EU PROMISE

A Journey of Learning, Connection, Understanding and Hope



PROMISE: THE QUALITY OF POTENTIAL EXCELLENCE

Beginnings

I am packing a case and considering the clothes I might need for my trip. I realise I have no idea what the weather might be like at my destination. Will I need a suit? This is a professional trip so I guess I will need some shoes, not just my trainers.

I better take those as well though.

And a tie. I wonder if ties are still to be worn, or is having an open collared shirt a little more academic-looking? A bit more 'free-thinking'.

How did this happen? I consider this as I carefully roll the tie into one of the case's inner pockets that line its sides. A year ago, I was a teacher on the frontline. I was worrying about mark schemes, lesson planning, and the fact that the assistant headteacher seemed just 25 years old.

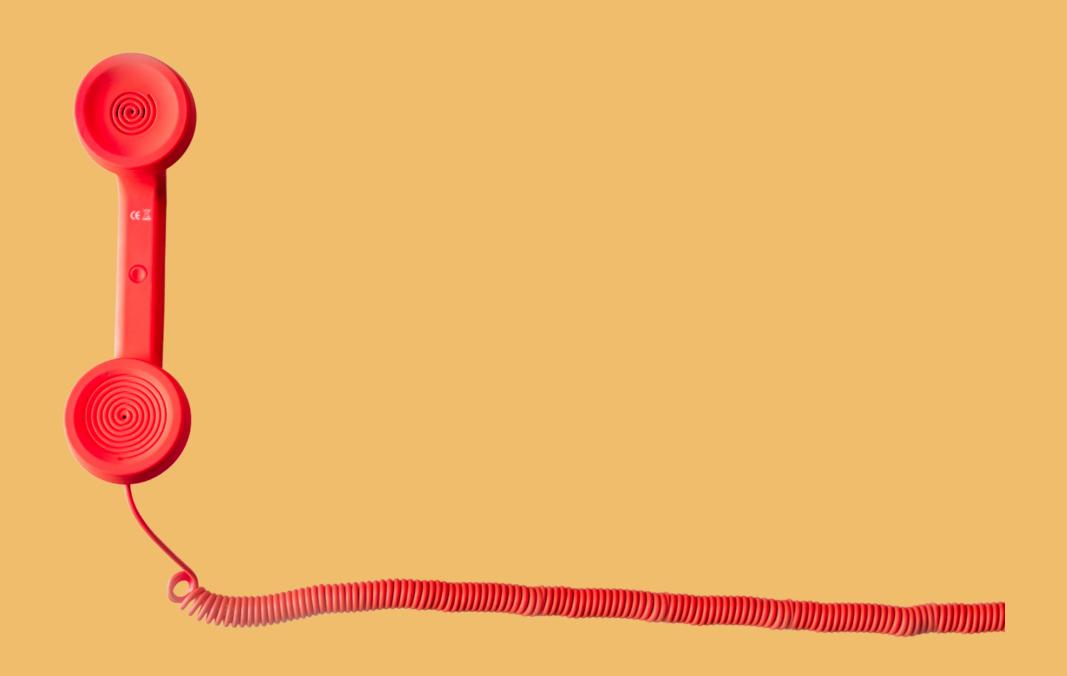


It's funny how time moves on. A series of markers.

Beacons of memory that map a route. In my case, a route from the classroom to the lecture hall. A stepping up rather than a stepping back.

So far, my time at the University has been a breath of much-needed fresh air for myself, and hopefully those I have worked with. It has been a chance to apply my professional knowledge and experience, whilst allowing my own creative sensibilities to grow again.

I throw a phone charger into my case. I don't want to get caught out. I also remember the adapter I will need for the destination.



I wonder what the people will be like. Will they be like me? A little nervous, but excited? It seems an eclectic group. Colleagues from all over Europe. I am interested in their professional views but am also intrigued at what sort of folk they are. I know there is an Education Psychologist, a Director of Research, someone responsible for Professional Development in Education, people heavily involved with Digital Learning Tools and then someone, according to the information we have received, says they are 'just a teacher'.





It is cross-border projects such as this that challenge that latter notion. The participant list is such that it is clear each nation holds its teachers and educators in high regard. It is a hugely human endeavour that these people have embarked on. They clearly come from well-rooted academic backgrounds, but they appear to me to be a group of professionally purposeful people who want to help others be autonomous rather than 'autotuned'

Knowledge is powerful but needs to be lived and breathed.

In my head, the social world collides beautifully with the academic world, and I throw my trainers into the case.

The language barrier might be a cause for concern for me, but I am really hoping we get some downtime to connect. Dissemble my own perceived barriers and connect. It is these wider connections that I think will help me continue to grow. I think again about the mundane bureaucracy that some might link with academic life, but for me, I am still giddy, like a child queuing for a rollercoaster.

I try to explain the project to my partner:

It's a Europe-wide project where teacher educators are going to think and talk about their work, whilst considering what that work might look like in a different country. In a different learning culture.

I am greeted with a blank expression. I try again:

The world is a complex and scary place. We need teachers to quell social anxieties so that fears are reduced. And we also need them to be agile knowledge curators. We want teachers who are human, humane, sensitive, and connected.

My partner looks at me and says,

Send me a postcard

That reminds me. I should take some stationary. A notebook.

Some pens. And I must not forget my glasses.

The suitcase fastens too easily, and I worry about what I might have forgotten to pack.

It all feels rather like an adventure.





POSTCARDS #1

The following are reflections from participants presented as postcards to colleagues within the project and beyond.

Dear Mhairi

When I first met you at the BERA conference in the summer before you jained Leeds Beckett I was still making sense of my new role as Professor and how it and I would shape up! You greeted me like a old friend, and immediately started to talk about your European colleagues from the projects that you were part of.

I had to catch my breath and deal with the whirlwind of information and stay calm and try to look like it all made sense to me. I felt as if I was on a precipice. I could step backwards, stay a little remote, and say that I was interested in your work but from a distance. Or I could step over the edge and into freefall, not knowing quite where I would land.

Well, you know what I decided. As we start the new Promise project together, I already know I will frequently be outpaced by you, but I hope you will see me as a legitimate companion. I promise not to hang from your coat tails, but I will carry your bags and share some of the effort! I cannot wait to see how that unfathomably complex bid gets turned into people working together and places to experience.

I will open up a little parachute as a I fall from the edge and hope that slows me down and allows me to appreciate the journey to a safe landing.

With you all the way!

Rachel

Dear Christiane

A quick postcard to send greetings from Leiden. some of us, as you know are staying on for the Saturday to plan our next project.

I will be honest and say that I am daunted to be leading the next project for the team. It doesn't seem that long since I was 'just' a primary teacher in Scotland and now I am working with colleagues from across Europe which has such extensive experience and expertise in running European projects.

I so want to make this project a success for everyone and produce some really helpful resources for teachers but its daunting to know whether I have the skills to lead the team—stuff like knowing when to let the conversation continue and when to push for decisions—how to keep everyone on board.

I guess the trick is to think of us all being different and having different skills and that together if we can work together, we will all make the project a success. I'll keep you posted.

Speak soon, Mhairi

Kedves Jván!

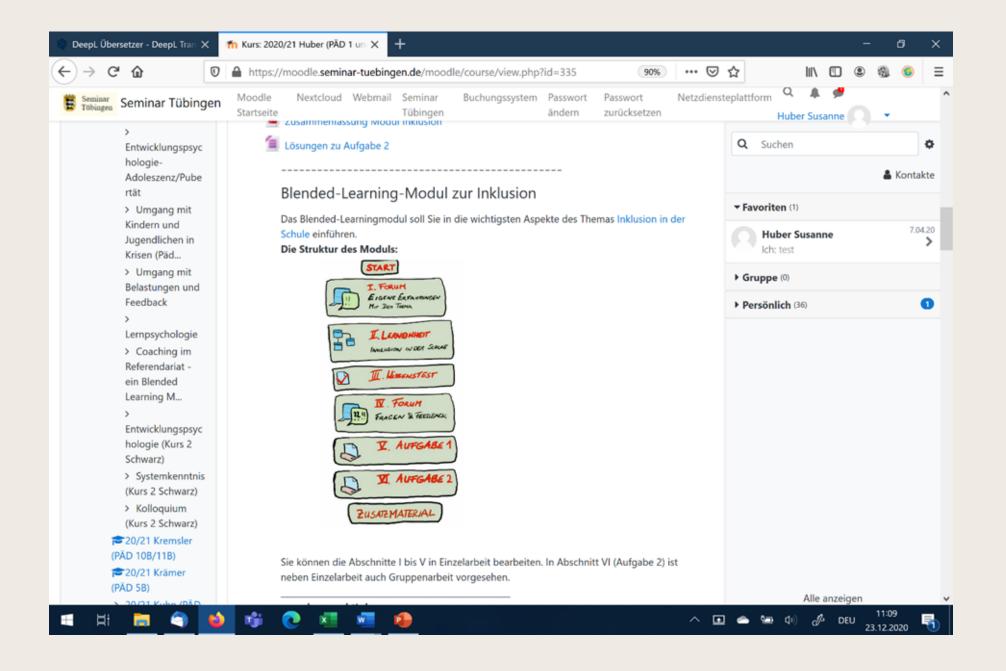
Képzeld Erikával megnyertük a PROMISE pályázatot! Nagyon örülünk, hogy együtt dolgozhatunk az ATEE-s RDC tagjaival és hogy a pedagógusképzés, a pedagógusok tanulásának témáit európai kollégákkal is meg tudjuk majd beszélni, egyeztetni. Már nagyon vágytunk egy ilyen európai projektre, ezért borzasztóan örülünk. Reméljük, mi magunk is sokat fogunk tanulni belőle és az ELTE-s tanárképzés javára is válik. Köszönjük neked, Iván, hogy az ATEE-s részvételünket mindig támogattad, nélküled nem juthattunk volna el idáig.

Minden jót! Orsi

Dear Jván!

I have great news, we won the PROMISE Erasmus project with Erika. We are extremely happy to work together with the participants of the ATEE RDC on In-service teacher education and that we will have the chance to discuss the topics of teacher education and teachers' learning with our European colleagues. We have wished for such a project for a long time, so now we are very happy. Thanks for your support in working with ATEE. We couldn't have come to this far without you!

All the best, Orsi



Liebe Frau Huber,

Sie hatten uns um ein Feedback bzgl. des Blended-Learning-Moduls "Inklusion" gebeten. Ich habe hier mal versucht ein paar Vor- und Nachteile aufzulisten: Ich habe das Gefühl, dass ich durch die eigenständige Onlinearbeit fast mehr mitgenommen habe bzw. mich intensiver mit dem Thema auseinandergesetzt habe als dies in einer Präsenzsitzung der Fall gewesen wäre. Das liegt vor allem daran, dass ich meist sehr müde vom Schulvormittag in den Präsenzsitzungen sitze. Wenn ich eigenständig arbeite, habe ich die Möglichkeit, die Aufgaben dann zu erledigen, wenn ich fit genug bin. Das Modul zu Inklusion und Heterogenität hier auf Moodle finde ich sehr strukturiert, logisch und durch die unterschiedlichen Medien, die genutzt wurden (Lernvideos, Interviews, Informationstexte, etc.) ansprechend angelegt

Gefehlt hat mir alles Zwischenmenschliche, also die direkte soziale Interaktion mit Menschen, nicht mit Menschen in meinem Bildschirm. Aber dafür kann das Online-Arbeiten ja nichts. Auch fehlen mir die anregenden und oft sehr interessanten Diskussionen mit den anderen KursteilnehmerInnen, die sich in Präsenz ergeben und der professionelle spontane Input der Dozentin zu aufkommenden Fragen.

Als Vorteil und Nachteil zugleich empfinde ich beim Onlinearbeiten die flexible und eigenverantwortliche Einteilung der Arbeitszeiten. Wobei man beim Online-Arbeiten eigentlich nie Feierabend hat (Nachteil!). Ein großer Vorteil wiederum ist, dass beim Online-Arbeiten die Zeit für die Fahrtwege komplett wegfällt. Nicht pendeln zu müssen ist gut für das Zeitkonto, die Nerven und das Klima! :)

Viele Grüße Sandra Sanders (Name geändert)

Dear Ms Huber,

I'm very happy to give you feedback on the blended learning module "Inclusion". Therefore, you'll find a a list of some advantages and disadvantages below:

Honestly, I have the impression that I have learned more from the blended online course and that I have dealt with the topic more intensively than it would have been the case in a regular classroom setting. I guess, this is mainly due to the fact that I am usually very tired from school mornings when I sit in the face-to-face sessions in the afternoon. However, when I have the chance to work independently, I can complete the tasks whenever I feel fit enough to do so. Also very helpful was that the module on inclusion on Moodle is very structured, logical and attractively laid out by the different media used (learning videos, interviews, information texts, etc.).

On the other hand, what I missed were interpersonal experiences, i.e. direct social interaction with people, not only with people on my screen. But one cannot blame online work itself as it is simply not part of its nature. I

also missed stimulating, often very interesting discussions with the other course participants as well as your professional spontaneous input to questions that pop up.

One advantage and disadvantage alike of working online is that you can organise your working hours flexibly and on your own responsibility. When you work online, you never actually finish work (disadvantage!). On the other hand, a big advantage of working online is that you don't have to spend time travelling. Not having to commute is good for your time account, your nerves and the climate!

