. Thus teachers have to differentiate as much as possible to challenge each learner by planning lessons around one or more of the intelligences and offer a range of activities related to these intelligences.

¹ <http://www.businessballs.com/howardgardnermultipleintelligences.htm>

The new learning approach also encourages differentiation which gives teachers the opportunity to address these Multiple Intelligences with their teaching plan. This means all learners can be challenged and learning will be effective.

1.2.3 Multiple Intelligence versus Learning Styles

²There is a profound distinction between Multiple Intelligence and Learning Styles (for readability's sake from here on called MI and LS), researched by creative learning company director Prashnig (2005). MI is a theoretical framework for defining, understanding, assessing and developing people's different intelligence factors. In comparison with MI, LS can be defined as the way people prefer to concentrate on, store and remember new and difficult information.

Prashnig's research shows that LS can be divided into biological (innate) and learned or conditioned elements (which can change over time). As mentioned above MI categorises intelligence into seven *biopsychological potential* as Howard Gardner describes it. Biopsychological means the biological foundations of behaviour, emotions, and mental processes.

LS give insight into pupils' reflective or impulsive thinking styles, sequential or simultaneous brain processing and overall tendencies for either analytic or holistic brain dominance. MI only covers the ability to reason, calculate and handle logical thinking. Thus MI must be understood more as the *output* function of information intake, knowledge, skills and talent such as mathematical, musical, linguistic and so on. Whereas LS can be seen as explaining information *input* capabilities of learners. This ability cannot be described as intelligence but as idiosyncratic personal style, for to say someone who learns better in dim light with music in the background while fiddling with something is more or less intelligent than someone who

² <http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/creative-learning-action-713>

concentrates better in bright light and silence and sitting still, is inappropriate.

Thus learners with similar intelligence factors in the MI framework can have vastly different learning styles, based on their personal biological make-up and their individual conditioning.

Learners have diverse learning styles which are the way in which learners of any age concentrate on, absorb, process and retain new and difficult information applying their multiple intelligences to do so. Everyone has a unique style in which they prefer to learn and if learners learning preferences are being matched with the overall learning conditions and their study environment, they become their strengths. This will improve their performance and can lead to permanent learning success. Hence lesson plans should pervade a mix of the multiple intelligences. Teachers need to provide a learning environment that allows pupils to discover their learning preference. Therefore teachers should assess their learners' learning style as soon as possible to help them develop their different intelligence factors in a way which is conducive to their individual learning styles. To apply these intelligences learners need to discover their learning style first. These learning styles are also referred to as the VAK learning styles (Visual-Auditory-Kinaesthetic learning styles) introduced in 1920 by psychologists and teaching specialists Fernald, Keller, Orton, Gillingham, Stillman and Montessori³. The VAK learning styles were originally introduced to the teaching of dyslexic learners and other learners for whom conventional learning and teaching methods were not effective. Everybody has a preferred learning style. Knowing and understanding that learning style helps to learn more effectively. This is particularly true for learners experiencing one or more learning disabilities such as ADHD and dyslexia because of their different ways of learning. When learners have the

³<http://www.businessballs.com/howardgardnermultipleintelligences.htm#vak%20visual%20auditory%20kinesthetic%20learning%20styles%20inventory%20theory%20model>

opportunity to identify their learning style, they will be able to capitalize on their strengths and improve their learning skills.

⁴The Learning Style Analysis Pyramid

The following LSA pyramid is introduced by creative learning company director Prashnig (2005). This pyramid illustrates different innate and conditioned elements to perceive and process information.

The core elements (found in the top two layers of the LSA Pyramid) are:

- **Brain dominance**
(analytic/holistic brain processing or sequential/ impulsive thinking style);
- **Sensory Modalities or perception**
(Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Kinaesthetic).

The remaining levels of the LSA Pyramid define the following style elements:

- **Physical needs**
(mobility, food intake, time of day);
- **Environmental conditions**
(need for sound/quiet, room temperature, low/ bright light, formal/informal study area);
- **Social preferences**
(working alone, with a partner, with peers, in a team, with an authority figure);
- **Personal attitudes**
(motivation, persistence, conformity, responsibility, need for structure, need for variety/routine).

⁴ <http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/creative-learning-action-713>

The elements in the four top layers of the LSA Pyramid seem to be biologically determined and remain fairly stable over a lifetime whereas elements in the two bottom layers seem to be conditioned or learned, can be influenced at will and can change frequently in a person.

Here is what we could call the core elements of the LSA Model:

- The area of perception (Sensory Modalities)
- The area of processing (Brain Dominance)

1.2.4 Learning styles

Learning styles are a reflection of the mix of multiple intelligences as described above. More traditionally there are roughly eleven basic types of learning styles⁵ described by Moore (1992). The three most identifiable in learners are visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic. These VAK learning styles are simply different approaches or ways of learning reflecting and appealing to one's multiple intelligences. Thus for learning to be effective it is highly important to stimulate the input (LS) for output (MI) capabilities to be capitalized in learning and to develop to their full potential.

As follows the three VAK learning styles described into more detail.

- **Visual learners:**

Learn through seeing.....

These learners need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They tend to prefer sitting at the front of the classroom to avoid visual obstructions (e.g people's heads). They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead

⁵ http://www.ndt-ed.org/TeachingResources/ClassroomTips/Learning_Styles.htm

transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs. During a lecture or classroom discussion, visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.

- **Auditory Learners:**

Learn through listening.....

They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.

- **Kinaesthetic Learners:**

Learn through moving, doing and touching.....

Kinaesthetic persons learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

To learn, we depend on our senses and intelligences to process the information around us. Most people tend to use one of their senses and intelligences more than the others but always in combination. As follows some characteristics of the three most common learning styles that stimulate one's multiple intelligences:

Visual learners

- take numerous detailed notes
- tend to sit in the front
- are usually neat and clean

- often close their eyes to visualize or remember something
- find something to watch if they are bored
- like to see what they are learning
- benefit from illustrations and presentations that use colour
- are attracted to written or spoken language rich in imagery
- prefer stimuli to be isolated from auditory and kinaesthetic distraction
- find passive surroundings ideal

Auditory learners

- sit where they can hear but need not pay attention to what is happening in front
- hum or talk to themselves or others when bored
- acquire knowledge by reading aloud
- remember by verbalizing lessons to themselves (if they don't they have difficulty reading maps or diagrams or handling conceptual assignments like mathematics).

Kinaesthetic learners

- need to be active and take frequent breaks
- speak with their hands and with gestures
- remember what was done, but have difficulty recalling what was said or seen
- find reasons to tinker or move when bored
- rely on what they can directly experience or perform
- activities such as cooking, construction, engineering and art help them perceive and learn
- enjoy field trips and tasks that involve manipulating materials
- sit near the door or someplace else where they can easily get up and move around
- are uncomfortable in classrooms where they lack opportunities for hands-on experience

- communicate by touching and appreciate physically expressed encouragement, such as a pat on the back

The new learning approach gives teachers the opportunity to address these learning styles with their teaching plan. Again this means all learners can be challenged and learning will be effective.

1.2.5 Natural learning

The new learning offers opportunities to stimulate natural learning. Natural learning is learning from a need of self-development and self-fulfilment. Learners who learn naturally are intrinsically motivated. When learners are intrinsically motivated they learn from a need of self-development and self-fulfilment. To stimulate intrinsic motivation it is important to create a safe learning environment for learners. A learning environment:

- that emphasizes the collaborative nature of learning;
- Stimulates autonomous learning;
- that offers authentic learning or learning in context;
- that offers an abundance of knowledge in accordance to what society requires;
- where teachers facilitate learning without putting too much pressure on results.

Learning is gaining knowledge and skills

- By experience: what you already know;
- By study: gaining new knowledge and skills;
- By being taught: behaviourism
- By collaboration with peers and teachers: constructivism
- By creative thought: autonomous learning

Recent hypotheses (Cook, 1989) claim that learners' own experience and study are where learning starts. As said before the existence of *the new learning* arose from two different factors. One of them is a fast changing-society and the other is that recent psychological and educational theories say that learning would be more effective if emphasis is put on learners' learning rather than on teachers' teaching. This change of insight is derived from new studies of psychological hypotheses that claim learning from constructivism is more effective than learning from behaviourism.

Behaviourism puts emphasis on active teaching and passive learning. The teacher actively and progressively feeds information to learners to alter their behaviour. A change in the behaviour is the evidence of learning. Constructivism puts emphasis on passive teaching and active learning. The learner is busy *constructing* his knowledge from the materials and facilities available. The teacher guides and provides an environment that is rich in materials and facilities to stimulate such learning. Learners are actively involved in their own learning.

Thus natural learning is mainly based on Social Constructivism and so is *the new learning*. Social Constructivism is a theory of human learning based upon the learners' social situation and community. Social constructivism is a variety of cognitive constructivism that emphasizes the collaborative nature of much learning. Social constructivism was developed by post-revolutionary Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky was a cognitivist, but rejected the assumption made by cognitivists such as Jean Piaget and William G. Perry that it was possible to separate learning from its social context. Vygotsky argued that all cognitive functions originate in, and must therefore be explained as products of, social interactions and that learning was not simply the assimilation and accommodation of new knowledge by learners; it was the process by which learners were integrated into a knowledge community.

Lev Vygotsky shared many of Jean Piaget's assumptions about how children learn, but Vygotsky placed more emphasis on the social context of learning, referred to as the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development, often abbreviated ZPD, is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he can do with help. Vygotsky maintained that a learner follows an adult's example and gradually develops the ability to do certain tasks without help or assistance; which is explained as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance

or in collaboration with more capable peers. The idea of ZPD implies that a learners' development is determined by social interaction and collaborative problem-solving. This means that you have to work and learn in collaboration in order to learn autonomously, thus learners are guided towards autonomous learning. Based on Vygotsky's hypothesis I can conclude that *the new learning* and autonomous learning are not identical concepts as in *the new learning* concept learners are guided towards autonomous learning. Teachers teach learners how to work autonomously. For instance when a learner has to work on a project about a school trip to London he can rely on help from the teacher or peers whenever a task cannot be completed autonomously. A teacher in his turn can choose to guide the learner towards solving whatever difficulty he is having in completing the project by giving tips and leaving the learner to work with those tips autonomously to solve the learning challenge. This is referred to as *learning with only a small amount of teacher support*.

1.3 Active learning

The main idea of *the new learning* is to challenge and give more self-responsibility to learners for their learning, make learning and teaching more flexible, motivating, effective and enjoyable through another approach.

One of the consequences of this new development is that the role of the teacher changes. The traditional focus on teaching learners as a group will develop into a way of teaching that focuses more and more on guiding groups as individual learners during their learning process. This does not mean that learners are completely in charge of what and how they learn. The teacher gives guidance, structure and decides what tasks learners should work on but offers *options* on how and what tasks and guides them through it. When options are offered learners can be given a choice on how and what to learn. This is really important for their development into an independent learner. This way learners feel challenged, are self-responsible and involved actively in their own learning process, which gives them a feeling that they are a part of what they do.

