

jenaplan

school where you learn to live together

Freek Velthausz

Hubert Winters



PART 1

KNOWING

jenaplan

How the jenaplan school began
and how jenaplan schools are organized in the Netherlands.

PART I KNOWING jenaplan

content

	page
1. jenaplan back then	4
1.1 Peter Petersen	4
1.2 Der kleine Jena-Plan	5
1.3 Suus Freudenthal	11
2. jenaplan theory	13
2.1 a concept	13
2.2 at the heart of society	13
2.3 focus on the child	14
2.4 pedagogical climate	14
2.5 culture and structure	14
2.6 parents and school	15
2.7 the team, a community group	15
2.8 basic principles	16
2.9 quality characteristics	17
3. essences of a jenaplan school	24
3.1 seven essences	24
3.2 seven times seven	24
3.3 enterprising	25
3.4 planning	25
3.5 cooperating	26
3.6 creating	26
3.7 presenting	26
3.8 reflecting	27
3.9 accounting for your actions	27
4. jenaplan organization	29
4.1 history	29
4.2 current events	29
5. jenaplan training	30
6. jenaplan practice	30
6.1 learning environments	31
6.2 meaningful learning	31
6.3 school buildings	31
6.4 abroad	32

1. JENAPLAN BACK THEN

introduction

This chapter is about the beginning of jenaplan. The first subject of attention is of course Peter Petersen, the creator of the concept. Suus Freudenthal-Lutter, who made jenaplan big in the Netherlands, is second.

1.1 Peter Petersen (1884-1952)

Peter Petersen was born on 26 June 1884 in Grossenwiehe, in the state of Schleswig Holstein, near the Danish border. He was the eldest son in a peasant family, where a total of nine children were born. Although he was from a large family, he did not grow up with his many brothers and sisters.

In the village Peter attended Grundschule, primary school for children aged 6 to 10 years old, which still functions today in many German federal states. Because it was a small school, all children from grades 1 to 4 (Dutch grades 1 to 4, aged 6 to 9) sat together. As a child Peter was basically in a four-year community group. This way Petersen must have experienced the richness of a heterogeneous group.



Peter was a particularly good learner and, being the eldest son, would not work on the farm as was customary at the time. No, at the insistence of the minister and the school principal, he attended the gymnasium in Flensburg in 1895. Every Sunday afternoon he walked to Flensburg, stayed with his uncle Nicolai during the week and walked home again on Saturday afternoon. So Peter did not really take part in life at home.

In 1908, at the age of 24, he obtained his doctorate with a dissertation on Wundt, founder of psychology, after his university studies (philosophy, history, and theology). He did this in Jena, where it was not until 1923 that he was appointed professor at the university and thereby becoming head master of the practice school that was affiliated to the university. At this school he developed his concept and connected theory and practice.

After his education Petersen worked as a teacher at the traditional gymnasium in Hamburg. In 1920 he was asked to lead an innovative teaching gymnasium. He became a head master at the Lichtwarkschule. Here, for the first time, he got the opportunity to put his innovative ideas into practice. Although he was only a school leader there for three years, he managed to achieve a great deal at the Lichtwarkschule. The school focused a great deal on art education and world studies, and Petersen also cooperated with parents a lot. His work got lots of attention, even from abroad. Célestin Freinet, among others, was interested in his work during this period.



In 1923, Petersen left for the University of Jena to accept his appointment as a professor. Hans Wolff was the first community group leader at the practice school, which later became the university school. He kept a diary of his experiences. This school was a testing ground for Petersen's ideas. He was always switching between theory and practice. Even literally: he walked back and forth between his university office and the school every day.

In Jena, his ideas reached their full potential. In August 1927, Petersen made his international breakthrough at the educational conference of the New Educational Fellowship in Locarno, where he gave a lecture on his 'Menschenschule'. Against Petersen's will, his lecture was reported under the title Jena plan (the plan from Jena). The name jenaplan was born and never disappeared.

In his concept he paid a lot of attention to learning to live together. And to giving children lots of responsibility. The children had to learn to take diligent care of themselves and to take diligent care of the group. The children at Petersen's school had lots of room to decide what and how they learned. He also involved the parents in the school. In *Der Kleine Jenaplan* he gave a practical description of life at the school in Jena.