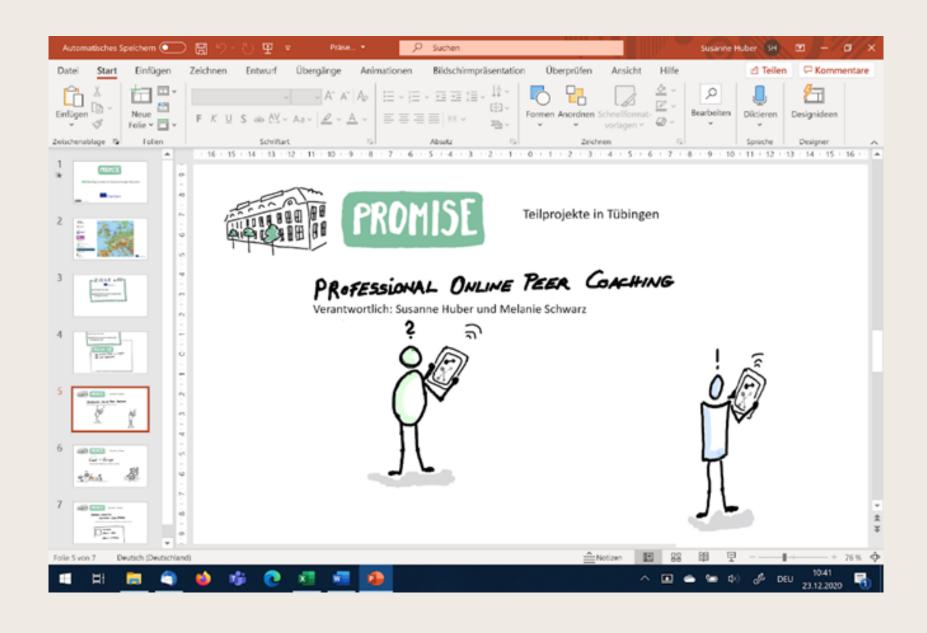
:)

Best wishes from Sandra Sanders (name changed)

Liebe Frau Schwarz,

anfangs fand ich die Idee mich mit meinen KollegInnen in einer Videokonferenz auszutauschen eher abwegig. Als ich dann aber innere Barrieren überwunden hatte und ich mich getraut hatte mich meiner Coaching-Gruppe zu öffnen, war es ganz einfach. Das Gefühl der Gemeinsamkeit, das in der Gruppe entstanden ist, hilft unheimlich gut, mit Stress umzugehen. Auch, weil Außenstehende (Familie, Partner) oft nicht oder nur teilweise verstehen können, was man im Referendariat erlebt. Darüber hinaus merkt man oftmals erst im direkten Austausch, dass andere ReferendarInnen vor ähnlichen Problemen stehen. Gerade über das Tablet kann die räumliche Distanz zu meinen Coaching-PartnerInnen leicht überwunden werden. Ich kann sie sehr schnell erreichen und sa dringende Fragen unverzüglich klären. Auch empfinde ich es als enormen Vorteil, dass die Besprechungen zu Hause in einem geschützten Rahmen stattfinden können.

Ihr Max Mayer (Name geändert)



Dear Ms Schwarz,

Quite frankly, at first I found the idea of exchanging ideas and problems with my colleagues from the teacher traineeship via internet rather absurd. But once I had overcome inner barriers and dared to open up to my coaching group, it was in fact rather easy.

The feeling of togetherness that has developed in the group helps tremendously in dealing with stress. In addition, it is often only through direct exchange that you realise that other trainees are facing similar problems.

Also, my family and other friends often only partially understand what is means to go through the traineeship.

Especially by using the tablet, the physical distance to my coaching partners can be easily overcome; I can reach them very quickly and thus clarify wrgent questions immediately.

I also find it an enormous advantage that the meetings can take place at home in a protected setting.

Yours, Max Mayer (name changed)

Liebe Frau Huber, liebe Frau Schwarz,

Ich möchte mich bei Ihnen ganz herzlich bedanken, dass ich an dem Projekt teilnehmen kann. Der

Austausch mit den anderen Referendar Innen hilft mir sehr, da ich bessere Ideen habe, wenn ich mit anderen über meinen Unterricht sprechen kann. Außerdem ist es schön eine Sache, das Referendariat gemeinsam durchzustehen und sich gegenseitig zu unterstützen!

Manchmal fühlt man sich doch recht alleine und denkt, man wäre der Einzige, dem gewisse Fehler unterlaufen. Im Gespräch bekommt man aber oft raus, dass andere ähnliche "Startprobleme" haben und man auch gemeinsam Lösungswege finden kann. Diese emotionale Unterstützung empfinde ich durch den Austausch mit meinen Kolleg Innen als extrem hoch.

Ihre Brigitte Hausmann (Name geändert)

Dear Ms. Huber, dear Ms. Schwarz,

I would like to thank you so much for including me in the project. The exchange with the other trainee teachers helps me a lot because I have better ideas when I have the opportunity to talk to others about my teaching. Moreover, I really do appreciate the possibility of going through the traineeship together and of supporting each other! Especially as you sometimes feel quite alone and think you're the only one who makes certain mistakes. While talking to others, however, you often find out that everybody has similar "start-up problems" and that we can find solutions together. This kind of emotional support through the exchange with my colleagues is extremely valuable.

Yours, Brigitte Hausmann (name changed)

Leiden, February 2018

Dear Yvonne,

I write you because we have just had a meeting with the international group I told you about. We have been working in an Erasmus-project beforehand and now are crafting a submission for a new project.

I do have mixed feelings.

Of course, I am enthusiastic about joining another project. I love to travel, and I consider the other participants as friends.

I do have some doubts as well. The theme is inclusion (which is important of course), and I do not have a lot of expertise of the topic.

As you know, my expertise is mainly on professional development of teachers and teacher educators. I wonder if my expertise will fit in. Another issue is if participating in this project will be beneficial for our Institution? How can I involve colleagues in this?

We will speak about it when I am back.

Best wishes, Quinta

Tübingen, den 20. November 2017 Lieber Peter,

ich finde es sehr spannend, dass ich bei einem neuen EU-Projekt für das Seminar mitmachen darf. Ich freue mich und bin auch etwas stolz, dass ich für das Tübinger Seminar nun die Verantwortung habe ein EU-Projekt mitzubeantragen und die Tübinger Projektgruppe zu leiten. Es gibt mir so viel neben meinem Job als Lehrerin und als Ausbilderin auch mit WissenschaftlerInnen von Universitäten zusammenarbeiten zu können, die an Forschung und Entwicklung mit dem Ziel der Verbesserung der Ausbildung von Lehrkräften interessiert sind. Das fehlte mir etwas seit ich die Forschung vor 10 Jahren verlassen habe, um Lehrerin zu werden. Es war damals der richtige Schritt. Ich wollte junge Menschen unterstützen, sie unterrichten. Mir war damals klar, dass dieser Schritt bedeutete, dass ich keine Zeit mehr haben würde, mich mal ausführlich mit einem Aspekt, mit Verbesserungen mit Erforschung der Details zu beschäftigen, wie das in der Forschung möglich war, dass ich nicht mehr auf Konferenzen gehen würde usw. Daher bin ich nun begeistert, dass ich mit dem EU-Projekt beide Welten wieder zusammenbringen kann. Lieber Peter, vielen Dank auch dass du mich in deine EU-Gruppe integriert hast, alleine die Kontakte auf solchen Konferenzen zu knüpfen, dauert eine Weile. Das ist eine tolle Gruppe, die über die Ausbildung von Lehrkräften ähnlich denken. Diese Gelegenheit ist wirklich einzigartig. Nochmal, ich fühle mich geehrt und bin mächtig stolz, dass ich mitmachen darf.

> Viele Grüße von deiner ehemaligen Kollegin Susanne

November 2017

Dear Peter,

It is very exciting to be involved in a new EU project for the SAF Tübingen. I am happy and also a bit proud that I now have the responsibility to co-apply for an EU project for the Tübingen Seminar and to lead the Tübingen project group. It gives me so much, besides my job as a teacher and as a trainer, to be able to work with researchers from universities who are interested in research and development with the aim of improving teacher education.

This is something I have been missing since I left research 10 years ago to become a teacher. It was the right move at the time. I wanted to support young people, to teach them. I knew that this step meant that I would no longer have time to work in depth on single aspects of professional development, as it was possible in research. Also I knew that I would no longer go to conferences, etc. So I am now thrilled that with the EU project I can bring both worlds together again, teaching and research.

Dear Peter, thank you also for integrating me into the RDC at ATEE. This is such a great group who think alike about teacher education. This opportunity is really unique. Again, I'm honoured and mighty proud to be involved.

Many greetings from your former colleague
Susanne



Dear Christiane and dear Sanja,

I came across this photo from the ATEE conference in Dubrovnik where we started planning our PROMISE project. Since you were not able to join us I would like to tell you about the progress we made so far. The vignettes written by teachers and student teachers present the dilemmas they are facing in their professional role.

We have created a wonderful webpage where teachers' dilemmas serve as a trigger for discussion and reflection. Next year we will organise an on-line learning event where teachers from 6 countries will come together and discuss contemporary challenges they are facing.

I hope you can join us at the ATEE conference next year where we will present the findings of the project.

Looking forward to see you again, Brigita

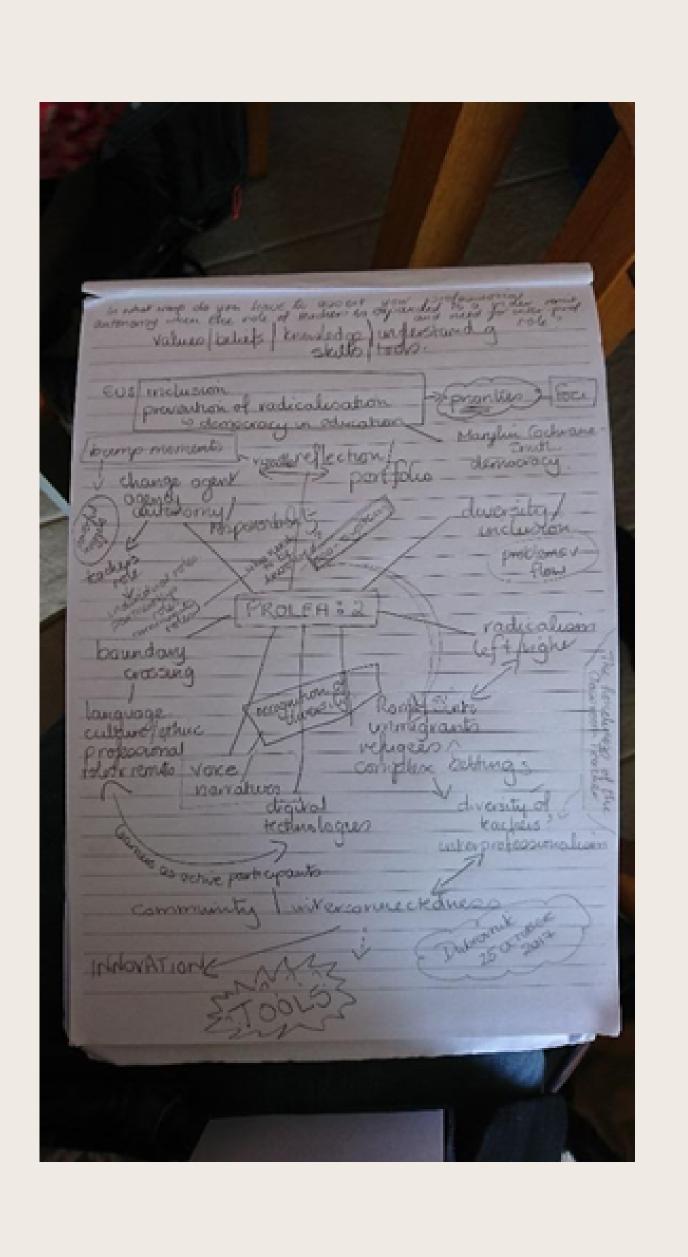
Dear all

I just came back home from ATEE 2017 in Dubrovnik, Croatia. What an inspiring atmosphere.

What a wonderful conference venue. Here are our thoughts for our new project with the preliminary title PROLEA 2.0.

I am so much looking forward to this project in the next few months. I am looking forward to see you again in Leiden, NL.

All the best from Tübingen Susanne



Homeground: Leeds



The itinerary is a clear one. Welcome visitors from around Europe as part of an Erasmus project. Get some food on, show off some local education establishments and, hopefully, give the visitors a genuine warm feeling of being part of something special.

This is a totally different world to the one I know: the world of a school. The world of unreliable technology, tiredness and break duties. And yet, this new world of mine is fuelling how the familiar world of mine operates. The key matter is that projects such as this are attempting to make the latter world better. I have no choice but to admire the endeavour of such a project.

Encouraging the spaces for dynamic professional conversations to take place is a good thing. It needs to be modelled, and that is what this project, now officially called EU PROMISE, is doing.

We are puzzling through this project, but, from where I write this, we are on home ground. I ask the manager of the project how she sees it all and she responds to my enquiry with an email:



Reflecting

Reflecting bound up with thinking.

Reflecting by myself, with others in the meetings, with others while we are walking, in the morning at breakfast and in the evening when we are out for dinner.

Instead of reflecting, it might be more accurate to use the word 'puzzling through' as much of the reflecting has been for the purpose of puzzling through how we achieve:

- translating the project from the wordy application document into a plan to achieve the project objectives
- considering how we work our way through the 'thorny issues' that arise
- working our how we ensure the resources we are creating are relevant for all the different national policy contexts.
- working our how we achieve the project objectives in an efficient and yet productive manner – particularly since we have been working online rather than meeting in person.

As the project lead, I also spend a lot of time reflecting on

- how I lead. Do I organise the meetings and lead the dialogue in ways that facilitate everyone's participation?
- how do I ensure everyone feels included and feels they have a role in the project?
- how I ensure everyone in the team can contribute their expertise?
 - how do I ensure that everyone gets the chance to articulate their ideas?
- how do I ensure that we come to mutually acceptable decisions once the dialogue is over in ways that everyone still feels included?