Thus *the new learning* refers to forms of education that are characterised by *self-directed learning* under guidance of a teacher, taking place in *realistic learning environments* (for instance, professional environments), in which *cooperative learning* is important and in which the functional use of *ICT* plays a prominent role. So it is education in which a great deal is asked of the learners themselves. It is less structured, and in general also less fact-based than classroom instruction. An important characteristic is that it is strongly oriented towards training life skills: working together, debating, and conducting research using a computer. There is a growing need for and thus emphasis on these skills. In developing these competences, learners learn to see what they can do with the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

1.4 Fast-changing society

Besides challenging learners and giving them self-responsibility, many programmes at school have to teach in accordance to *the new learning* because professional fields require it. The immediate reason was that, due to the fast-changing society, learners in secondary and vocational education were not being sufficiently prepared for further education or the labour market. The educational concept behind *the new learning* is that theory and practice must be much better combined and complement each other. Learners must not only acquire knowledge, but must also know how to tackle a problem *using* their knowledge; this is why they must also have adequate life skills besides strictly job-related skills. They must know what to *do* with the knowledge they are acquiring. In order for a certain programme to produce competent graduates, these general skills I have briefly mentioned are necessary. All in all, the principles of *the new learning* well supplement the classic, traditional education in which knowledge is handed down and consumed. Thus *the new learning* makes education more complete.

This concept also prepares learners for further education and the labour market. Requirements of vocational and university education change from time to time, following the needs of a changing society. This means that requirements at secondary schools must change as well otherwise a transfer from one to the other will be difficult as learners will not be considered sufficiently competent. The required knowledge and skills for a follow up study should connect if learners want to succeed.

Also the requirements of professional fields are different nowadays. Different knowledge and skills are required and skills are considered more important. Now employers would rather hire someone who is good at for instance explaining something than someone who can speak flawless Dutch, or someone who can work independently rather than someone who has a lot of knowledge about a subject. There is a change in what sort of

knowledge is required. Extensive knowledge and knowing a lot of facts are not solely important anymore because in the fast-changing society some knowledge quickly becomes obsolete. Knowledge obtained while working is more important as people are likely to forget a lot of facts and a great deal of the extensive knowledge they learnt in school. The main point is that it is essential that the required or necessary knowledge can be used at the right time and at the right moment. This means it does not matter how many facts someone knows or how extensive one's knowledge is. If the required or necessary knowledge for a certain task at a certain moment is limited one must be competent to obtain it. That is why *the new learning* focuses more on using skills to obtain that knowledge and on doing so autonomously.

You learn working with other people by working with other people and you learn how to apply knowledge by applying knowledge. Sitting in a classroom and listening to instructions and theories is not effective if you do not know how to apply it. *For this you need a new approach to learning, which means learners should actively work with this knowledge and theories using various skills.*

1.5 An umbrella term

Based on my research I can conclude that *the new learning* is an umbrella term for various new learning outcomes or better said educational innovations, these are defined as "to learn by exploiting already existing knowledge to obtain new knowledge collaboratively and autonomously using means that learners connect with." The means that learners connect with involve for instance *Ipod, Powerpoint, Google, wiki, DVDs* and *CDs*.

Nothing much has changed the past years in education, organisation and content are pretty much the same. What has changed is the didactical aspect of education, which is the approach to teach learners what they need to know.

Chapter 2. Requirements for implementation

As said in the introduction I visited two schools who had already embraced *the new learning* approach, knowing Rombouts (Brunssum) and Herle College (Heerlen). I have learnt that *the new learning* is a systemic change in education and for it to be incorporated successfully institutions and teachers have to go through a reformation. This does not go smoothly as this systemic change is quite demanding especially for teachers from early generations

Of importance for a successful reformation are:

- Professional development
- New technologies
- Accurate organization

2.1 Professional development

Because of new theories on learning, it is important that teachers continue to develop professionally.

Many teachers, especially from early generations, see themselves as the source and provider of information as a result of their personal and professional history. Since this kind of teaching sufficed for early generation teachers it is not likely to change day over night unless alternative experiences prove to be successful.

Change and reformation in education tends to be difficult for teachers of early generations. The fast-changing society and emerging theories on learning requires of teachers to start or continue to develop professionally in order to help learners to develop in current education and to cope and be successful in our fast-changing society. Learning through behaviourism only is not sufficient anymore and the sooner teachers realize this the better it is for the development of learners. In order to help learners direct their learning processes teachers have to alter and reform their current teaching skills and beliefs of their role as a teacher. It is important to start or keep developing professionally and when any difficulties or objections from colleagues arise it is essential to find a way to stimulate and advocate professional development.

2.2 New Technologies

New technologies in the form of modern electronic devices and ICT tools allow us to process information digitally. Such processes are storing, transporting, transforming, searching, generating and presenting of digital information. Computers and the Internet are devices for processing and transporting, CDs and the so-called USB-stick are devices for storage and

search and digital video and audio are ways of presenting information in varied and flexible ways. These are called ICT tools.

As explained in chapter one constructivism and collaborative learning are dominating new learning outcomes. Learners are encouraged to construct their own knowledge instead of copying it from an authority, such as a course book or teacher.

ICT tools have a prominent role in incorporating these new learning outcomes in education as they support constructivism and collaborative learning. Current research (Simons, van der Linden and Duffy, 2000, p. 55) shows that constructive and collaborative learning is supported by various ICT tools and computer programs such as *Ipod, Powerpoint, Google, wiki, DVD* and *CDrom*.

Since ICT is integrated rapidly and prominently in the fast-changing society learners do not know better than obtaining knowledge using ICT tools. Learners grew up using these tools and it is therefore inevitable to integrate ICT in *the new learning* concept. ICT also makes it possible to teach in accordance to *the new learning* concept as it is an enrichment of the didactical approach in this concept and ICT offers a wide range of useful data quickly.

ICT

- Makes it possible to go along with differences between learners.
There are extensive differences in the study pace of learners. Use of ICT can meet learners' differences.
- Makes face-to-face interaction, virtual or both possible. This can be a nice complement to a course.
- Stimulates authentic learning as it offers authentic material.
- Can structure learning, classes, deadlines and assessments through their personal portfolios and intranet.

Learners no longer depend on a teacher's subject knowledge, learners work on tasks and projects that interests and challenges them, which encourages them to show more initiative. Teachers have become increasingly excited, as learners work on tasks that are more original, interesting and authentic. Thus ICT is functional to learning. Learners can avail themselves of the possibilities that ICT offers to learn or complete a task or project. Therefore information and communication technology is an important and powerful tool in education; it provides data more quickly, enabling learners to manipulate information and learn in a more sophisticated way. ICT makes it possible to consult sources on special knowledge on various subjects without any difficulty. Use of ICT also increases mobility. Teachers can easily teach where- and whenever they can and learners can learn where- and whenever they want to.

ICT can be used

- In and outside the classroom;
- To support constructive and collaborative learning;
- To support the organization of your learning.

2.3 Accurate organization

Before organizing the lessons according to *the new learning* concept three main conditions need to be taken into careful consideration.

1. The teacher's role changes into that of a coach;
2. In order to guide all groups and individual learners you need a classroom assistant;
3. ICT tools should be up and running and ready to use at all times.

As mentioned in chapter one, the teacher no longer spends the entire lesson in a classroom with the entire group. This means that the teacher has to guide learners or groups working in different spaces simultaneously and move from classroom to the ICT or self study area which can be hard work without a classroom assistant. This means that teachers need an extra pair of hands.

A next requirement is that ICT tools should be up and running and ready to use. This means that all CALL-software should be accessible at all times and an ICT technician or fixed ICT help desk hours should be available to offer support and deal with failures quickly. Furthermore the language area with ICT tools should be available for language teachers and learners whenever they want and need to use it. Teachers need to share computers when teaching simultaneously and agree on who uses which computers or other ICT tools and when.

These three conditions need to be met before teaching in accordance to *the new learning*!

Chapter 3. Outcome survey

As the language department at my teaching practice school, Broekland, has already dealt with the professional development of their staff and the introduction and use of new technologies I was asked to research how best to incorporate *the new learning* in the language teaching in the lower years and organize it in the current school setting.

Last year Broekland changed location. A completely new building was built and its design was based on this new vision of learning. The building has a language area and computers, smart boards and beamers everywhere. Teachers were asked to take professional development courses in using these new ICT tools, for instance how to use a smart board effectively and functionally in the lessons and adapting their didactical approach to *the new learning* concept.

As mentioned in the introduction I drew up eighteen open questions for an interview (Appendix 1) about how the schools I visited organized *the new learning* in their language teaching and whether it worked for their first year VMBO learners, since I am going to try it out with the VMBO learners in year one and two at Broekland.

Next I am going to summarize the outcome of the questions about the ten components, and suggest the best and most practical way to organize and incorporate this concept in language teaching and the current school setting of Broekland.

3.1 Procedure of interview

Using the eighteen questions (Appendix 1) I interviewed two language teachers and one school manager at both Rombouts (Brunssum) and Herle College (Heerlen) about ten important components on how *the new learning* was incorporated and organized in language teaching at these school accurately.

I first explained more about my research ("I want to incorporate *the new learning* in language teaching at Broekland but I do not know how yet.") and the aim of the interview ("As you have already embraced *the new learning* I want to ask you a few questions on how you incorporated the concept at your school."). Then I asked these teachers and school managers how the ten components were incorporated in the current school setting. Next I illustrated the school setting at Broekland and asked for advice on how best to incorporate these components in this particular school setting and whether it is thought feasible or not. After the interview I was taken on a tour of the building and attended a few lessons to experience how the teachers taught in accordance to *new learning* outcomes.

3.2 Summary of interviews

3.2.1 Teaching methods and material

The Dutch ministry of education does not lay out any detailed regulations with regard to the curriculum concerning content, teaching methods and materials. Some schools organise their teaching according to a particular educational theory referred to as, *the new learning*. These include Montessori, Dalton and Jena Plan schools. Schools select their own textbooks and course materials. However, the school plan must describe the subject matter covered and the teaching methods used. The leaving examination regulations provide guidance as to the content of the various curricula. The National Teaching Materials Information Centre (NICL) produces a guide to teaching materials which schools can use to compare existing and new products. The NICL is part of the National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO).

The new approach to teaching which is part of the reforms in the lower and upper years of secondary school such as "het studiehuis" is as described in chapter one aimed to encouraging active learning through independent study.

After completing primary education, children aged 12 attend secondary education. Depending on the advice of the primary school and the score of the End of Primary School Test pupils can be assigned to pre-university education (VWO; 6 years, age 12-18), senior general secondary education (HAVO; 5 years; age 12-17), pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO; 4 years, age 12-16) and Practical Training (PRO; age 12-18).

All children from the age of 12 attend one of these four types of secondary education.

On 1 August 2006, these four types of education were divided in lower and upper years. Teaching in accordance to *the new learning* at a secondary school is possible in the lower years and upper years. Although interviewees claim that it can be difficult to teach in accordance to *the new learning* in the higher years for the regulations set on national exams and tests.

The requirements of the curriculum in the lower years are different from that of the upper years.