His second wife, Else Müller, contributed to the jenaplan concept, too. She thought along with Petersen and published, for example, 'Die Grundkräfte kindlicher Entwicklung' (the fundamental forces of childlike development) During the German National Socialism and during the GDR, Petersen managed to continue working. But it was getting harder and harder, until the school eventually closed by order of the communists of the GDR. His career petered out.

Petersen died on 21 March 1952, at the age of 67. He suffered from poor health, and his eyes were bad in later life (cataracts). He died from pneumonia in the hospital of Jena, lying on a field stretcher in the corridor. He was cremated in Jena, his ashes transferred and buried in his birthplace Grossenwiehe.

1.2 Der kleine Jena-plan

On 3 November 1923, Peter Petersen gave his inaugural speech as a professor at the Thuringia State University. In the spring of 1924, in addition to his work as a professor, he started his 'Erziehungswissenschaftliche Anstalt' (educational institute) including a practice school. This school would work according to Petersen's insights. Hans Wolff was recruited as a group leader and started with twenty children.

The school was developing and at the fourth meeting of the New Educational Fellowship in Locarno in 1927 Petersen gave a lecture and talked about his educational ideas. An extended version of his lecture was published and was titled *Der Kleine Jena-plan*.

Petersen wanted a 'freie allgemeine Volksschule' (free public primary school). Free from government interference, for boys and girls and accessible for all children.

The school should primarily be a school for upbringing, where children would be raised to become enterprising and competent fellow human beings who are helpful and feel responsible. The children should be brought up to be human and the school should be primarily a people's school. To achieve this, the school would consist of ten learning years.

Below you will find some parts of *Der Kleine Jenaplan* in a free adaptation by Hubert Winters.

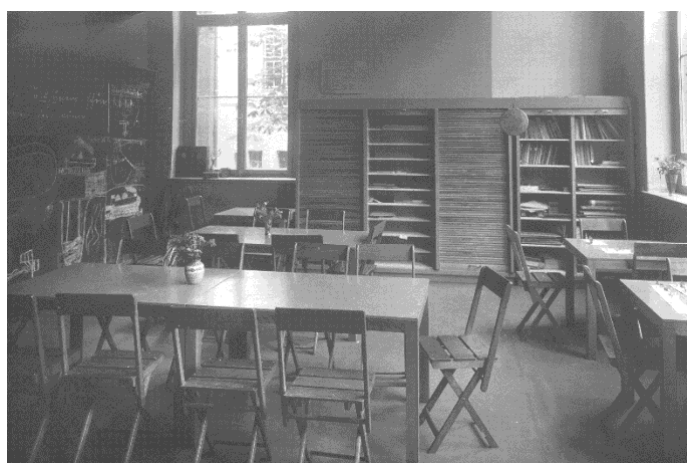
The school organization

Schools should not be larger than 400 to 500 children. The school building should be a low-rise building surrounded by a playground and a school garden: a children's countryside.

Each group has its own classroom, as well as specific areas for crafts, research, exercise and room for communal school celebrations, music, and theatre.

The classrooms have easily movable furniture and there is a chair for the group leader. Materials are stored in cupboards. There are plenty of work spaces along the walls and places where aquariums, terrariums and flowers can be placed.

Children do not have a permanent place to sit. The places are freely chosen or determined by the group work. The children can use the whole classroom and even the whole school, everyone can walk in and out freely but must always account for their choices to the group. This also ensures that the children move around more. If you meet the need for exercise, children will have a longer concentration span.



The community life of the group

In the jenaplan school, we do not speak of classes, we speak of groups. The main focus in the group is on community spirit.

A group consists of three learning years which involves a mixture of ages and boys and girls of different abilities. There is no such thing as staying back, children can always move on to the next group after three years. What children can learn based on their intelligence, they can learn in any group. Group leaders know the children so well after three years that they can determine whether the transition to the next group will be successful. Children always have the right to decide not to move to another group yet or to come back to a decision. The school has acquired the experience that children are fully able to judge themselves.

In the community group, children work freely, self-motivated, and largely independently from the start. Desk groups are formed spontaneously based on friendships or common interest. It is the task of the group leader to point out to the children the advantages of putting together groups in a certain way. Coercive grouping would be worthless. Children must give their inner consent. During a school year, the groups change repeatedly because the relationships between the children also change. Children are not part of the desk group all day long; different groups can be made for different activities; for arithmetic, groups are composed differently than for crafts.