I really like the puzzling through. This is what teachers thrive on. Professional curiosity, being, belonging. Well, me, anyway.

The project lead forwards me a message from another participant, expanding this idea:

The setting is a project meeting, the 'doing' is 'sense making'

At the first project meetings after a project proposal has received funding, everything still has to fall into place. Yes, we did write the project proposal, but that was ages ago... and it happens to be a document of about 300 pages, so who remembers what they promised...

So in this first meeting, it is about setting the goals. Together, as a project team, but also setting goals for your own organisation and for your own input. For me, these meetings are very intense. We talk and talk, concepts are shared, but do we really understand each other? Do we have the same vision on the project and on the intellectual outputs? There are language issues, different ideas, different educational contexts we all take with us.

During the day, my feelings change. I can feel confident (Yes, I understand!), I can feel puzzled (what are we talking about??) I can feel annoyed (NO, I do not see it that way) and I can feel uncomfortable (I do not get what we are heading to...).

At the moment of discomfort, it helps if someone (it might be me!) asks for clarification. A good moment to do that is at the end of the day. Suggest: shall we summarize what we have agreed on? I have learned that this is helpful, not only for myself, but also for the others, who are also struggling to grasp what is going on.

In one of our meetings, this ended with Mhairi standing in front of a flipchart, drawing fishbowls, rectangles and triangles, but strangely enough, at that moment we collectively understood our direction.

And we could head off to the pub, to continue getting to know each other, share stories and enjoy drinks and food.

This idea of discomfort sits well with me in a strange way. It is like being pressed against the edge of your comfort zone. What I have learned in my new role away from the full-time classroom is that comfort zones are not solid walls, rather doors that can be pushed and prised open.

Also, there are many strands of learning going on as this discomfort manifests itself:

- What are we supposed to learn?
 - What else are we learning?



The latter touches an idea I have been playing with during my own reveries: a kind of initiative-based realm of learning that takes us beyond a curriculum that is written down whilst opening up a collected interprofessional perspective that will ultimately grow good teachers.

To have these thoughts in my head is just fine, but I am realising that the EU PROMISE project is offering a foundation on which to build this aspiration. It moves us collectively from sitting firmly with the theoretical toward the real, the tangible, the social, the humane.





POSTCARDS #2

The following are reflections from participants presented as postcards to colleagues within the project and beyond.



Dear PROMISE-team,

Hurray, we can start our ERASMUS+ project PROMISE. What a pity that you, Erika and your team from Budapest, as well as you, Sarah and your team from Scotland couldn't join us tonight. We would have loved to celebrate with you. Anyway, we are going to see each other soon at our kick-off meeting in Leeds, UK.

Cheers. Susanne



April 2018

Dear project-team,

This photo marks the progress we made in our project.

During our meeting in Ljubljana (last month, in march 2018), discussions and reflective walks helped us to define more clearly the goals of the project. As a group, we developed 'language' and images.

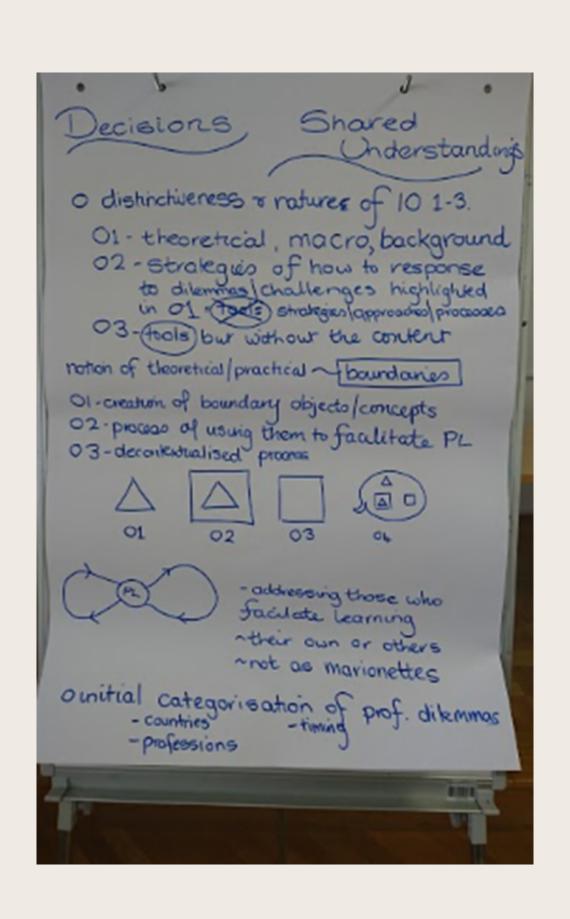
At the end of the meeting, the results are visible in these pyramids, squares and circles.

This might be a bit difficult to understand for non-project members, but for us, this was enlightening!

It certainly helps me in working on our activities and tasks.

Quinta





Kedves Erika!

Izgultam ettől a ljubljanai találkozástól, úgy éreztem, hogy nem látom jól még a projekt céljait, az együttműködés módjait, igyekeztem készülni erre az első találkozóra, gondolkodni azon, hogy mi milyen ötleteket tudunk majd vinni. Úgy éreztem, hogy a többiek biztos előrébb tartanak majd, mint mi a készülésben, gondolkodásban. Nem kellett volna tartanom ettől, egyrészt olyan lépésről lépésre gondoltunk végig mindent, hogy egyáltalán nem éreztem, hogy most kapcsolódtam be a folyamatba. Másrészt jó érzés volt az, hogy volt, akiket már ismertem korábbról, bíztam bennük, otthonosabb lett ettől a közösség.

Amikor visszagondolok erre a két intenzív napra, akkor nagyon erős képek és hangulatok ugranak be. Például a közös sétálások, ahogyan Lacival megyünk egy felásott Ljubljana-i utcán, az egész olyan, mint egy akadálypálya, de élvezzük, már a projekt megközelítése is meglepetéseket rejt, bízunk benne, hogy ez csak folytatódni fog. De ugyanilyen kellemes az is, amikor közösen sétálunk a várba, azért egy picit küzdünk azért, hogy elérjük a célunkat, de élvezzük az utat, jó együtt lenni. Bár szakmai szempontból is sokat gazdagodtam, főleg az interprofesszionális tanulás volt az, ami újszerű perspektívákat vetett fel számomra, és segített a hazai gyakorlatunk újragondolásában is, a szakmai közösséggé válás volt a legnagyobb élmény. Ebből is talán a legfontosabb képem: ülünk a folyó partján az első tavaszi napsütésben, ami jó jelnek tűnik a projekt indulása szempontjából. Beszélgetünk, keressük egymásban a közös elemeket, és találunk is ilyeneket, nemcsak szakmai dolgokat, hanem például a finn design kedvelését is ©

Csupa feltöltődés szakmailag, emberileg! Ljubljana csodálatos, ilyen európai városok kellenének még, kulturális sokszínű, befogadó, nyitott, élhető! Még maradunk a családommal a hétvégére

Dear Erika!

I was a little bit afraid of the meeting in Ljubljana because I felt that I hadn't fully understood the project's aims and how we will work together. I tried to prepare for the first meeting, I was thinking a lot about what kinds of inputs and ideas we can bring to the project. I thought that our other colleagues will probably be more prepared. I shouldn't have worried about it. On the one hand we talked through everything step by step, so I didn't feel that I latched on to the project late and on the other hand it was great that some of the participants I had known from earlier, I trusted them and the whole community has become more friendly.

When I am thinking about these two intensive days, I remember special pictures and moods. For example, those joint walks with Laci on a street under construction to the meeting. It is like an obstacle course, but we enjoy it, everything is a surprise and we believe this will go on our meeting too. Or another pleasant memory when we walk together with our colleagues to the castle on the top of the hill, we are struggling a little bit to reach our goal but we are also enjoying it because it is good to be together. Although I have learned a lot professionally, especially the interprofessional learning had a great impact on me and helped me to rethink our practice at ELTE, the biggest experience was how we have become a real professional community. One of my most important picture about this community when we are sitting on the river bench in the first sunshine in Spring, which was a good sign of a new project, and talking, looking

for similarities in each other, and we find a lot in common, not only professionally but personally as well, such as the love of the 7innish design

This whole event gave me a lot of energy on the professional and also on the personal level.

Ljubljana is amazing, we would need more European towns like Ljubljana with its cultural diversity, inclusiveness, and openness. We will stay with my family for the weekend!



Dear Mhairi,

I think our preparations are nearly complete for the PROMISE visit to Aberdeen. I feel oddly daunted – I think because I'm so keen for everyone to have a good experience. I know many of the team have been here before and so we've organised a trip to a college in Dundee too.

Joyce has kindly agreed to drive the minibus for us. I really hope everything goes smoothly and we don't get lost or break-down! It feels a lot like when you have friends come to stay on holiday and want them to have the best time possible.

It will be great to see everyone but I might need some time to recover afterwards!

Steph

Dear Joyce

Thanks so much for driving the minibus for our recent trip to Dundee. The group told me how it was the highlight of their trip! I really enjoyed hearing about all your adventures over the years driving groups around and how the minibus conversations are always so different and interesting!

The conversations with this group are never dull – the drive seemed to fly by. I'm glad you got to meet these European colleagues. To me, meeting colleagues like these is the best part of working in a university.

Thanks again, Steph





Dear project-team,

This photo marks our first official project meeting at Leeds Beckett University, in October 2018.

Thanks to the Dutch tradition of chocolate letters, we were able to spell it out: a PROMISE to work together, to develop things and contribute to professional learning.

Now, looking back at this meeting from where we are now (in Covid-times), live meetings may have vanished, but the energy is still there.

I hope to see you all in a live setting in 2021.

Best wishes, Quinta



Destinations, memories and connections

The project unfolds like a carpet being rolled out in front of me. I am feeling special. It is such a privilege to be part of this big conversation.

I have questions that I carry with me. This sense of professional curiosity is something that I had thought had been eroded over the years in the school classroom.

But now it is back. Alive and kicking.



Here are some of the conversations I've noted down. These conversations happened walking to coffee shops, to restaurants, over bridges, under stars.

I scribbled them down in my journal. Also, these are my 'carried questions':

- What motivated you to be involved with the EU Promise project?
 - What have you led?
 - What have you learned?
- What's been memorable?

What motivated you to be involved with the EU Promise project?

- · I want to travel. And practice my English
- Euro projects need partnership between connected educators
- I like the collision between the professional and personal we recognise each other as human and 'the same'
 - · An interest in people learning using their own initiative
 - Learning in different contexts
 - The finding of a tribe
- To work with a group that has been self-created, that has agency and purpose
 - Seeking an international perspective and building a network
 - To explore, expand and understand
 - Develop an understanding of the mechanics of professional learning
 - Previous great experiences on similar projects
 - The word 'promise'
 - Crossing borders in thinking and professional learning
 - Being part of a jigsaw of understanding
- See how with our different starting points, we might react the same/different?
 - Talking theory and reflecting on reality
 - I am more than aware of my own experience and perspectives so need to learn from others

What have you led?

- I lead the training of teachers
- I concentrate on professional learning for trainee teachers
- · The importance of the stance of teacher-inquiry
- · The 'hidden' curriculum and broad contexts of learning
 - Digital learning and upskilling
 - · Promoting self-audits
 - Knowledge productivity
 - Website development how can we present professional dilemmas?
 - Inclusion
 - · Digital platforms integrated with pedagogies
 - · Development of coaching cultures

What have you learned?

- That we are friendly Europeans. And that the British are SO polite!
 - People are warm and factual
 - That work can be a gift
- Working with diverse partners is fruitful and it leads to shared understandings
 - Learning how bids work
 - How to be a flexible professional
 - Working towards a definition of professional and cultural learning
 - There is a panic-less DO mentality in the group
 - Being part of a human, warm project gives the wider discussions nuance
 - It has been enriching to think about learning beyond organisations and how things constantly evolve and change, and yet we are constants
 - The power of the social alongside the academic
 - In Aberdeen, digital devices are used 'bottom up', in Germany it is 'top down'
 - To trust my students more
 - Attuning myself to other audiences and other voices
- I've learned about things you can't find in professional learning books
 - The cultures of other countries
 - My mind has been opened to possibilities
 - Food for thought. Reflection and then action
- That mutual support has immense power and is great for mental health

What's been memorable?

- The social aspect of the project has been lovely. I liked the 'talking while walking' sessions. I also will never forget the haggis!
 - The boat trip and the whiskey!
 - A red-hot train
 - Our colleagues as personal guides
 - A coastal walk
 - Learning Dutch
 - Writing postcards and doing the workshops online
 - The Most Expensive Taxi In The World
 - Mhairi empowers us
 - We work in different ways to achieve the same goal
 - Autonomy is pleasurable
- The sensitivity of colleagues we need the personal as well as the professional
 - · We attune, rather than auto-tune
 - The sense of play
 - Sitting and chatting in the evening sun
 - The cities, their life and vibrancy
 - I got a sombrero!
- I feel close to the other colleagues. They are my friends.



POSTCARDS #3

The following are reflections from participants presented as postcards to colleagues within the project and beyond.

Tilburg, May 2019 Dear Chantal,

You asked me to give you a bit more information on the project before we head off to Tubingen.

For example, what kind of clothes you should pack: formal of not-so-formal.... I realise that I entered the project and its members quite unprepared, maybe you could say very 'Dutch' . I just went in clothes that were suited for travelling and for the climate.. I did not think about it that much (might have!). This also hold true for the way I approached the other project members. Very Dutch, I was not very aware, nor impressed by hierarchy or status. So this made me approach the other members from a rather non-biased position, just being 'Me'.