In the lower years teaching is based on subject integration. Pupils are exposed to all kinds of learning methods and a variety of subjects. The aim is to prepare them to choose the best courses for them from all sectors or subject combinations available in the upper years.

In the lower years most schools employ the –homogeneous- year group system with children of the same age being placed together in the same class. Schools are free to group pupils by type of education or place pupils following different types of education in the same class. Combined schools often group their pupils in combined –heterogeneous- classes in the first and second year. More than half of all first-year pupils are in mixed VMBO/HAVO or HAVO/VWO classes.

At the end of the second year VMBO pupils choose a sector and a learning pathway. HAVO/VWO pupils choose one of the four fixed subject combinations, called 'profiles', at the end of year three (and in some cases at the end of year four of VWO). They are then regrouped accordingly. All examinations in a learning pathway (at VMBO) or profile (at HAVO/VWO) are taken at the same level.

The immediate reason for a lower and upper year division is that the Dutch ministry of education requires a coherent and uninterrupted learning pathway from primary to secondary school, from the lower to the upper years and from the upper years to a follow up study.

The aim of current secondary education is that it should contribute to pupils' development, with attention and respect for the various religious,

philosophical and social values that exist in Dutch society and with an emphasis on the knowledge and skills needed to function well in society, as well as an individual, a citizen and as a worker.

The aims of the lower years of secondary school have been set down in 58 general attainment targets. They apply to all pupils. School policy is free to determine how the attainment targets are fleshed out at every level and for each method of learning.

The aims of the upper years are to provide a broad general education and to ensure cohesion between the various subjects and harmonisation with the methods used in vocational, higher and scientific education.

In the lower years pupils will gradually learn how to cope with skills such as dealing with an increased personal responsibility and learning autonomously. Basically pupils are encouraged to learn actively through independent study. In the upper years pupils will have developed these skills and are able to organize their own learning. Thus *the new learning* concept can be a suitable and effective approach to learning that teaches learners how to learn. Therefore more and more schools nationally choose to incorporate it.

The upper years of pre-vocational education, senior general secondary education and pre-university education are oriented towards the national examinations and tests. Teachers therefore have to meet and achieve certain national targets of attainment to prepare pupils for their tests and exams.

My interview shows that teachers think that the required study load and content does not always give enough room to teach only in accordance to *the new learning* in these years. However the Dutch ministry of education does give schools the freedom to group the attainment targets in cross-curricular projects. This means it is definitely possible to teach in accordance to *the new learning* in these years. Teachers I interviewed came up with a practical solution. Traditional teaching and *the new learning* in the

upper years is combined, resulting in a form of blended learning. A few elements of *the new learning* approach are used to fulfil certain tasks like research, autonomous learning, and collaborative learning and use of ICT tools, but not weekly like in the lower years. However it is opted to rather stick to traditional teaching in the classroom for the sake of exam or test training. The extent to which one resorts to traditional teaching or *the new learning* differs from one teacher to the other, depending on the functionality as to the attainment targets.

3.2.2 Practical research at Rombouts College

The experience of *the new learning* at both schools is that it is possible to teach a language to LWOO and VMBO learners in accordance to *the new learning* approach. However it is considered important that teaching is directed and structured by the teacher otherwise there will be chaos and confusion amongst pupils. This new approach to learning is not considered necessarily bad for these learners but needs correct organization to be effective. *The new learning* critics say that these learners are not ready yet to take responsibility of their own learning. Andrea Plantaz, one of the interviewees and teacher of German at Rombouts, claims that teaching in accordance to *the new learning* will only be successful when it is done with a small group of pupils (maximum 15-20). Monitoring what pupils are working on and evaluating tasks is much more effective in a small group.

In the lower years, at Rombouts pupils are taught in group units. The school has multiple so called unit floors; its design is based on this new vision of learning. In this unit floor, pupils are taught in accordance to *the new learning*. The unit floor has an instruction area (where subject items are explained, instructions are given and tests are taken), a study area with a few computers (to work collaboratively or do research) and a 'silence' area (to study for tests or do homework in silence with no interruption from peers).

Teachers teach their subject to three classes (approximately 90 pupils in total) with 5 to 6 teachers. One of those teachers is the actual subject teacher and the others are coaches. Such a unit session takes 50 minutes. It used to be 80 minutes but this proved not to be successful, because the school realized that pupils had too short an attention span to work 80 minutes on one subject. In this 50-minute session the three classes rotate from one area to the other after 15 minutes. Thus each group spends 15 minutes working in each area. The subject teacher decides which group starts working in the instruction area first. The other two groups are dispersed to the other two areas by choice under guidance of the coaches. This depends on what learners want or need to work on. The teacher who actually teaches the subject, for instance English, is working with pupils in the instruction area. Instructions or grammar explanations are given. The other four teachers work with the pupils in the study and silence area. Pupils receive guidance and teachers ensure the pupils work sensibly.

Rombouts College interviewees feel that the organization of *the new learning* needs to be changed since there is no time to evaluate or rotate pupils from one area to the next properly. Interviewee Andrea Plantaz therefore says that implementing teaching in accordance to *the new learning* at Broekland, should be "a piece of cake" since this school does not teach in units (three classes, 90 pupils total at the time), but subjects are taught to one group like in traditional classroom teaching and not three groups in 50 minutes. Thus the evaluation and rotation problem will not apply to Broekland.

3.2.3 Practical research at Herle College

At Herle College *the new learning* approach is organized in an "edutheek" in the lower years for LWOO pupils. The "edutheek" floor also has an instruction area (where subject items are explained, instructions are given and tests are taken), a study area with a few computers (to work collaboratively or do research) and a silence area (to study for tests or do homework with no interruption from other peers). In the "edutheek" pupils are taught by the E-team (edutheekteam). This team consists of eight teachers who teach all subjects to these pupils. Unlike the area rotations at Rombouts in the "edutheek" all pupils have to come to the instruction area once a week for instructions on their tasks or explanation on language or linguistic challenges. The pupils receive a week planner with all tasks to be completed, containing information about how, when, where and with whom these tasks should be completed that week. They must finish the tasks on the week planner and teachers monitor the progress.

The whole idea of *the new learning* approach at both these schools is that if learners work on the tasks at school properly they do not have any homework. Anyway when pupils do not finish their tasks they have to finish it at home. Evaluation of tasks and process takes place during an instruction lesson. Language or linguistic elements that are considered difficult are explained again, and the process of working on the tasks in accordance to *the new learning* is discussed. How tasks and process are evaluated varies from one teacher to the other. Depending on content of task and project teachers can decide to evaluate process with the whole group during an instruction lesson by checking workbooks. While pupils are working on their tasks teachers monitor the process as well by checking what has been completed, if any learning challenges have occurred and how pupils dealt with these learning challenges. Evaluation of grammar tasks also takes place in the instruction lesson with the whole group, orally. Reading, listening and writing tasks are generally discussed in groups of 2, 3 or 4. Pupils share findings and deal with learning challenges. Of course

when certain learning challenges can not be dealt with individually or in collaboration pupils can always rely on the teacher's guidance. Testing is done in the same way as in traditional teaching: tests on vocabulary, useful phrases and chapter tests are done in an instructions lesson, with all pupils at the same time at the same place. Pupils get 20 minutes for a vocabulary and useful phrases test and 1 hour for a chapter test.

3.3 Suggestions incorporation of the new learning

I will now suggest how best to incorporate *the new learning* in language teaching in the lower years and how to organize the ten components in the current school setting at Broekland.

Component 1: *How to allocate tasks among pupils?*

Language teaching from a course book traditionally involves training the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and linguistic skills (grammar, vocabulary, useful phrases and pronunciation), either individually or in collaboration and group tasks and ICT supported tasks integrating a few or all language and linguistic skills. This can of course differ from one course book to the other. One of the ideas of *the new learning* is that learners should be offered a variety of challenging tasks to learn the language and linguistic skills, thus the lessons offered should be differential. Either you use material from your course book or from other sources like the Internet. My research shows that it is best *not* to divide different tasks between learners working in groups but to allocate the same tasks to all learners individually to avoid confusion and provide structure.

In traditional language teaching learners were instructed to complete one or two tasks after a presentation within a time limit of 10 to 15 minutes and evaluation of the tasks took place subsequently. This is referred to as a day task. In accordance with *the new learning* approach I suggest allocating a week task to give learners the opportunity to work at their own pace.

Usually every chapter in a course book is divided into sections. Each section deals with a variety of language skills and linguistic skills either separately or in combination. Depending on the amount of sections per chapter and

workload of activities in a section you can choose to allocate all activities per section in one week. Thus learners work on the same section but are responsible for their own weekly time management. A week task gives teachers the opportunity to guide weaker learners while the fast learners are being challenged. You make sure you provide extra enrichment material with each section for fast learners to make sure they remain feeling challenged.

Component 2: Clear time management; how long should pupils work on a task and when should it be finished?

At Broekland, normally it takes a teacher approximately 18 to 20 lessons to complete a chapter. This means five to six weeks, depending on planned language projects. The best way to manage the study time and work within the given time limitations is to give learners one week to complete one paragraph. This means that they have three to four lessons to complete and check or evaluate their activities relating to that particular section and this gives learners the opportunity to manage their own work and time. Thus the learners have to make sure that they have finished and checked their activities during the last lesson of the week. During the week the teacher monitors how learners progress and instructs and guides them if necessary.

Component 3: When and how to give instructions?

Learners should report in at the start of each lesson to make sure that everyone starts working on their tasks properly. Instructions should be given prior to every new section. This can be done at the beginning of a lesson or at the end. Always give instructions in class when everybody is present otherwise learners will miss it. The best thing to do is to give instructions on the activities whenever you allocate a new section; this can be done at the beginning of a week. You first allocate a section and then explain what is expected of the learners. For instance how should they work

on their activities using what ICT tools? Can they complete the activities in collaboration or must they work individually. This all depends on the activities and the learning objectives.

Component 4: *When and how to give grammar presentations?*

Grammar presentation is of great importance in language teaching. You have to make sure that this presentation is given when everybody is present and preferably at the beginning of the lesson as learners have quite short attention spans. Every activity that needs a grammar presentation in advance needs to be explained in class, for this I suggest you plan a traditional classroom session.

Component 5: *Task evaluation; how and when to evaluate?*

Evaluation of activities within *the new learning* concept can be quite difficult especially when learners work at their own pace. I have learnt and advocated that allocating the same section to all learners is more structured and less confusing; it also makes it less difficult to evaluate. Learners who have finished an activity of the allocated section can show their work to the teacher. The teacher in his turn checks if the activity is completed and decides whether to give an answer key or divide learners who finished the activity in small groups to evaluate their findings. Provide extra material for learners who complete activities quickly while guiding others and always make sure that you have answer keys for all activities. If you do not have answer keys you can always opt to discuss findings in class in small groups or plan a thirty minute traditional classroom session in the last lesson of the week to evaluate a few activities together in class.

Activities and assignments that involve grammar can be dealt with in a traditional classroom session after everybody has completed the grammar activities. These can be explained again and more examples can be given. You can also choose a few learners at random every week and go through

their notebooks to check their activities to see if they are evaluating these properly.