By working in these differentiated groups, new children can easily be included in the group and the difference between children, which is a natural phenomenon, does not cause problems. The differences between children are even used to learn with and from each other.

Learning to live together

From day one, we need to pay attention to living together in the community group. From the first day on there is practice in interacting with each other. Entering and going outside, walking and whispering softly, taking others into account, and helping each other.

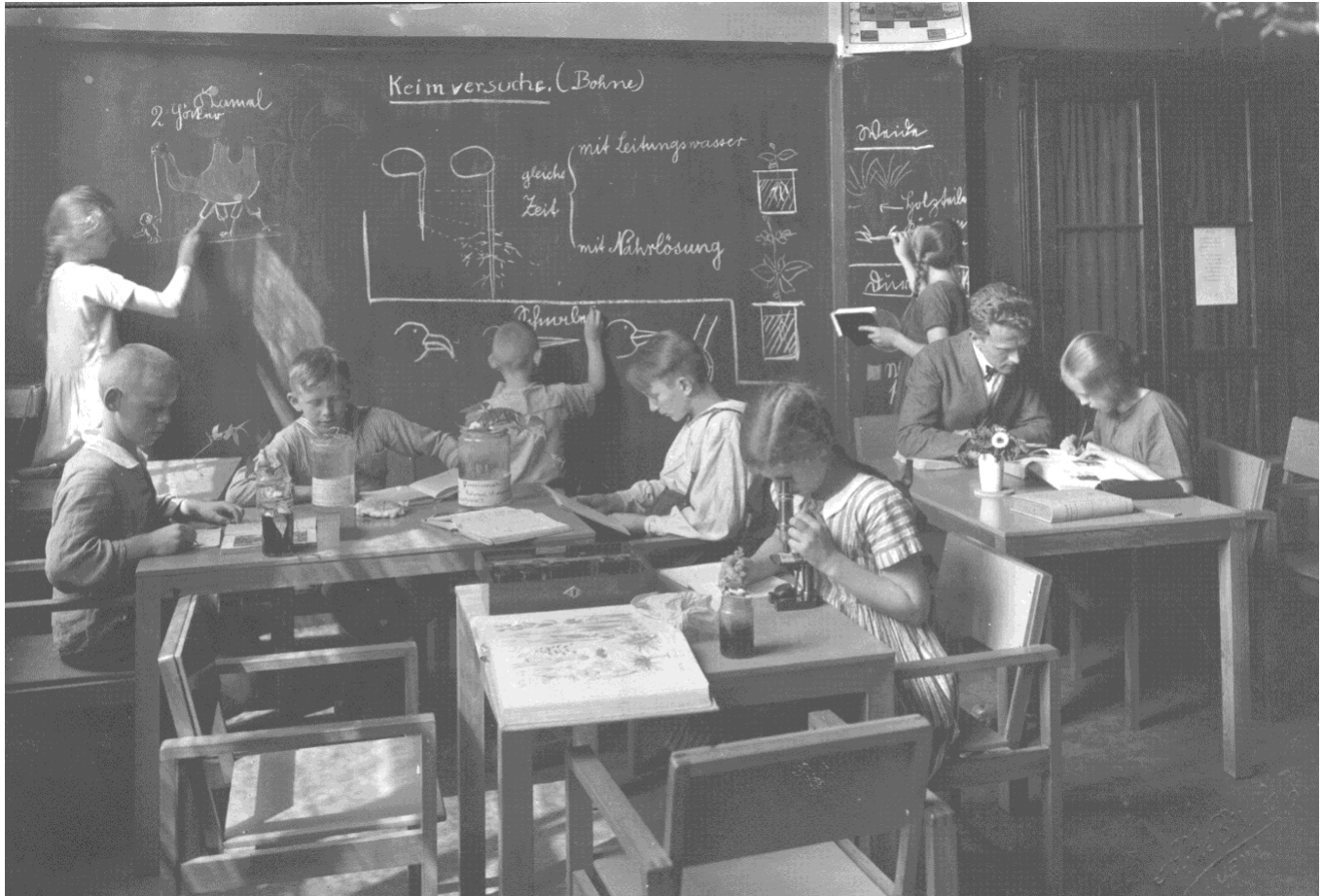
Children are quite free in school, but there is one important rule, the group law:

'In our classroom things only happen if we all want them to happen and if they guarantee a way of living and working together that is good for all of us.'