I now realise that some other members might not have liked this, due to cultural differences. Oops...

Hopefully you will be able to merge in as yourself
I am sure this will work out.

We will speak about it when I am back.

Best wishes, Quinta



Hi Tim.

After having organized a project meeting, I felt frustrated. Somehow groups of people tend to lose some of their intelligence. If you go somewhere with a group, nobody seems to know the way back anymore. They all think you know, since you brought us here. It is like with GPS, those who use it lose their sense of geography.

I was so frustrated that I had to go to the beach to reflect and regain energy.

It made me think that in order do keep people alert, constructive and creative, there must be a challenge included in what needs to be done. If people are told what to do they stop thinking; if they are asked what to do they will start thinking; if they are asked to develop alternative routes they become creative. I suggest we keep that in mind for next meetings we will have to organize.

When will be the next meeting for us? Please remind me.

Best wishes, Jaap





Dear Peter.

Currently I am involved in a project on professional development of teachers. As you know this is a sentence I could have written in any year of my professional career. Like we did in the days we worked together, I still always work in projects on professional development of teachers. Through this I developed a view on how our approach shifted through time from training teachers, to, how can we facilitate teachers' learning. Various intermediate stages we passed.

They are reflected in the titles of projects we went through (Inservice education, school based inservice education, training the trainers for school-based education, mentoring in teacher education, contextual learning in management and teaching, and professional learning).

Recently we extended our scope to interprofessional learning since we increasingly felt that problems, we are facing no longer may be solved by one sector only. Secondly, we felt that if those who are part of solutions need to co-operate, and thirdly we noticed that co-operation only is successful if professionals of various sectors know the basics of each other's fields of work.

Our next project will add to this boundary crossing aspect also the extension into the virtual online world. I wonder what the next boundary will be to be crossed. What about the German border in order to pay you a visit?

best wishes Jaap

Liebe Brigita, lieber Jaap, liebes PROMISE-Team,

Grenzen zu überwinden stellt uns immer wieder vor Herausforderungen.

Manche sind so groß, dass man sie nur gemeinsam bewältigen kann.

Kooperation ist nicht selbstverständlich. Sie erfordert Mut (sich auch auf ungewöhnliche Herausforderungen einzulassen), off ene Arme (für die Zusammenarbeit mit den Partner*innen), Klugheit (um geeignete Lösungen zu finden), Geduld (bis alle ihren Platz gefunden haben) und vieles mehr.

Und mit euch macht das alles auch noch Spaß...Danke! Melanie



Dear Brigita, dear Jaap, dear PROMISE-Team,

Overcoming borders is a constant challenge to all of us. Some are so big that they can only be overcome together.

Cooperation is not a self-evident fact. It requires courage (to take on even the most unusual challenges), open arms (to work with partners), wisdom (to find suitable solutions), patience (until everyone has found their places) and much more.

And with you all this is also funthank you!

Melanie

Ljubljana, 30. 3. 2019 Liebe Melanie, lieber Rainer,

Katja und ich sind gerade auf dem Rückweg von Ljubljana. Ich möchte euch erzählen, wie es dort war. Katja und ich sind mit dem Zug gefahren. Das ist eine lange Reise, aber der Zug fährt direkt von Stuttgart durch bis Ljubljana. Es dauert ca. 8 Stunden. Ich habe 1. Klasse gebucht und wir waren auf dem Hinweg und auch jetzt wieder auf dem Rückweg die ganze Zeit allein im Abteil. So können wir arbeiten und zwischendurch quatschen. Katja und ich hatten Zeit uns mal kennenzulernen. Das war sehr schön.

Nach der Ankunft, mein erstes Abendessen mit den anderen Projektpartnern in Ljubljana, ich machte mich alleine auf den Weg, Katja war müde von der Reise. Es war aufregend alleine durch Ljubljana zu laufen. Im Restaurant angekommen wurde ich herzlich empfangen. Ich wusste wieder, es hat sich gelohnt, die lange Reise zu machen. Auch die nächsten zwei Tage zu Gast in Brigitas und Brankos Reich waren spannend und arbeitsintensiv. Ich war froh mich immer wieder mit Katja auf Deutsch

Ich war froh mich immer wieder mit Katja auf Deutsch unterhalten zu können, um mich auszutauschen, ob ich alles richtig verstanden hatte..... ... Wir waren auf der Suche nach einem gemeinsamen Verständnis unseres Projekts, wenig zum Festhalten, viel wurde in Frage gestellt, wir evaluierten unsere ersten Schritte und ich hatte immer wieder das Gefühl im Dunkeln zu tappen. Doch Mhairi führte uns mit einer Geduld und mit der festen Überzeugung, dass wir ein

tolles Projekt haben und wir dabei sind eine gemeinsame Richtung zu finden und einzuschlagen. So machte ich mir nie Sorgen, dass wir scheitern würden. Es beflügelte meine Kreativität und meine Motivation. Schon alleine das mitzuerleben, hat mich unheimlich

viel gelehrt. Am Ende fasste sie alles mit einem Aquarium, einem Goldfisch, Dreiecken, Vierecken und Kreisen zusammen und wir hatten ein tolles Ergebnis.

Die Spaziergänge und die Abende in Ljubljana, die Gespräche mit den anderen, die Herzlichkeit, die Wärme mit der wir uns alle begegneten waren toll. Ich wünschte, ich könnte diese Erlebnisse noch viel mehr Menschen am Seminar nahebringen. Dort haben wir so wenig Zeit für Kooperationen untereinander. Es wäre so viel schöner, wenn wir an gemeinsamen Zielen gemeinsam auch am Seminar arbeiten könnten. Ich bin froh, dass zumindest ihr beide und Katja am Seminar dabei seid. Das ist sehr schön.

Viele Grüße Susanne



Ljubljana, 30. 3. 2019 Dear Melanie, dear Rainer,

Katja and I are on our way back from Ljubljana, our second project meeting. I would like to tell you what it was like there. Katja and I went by train. It's a long journey, but the train goes straight through from Stuttgart to Ljubljana. It takes about 8 hours. I

booked 1st class and we were alone in the compartment the whole time on the way there and again now on the way back. This way we can work and chat in between. Katja and I had time to get to know each other. That was very nice.

After arriving, I set off alone for the dinner with the other project partners in Ljubljana. Katja was tired from the journey. It was exciting to walk through Ljubljana alone. When I arrived at the restaurant, I was warmly welcomed. I knew again that it had been worth the long journey. The next two days as a guest in Brigita's and Branko's "realm" were exciting and busy. I was happy to be able to talk to Katja again and again in German to exchange ideas and make sure I had understood everything correctly. ...

... We, the project group, were searching for a common understanding of our project, little to hold on to, much was questioned, we were evaluating our first steps and I kept having the feeling of being in the dark. But Mhairi guided us with a patience and a firm conviction that we had a great project and we were about to find and take a common direction. So I never worried that we would fail. It inspired my creativity and my motivation. Being part of that process taught me a lot. In the end Mhairi summed it all up with a drawing of an aquarium, a goldfish, triangles, squares and circles and we had a great result. Wonderful!

The walks and evenings in Ljubljana, the conversations with the others, the cordiality, the warmth with which we all met were great. I wish I could bring these experiences to many more people at the Seminar in Tübingen. There we have so little time for cooperation amongst each other. It would be so much nicer if we could work on common goals together also at the Seminar. I am glad that at least you two and Katja are at the Seminar. That is very nice.

Many greetings Susanne

Hi Sarah

Hope you are feeling better. Just thought I would send a quick postcard from the partners' meeting.

The weather was just wonderful and we had just lovely 'walk and talks' round the town. These walks are so important for the team to relax and just spend time with each other.

I will admit though that I am exhausted at the end of each partners' meeting. During the discussions, my head is processing multiple levels of the conversation — trying to keep track as the ideas flow around me whilst feeling responsible for ensuring that we don't go down 'rabbit holes'. We are still had the exploring stage of the project but of course I am worrying about ensuring everyone gets heard in the meetings, that the ideas remain realistic but adventurous and of course that we make progress towards actually creating the intellectual outputs.

I guess I will just have to trust the process and my colleagues. It's only Year 1 and I need to trust we will get there because everyone is committed to the project.

See you when I get back

Mhairi

Dear Andrew

You wan't be expecting this postcard from me, but let me just say hello from Venice. Its early spring and I am sitting in a plaza sipping coffee. Why Venice? Well, last week I was an an Erasmus visit to Slovenia, and a few of us have stayed for a couple more days to make the most of our location.

I thought I would write to you because one of the things I remember you talking to me about when we met at the conference were your European projects and how they enlivened your work as headteacher, and how they created new friendships.

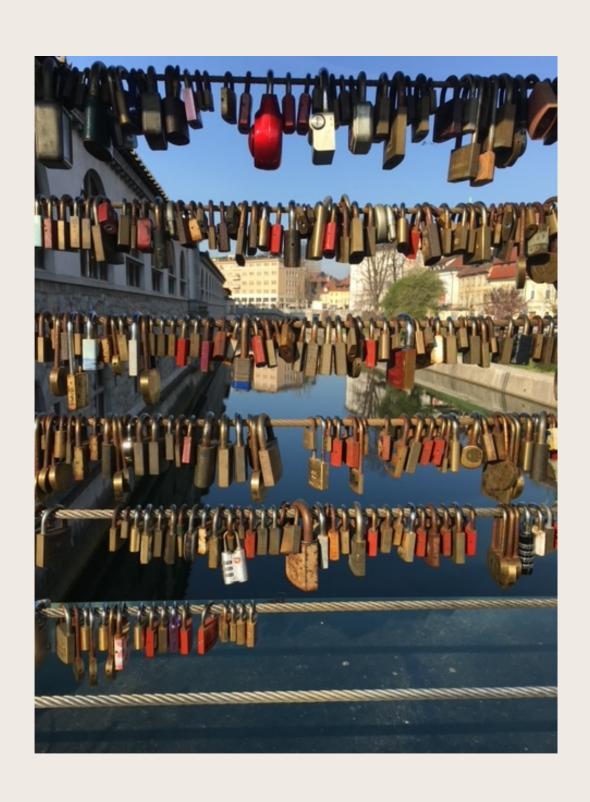
The difference between you and me is that I do not have the challenge of traveling with young people. This project is all professionals and academics, adults old enough to enjoy a glass of beer if we choose to, people with shared interests in professional learning.

We meet students during study visits entering into schools and colleges which host opportunities for us to learn about and from them. This keeps us grounded.

The project is more than just hot air, websites and new resources. This project serves as an investment in the future of education. A grand European ideal, and one that we will play a small part in.

Hope to catch up again soon. We can share stories of our travels

Rachel



To Brigita

What a privilege it has been to spend time with you in Ljubljana. What a beautiful city! It was also a privilege to spend time with other team members, staying in the same hotel and walking the same route to our meetings.

And your guided lunchtime walks were also very welcome - it was good to get up and move during the day as our discussions were sometimes long and intense, but we had some important matters to discuss and key ideas to explore. I have done a lot of walking in the last few days! But all this walking has been really valuable as an opportunity to talk to people, learn more about them and their contexts, and to support reflection on what we have been discussing, and planning for putting ideas into practice back home.

I will try to do more walking with colleagues in Aberdeen. I think I will suggest to my mentees that we have our meetings 'on the go' - perhaps to the lovely botanic gardens on our own university campus. Of course the weather in Aberdeen is not always the same as it is in Ljubljana!x

Dear Quinta,

Yesterday we had our first online meeting with six schools which have participated in the Promise project. The corona situation made us search for new ways of collaboration. The activities stopped for a while and we had to bring new energy to our Slovenian PROMISE team.

We made a workshop with the vignettes which proved to be a very motivating tool. We had our concerns about the workshop which was done long distance for the first time. I was afraid that a five o'clock event, after a whole day classes, would be too much for teachers. Yet I proved to be wrong.

They all showed up and the atmosphere was very positive. When we asked them to write the vignettes, they obediently did it but only now they have recognised its value. It is a pity they couldn't also try out the game you invented and we first delivered at our online learning event. It was really a success.

Enjoy the Easter holidays and I hope we can meet once again before the project is over.

Love, Brigita June 2019

Conversations, commuiques and contact

What follows are snapshots of random imagined conversations had over the duration of the project.







Rachel: Juggling

I am talking to Hywel over coffee after I had to lead an online webinar for Leeds Beckett University during the afternoon of one of our project meetings in Aberdeen. Hywel has offered to pour me a coffee and we are chatting.

Rachel

"Gosh I am going to have to play catch-up now. Thanks for the coffee – are there any biscuits left? That webinar came at what seemed to be a critical point in the meeting and I feel a bit guilty about having had to dip out. Thank god the technology worked ok though – at least I wasn't battling with that. It often feels like we are juggling things. Being away for a few days so regularly means trying to block out time in my diary, but it's not always possible to make a clean break from the 'day job'. It's funny how sometimes I forget that being on this project team IS the day job too. I think that's because it feels like a luxury to be able to travel, meet and work with new people and contribute to something over an extended period. I am aware that some of my colleagues are probably a bit fed up of me being on the road. Trying to accommodate other work while I am away, and keep up with emails seems essential at times, but also creates some difficulty in engaging in the flow of the meetings and study visits. Fortunately, I think the Promise team members understand – I am not the only one who has to do this juggling."

Hywel

"Did you manage to clear your head of the Promise project and do the webinar without distraction?"