Component 6: *How and when to plan oral or written tests on vocabulary and useful phrases?*

You can plan these tests whenever you feel it is time to assess pupils' knowledge on a chapter. Basically these tests are planned the same way as before with traditional teaching. You plan tests in the first fifteen or twenty minutes of the lesson. For homework pupils have to learn the vocabulary and useful phrases every week until the chapter is finished.

Component 7: *Assessment; how and when to give a test on the chapter?*

Nothing really dramatically changes here as testing still needs to meet national or regional standards. When all paragraphs have been completed, checked, evaluated and you feel that there is no further teaching needed on the language of that chapter you can plan a written test for the next lesson. Like in traditional teaching learners get an hour to complete the test. There is another variety to testing, instead of assessing on paper you can opt to assess digitally. This is quite simple, really. You design a test that learners can make on the computer with e.g. *WinToets*, *TestVision*, *Etude*, *Egel*, *Hot Potatoes*, and *Question Mark*⁶.

Component 8: *How to stimulate autonomous learning to guide learners in their learning process?*

As mentioned in chapter one the idea of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development implies that a learner's development is determined by social interaction and collaborative problem-solving. This means that you have to work and learn in collaboration in order to learn autonomously. Whenever

⁶ With these programs you can design your own test and grade learners digitally.

learners experience difficulties when learning they can turn to their teacher or peers for a solution or tips on how to carry on autonomously. In *the new learning* concept learners are guided towards autonomous learning. Teachers teach learners how to work autonomously by giving tips on how to carry on when difficulties arise. Autonomous learning is less other-directed and more self-directed. In education and in life it is important to let others direct us in order to allow us to direct ourselves. This means that first teachers give tips and instruct how to fulfil a task and learners use the tips, instructions and guidance to learn how to carry on by themselves next time they encounter the same or a similar difficulty or situation. Very important is that learners must know that they need to ask for help or advice whenever they feel that they cannot carry on. Knowing when and how to ask for what help is also an important characteristic of autonomous learning since you take the initiative to solve a problem by asking for advice or help. Thus as a teacher or guide you have to make sure that learners solve their problems in collaboration to carry on autonomously. You can do this by providing a learning environment that allows failure and that gives learners the feeling that they can ask their teacher or peers for help whenever necessary. Give learners tips by asking questions such as "what went wrong?" or "who is the best person to ask for help?" to solve a problem and ask peers to do the same and simultaneously stimulate and encourage learners to go ahead and try to succeed in whatever they are doing.

Component 9: *Is classroom assistance for language teaching required for better guidance? What is the role of the classroom assistant?*

A classroom assistant is known to be very important in *the new learning* approach. As mentioned before a teacher will be needing an extra pair of hands as a teacher has to guide learners or groups working in different spaces simultaneously and move from classroom to the ICT or self study area which can be hard work without a classroom assistant. Thus a

classroom assistant is needed for better guidance and organisation of a lesson.

The role of a classroom assistant is to support the teacher and guide learners through their learning challenges concerning time - or classroom management and difficulties with for instance ICT tools.

Teacher assistants help classroom teachers complete instructional and secretarial tasks, which allow teachers to spend more time preparing lessons and teaching. Using the teacher's lesson plans, teacher assistants can help learners learn material by tutoring and assisting them one-on-one. Additional classroom duties teacher assistants have are to help prepare supplies for lessons, set up equipment, and record grades. Outside of the classroom teacher assistants may be responsible for supervising learners on field trips, in the hallways, or in the cafeteria. Teacher assistants are also called teacher aides or instructional aides. There are teacher assistants available at Broekland and they help with the tasks mentioned above.

Component 10: *Are the facilities needed to complete the tasks available at all times?*

In order to teach a language according to *the new learning* approach the required facilities must be available whenever they are needed to complete a task. Otherwise you cannot implement *the new learning* properly. These facilities involve a well-equipped ICT area, ICT support, library, and audio-visual equipment and audio-visual communication aids like smart boards, beamers, televisions, DVD and CD players and necessary software.

Chapter 4. Try-out of the concept

4.1 The new learning approach PILOT

I organised a meeting with all language teachers who were interested in teaching language in accordance to *the new learning* approach to discuss my findings on this approach, at Broekland on 24 January 2008. FL teachers present at the meeting were: Afke Zondervan (French), Silvy Rockacher (French), Claudia Hendrix (English), Danielle offermans (German).

In the meeting I presented the three conditions and ten components required for a correct implementation of the concept. After the confirmation of the three conditions, (1) the teacher's role changes into that of a coach, (2) in order to guide all groups and individual learners a classroom assistant is required, (3) ICT tools should be up and running and ready to use at all times, we decided to do a one-month pilot on *the new learning* approach with first year VMBO pupils, from 1 March until 1 April 2008.

In this pilot we aimed to incorporate the ten components and organize the approach in the current school setting at Broekland as described in chapter three.

4.2 The PILOT

Not all three conditions described in chapter three were met. The conditions (1) "changing the role of the teacher to that of a coach" and (2) "support from a classroom assistant" were not difficult to meet. The last condition (3) "ICT tools should be up and running and ready to use at all times" however could not be met. Software belonging to course books could not be used on the computer since ICT technicians had not yet installed a program on the computers to run the software. Multiple requests on installing the program were made but unfortunately other requests had higher priority. The installation of this program will be done next school year.

When the CDrom is played the running device gives a popup that it is blocked and not allowed to be used. It was decided to give learners the CDrom to practise at home.

Each language teacher that was present at the meeting and worked on the pilot used the ten components to teach in accordance to *the new learning* as described in chapter three. These teachers informed the pupils about the pilot and on how lessons would be taught the next four weeks. Furthermore I handed out the ten components on paper and asked the teachers to make comments and notes on what worked and what did not and why. The comments on the handout would later be used as evaluation material.

4.2.1 Process of the PILOT

All learners were allocated the same week tasks to avoid confusion and provide structure. Nowadays all workbooks have a task planner named "workmate", at the beginning of each chapter (Appendix 3). Learners must use this workmate to work through their tasks. It is a guideline that helps learners organize their work properly per section by asking the right questions like:

- What tasks do you complete in pairs or in groups;

- What tasks do you complete individually;
- For which tasks do you need a CDrom;
- When must the tasks be completed;
- What do you have to study for a test on vocabulary and useful phrases;
- What extra activities can you do;
- Evaluation of the chapter;
- What do you have to study for the chapter test?

Learners answer these questions per section and work their way through the activities.

Depending on the amount of sections per chapter and workload of activities in a section it was opted to allocate all activities per section in one week. Thus learners worked on the same section but were self-responsible for their time management. A week task gave the opportunity to guide weaker learners while the fast learners were being challenged. Extra material on the section was provided for fast learners to make sure they remained to be challenged.

Learners were given one week to complete one section. This means that they had three to four lessons to complete and check or evaluate their activities relating to that particular section. The new approach offered learners the opportunity to manage their own work and time. Learners checked and finished their activities during the last lesson of the week. During the week the teacher monitored the learners' progress and instructed and guided them if necessary.

Learners were to report in at the start of each lesson. Everyone knew what to do and could start working on their tasks properly. Instructions on every new section were given in the first lesson of the week, at the beginning of a lesson. Instructions were given in class when everybody was present so nobody would miss it. Thus first a section was allocated and then it was

explained what was expected of the learners. For this explanation the teacher referred to the workmate as described above. For instance how to work on the activities using what ICT tools? Can the activities be completed in collaboration or must learners work individually? This all depended on the activities and what learners were expected to learn.

For grammar presentations it was decided to plan a traditional 1-hour classroom session once a week, during the time that pupils usually worked on their tasks. When planning a lesson it was first checked what activities pupils had to do in the new section. When explicit elaborate grammar presentation was needed prior to the activities, that is what was done and next pupils were allowed to work on the activities. Sometimes the inductive (implicit) approach to a grammar structure was possible, for instance a grammar point introduced in a story or game. If this was the case of course pupils worked on these inductive activities before the grammar point discussion took place in class. Whenever more grammar explanation was needed it was decided to plan an extra compulsory traditional classroom session of 30 minutes, during the time that pupils usually worked on their tasks. Depending on the workload of a section it was also possible to spend even more time on grammar discussion when necessary, which resulted in working on a section longer than a week, but this was exceptional.

Evaluation of activities within *the new learning* concept was not as difficult as it was expected. Unlike *the new learning* at Rombouts, as described above, the subject was taught in accordance to *the new learning* to one group of approximately twenty-five pupils at a time and not three groups of approximately ninety pupils. This was much easier and thus guiding pupils and checking their tasks was much more efficient than at Rombouts. Learners who had finished an activity of the allocated section showed the teacher their work. The work was checked when the activity was completed and then it was decided whether to give an answer key or divide learners, who finished the activity, in small groups to evaluate their findings. A very successful method was planning fifteen minutes of traditional classroom

work in each lesson to evaluate an exercise or a 30-minute traditional classroom session in the last lesson of the week to evaluate a few exercises together in class. These traditional classroom session were compulsory.

Activities and assignments that involved grammar were checked and discussed in a traditional classroom session after everybody had completed the grammar task. These assignments were explained again and more examples were given.

For homework pupils had to learn the vocabulary and useful phrases every week until the chapter was finished. Tests on vocabulary and useful phrases were scheduled in the long term planning, but rescheduled whenever it was determined that it was not the right time to assess pupils' knowledge on two or three sections. Pupils were informed one week prior to the test, during a traditional classroom session. Even though tests appear on the week planner the upcoming test was also written on the whiteboard with the exact date and content of the test. The immediate reason was that my research showed that pupils tend to forget that they are having a test. Basically these tests were planned the same as before with traditional teaching. Tests were scheduled in the first fifteen or twenty minutes of the lesson, at the same place and moment. When pupils finished the test they could carry on with their week task.

When all sections were completed, checked, evaluated and when it was determined that there was no further teaching needed on the language of that chapter a chapter test was scheduled for the next lesson. This test had also been scheduled in the long term planning but again as a reminder for pupils it was necessary to announce it again explicitly. Like in traditional teaching learners are assessed at the same place and moment and get an hour to complete the test.

A long term planning is usually not strictly fixed. This kind of planning is made as a guideline but it does not necessarily mean that it should

determine precisely what should be taught and tested the next few weeks, months or year at what date and time. My research shows that it is impossible to stick to the exact dates. Sometimes cross-curricular projects compulsory for all pupils or an absent teacher are immediate reasons to reschedule whatever is planned. This results in an unreliable planner which means that it is at times necessary to inform pupils about upcoming tests explicitly or even hand out a new long term planning.

Two teacher assistants, Willy Hensen and Miep Pieters, also had a significant role in the PILOT. The role of these teacher assistants was to help us and guide learners through their learning challenges, problems concerning time- or classroom management and mainly difficulties with for instance ICT tools. Whenever something was wrong with the computers or ICT tools it had to be reported to these two teacher assistants and they made sure to report it back to the ICT technicians or the ICT helpdesk and thus helped to solve learning challenges and obstacles. They mainly supervised learners when they were working in the language area as supervision in the classroom was not necessary because the classroom was used for work instructions and grammar presentation only. These teacher assistants supervised learners when they were working on the computer or in groups in the language area and the teachers guided and supervised pupils who were working individually or collaboratively in the classroom.