And that rule applies to everyone in the group, including the group leader and other helpers such as assistants, parents, and interns.

With this freedom come limits. The group has to make agreements in mutual consultation. Important in this are:

- Equal rights and obligations for everyone
- Agreements on the use of the limited space
- The limitations of the tools, learning aids, books, microscopes, etc.



The school living room

The classroom is the "living room of the group". The group determines the interior, which makes them feel connected to their own classroom. There, you will find children's valuable treasures, both small and large, and their products on the walls.

Children enjoy being involved with the design. This design usually changes several times a day to suit the activity: the circle, group work, quiet and individual work.

Relationships

The school is of course all about mutual relationships. The following is important to work on good relationships:

1. The conversation; being open to each other, free to question everything.
2. All children need to be heard; equal rights for all. But personal rights end where the rights of others begin.
3. Problems that arise are discussed by the group and sometimes also by the whole school community. The group leader should lead these discussions with great tact. This will ensure that children feel free as a person within a community.

4. There are no fixed ways of warning or rebuking, each way tends to wear off. Look for ways that are effective: placing your finger on your lips, raising a hand, placing a certain mark, a light hit on a gong, a bell; these are tried and tested means.

One thing should be avoided, though: using words! Any intervention with words is more than 90% wrong, because the human word stimulates a reply, an answer, justification, apology, stubbornness. The silent wordless understanding of each other is a hundred times better than speaking about how to do things differently. It is much better to act, it results in much less discussion. This does not mean serving the children hand and foot. No, it helps to intervene briefly, to be energetic and clear in word and deed.

5. Ensuring involvement by celebrating together, large and small celebrations. And by involving parents in activities in the school, it makes them feel connected to the school.

School of silence and quiet

Jenaplan schools are schools of silence and quiet; try to avoid chatter. Group leaders should also limit their talking. Therefore, it is important that the children recognize clear and orderly pedagogical situations in the school such as courses, circle talks, group work and block period, so that they and their group leaders know what is expected of them and they can be guided clearly. Working on a theme for a longer period also makes for meaningful activities.

Ten advantages of the three-year community group

1. Difference in age and difference in development. This means children can learn a lot from and with each other. There are always children who are pedagogical or didactic leaders.
2. The three learning years relate to each other as a student, journeyman, and master. Each with their own role.
3. The gifted children are not always the best, what might make them conceited. For a year they are the youngest in a group and have to adapt to older and perhaps more gifted children.
4. Even the children who are good leaders have to live up to expectations again and acquire their leading role.
5. It is better that only one third of the group changes every year. The two-thirds that stay can guarantee the good traditions of the group.
6. The third that comes in new provides new stimuli, provides 'fresh blood'.
7. The youngest group should not consist of too many newcomers to ensure that the cohesion within the group continues to exist in a natural way.
8. The teacher cannot be a teacher in the old sense, but becomes more of an educator for the children, the leader of the group.
9. A natural social education arises, a learning community. Placing pupils in groups based on age, the grades, ensures that one sees above all the pupil and not the child.
10. The community group is primarily concerned with education as opposed to the traditional one-sided school.



School for upbringing

Jenaplan schools are about upbringing. This upbringing takes place in many ways.

In the group we practice manners, caring for the group room, keeping the room in order. And observing the agreement, the obvious duty, that we never leave a classroom without cleaning it up and leaving it in the best conceivable way.

We pay attention to everything that comes up in children's lives: their experiences inside and outside of school, working and living in the workshop, on the school grounds, in the school garden, helping each other in their learning. There are joint celebrations at the beginning and end of the week. At the beginning of the day we have the opening of the day with a reflection, a saying, a story. At the end of the week we have a clean-up and a discussion in the circle about life of the past week.

There are meetings where the whole school community comes together: the Monday morning celebration, the introductory celebration for the new children, the biannual 'pedagogical review'. This review gives the children an overview of the schoolwork. The groups decide for themselves what they want to report on in the form of lectures, games, music, and singing. A whole morning is filled. Each group also makes an exhibition of important recent school work and explains the pieces of work to the visiting children.

In the school we pay a lot of attention to Christmas and the summer festival, in which the children have a lot of input.