Rachel

"Mostly. I guess we get good at job-hopping. Interacting with other people online means I have to enter their space rather than the one on the other side of the corridor here. But not quite. There was a point in the webinar when I was referring to the work that we are doing on dilemmas here. It was a moment when we were thinking about the complexities of teachers' jobs and the sorts of knowledge they need, and I illustrated it with a dilemma shared from a teacher in Germany. That wasn't planned, but it seemed natural. It meant I gave the webinar participants a little glimpse of our project. I guess we all do that a bit - informal dissemination we could call it. Maybe if my webinar had been next week when I was back home that wouldn't have happened. Maybe that's a good thing. There is some bleeding between the spaces we occupy in this project and our other roles and responsibilities. If we recognise that it feels powerful rather than messy."





Sarah: language

"Hi Hywel.

Thanks for joining me online, it's good to have a break from writing. I'm in the middle of drafting our contribution to the Tools section of the web site. I have to explain a complicated activity that we have been using with students here at my University so that others can take the same ideas and use them in their own context. I would like to think that the activity might end up being used by other project members or anyone else who uses the website, so the potential audience is wide and diverse, and readers might be students, teachers or teacher educators.

I'm finding it quite a challenging task as it's a different style of writing to what I normally do – this is a bit more like technical writing. We developed the activity as a team, largely through discussions and experimentation, but we've never tried to write it down in a systematic way before. I feel a bit like I am creating a recipe to help others apply our ideas in their own context. I need to carefully and precisely explain the key ingredients, but I also want readers to be able to add their own flavourings to make the activity palatable for their own learners. I am thinking a bit about the language I'm using too...

...I have the advantage that I can write in my native language, but I need to ensure that my writing is accessible to a wide international audience. A sense of responsibility comes with this task. The activity I'm writing about has been jointly developed by quite a large team and I want to be sure that I present it in a way that represents their contributions and ideas. I will let them see a draft of the text before I submit it to the website, so I hope they will be happy with it, and ultimately that it will be useful for others too. And I hope that the style will fit with other contributions on the web site too."



Katja, Steph and Jaap: writing together



Hywel

"Jaap, could I just catch you quickly over lunch to talk about our article?"

Jaap

"Well, I started by presenting a structure of how it could be. I felt I may have been a bit pushy...

Conversation notes (from us all): We all work from different contexts and the article was supposed to be published in a Hungarian journal. What would be interesting in the Hungarian context? Our Hungarian partner served as representative of our readers and she set priorities. It was interesting to include a few different examples of boundary crossing. Thus we learned about each other's perspectives. Some of us are focusing on teaching, others on teacher training, and again others on how teachers learn throughout their careers. These perspectives fitted well together. What I thought would be problematic appeared to be no problem at all. The inputs were complementary. The whole process was remarkably smooth.

We worked in a shared online document. It was as if our article had a life of its own. Each of us added content, some did the editing, others re-arranged the content. It was joyful and it worked. It proved to be efficient, and we learned a lot about boundary crossing through this process.

And by talking about it I heard that my idea of being pushy was not interpreted that way. It was said to be helpful as a basis for outlining the article."

Katja, Steph and Jaap: Teamwork and translation

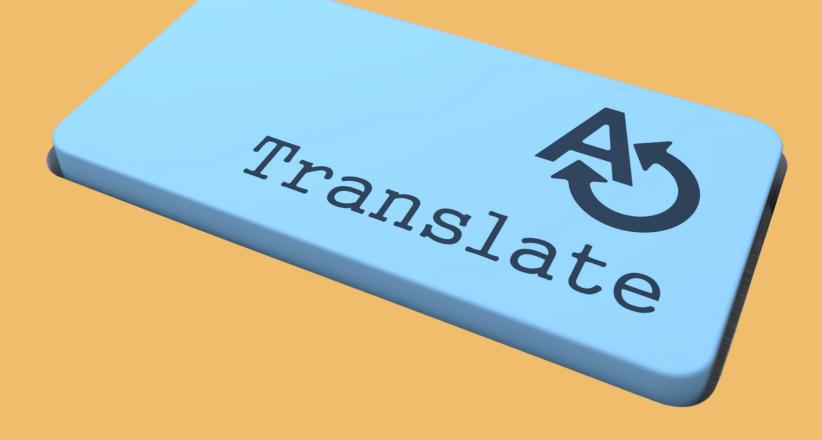
Hywel

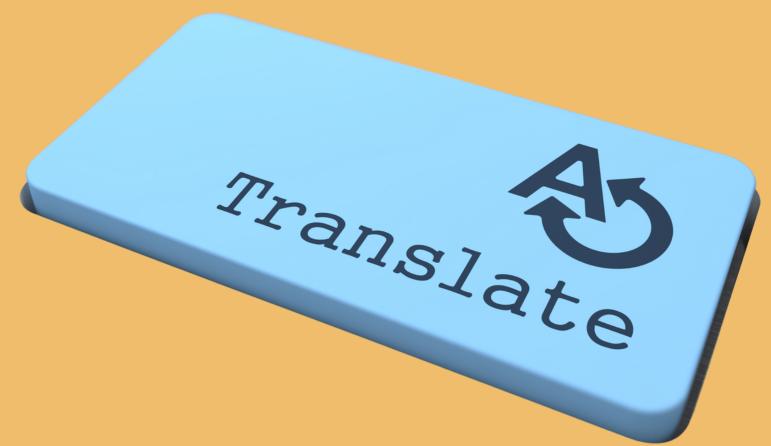
"Katja, You take part in the project as a member of a team of German teachers. What exactly is your role, how did you fill it and how did it feel for you?"

Katja

"In the beginning I had problems finding out what the project was about. I was involved as a teacher. I wanted my students to use digital means, but I didn't have an idea on how this would relate to the project. My involvement was too incidental to really get involved.

My focus was on technical things. And on translation. The actual work of translation though made me realize that many of the words as well as the concepts were difficult to translate. I didn't know the proper jargon. And while I worked on it, it appeared that many of the things I came across were sort of untranslatable not only because I didn't know the term but mainly because our educational systems are so different that no words are available in my language to describe something we don't have and vice versa."





Hywel

"Do you have an example of this?"

Katja

"For instance in Germany we have a system that is based on the idea that in order to become a teacher you go to university where you study a subject and later on you become a teacher. This system of mentoring and being mentored right from the start and possibly also throughout your professional life is not really common in Germany.

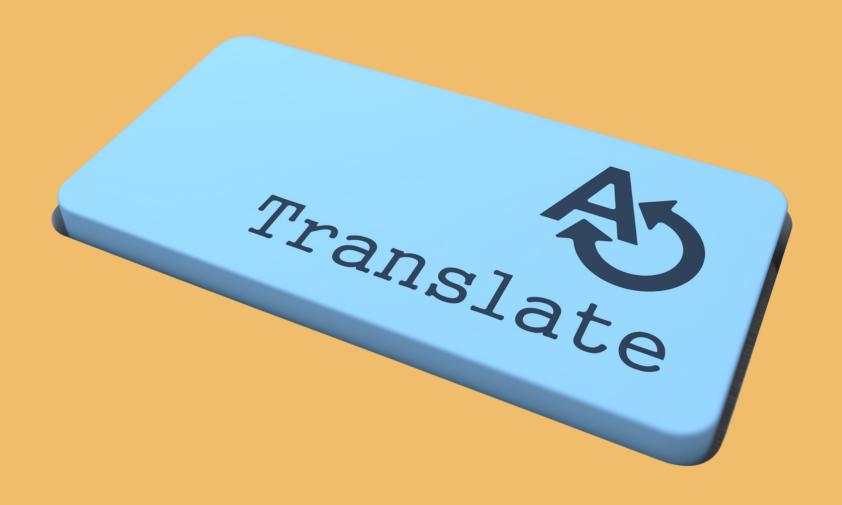
Moreover, I found out that in comparison to Germany, other countries oftentimes are more flexible and adaptive. We have e.g. very strict rules on data protection. Changes to be made will always have to be decided upon by the proper authorities. Committees (which are often staffed by people who have lost touch with the grassroots) make plans that (after endless phases of revision) will be implemented at points when it is actually too late already. The system is far from agile. I wish we'd be more hands on according to the motto by S. Beckett: Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better. – I strive to multiply these ideas both in my school and in the teacher training seminar."

Steph

"In Scotland I recognize this also in my work with teachers in vocational education. They often do not have a background in education and they feel that there is one way in which they have to do things. They can sometimes approach things very instrumentally. What strikes me is the difference between Germany and Scotland as far as subject didactics is concerned. In Germany this is important; in Scotland we seem to be focusing rather on a kind of generic didactics – especially in our work with vocational educators."

Katja

"It is so fascinating to see how these important issues all come up by being in volved in and by reflecting on translation. Now that I think about it, I believe that I learned a lot through this involvement in the project. I may have had some problems in finding out the essentials of the project, I do know that I learned a lot from the things I did."





Susanne: Reflecting on an online meeting

Hywel

"How do you feel and what are your thoughts when you are preparing for the online PROMISE project meeting."

Susanne

"I want to explain to the project group today what materials I need to be able to design the website well. I am always a bit nervous before the conferences because I have to say something in English. It's even harder in these online conferences. I can't quite grasp why it's actually harder when you're not sitting in a room together. I always have the fear that I might sound misleading or rude in my explanations. I rather would like to express how much I enjoy getting this website up and running it together with the project group. However, I think that I am not able to do the latter because I don't have the words and the digital format makes it even more difficult."



Hywel

"So, how do you feel about the website now that you look back on it?"

Susanne

"Looking back at the finished website, I am quite proud of what we have achieved. Even though I can't use it directly for training in Germany because English is a big boundary for most teachers, I can translate the vignettes and integrate them into my work. It encourages me immensely that others in Europe are working in a similar way in teacher training. I also find it supportive to see that we all experience similar difficulties and challenging situations - "a problem shared is a problem halved" is a German proverb. This European cooperation and openness to share difficult situations and grow together is enormously valuable."

Quinta: preparing for the Tilburg learning event

Hywel

"Hi there! What are you doing at the moment?"

Quinta

"Hi Hywel, you just catch me preparing the learning event that I am hosting in Tilburg in December 2019. That is a combination of creative thinking about the contents of the programme – sending out emails to involve other people, arrange the school visit - and practical arrangements. And of course, write down everything in a programme, find some information on hotels and travel and then send this to all the participants, so they can prepare their journey."



Hywel

"That's a big job. Do you like to do this?"

TIMEZFUTATION BUSINESSO PROJECT SINDOVATION DATA FINANCE TARGET JOBS DESCRIPTION JOBS DESCRIPTION

Quinta

"Well, actually, I do. I have attended learning events in other countries, and I have seen how they do it, what their programme was like. It is nice to make a mixture of project content and cultural elements. I only have three days for the learning event, and I want to make the most out of it. Of course, I want the partners to see our institute, I am proud of our buildings, the college rooms, facilities for the student teachers. We educate over 4000 student teachers, and I would like our partners to have an idea of the context where we do that. And because we educate our student teachers together with schools, I also want to organise a school visit. In my work as a researcher, my focus is on new roles of teachers and on schools with innovative teaching concepts. So, I would like to visit a school where we can see these innovative ideas. And I want to offer some content, so I will introduce the group to the work we have done for Intellectual Output 2. Another issue is that I would like my colleagues to profit from expertise of these guests from abroad, so I think of combining this into an afternoon with lectures and workshops from the participating partners."

Hywel

"That sounds like an interesting programme. I get the feeling that you feel very responsible for this event, you seem very eager to make it an interesting event..."

Quinta

"Haha! Yes, now you mention it..... I do feel responsible. I just want them to have a nice time, to see a lot, to get an impression of what we are doing in our institute, to get a sense of Tilburg. So, I also carefully select the restaurants where we will go, one of them is in an old train assembly place. It shows the industrial heritage of Tilburg. Maybe I am too serious about it... just want everything to be running smoothly, well organised and a pleasant experience."

Hywel

"That suits you. I am sure the guests will like the programme thank you for sharing your thoughts on this." Fancy a coffee?

Melanie: project culture

"Sometimes I focus so much on the foreign language that I slow myself down.

I feel like I am a different person. Sometimes too shy to talk.

But then I remember that EU projects are not about language skills.

It's about crossing borders:

- learning and professional development
- inspiring each other,
- coming up with new ideas or asking questions
- thinking outside the box
- understanding cultural differences
- supporting each other
- teamwork and friendship

These are exactly the things I take great pleasure in and the issues I love to contribute to.

Every project meeting and every learning event inspires me.

New ideas emerge and collaboration is the key to put them into action, even in a foreign language."



Quinta: engaging socially

Hywel is joining us in the pub where we meet, on Sunday evening, the night before the learning event starts in Aberdeen.

Hywel

"Is it alright if I join you?"

Quinta

"Hi Hywel, nice to meet you. Do join us. We are waiting for other folks to arrive. My colleague is just over at the bar ordering whisky. Haha, we do want to join in with the local habits. And we both are fond of Scottish Whisky."

Hywel

"Great! So, have you been travelling today?"

Quinta

"Yes, we just flew in from Amsterdam, it is a direct flight, so not much trouble. We've just dropped of our luggage in the hotel and rushed off to be here in time. It is a pity that the shops are all closed, but we did get an impression of the city of Aberdeen. And I think that we are about to engage in a pub quiz tonight..."



Hywel

"Oh! Am I lucky! Are you familiar with pub quizzes in the Netherlands?"

Quinta

"Well, it is an upcoming sort of fun, but I have never participated in one myself. I get the impression that it is rather popular in the UK, though. There is my colleague, might I introduce you? C, this is Hywel, form the Leeds Beckett team, Hywel, this is C, from the Fontys team. More introductions follow, as more folk from the PROMISE-project join us. Steph is registering our table for the pub quiz and we are about to start. The quizmaster announces the procedure and introduces the teams. Most other tables seem to be familiar with the procedure and some really look fanatic..."