Autonomous learning was also stimulated. Whenever a learning challenge arose instruction and tips were given on how to fulfil a task and learners used the instruction, tips, and guidance to learn how to carry on by themselves next time they came across the same difficulty or situation. The learning environment provided allowed failure, which gave learners the feeling that they could ask their teacher or peers for help whenever necessary. Tips like asking questions -on what went wrong?, or who is the best person to ask for help?, the teacher, teacher assistants or peers?- were given to solve a learning challenge. Peers were asked to do the same

and simultaneously learners were stimulated and encouraged to go ahead and try to succeed in whatever they were doing.

Except for programs to run complementary software, facilities like a well-equipped ICT area, ICT support, library, and audio-visual equipment such as smart boards, beamers, televisions, and CD players were available at all times.

Also an agreement with all teachers of the language department concerning use and availability of the computers was made.

There are five computer areas: the language area, a room called the "intermediary", and rooms 314, 401 and 406. The language area has 24 computers. The number of computers in the other rooms varies from 24 to 30. When the language classes were taught simultaneously it was impossible to send the entire group of pupils to work in the language area with only a small amount of computers available. It was therefore decided to divide the 24 computers among the four languages (French, English, German and Dutch): as a rule each language was entitled to 6 computers in the language area without prior booking. Not every week a whole class worked on the computers since learners worked at their own pace. It was always the case that a small group of learners (six learners sometimes seven or eight) needed to work on the computer to complete a certain activity. This group was sent to the language area while the others were working individually or collaboratively in the classroom or the study area in the language area. When a large group or a whole class needed to work on the computers at the same time it was made obligatory by the school management to book the "intermediary" room one week in advance or ask to switch rooms with colleagues teaching in computer rooms 314, 401 and 406, at least one day prior to the lesson.

4.3 Evaluation of the PILOT

On 3 April 2008 I organised an evaluation meeting with all language teachers who had taken part in the pilot "language teaching in accordance to *the new learning*" at Broekland. Present at the evaluation meeting were: Afke Zondervan, Silvy Rockacher and Emiel Muijtjens (French), Claudia Hendrix (English), Danielle Offermans (German).

4.3.1 Procedure of the evaluation

Notes taken during the pilot and an evaluation checklist with comments were used to evaluate whether the concept is feasible in the current school setting at Broekland. The three main conditions and the ten components were evaluated. The note-taking was not formalized or structured in any way since teachers preferred to choose their own personal method to recording findings.

The evaluation took place by first recapitulating initial thoughts on the feasibility of this concept at Broekland and giving arguments based on the reasons of these thoughts. The next step in the evaluation process was discussing experiences based on the personal notes three teachers had taken during the pilot and on an evaluation checklist for those who had not taken notes. The evaluation checklist consisted of the ten *new learning* components described in chapter three to be ticked off: what worked well and what did not. During the meeting teachers elaborated on the arguments of their findings drawn from the outcome of the notes and the evaluation checklist.

During this exchange of thoughts it was realized that all had encountered the same difficulties and obstacles.

4.3.2 Process of the evaluation

First the three main conditions were discussed (1) the changing role of the teacher, (2) the need of classroom assistants and (3) the need of good ICT facilities.

Changing the role of a teacher to that of a coach went smoothly and was not difficult at all. All teachers agreed that giving pupils some space and responsibility for their tasks is good for them as it was realized that they have to be active and do the learning themselves, not the teacher.

The help of the teacher assistants was very good and effective. All teachers experienced that their help was essential to have time to guide all pupils through their learning challenges. For the teacher assistants it turned out not too difficult or daunting to support the teachers. Some pupils are known not to accept the authority of assistants and think a teacher is the only one authorized to help with tasks or stimulate good behaviour and correct undesirable behaviour. The pupils at Broekland, however, treated the teacher assistants with respect. The assistants found it very professional of the pupils that they accepted their authority over them and guidance was therefore effective.

The only drawback was the use of ICT tools as not all computers worked properly. Some pupils could not log in with their personal codes, in the "intermediary" room not all computers actually worked and the "intermediary" room did not have a printer. As a result pupils had to be sent back to the language area for both computers and printer. This obstacle course was dealt with by reporting back to the school management and luckily this drawback was dealt with instantly.

As mentioned before software like a complementary CDrom could not be used on the computer because the required program to use the CDrom had not been installed yet and will not be installed by ICT technicians until next school year (August 2008). This was one of the main drawbacks, as a lot of

communicative activities could not be done. As an alternative we decided to give the CDrom to the learners to do the activities at home.

Second the pilot was discussed from the angle of the pupils. All realized that pupils had had difficulties working their way through the tasks. It was difficult for them to cope with the responsibility of working at their own pace, managing their own time and working collaboratively. Then again this is perfectly normal since they are in their first year of secondary education and still need to learn how to learn and get used to this new approach of learning. These pupils need strong guidance and structure. They should learn in accordance to *the new learning* from the moment they go to secondary school and not midway through a school year; now this pilot group had already gotten used to a different approach of learning. All agreed that the main conclusion to be drawn on this aspect is that in future this approach should be incorporated from the beginning of a school year as pupils will then get used to it more naturally and incorporating the approach will subsequently be less difficult and hopefully even more successful.

Third the ten components I drew up to implement *the new learning* in language teaching at Broekland were discussed. In chapter three I made suggestions on how the ten components might be incorporated. In the course of the discussion it was recapitulated how these suggestions had worked in practice in the pilot and consequently I made adjustments to components; 5. *Task evaluation, how and when to evaluate?*, 7. *Assessment, how and when to give a test on a chapter?*, and 9. *Is classroom assistance for language teaching required for better guidance? What is the role of the classroom assistant?*

All other components proved successful in the pilot so no changes were necessary.

Chapter 5. Recommendations for incorporation

The following is a description of the ten components, adapted and confirmed as recommendations and documented to use as a step-by-step plan to incorporate *the new learning* in language teaching at Broekland and other schools with a similar structure accurately.

5.1 Step-by-step plan

Component 1: *How to allocate tasks among pupils?*

- Differential materials and tasks;
- Challenging tasks;
- All learners do the same tasks; no task division within groups
- Week tasks instead of day tasks;
- Pupils are responsible for their own weekly time management;
- Pupils use task planner to complete their weekly activities.

Component 2: *Clear time management; how long should pupils work on a task and when should it be finished?*

- Pupils are taught a foreign language (English, French and German) three to four lessons a week;
- Pupils get one week to complete the allocated section;
- pupils use a "workmate" to work their way through a chapter;
- Pupils make sure they have finished and checked their activities during the last lesson of the week;
- Teacher monitors pupils' work pace.

Component 3: *When and how to give instructions?*

- Pupils always report in at the start of each lesson;

- Instructions on a section must be given at the beginning of the week and prior to each new section;
- Instructions must be given at the beginning of each lesson;
- Instructions must involve: How should pupils work on their activities using what ICT tools? Can they complete the tasks in collaboration or must they work individually? When should they ask for help from whom?

Component 4: *When and how to give grammar presentations?*

- A 30-minutes or 1 hour traditional classroom session is recommended when presenting grammar structures;
- Explicit grammar presentation when necessary; inductive grammar practice when possible;
- Give grammar presentation when everybody is present and preferably at the beginning of the lesson.

Component 5: *Task evaluation; how and when to evaluate?*

- Pupils who have finished an activity show their work to the teacher;
- The teacher always first checks if an activity is completed;
- Activities can be checked using answer keys or in groups with peers who have finished the same activity;
- Teachers can also opt to discuss findings in class in small groups or schedule a 30-minute traditional classroom session in the last lesson of the week;
- Activities that involve grammar must be checked with the whole class during a 30-minute traditional classroom session. This session can be scheduled in one of the lessons pupils are working on their task;
- Task process and progress can be evaluated during individual guidance of the pupils while working on their task;
- For close monitor of pupils' work it is recommended to occasionally choose a few learners at random every week and go through their

notebooks to check their activities to see if they are evaluating these properly;

- Make sure enough extra material on a section is provided for fast pupils;
- Make sure enough answer keys are provided.

Component 6: *How and when to plan oral or written tests on vocabulary and useful phrases?*

- These tests must be scheduled when it is determined that a pupils' knowledge on two or three sections is up for assessment;
- Pupils must be informed of the test one week prior to the actual test date;
- The test content and date must be stated on the white board and teachers have to see to it that pupils copy it in their diaries;
- These tests must be scheduled in the first 15 or 20 minutes of the lesson.

Component 7: *Assessment; how and when to give a test on the chapter?*

- Also this test must be scheduled when it is asserted that a pupils' knowledge on the chapter is up for assessment;
- As described above with component 6, pupils must be informed of the test one week prior to the actual test date;
- The test content and date must be stated on the white board and teachers have to see to it that pupils copy it in their diaries;
- The duration of a chapter test is one lesson of 50 minutes. This means that pupils have one entire lesson to complete the test.

Component 8: *How to stimulate autonomous learning to guide learners in their learning process?*

- Provide a learning environment that allows failure;
- Make clear to pupils that whenever they come across learning challenges when working on tasks individually they can turn to their teacher, the teacher assistant or peers for a solution or tips on how to carry on autonomously; make clear that pupils must not turn to their peers to copy work;
- Give learners tips by asking questions such as “what went wrong?” or “who is the best person to ask for help?”.

Component 9: *Is classroom assistance for language teaching required for better guidance? What is the role of the classroom assistant?*

- Classroom assistants support teachers with the organization of the lessons. They guide learners through difficulties with ICT tools and help with time- and classroom management;
- Classroom assistants also help with instructional and secretarial tasks.

Component 10: *Are the facilities needed to complete the tasks available at all times?*

Use of ICT tools is indispensable if you want to implement *the new learning* approach successfully. The following ICT tools are highly required:

- ICT support or helpdesk;
- a well-equipped ICT area;
- library;

- audio-visual equipment and aids like smart boards, beamers, television, DVD and CD player and necessary complementary software;
- Programs to run complementary software must be installed.

Chapter 6. Concept suitability

After the meeting I used the same interview questions that I had used at Rombouts and Herle College (Appendix 1) to interview all the Broekland teachers who had been involved in the pilot about the concept suitability.

6.1 The schools in comparison

Now that I have done the pilot at Broekland I want to compare the earlier experiences of the concept at Rombouts and Herle College with Broekland.

6.1.1 Procedure of comparison

I have drawn up sixteen statements (Appendix 2) based on the interview questions I used (Appendix 1) at Rombouts and Herle College. I already used these statements as interview questions at these schools to learn more about how they experienced the concept. When comparing it is necessary to learn how Broekland experienced the concept after the pilot using the same statements.