The transition to the new community groups, the school trips and the school camp in the summer are also important. A special occasion in the University School of Jena was the school anniversary on 9 December. That day, new children were officially admitted to the school community and were led into the auditorium by their 'godparents'. After a short celebration they take the vow.



Godparenthood

Older children have to decide whether they want to help a new pupil in the coming school year to find their place in school life. This bridges the gap between the youngest and oldest children. At all the celebrations, the older children sit next to their godchildren in a set place, a kind of 'tribute'.

If the child experiences a difficult period, the group leader can turn to the godparent and the child can work next to their godparent until the tension or troubles are gone. These godparenthoods have turned out to be an extremely helpful tool!

It is important that these godparenthoods are not arranged but based on free choice. In this way, it becomes self-evident that relationships between boys and girls, younger and older, are never ridiculed.



Parents

School and home have to intertwine. Children experience that group leaders and parents contact each other openly. Jenaplan schools are primarily family schools. Children, parents, and group leaders form a school community.

Upbringing can only become more effective if there is solidarity between school and parents, if both groups meet in openness and freedom: talk to each other, give advice but also reprimand. Educational possibilities disappear when the group leader or parents lose the ability to let themselves be addressed in this full openness.

The 'school living rooms' are always open to the parents. Parents are co-workers, wherever they can fit in with education and celebration, in the workshop or the garden, on walks and trips. In school, the family and the educators live together. This way the school becomes a social environment, a community.

1.3 Suus Freudenthal (1908-1986)

In the Netherlands jenaplan starts in the 1950s. Suus Freudenthal-Lutter was secretary of the *Werkgemeenschap voor Vernieuwing van Opvoeding* (W.V.O.; Working community for Innovation of Upbringing), the Dutch branch of the international New Educational Fellowship (N.E.F.).

In 1952 Suus Freudenthal coincidentally receives a copy of Petersen's *Der Kleine Jenaplan*. She devotes a review to this book in the W.V.O.-magazine.

She succeeds in convincing Gerrit Hartemink of the jenaplan concept. At that time Hartemink was the principal of the Dutch Reformed Primary School at Laan van Nieuw Guinea in Utrecht. At his school he often worked with the ideas of Ovide Decroly and Célestin Freinet. With the help of Suus Freudenthal, Hartemink decides to put Petersen's ideas into practice. The Hartemink school can be seen as the first jenaplan school in the Netherlands. The school still is a jenaplan school and is now called De Brug. In 1958 Hartemink and Freudenthal set up the Working Group Jenaplan, which meant the start of jenaplan in the Netherlands. In 1968, the Jenaplan Foundation (SJP) was established, which officially launched jenaplan.

Freudenthal made jenaplan big in the Netherlands. Thanks to her enormous efforts, more and more jenaplan schools have been set up in the Netherlands. She translated Petersen's thinking in terms of content. A translation into Dutch culture and into the present. She formulated eight fundamental principles that jenaplan schools can use to reflect on:



1. Educating to inclusive thinking

(individual interest versus group interest)

My salvation cannot be obtained at the expense of or without others, but only if I seek and/or promote the salvation of the other.

2. Humanization and democratization of the school-reality

(making decisions together through democracy, or better: sociocracy)

Both children and parents need to have a say in the working and living community.

3. Dialogue

(with each other instead of each for themselves)

The working community has dialogue and consideration. The dialogue connects people, work, play and celebrations.

4. 'Anthropologization' of education

(the importance of the child in the pupil)

The school is for the children. The interests of the child always come first. Upbringing takes precedence over education. There is no way not to bring up. The school should never be an instrument of economic, religious or other politics.

5. Authenticity

(being real and reality)

The adults and children should be as authentic as possible. Together, they should allow for as much room for authenticity as possible.

The encounter with reality should also be as real as possible: no make-believe world.

6. Freedom

(working on cooperating)

A common, autonomous organization of the living and working community creates freedom. Because you can make your own decisions and influence the course of events, you get freedom. Joint responsibility for the group, the school, the living and working community.

7. Educating to critical thinking

(questioning answers)

Developing productive thinking, i.e. aimed at the integration of new information into the worldview of the individual child. Do not swallow everything but ask questions about the purpose and usefulness of things.