After the quiz has come to an end, we finally have time to catch up on our conversation.

Hywel

"That went well, didn't it?"

Quinta

"I am surprised. That was great fun! Considering that we had difficulties in 1) hearing the question (not easy in a noisy pub!) and 2) understanding the question. We did have language barriers to cross, although we all speak English, there is a small amount of time needed to translate and 'digest' what the question is about. And that small amount of time was putting us behind as a team. And now Icome to think about it, Language does not seem to be our only issue, also cultural knowledge – gossip about national VIP's – is in our disadvantage. But nevertheless, we did have a lot of fun. This really is a 'bonding' kind of activity, a sort of team building'."

The quiz master has counted the scores and announces the ranking of the teams. To our surprise, our team was NOT last (we were second-to-last).

Quinta: reflecting in a project meeting

We have just had a the first morning of a two-day project meeting. I am looking out of the window and Hywel joins me.



Hywel

"A penny for your thoughts?"

Quinta

"Well, a Euro might do! I was just reflecting on the setting of the meeting here in Leeds. When I look back at this meeting and other meetings in other countries, it occurs to me that there are differences in the way we relate to each other in our organisations. I mean, I thought that since our work basically is very much alike, that would also be the case for the way our work is organised. But no, I realise that I mostly represent a Dutch organisation and I view things from my Dutch perspective."

Hywel

"Can you elaborate this?

Quinta

"Well, for example, in the programme of this meeting, the first thing on the first day was an official moment, with the director having a small speech, telling us how thrilled he was to have us here and how proud they were to have acquired this project. From my Dutch perspective, this is a bit too official and too much fuss. But for the other project partners the presence of the director might add to the importance of the project, being welcomed by the director and all. In the Netherlands, we do not have a very strong sense of hierarchy in organisations, nor do we live up to that. I need to give this a bit more thought. Maybe it is a good thing to invite my director to welcome us at a project meeting. For her to get an impression of what I am doing, and for the partners to show that my organisation is proud to participate."



Quinta: reflecting over lunch

Hywel

"Oh, let's take a look at what we have here for lunch"



Quinta

"Yes, it is always a surprise. Now we come to talk about it, it also reflects the national habits in food consumption. When we talk about lunch, most partners say that they normally bring some bread or a salad from home. This seems to be the case in all countries. But at these meetings, it is different. Sometimes we are taken to a restaurant for a hot meal, sometimes it is sandwiches, we have had a picnic during a boat trip..."

Hywel

"So I can expect some nice experiences in this project?"

Quinta

"Yes, I think we all try to be a good host when we are in charge of organising the meeting, and we want the partners to get a glimpse of our cultural heritage on food as well. But do not get overexcited when you visit us in the Netherlands. The most common lunch consists of a roll with ham or cheese, a glass of cold milk and an apple. In the luxury version, we might add soup and a warm snack. Most foreign visitors are shocked but do not dare to show."

Hywel

"Well, at least I am prepared for it now!"



POSTCARDS #44

The following are reflections from participants presented as postcards to colleagues within the project and beyond.



Dear colleagues,

I arrived last to the party in Tubingen, on one of the hottest weeks in Europe. The strolls during the day led to in-depth thought-provoking reflective conversation from a range of cultures and perspectives.

One insightful event was the reflective conversation we had with the student guiding our boat. His journey and mine were like the river meandering to a destination with the journey being the most important activity.

Thanks Tubingen for a wonderful learning activity and companionship..

Mary

Dear Quinta,

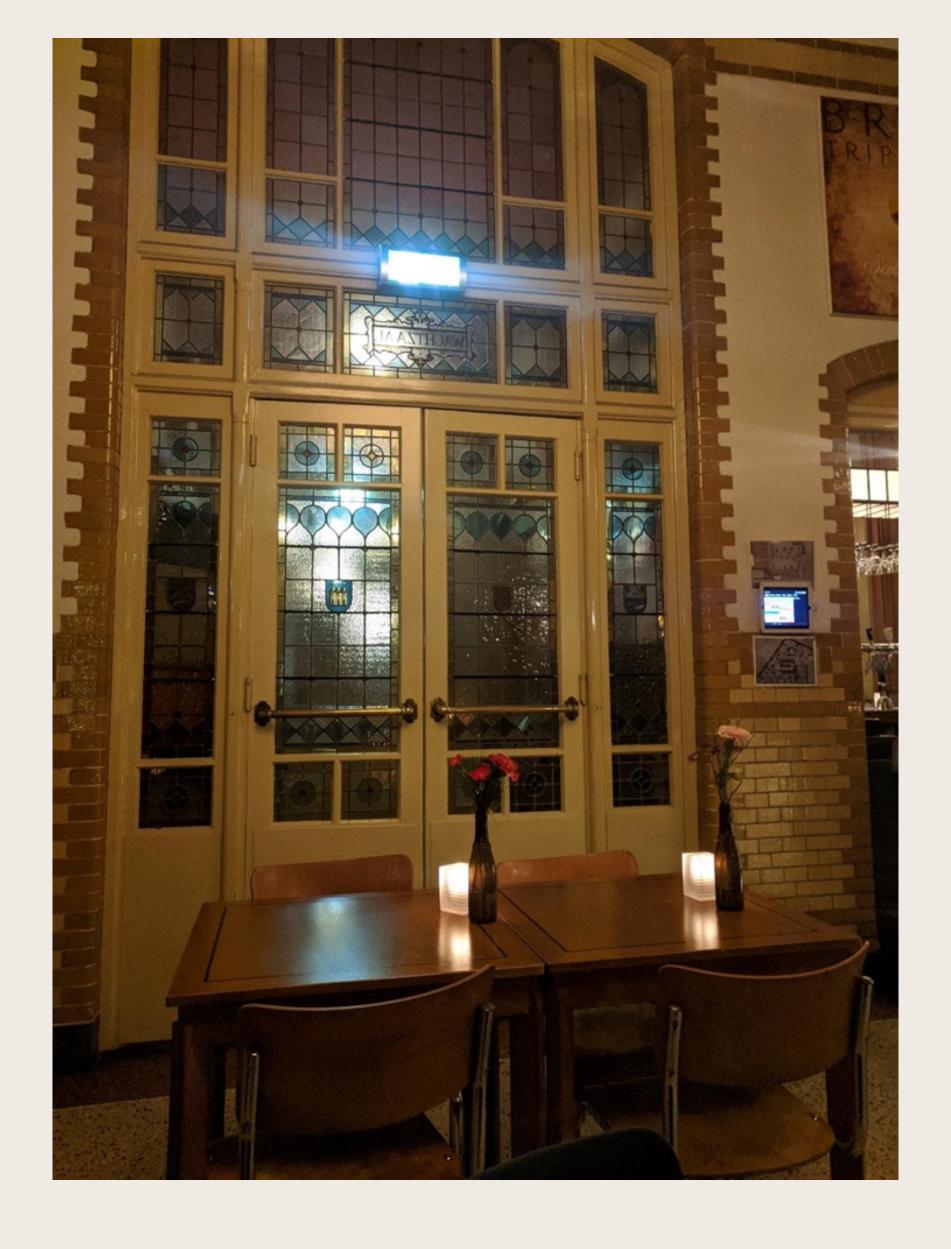
Thank you for organising such an interesting visit for us. The highlights for me were the visit to the vocational school and playing 'the game' in Fontys. Oh, and the appelflappen of course! We all had such interesting conversations during our walks to and from Tilburg city centre to Fontys each day.

Thanks to your encouragement, I got more confident ordering food in Dutch as the week went on and I even managed to take a bus with Melanie without getting lost!

I have really fond memories of this trip and want to thank you for all you did to help create them.

Groetjes! Steph





Dear TQFE team

I'm winding down after a long but interesting day here in the Netherlands. This building is a pub that used to be a bank and earlier we visited a public library that used to be a locomotive hall.

Everywhere here there are examples of clever re-use of old things. The school we visited was another good example of this. They've transformed the idea of what school can be and created lots of flexible spaces to learn in. It's given me a lot to think about.

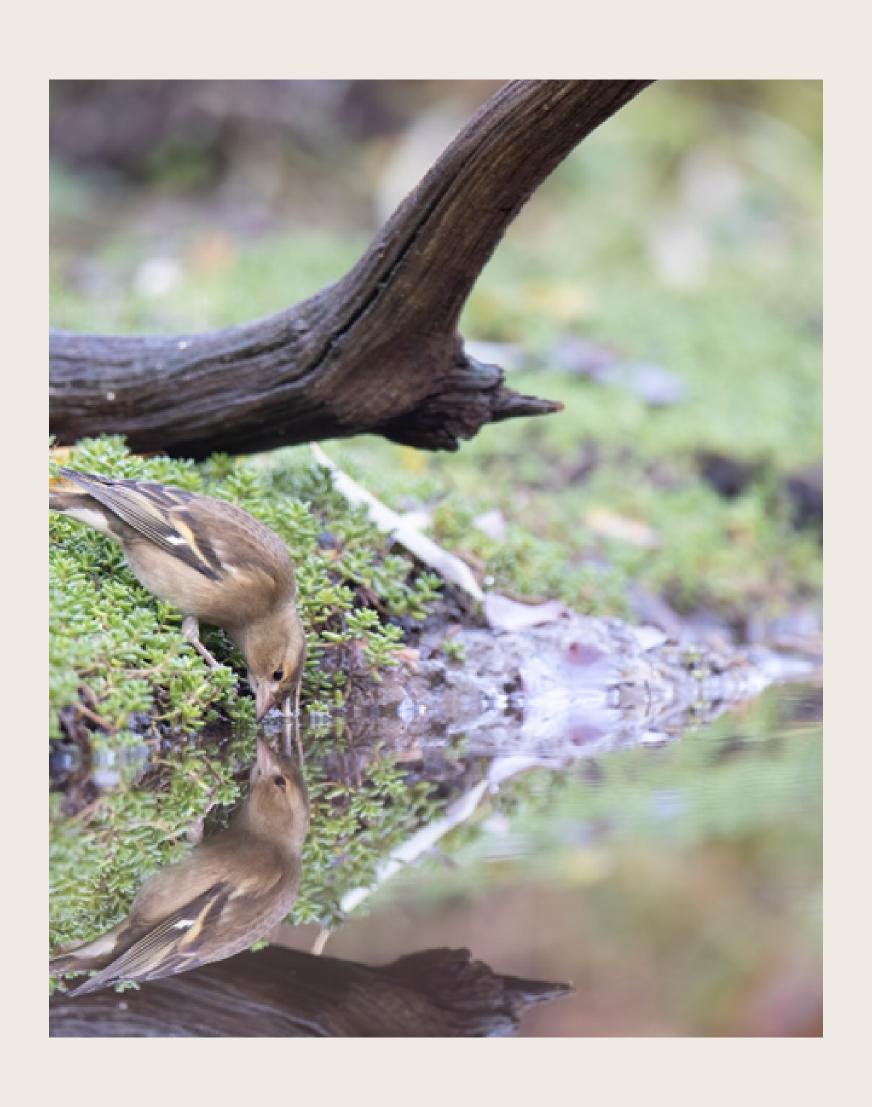
See you soon, Steph

Dear all.

No longer being part of the PROMISE project, I still have fond memories of the meetings we had, the cultural events that took us to beautiful places and - last but not least - the evenings together.

The finch found some time to reflect. I hope that - with the help of the PROMISE project - many (future) teachers will be able to do the same.

Best wishes, Chantal

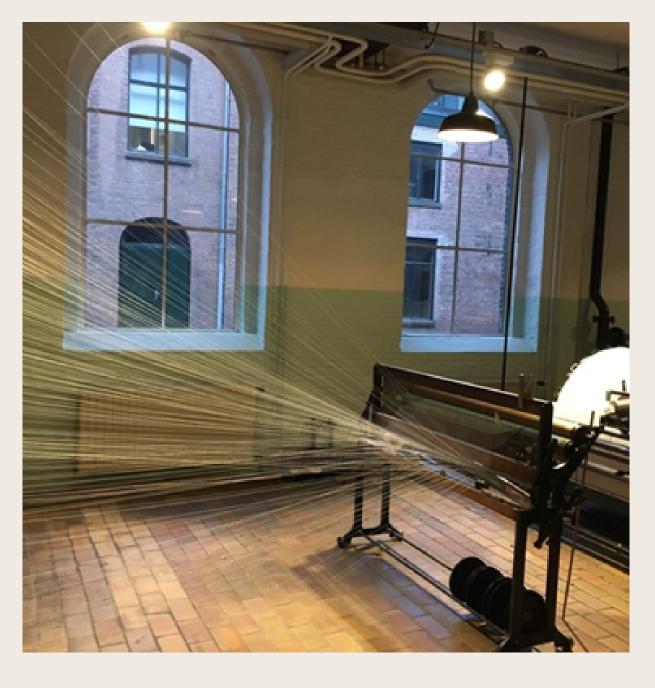


Liebe Promise-Partner*innen,

bei den Learning-events lauf en für mich die Fäden zusammen. Ich kann erleben, wie Ihr Lernen gestalten, welchen Herausf orderungen ihr euch stellen müsst und wie ihr das meistert.

Das gibt mir die Möglichkeit zu erkennen, in welchen Bereichen ich mir unbewusst Grenzen setze und wie diese zu überwinden sind. Auf dieser Basis Konzepte für die Schüler*innen und (angehenden) Lehrer*innen zu entwickeln empfinde ich als sehr gewinnbringend.

Vielen Dank euch allen! Melanie



Dear Promise-Partners,

in learning events all the different strands of the project come together. I can experience firsthand how you shape learning, which challenges you have to face and how you successfully master them.