These statements are about the components and conditions that are vital to successful incorporation of the concept as described in chapter five. The reactions to these statements are the last step towards a clear vision of the feasibility of the concept at Broekland. The aim of this last survey is to summarize the comments and notes taken on the components and conditions during the pilot and evaluation of the pilot. FL teachers Afke Zondervan, Silvy Rockacher and Emiel Muijtjens (French), Claudia Hendrix (English), Danielle Offermans (German), reacted to these statements. I distributed a handout with these statements and asked these teachers to react to them to come to a *final conclusion of the feasibility of the statement at Broekland compared to Rombouts and Herle College*.

In the following graphs the results are shown. The horizontal line illustrates the questions 1 to 16 and the vertical line illustrates to what degree the

teachers agreed or disagreed with each statement on the conditions and components. I have translated the statements from appendix 2 for easy reading and reference to the graphs.

6.1.2 Evaluation statements on the new learning in practice

1. *The new learning* is based on active learning. Pupils decide what and how they learn.
2. *The new learning* is also referred to as question-directed learning. VMBO pupils can formulate enough concrete questions to deal with learning challenges.
3. *The new learning* is not suitable for VMBO pupils since these pupils already have learning and behavioural difficulties. VMBO learners can handle the responsibility of active learning.
4. *The new learning* also involves autonomous learning. The majority of VMBO and LWOO pupils can work autonomously.
5. Old course books can be used when teaching in accordance to *the new learning*.
6. Collaborative working is possible.
7. Grammar instruction in class like in traditional teaching is possible.
8. It is possible to divide a chapter in sections and allocate each section in a different order.
9. It is possible to teach in accordance to *the new learning* in lessons of 50 minutes.

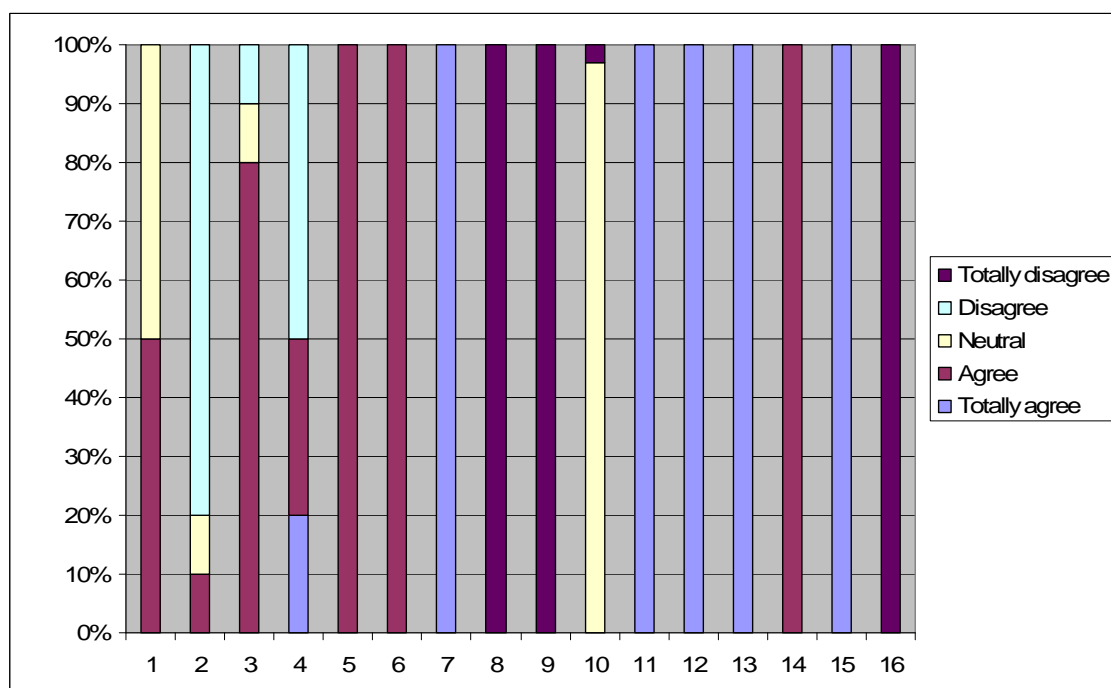
- 10.** The changing role of a teacher into that of a coach is realistic and feasible.
- 11.** Subject concepts and subject structures should always play a role as interpretation references of the targets of attainment.
- 12.** Course books are no longer needed.
- 13.** In the upper years of secondary school teachers have to meet and achieve certain national targets of attainment to prepare pupils for their national tests and exams. The national examinations and tests requirements do leave enough room for teachers to teach in accordance to *the new learning*. There is enough room for this concept in the upper years of secondary education.
- 14.** Learners are allocated tasks that are due at the end of the week. However pupils can still get homework.
- 15.** Testing vocabulary and useful phrases is possible in *the new learning* concept.
- 16.** Evaluating and assessing learners' work is possible in this new approach to teaching, in your current school setting and organization.

6.1.3 Evaluation results

Since I am only asked to research *the new learning* in foreign language teaching in the *lower years* the number of respondents is justifiably low. The amount of FL teachers of each language in the lower years is usually two to four depending on the school organisation. Furthermore it also depends on how many of these teachers want to respond or were available at the moment of the actual survey. These graphs reflect the research question accordingly which makes this survey justifiably valid.

Carboon College Rombouts

(Lower years VMBO-HAVO-VWO)



Graph 1: Feasibility *new learning* concept: 4 respondents

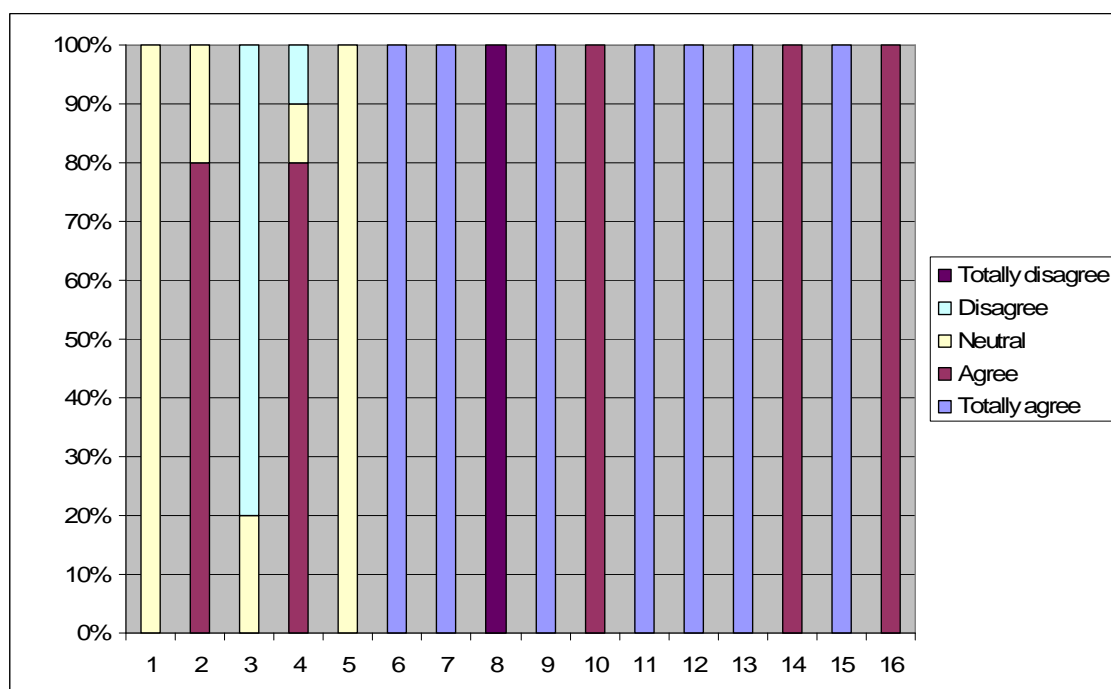
Summary of results and conclusion:

FLT respondents at Rombouts are not all together positive about statements that involve evaluation of tasks and learner responsibility and suitability of the concept for LWOO and VMBO learners. This can be explained from the fact that at Rombouts lessons are taught in units (three

classes, 90 pupils total, in 50 minutes). It appears there is never enough time to evaluate tasks and to teach learners how to learn and give them the attention they need. *The new learning* is an innovation still in progress and under development at this school. They are trying to find solutions to this possible obstacle course. Furthermore two FLT respondents are not quite sure if all VMBO learners are able to deal with the responsibility of active learning and autonomous learning since the majority of these learners suffer from learning and behavioural disabilities like dyslexia or ADHD and consequently are in need of direction and structure. This entails traditional classroom teaching.

Herle College

(Lower years LWOO)



Graph 2: Feasibility *new learning* concept: 2 respondents.

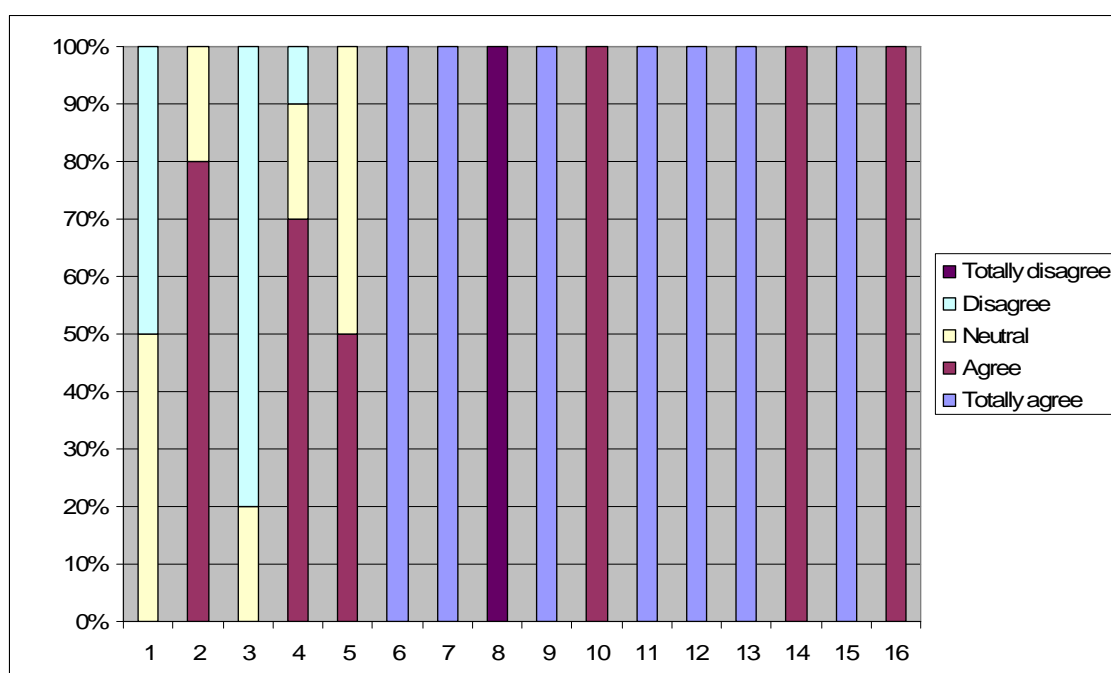
Summary of results and conclusion:

FLT respondents at Herle College are mostly positive about all statements since it proves very successful in practice. *The new learning* concept at this school is organized differently from Rombouts and Broekland. I think this

could be one of the reasons that it proves successful since they teach in an "edutheek" and the E-team is a team of eight teachers who teach all subjects to a small group of LWOO pupils. I believe the learning environment is very safe and effective for the atmosphere when teaching in small groups with one whole team.

Carboon College Broekland

(Lower years VMBO)



Graph 3: Feasibility *new learning* concept: 5 respondents

Summary of results and conclusion:

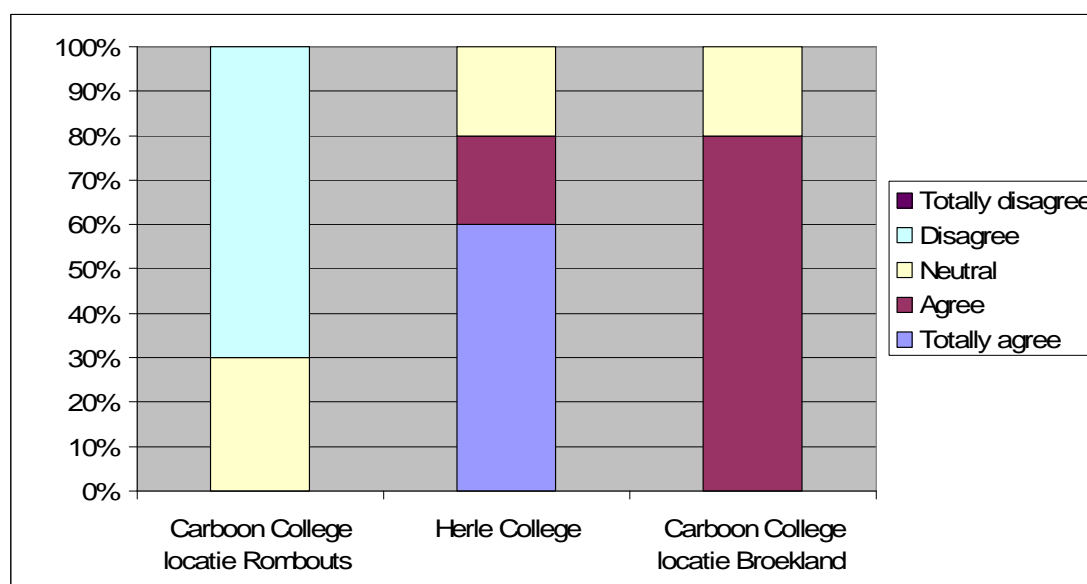
Also FLT respondents at Broekland appear to be mostly positive about the statements. Two teachers are neutral about statement 1 to 5 because it is said that it depends on the pupils whether they are able to cope with the responsibility of their learning or able to learn autonomously. There will always be pupils who need more direction than others. This is why *new learning* critics find this concept unsuitable for LWOO and VMBO learners as they think that these learners suffer from learning and behavioural disabilities and consequently are in need of direction and structure.

Therefore these FLT respondents do not quite know what to think of it yet as a one-month pilot does not give a clear insight of this argument. The other two schools already embraced the concept over a year ago. The feasibility of the first 5 statements will be clearer when this concept will be fully implemented next school year or after that.

6.1.4 Feasibility of *the new learning* concept

The following graph shows whether the implementation of *the new learning* concept is feasible at Broekland in comparison to the other two schools, based on the results shown in the graphs above. The horizontal line illustrates the three schools involved and the vertical line illustrates to what degree the FL teachers think the concept is feasible or not.

Is *the new learning* concept feasible in the current school setting?



Graph 4: Feasibility of *the new learning* concept: 3 respondents (schools)

Summary of results and conclusion:

There is no surprise here since the graphs above already showed the feasibility of the components and conditions per school: Herle College has more faith in the feasibility of implementing *the new learning* than Rombouts; Broekland in turn has more faith in it than Herle. Since *the new learning* concept is still an innovation in progress certain obstacles and opinions are inevitable. Rombouts is still dealing with obstacles like

devoting enough time to task evaluation and giving learners the guidance they need since *the new learning* is organized completely differently from that at Broekland and Herle College. FLT respondents at Herle College experience and embrace the concept positively. This means no challenging obstacles there. FLT respondents at Broekland are also positive about the feasibility of the concept. Although all FLT respondents are worried about the installation of the program to run complementary CDroms and two FLT respondents are apprehensive whether all VMBO learners are able to deal with the responsibility of active learning and autonomous learning. To get around this problem the conclusion must be that it is best to mix *new learning* elements with traditional elements. To prevent learners to feel lost in this concept I recommend planning one or two compulsory traditional classroom sessions every week to offer some kind of structure for these pupils, especially pupils with learning and behavioural problems. Learners will then have the feeling that they are not completely left to their own devices.

Chapter 7. Conclusion and recommendations

I am very positive about the idea behind *the new learning* approach.

The problem is that *the new learning* has had bad media coverage, in my view often based on preconceptions. One hardly dares to use the words these days while there are also many positive sides to *the new learning*. *The new learning* stimulates thinking about what you want to achieve with an educational programme.

Prominent is *how* to organize and incorporate it in a school setting and without cooperation of colleagues and school management it is difficult to realize.

I found out how this concept works in everyday school practice, how it can be incorporated in language teaching in the lower years and organized, and formulated ten recommendations on the best way to implement and incorporate it. These ten components are confirmed as recommendations and documented to use as a step-by-step plan to incorporate *the new learning* in language teaching at Broekland accurately.

I came to the conclusion that this concept is definitely feasible in the current school setting at Broekland as well as at other schools with a similar structure.

My research also shows that this concept is suitable for LWOO and VMBO pupils but not all these learners can deal with the responsibility of active learning and autonomous learning. This is due to the fact that the majority of these learners have learning and behavioural issues. I came to the conclusion that it is best to mix *new learning* elements with traditional elements. I recommend planning one or two compulsory traditional classroom sessions every week to closely monitor and to offer some kind of structure for these pupils.

However I do emphasize that it is necessary that the management at Broekland makes sure that ICT technicians install the necessary programs to run complementary software swiftly. This software, for instance a CDrom rich with communicative and collaborative activities for learners, is very prominent for teaching language in accordance to *the new learning*!

Furthermore I recommend the Modern Foreign Languages Department at Broekland to do further research on how to incorporate digital testing with *WinToets* or a similar program as part of teaching in accordance to *the new learning* in language teaching. Since this is a different and also a time - consuming research subject I unfortunately did not have the time to do it next to or as part of the incorporation of *the new learning* in language teaching at Broekland.

Afterword

Working on this research was at times difficult, frustrating and time-consuming, but also rewarding. The most positive experience during the process of my survey was visiting Rombouts and Herle College to experience and learn how *the new learning* works in actual everyday practice. Using this experience to do a pilot at Broekland was very helpful, effective and successful.

Also positive was the collaboration with, and time and effort of my colleagues at Broekland. This is one of the reasons that the outcome of my research has been successful.

Especially trying to meet all three main conditions to incorporate *the new learning* Broekland proved to be difficult and frustrating. The condition "ICT tools should be up and running and ready to use at all times" was not easy to meet as there were a few difficulties with personal login codes, computers that did not work properly and most importantly software that had not been installed.

As for teaching in accordance to *the new learning* nothing much has changed the past years in education; organisation and content are pretty much the same. What has changed is the didactical aspect of education, which is the approach to teach learners what they need to know in accordance to recent psychological and educational theories about learning and adjusting to a fast-changing society.

Now that I have researched *the new learning*, I will be an advocate of this concept to a certain degree. If teaching is conducted completely in accordance to *the new learning* teaching will no longer take place in a classroom for 50 minutes but reduced to giving instructions and presentations of 15 minutes at the most. Based on my research, I reckon that a mix of *the new learning* and a traditional classroom session once or

twice a week is the better option for LWOO and VMBO learners due to the learning and behavioural disorders many of these pupils have to cope with.

Glossary

AD/HD	Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Affective skills	To understand and to deal effectively in your relationship with other people you need to understand how to communicate and interact with others. These skills involve developing respect for yourself and others, be responsible for your actions, improve speaking and listening abilities, change expectations, understand and control anger and increase the ability to solve problems and set goals.
CALL	Computer assisted language learning
Cognitive skills	These are any mental skills that are used in the process of acquiring knowledge; these skills include reasoning, perception, and intuition.
Constructive learning hypothesis/constructivism	Constructivist teaching is based on recent research about the human brain and what is known about how learning takes place. Constructivists believe that learning is affected by the context in which an idea is taught as well as by learners' beliefs and attitudes.
Edutheek	The organization of <i>the new learning</i> at Herle College. One unit designed in accordance to <i>the new learning</i> concept for LWOO learners.
End of Primary School Test	In Dutch: Cito-toets. This is an academic skills achievement test taken by most pupils at the end of primary school . It provides pupils, parents and teachers with an objective report on the pupils' level of achievement. The test has a high predictive value, making it a very useful tool when pupils have to decide their next type of education.

E-team	Team of 8 teachers who teach all subjects to LWOO learners in accordance to <i>the new learning</i> in the Edutheek, at Herle College.
EFL	English as a foreign language
FL teachers	Foreign language teachers
FLT	Foreign language teachers
HAVO	senior general secondary education (HAVO; 5 years; age 12-17)
ICT	Information- Communication Technology
LD	Learning disability
LWOO	This is a supporting education, which is intended for pupils with educational or behavioural problems. The pupils are taught in small classes by specialized teachers.
Meta-cognitive skills	Metacognition is the awareness and understanding of one's self as a thinker. Meta-cognitive skills are approaching texts, planning your studying, or working through problems.
MI profile	Multiple intelligences profile
Social skills	Social skills are a group of skills which people need to interact and communicate with others. Like active listening and body language.
VMBO	pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO; 4 years, age 12-16)
VMBO-T	pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO; 4 years, age 12-16). Theoretical
VWO	pre-university education (VWO; 6 years, age 12-18)
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview questions before PILOT

A few questions are drawn up from:

<https://www.fontys.nl/talent4leren/Default.asp>

http://www.qprimair.nl/ventura/engine.php?Cmd=seepicture&P_site=345&P_self=1434&Random=2143141720

(20 April 2008)

I have interviewed the following EFL teachers:

Carboon College Location Rombouts

Andrea Plantaz, *German teacher*;

Thomas Baaij, *English teacher*;

Jeroen Vegter, *sector manager of education*;

Herle College

Mevrouw Nyssen, *Edutheek > E-team manager*

"Het Nieuwe Leren" hoe begin je?