This gives me the opportunity to make out areas in which I unconsciously set myself limits and how I can overcome those. Against this backdrop, developping new concepts for students and (prospective) teachers, is extremely rewarding for me.

Many thanks to all of you!

Melanie



Dear Mhairi

There were two 'critical moments' on the project for me. Both of these were times when I felt my understanding of our project objectives and process moving forward in big leaps.

The first was in Ljubljana when we talked about squares and circles and triangles and developed a shared understanding of what the project was really all about.

The second was in Aberdeen (which is where this picture was taken) when we came to a common view of what a vignette was and developed shared expectations for the vignettes. There were challenging discussions and there was heated debate, different perspectives were expressed and listened to, and there was time for reflection and consolidation.

Thank you for facilitating our team work so effectively!

Sarah

Ljubljana, December 15, 2020

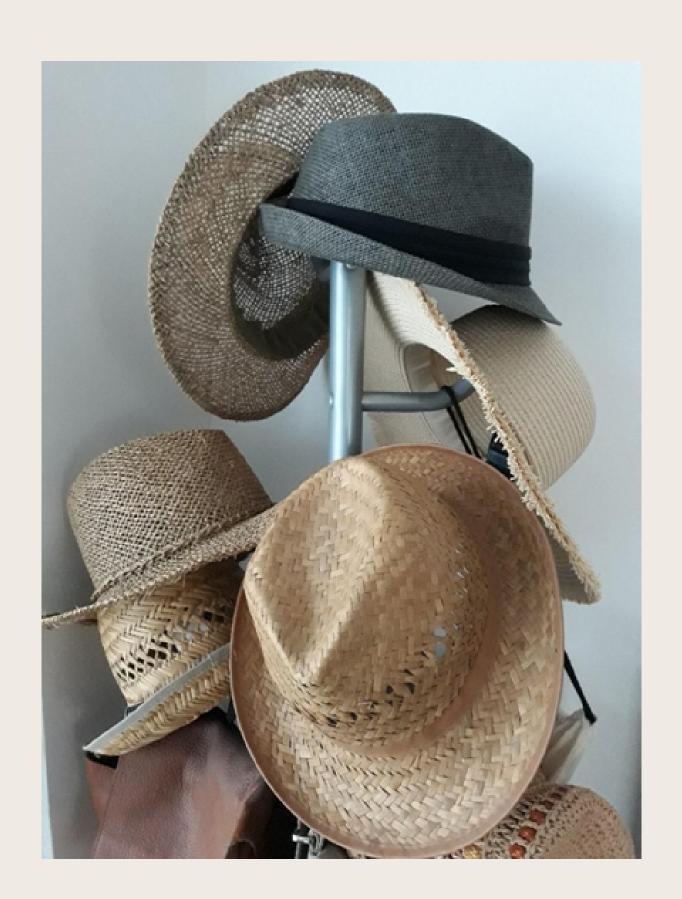
Dear Melanie,

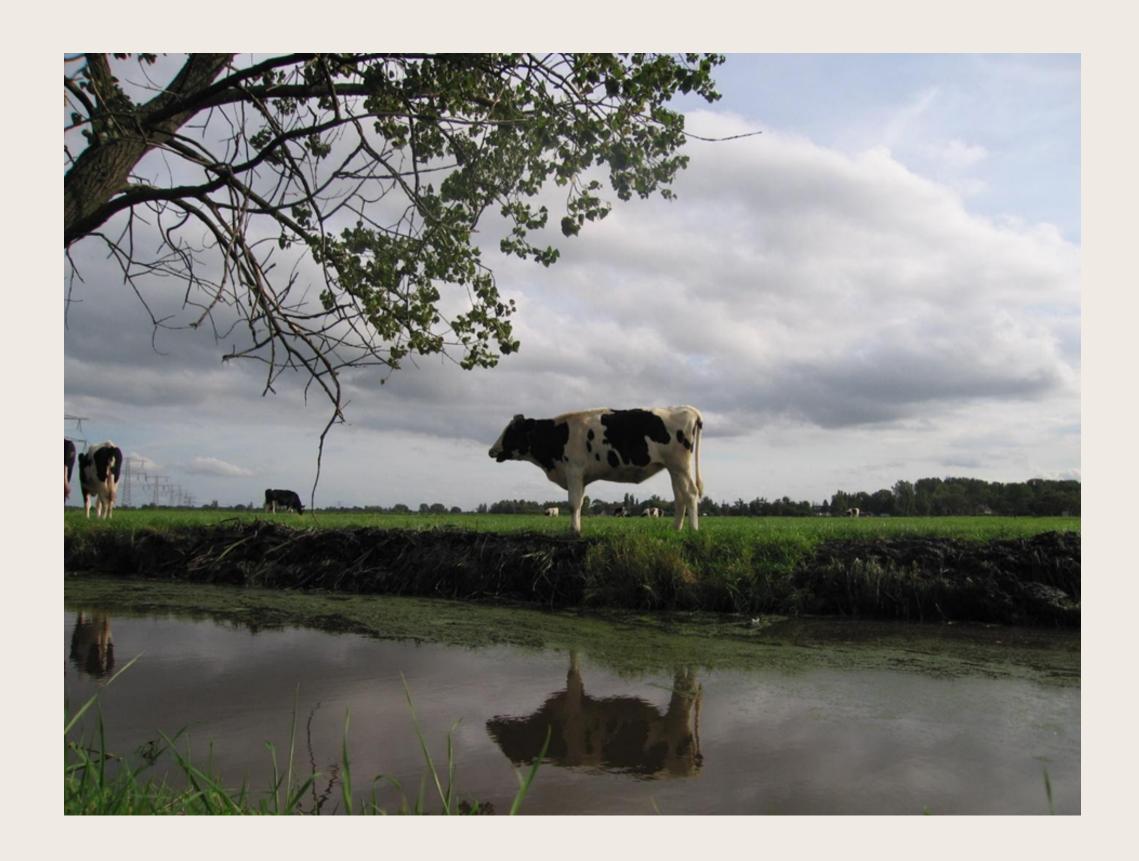
In my house there are many hats. They are of different shapes and textures and made for different occasions. Whenever I see a straw hat I remember you and the Tübingen team.

I will never forget a project meeting on a hot summer day when you provided hats for all of us. It was such a nice gesture which showed how carefully you planned the event and how much you cared about us. You thought about it to the last detail.

And since I loved my hat so much you even sent me one as a present.

Do you recognise it on my hat tree? Love, Brigita





Dear Orsi and Brigita,

Our task in the Promise project is to organize the evaluation. We have decided to make it a picture-based evaluation. Everybody makes pictures. Together these pictures reconstruct the history of the project.

They bring back memories and allow us to discuss the progress we made. I was searching for a picture that could serve a front page of our evaluation, something reflective I thought. I once made this picture and now all of a sudden it struck me as highly reflective. What do you think?

Best wishes,

Jaap

September 2019,

Dear colleagues of Fontys Teacher Education Tilburg,

At the moment I am in Aberdeen, where I visit our colleagues from teacher education at the University.

We do have a busy schedule, but there is time for a lunch walk as well.

This was what caught my eye... school everywhere.

So it is clear what our focus is!!

Best wishes, Quinta











14 April 2021

Dear Rachel and Mhairi,

Today, I attended the online seminar of CollectivEdE which came to my attention because you send an invitation to participate.

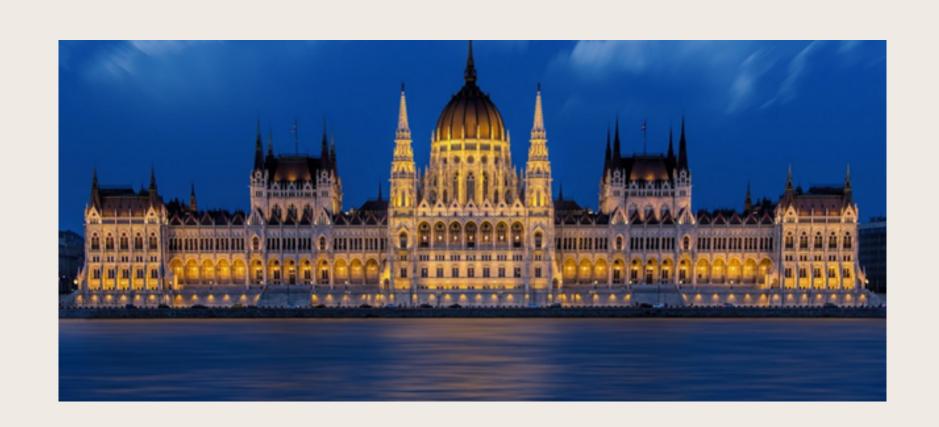
Thanks for this invitation. It made me feel proud that I have so many international contacts, it made me feel part of an international community.

Furthermore, I liked the atmosphere in which your colleagues shared their research findings and their insights. The topics addressed today caused reflection, they stretched my thoughts and broadened my horizon

Some offspring of the above is that
I feel encouraged to invite people from my network for online
meetings of my research group. It is very easy to send a link, one
does not have to join, but if they do, it is like a small present.

Thanks again, best wishes, Quinta





April 2020

Dear Erika, Orsi, Fruzsi and Laszlo

- We were supposed to meet in Budapest this week. Imagine, we would have been there, in your beautiful city, visiting your University, getting to know the Hungarian educational system from close-by and tasting your national lunch and dinner specialties.
- · Now, we are going to meet online. We certainly do miss the 'couleur locale' and the social contacts. On the other hand, we do not miss the hassle of having to travel a long time, worrying about connecting flights or left luggage. It is beneficial for the planet if we do not travel that much.
- · So, this afternoon, we will make the best of it. We can do this! We are used to meeting online and to discuss the progress of the project. We know each other already from face-to-face meetings and even without camera on, I am able to detect who is who by listening to their voices. And a sneak-view of each other's living room, pets and children also is a form of social connection.

· See you this afternoon! take care, Quinta



March 2019

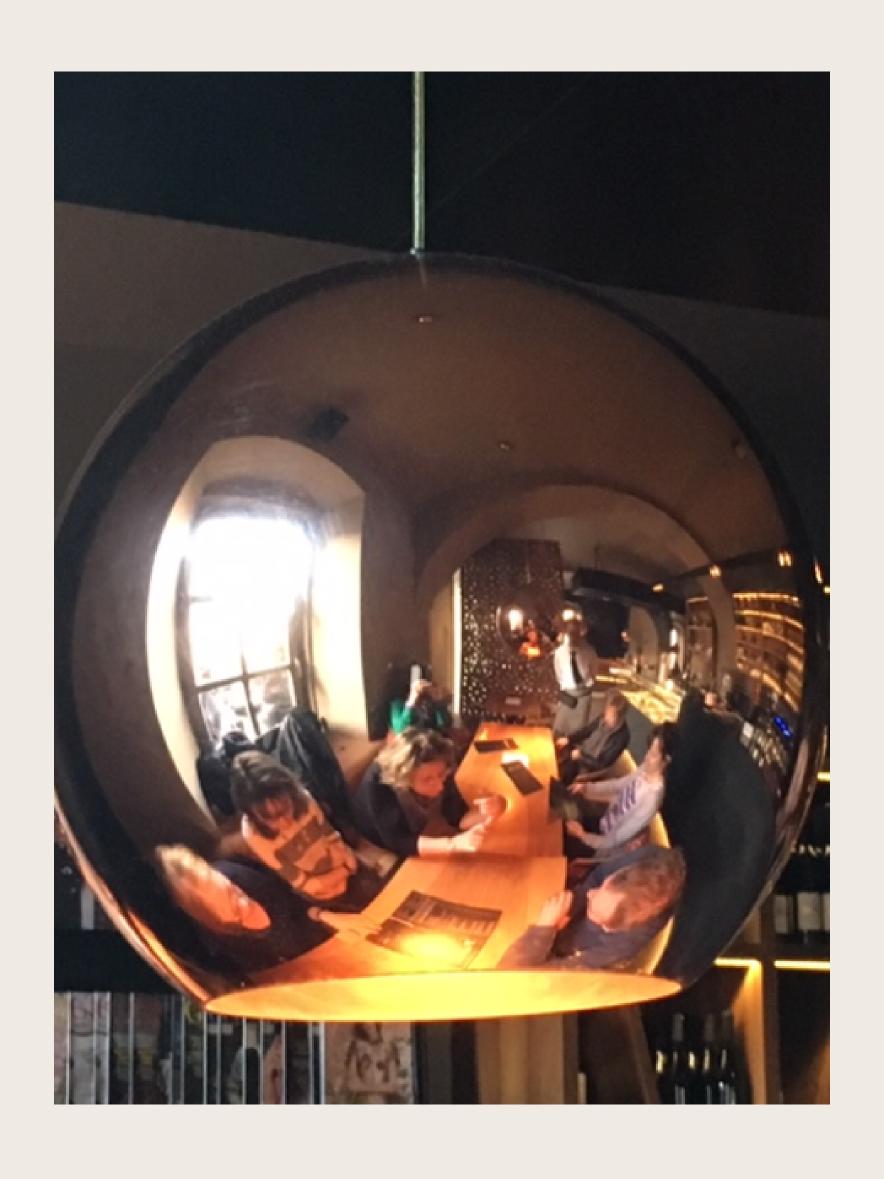
Dear Brigita and Branko,

Thank you so much for hosting the project meeting in Ljubljana. It was lovely to visit your beautiful city once again.

This is a picture I made in the café where we had our good-bye coffee. Reflections in the lamp show the partners, still deliberating on the whereabouts of the project and on education in general.

For me this shows our dedication to the subject and the warm atmosphere in our project team.