1. Het nieuwe leren gaat uit van de leerling. Betekent dit dat de leerling helemaal uitmaakt wat en hoe hij/zij leert?
2. Het nieuwe leren wordt ook wel "vraag-gestuurd" leren genoemd, maar is een VMBO leerling wel in staat voldoende concrete hulpvragen te formuleren.
3. In het nieuwe leren werken leerlingen veel met taken en moeten ze zelf informatie opzoeken en weergeven. Veel VMBO leerlingen lezen en schrijven slecht. Is deze vorm van onderwijs goed voor deze leerlingen en kunnen deze leerlingen het aan.
4. In het nieuwe leren moeten leerlingen zelfstandig werken; veel VMBO- leerlingen en vooral LWOO- leerlingen kunnen dat niet. Moeten deze leerlingen in dit nieuwe concept direct worden gestimuleerd? Vallen we dan niet gedeeltelijk terug in het oude concept "het traditionele onderwijs?"

5. hoe pas ik een verouderde lesmethode zoals *Unicom Plus* aan op het nieuwe leren.
6. Kan er in groepen gewerkt worden en hoe groot moeten die maximaal zijn (twee-, drietallen).
7. Hoe pas je klassikale instructie met betrekking tot grammatica in?
8. Is het mogelijk (na klassikale instructie) een hoofdstuk onder te verdelen in stukken en deze in een wisselende volgorde af te werken? (in verband met werken in groepen).
9. Hoe ziet een schoolrooster eruit van een school die volgens het nieuwe leren opereert?
10. Is het mogelijk om in een lesuur van 50 minuten les te geven volgens het nieuwe leren?
11. Welke eisen stelt het nieuwe leren aan docenten?
12. Hoe worden de vakken *Engels*, *Duits* en *Frans* in het nieuwe leren aangepakt? Blijven Vakconcepten en vakstructuren een rol spelen als interpretatiekaders voor een meervoudige werkelijkheid?
13. Zijn er nog wel leerboeken en lesmethodes nodig?
14. Het PTA (programma voor toetsing en afsluiting) en centraal examen is behoorlijk sturend en laat weinig ruimte voor een andere manier van werken. Is er wel ruimte voor dit concept?
15. Leerlingen krijgen taken die op een aangegeven datum af moeten zijn. Past het binnen het nieuwe leren om leerlingen huiswerk te geven?
16. Hoe evalueer je taken en beoordeel je leerlingen binnen deze nieuwe manier van leren?
17. Is er ruimte voor tussentijdse Schriftelijke en mondelinge overhoringen?
18. Hoe kunnen we met deze onderwijsvernieuwing het beste beginnen in school?

Interview after PILOT

I have interviewed the following EFL teachers

CarboonCollege Locatie Broekland

Emiel Muijtjes, *French teacher*

Sylvie Rockacher, *French teacher*

Afke Zondervan, *English/French teacher*

Danielle Offermans, *German teacher*

"Het Nieuwe Leren" hoe ervaar je dit in de praktijk?

1. Het nieuwe leren gaat uit van de leerling. Betekent dit dat de leerling helemaal uitmaakt wat en hoe hij/zij leert?
2. Het nieuwe leren wordt ook wel "vraag-gestuurd" leren genoemd, maar is een VMBO leerling wel instaat voldoende concrete hulpvragen te formuleren.
3. In het nieuwe leren werken leerlingen veel met taken en moeten ze zelf informatie opzoeken en weergeven. Veel VMBO leerlingen lezen en schrijven slecht. Is deze vorm van onderwijs goed voor deze leerlingen en kunnen deze leerlingen het aan.
4. In het nieuwe leren moeten leerlingen zelfstandig werken; veel VMBO- leerlingen en vooral LWOO- leerlingen kunnen dat niet. Moeten deze leerlingen in dit nieuwe concept direct worden gestimuleerd? Vallen we dan niet gedeeltelijk terug in het oude concept "het traditionele onderwijs?"
5. hoe pas ik een verouderde lesmethode zoals *Unicom Plus* aan op het nieuwe leren.
6. Kan er in groepen gewerkt worden en hoe groot moeten die maximaal zijn (twee-, drietallen).
7. Hoe pas je klassikale instructie met betrekking tot grammatica in?
8. Is het mogelijk (na klassikale instructie) een hoofdstuk onder te verdelen in stukken en deze in een wisselende volgorde af te werken? (in verband met werken in groepen).

9. Hoe ziet een schoolrooster eruit van een school die volgens het nieuwe leren opereert?
10. Is het mogelijk om in een lesuur van 50 minuten les te geven volgens het nieuwe leren?
11. Welke eisen stelt het nieuwe leren aan docenten?
12. Hoe worden de vakken *Engels*, *Duits* en *Frans* in het nieuwe leren aangepakt? Blijven Vakconcepten en vakstructuren een rol spelen als interpretatiekaders voor een meervoudige werkelijkheid?
13. Zijn er nog wel leerboeken en lesmethodes nodig?
14. Het PTA (programma voor toetsing en afsluiting) en centraal examen is behoorlijk sturend en laat weinig ruimte voor een andere manier van werken. Is er wel ruimte voor dit concept?
15. Leerlingen krijgen taken die op een aangegeven datum af moeten zijn. Past het binnen het nieuwe leren om leerlingen huiswerk te geven?
16. Hoe evalueer je taken en beoordeel je leerlingen binnen deze nieuwe manier van leren?
17. Is er ruimte voor tussentijdse Schriftelijke en mondelinge overhoringen?
18. Hoe ben je met deze onderwijsvernieuwing begonnen op Broekland College?

Appendix 2

Original evaluation statements on the new learning in practice

- 1.** Het nieuwe leren gaat uit van de leerling. De leerling maakt helemaal uit wat en hoe hij/zij leert?
- 2.** Het nieuwe leren wordt ook wel "vraag-gestuurd" leren genoemd. Een VMBO leerling is instaat voldoende concrete hulpvragen te formuleren.
- 3.** In het nieuwe leren werken leerlingen veel met taken en moeten ze zelf informatie opzoeken en weergeven. Veel VMBO leerlingen lezen en schrijven slecht. Deze vorm van onderwijs is goed voor deze leerlingen en deze leerlingen kunnen het aan.
- 4.** In het nieuwe leren moeten leerlingen zelfstandig werken; veel VMBO- leerlingen en vooral LWOO- leerlingen kunnen dit.
- 5.** Een verouderde lesmethode zoals Unicom Plus kan worden aangepast op het nieuwe leren.
- 6.** Er kan in groepen gewerkt worden.
- 7.** klassikale instructie met betrekking tot grammatica kan worden ingepast?
- 8.** Het is mogelijk een hoofdstuk onder te verdelen in stukken en deze in een wisselende volgorde af te werken.
- 9.** Het is mogelijk om in een lesuur van 50 minuten les te geven volgens het nieuwe leren.
- 10.** De gestelde eisen aan de docent met betrekking tot het nieuwe leren zijn realistisch.
- 11.** Vakconcepten en vakstructuren moet een rol blijven spelen als interpretatiekaders voor een meervoudige werkelijkheid?
- 12.** Er zijn nog leerboeken en lesmethodes nodig.
- 13.** Het PTA (programma voor toetsing en afsluiting) en centraal examen is behoorlijk sturend en laat genoeg ruimte voor een andere manier van werken. Er is voldoende ruimte voor dit concept in de bovenbouw?

- 14.** Leerlingen krijgen taken die op een aangegeven datum af moeten zijn. Huiswerk opgeven past binnen het concept.
- 15.** Er is ruimte voor tussentijdse schriftelijke en mondelinge overhoringen
- 16.** Het evalueren van taken en beoordelen van leerlingen is mogelijk binnen deze nieuwe manier van leren.

Appendix 3

English "workmate"

Worldwide workbook 1 VMBO-T/HAVO/VWO

IN DIT HOOFDSTUK:

- ontmoet je allerlei mensen
- leer je een gesprek beginnen en eindigen
- vertel je iets over jezelf
- spel je je naam en adres in het Engels
- schrijf je een kort briefje en een gedicht

1

Meeting people

WORKMATE	Welke oefeningen maak je in tweetallen of met een groepje?	Welke oefeningen maak je individueel?	Wat doe je op de cd-rom?	Wanneer moet het af zijn?	Gecorrigeerd	Gemaakt	Geferd
Paragraaf en oefeningen							
1 A new kid in town Oefening 2-10			<input type="radio"/> vocabulary <input type="radio"/> grammar		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uit het TB: Uit het WB:
2 Puffin Post Oefening 11-13			<input type="radio"/> vocabulary		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uit het TB: Uit het WB:
3 Family affairs Oefening 14-23			<input type="radio"/> vocabulary <input type="radio"/> grammar		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uit het TB: Uit het WB:
4 Summer camps Oefening 24-26			<input type="radio"/> vocabulary		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uit het TB: Uit het WB:
5 At the police station Oefening 27-28			<input type="radio"/> vocabulary <input type="radio"/> vervangende paragraaf		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uit het TB: Uit het WB:
6 Calling forever friendship Oefening 29-31			<input type="radio"/> vocabulary <input type="radio"/> vervangende paragraaf		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uit het TB: Uit het WB:
7 The UK and the USA Oefening 32			<input type="radio"/> vocabulary <input type="radio"/> vervangende paragraaf op www.worldwide.nl		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uit het TB: Uit het WB:
8 Poems Oefening 33			<input type="radio"/> vocabulary		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uit het TB: Uit het WB:

Extra activiteiten ☐ spelling op cd-rom
 ☐ word game op cd-rom
 ☐ anders, nl.:

Toets ☐ zie kolom 'Wat moet je leren?'
 ☐ anders, nl.:

Welke onderdelen gingen minder goed?

datum **cijfer/score**

Als voorbereiding op de toets kun je de grammatica- en woord-oefeningen op de cd-rom maken.

French "workmate"

German workbooks have the same "workmate"

Workbook Grandes Lignes 1 VMBO-GT/HAVO

1

Vacances en France

Wat ga je leren?

- zeggen hoe je heet, waar je woont, hoe oud je bent
- vragen hoe iemand heet, waar hij / zij woont, hoe oud hij / zij is
- hoe je de ou, de ui en de oi in het Frans moet uitspreken
- tellen van 0 tot en met 16
- de namen van de kleuren in het Frans
- hoe je het werkwoord être vervoegt
- het Franse lidwoord: le, la, l' en les ; un en une

les	datum	voorbereiding	klassikaal	zelfstandig	opmerkingen
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					

Opmerkingen

- ⊕ Je hebt een luistertekst nodig. Die staat op de cd.
- ⊖ Deze opdracht kun je op de computer doen.
- ⊕⊖ Deze opdracht doe je in tweetallen.

BB	WB	AF
	1	
	2	
Taak 1		
A	3	⊕
	4	⊕
B	5	⊕
	6	⊕ ⊕
C	7	
	8	
Taak 2		
D	9	
	10	
	11	
	12	
	13	
	14	⊕
E	15	⊕ ⊕ ⊕
Taak 3		
F	16	⊕ ⊕
	17	⊕ ⊕
	18	⊕
	19	⊕ ⊕
G	20	⊕ ⊕
	21	⊕
	22	⊕
H	23	
	24	
	25	⊕
Taak 4		
I	26	
	27	
	28	⊕
J	29	⊕ ⊕
	30	⊕
K	31	
	32	
	33	⊕
	34	
	35	⊕
EXTRA		
L	36	
	37	

Vacances en France

neuf 9