Best wishes, Quinta



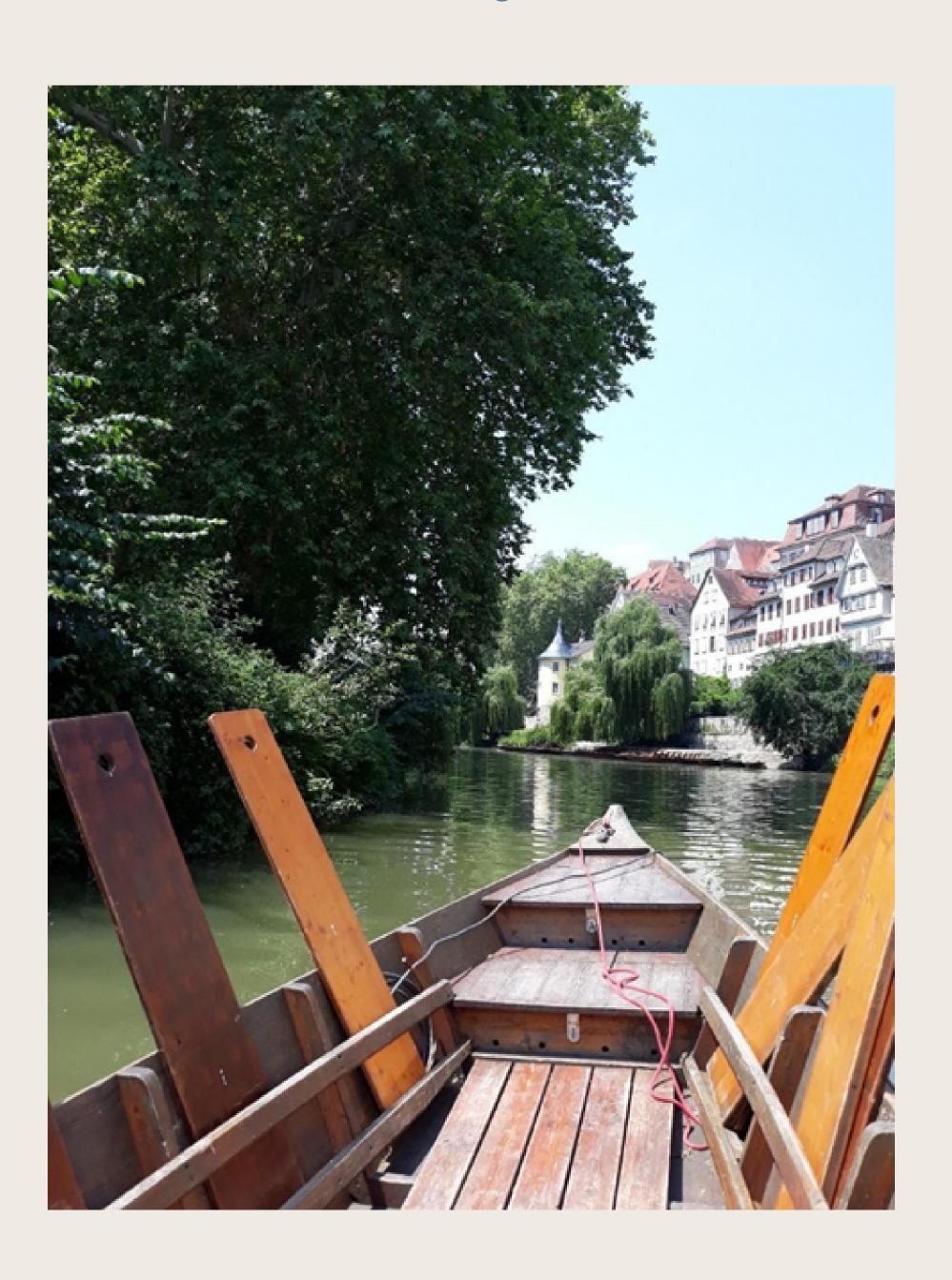
Dear PROMISE partners,

I very often remember our trip along the river in Tubingen. It was a hot June day and we were packed together in a boat. The view of the old town was wonderful and the water cooled the heated air.

We felt close and connected after a vivid morning discussion which made the picture of our future activities clearer. We knew where our boat was heading and that made us feel safe and comfortable.

It is great to be in the same boat with you.

Love, Brigita



Dear promise friends,

Whenever I think back of our meeting in Tübingen, I remember the extreme heat I experienced in the train from Stuttgart to Tübingen. It was a very hot day. The train came to a standstill for quite some time. I was in a compartment of which no windows could be opened, since it was supposed to be air conditioned. However, the Aircon also had stopped working, so there we sat, the temperature rose, people looked like they had just come out of a bath, red skinned and completely wet. I tried to keep my head cool.

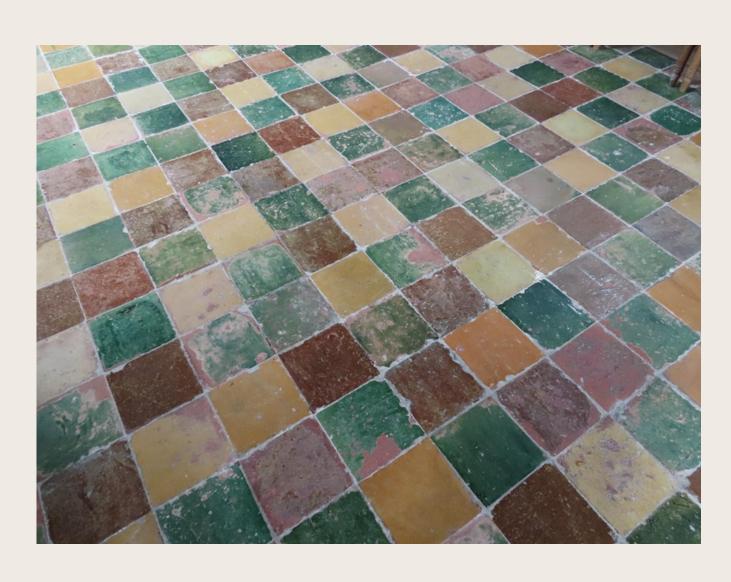
I analyzed the vignettes we gathered and was impressed by their richness and diversity. So many examples from so many countries, showing such a variety of problems, concerns, and challenges. Yet at the same time revealing attempts to solve things by crossing borders of organizations, and disciplines.

On my holidays I came across this floor in an old church. It reminded me of this colourful set of vignettes, I had been analyzing. I was pleased to see that the colours of the tiles have started to cross borders. A set of tiles has become a floor. Look how beautiful it has become

Have a good summer,

Jaap





June 2019

Dear Tübingen

You gave us this warm summer evening, when the intense heat of the day had cooled to being bearable. We were relaxed and we talked. Our Tübingen days had been a struggle as the heatwave crept into every indoor and outdoor space we occupied. Our daytime work pace slowed as we melted. But the evenings allowed us to re-group and re-focus. Project conversations bubbled up as we ate and drank, each one an opportunity to re-frame and re-invest in our work. And alongside them we ate and drank, and we laughed and learned.

A toast to Tübingen, Rachel





September 2019

Dear Steph and Sarah,

Thank you so much for hosting the learning event in Aberdeen. I very much enjoyed the trip to Dundee to visit the Dundee & Angus College. Both the school visit and the trip along the coast were very inspiring.

I also was impressed by your e-learning facilities. The session in which we were able to engage in an online conversation was helpful to understand how you teach your student teachers.

take care, Quinta

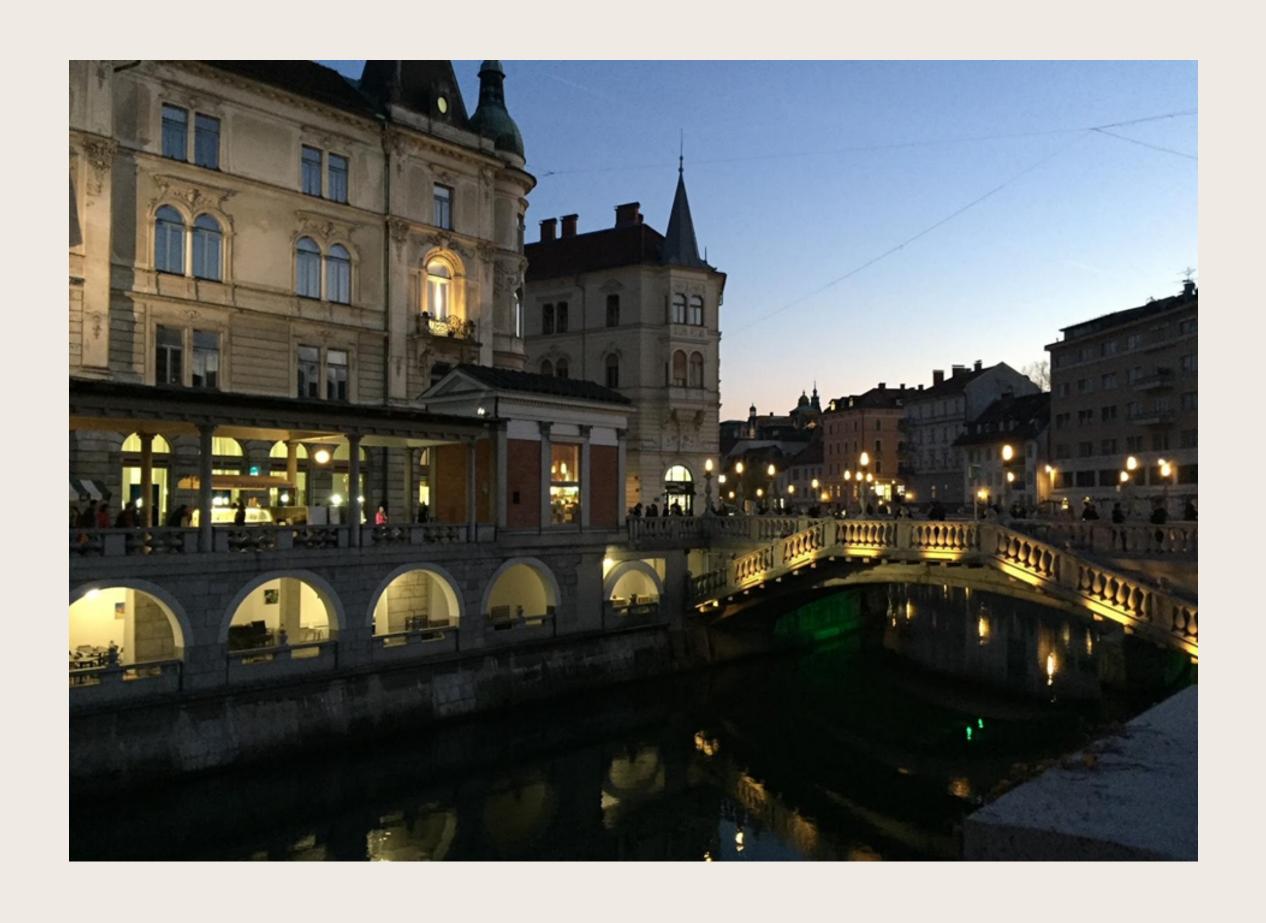
October 2019

Dear friends and partners

Our EUPromise project has spanned a turbulent time, and for Mhairi and I it is superimposed on the genuine sadness of Brexit. We passionately wish this was not occurring and we will always campaign (like we did on this march) for a European future. We've cried real tears of anger, frustration and grief. But we have been held together by you, by your warmth, your solidarity and your commitment. It has meant so much to feel that friendship.

Thank you all, Rachel





Dear all.

crossing bridges. crossing boundaries. c
rossroads. crossover. cross platform network. crossing gates.
cross country trip. cross section. crossing paths. crossed fingers.
crossing the street. pedestrian crossing. border crossing.
boundary crossing....

All this (and much more) crossed my mind!

Katja

P.S. ... and working on all these crossings. I didn't miss my cross trainer a bit! :-)



Dear all.

First morning in Aberdeen: foggy and drizzling. The hotel receptionist asks me "Are you alright?" I wonder what she means. do I look like death warmed over? — No. observing her I find out that she applies the question to everyone. therefore. I conclude that this is the Scottish (?) way to say "How are you?" I smile into myself: I feel like a student exploring new worlds. — and it feels invigorating and enlightening!

Last morning in Aberdeen: pleasant and sunny!

Katja



Dear Promise Colleagues

Thank you just for being there during some turbulent times for us in the UK.

Being European is an important part of my identity. I have lived and worked in several

European countries and travelled in many more. Working on PROMISE with you all has
been a constant and timely reminder of the value of being part of such a welcoming, diverse

and fascinating community.

During BREXIT and the COVID-19 pandemic it has felt more important than ever to be part of our ERASMUS partnership and remain connected with you all. It was helpful and encouraging to hear your insightful and thoughtful perspectives on BREXIT. I missed you when COVID-19 struck and we couldn't travel anywhere. Brigita and Branco gave me hope when they were working in the same office together on a Teams call whilst the rest of us were still confined to our homes. The enthusiasm of the team to work together whatever the challenges is a constant source of inspiration.

Thank you to you all.

Sarah



Afterthought



I'm home. The dog was pleased to see me as she has missed her long earlymorning walks by the canal. The family have been interested in my journeying, but I know they are being polite!

As I empty my pockets, I find some shells I collected from the beach. I smell them and I hear the sea.

I also have a business card from the restaurant where the food nearly blew the heads off some of our European colleagues. I smile and place it in the novel I hadn't touched whilst away.

And then I find a folded note from one of the brilliant workshops we had done. It is a sticky note. We had been asked to write a word that summed how we are feeling. The sun had been shining and there had been a lot of laughing. A lot of warmth.

I read the word.

connected



The PROMISE ebook was written by members of the Erasmus+ Promise Project team with the help and creativity of Hywel Roberts.

2022