8. Creativity

(Imagining)

Creativity should be given ample attention in the school. Creating plays a significant role. But also expressing feelings, beauty, as well as the ability to put yourself in another position (empathizing).

With these eight fundamental principles of jenaplan education, Freudenthal laid the foundation for the 20 basic principles that Kees Both and Kees Vreugdenhil later put together (see next chapter).

Freudenthal explicitly put forward the primacy of education. There is no teaching without upbringing. As a group leader at a jenaplan school, you do not only teach but you also bring up.

Freudenthal also clearly said that the jenaplan concept is not a fixed model. It is not a rigid didactic approach that prescribes exactly what you should do as a teacher. Jenaplan is a vision, a basic attitude, a philosophy of life. Freudenthal described the jenaplan concept as an interpretable target model or an admissible ground model. This means that the concept is open to new developments and offers space for school-related interpretation.

The mother of the Dutch Jenaplan movement died on 25 September 1986.

2. JENAPLAN THEORY

2.1 a concept

Jenaplan education is a valuable educational innovation concept. Initially developed in Jena, it has been updated in the Netherlands over the last few decades. However, the concept is an interpretable target model. It is not an elaborated pedagogical and didactic model but a foundation on which you have to build a school. It is a concept that has to be shaped within the own living and working community. The designers are the ones involved: the children, parents, and group leaders.

The concept provides the opportunity to design your own school. You give shape and content to a school with your team and with your children and parents. This is a big advantage. It is what makes the concept strong, as you can translate the starting points into your own situation and you are not bound by specific rules, agreements, work and organizational forms.

But an open concept is also tricky. Because what is good jenaplan education, what does that look like? You will recognize this situation at a birthday party. You're just having a beer, enjoying some cheese and your neighbor asks: "Don't you work at a jenaplan school? What is that exactly, a jenaplan school?" Well, what do you say? How can you explain to others in a comprehensible way what a jenaplan school is without quoting a theory book?

The openness of the concept gives a lot of freedom, but it also forces you to make choices. How should you further develop your school? What suits you, your team, your children, and parents? The choices need to be made together. If the school wants to be a living and working community, a cooperation where people live and work together, you will also have to make decisions together. Without involvement there is no responsibility. And without responsibility there is no involvement.

To be able to make good choices, you must know where you want to go. The school's mission must be clear. To reach the end point of the journey, you must know where to start.

2.2 at the heart of society

Social developments play a role in the development of the school, of course. The jenaplan school is right at the heart of society, is part of it, opens doors and windows, and commits itself to doing something with current social developments. This is of course not limited to the educational content, but it should also have an impact on accountability, school development, culture, and structure; on total school life.

We live in a time where governments are asking schools to account for their actions. The inspectorate monitors whether the available funds are spent in the manner intended by the legislator. Not only parents ask about the school quality, teachers also look more specifically at the quality of the school where they work or want to work.

Schools are asked to show more clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and are asked to draw up plans for change and improvement. School development and personal development need to be linked, integrated. School leaders are trained to shape these developments. Strengths and weaknesses are analyzed, organizational culture diagnosed. Competences, qualities and learning styles are examined. Requirements are set for the content by nationally established attainment targets and for the yields, which must be made visible with an approved system. Children are well monitored in the school, sometimes even controlled.

What guides a jenaplan school to ensure that it is not thrown back and forth between all kinds of interest groups: parents, the government, the inspectorate, colleagues, partnerships, agreements by coordinating school boards, policy plans?

2.3 focus on the child

The jenaplan school must be organized in such a way that it offers optimal development opportunities for every child. This is the mission of the jenaplan school, and therefore provides direction for all activities undertaken in the school. We must continually ask ourselves what actions will help the child's development.

So: What is the use of all our registration activities, all our meetings, all our coordinating school board meetings to a child? We can only be successful in all the changes we make if we can show how our efforts contribute to the development of children. And we must have an overview of the development of each child. It is not about our opinion on that development, it is about the development itself.

Children develop optimally in a good educational climate, which is what we work on as group leaders. However, 'pedagogical climate' is an abstract concept. You can sense and identify the characteristics of a good pedagogical climate, but how do you achieve this in your group? What should you do and know and what skills do you need to work on this?

2.4 pedagogical climate

A good pedagogical climate is created when group leaders lead well (Leadership), when group leaders know a lot (Content), can teach well (Didactics) and can manage their work well (Organization). These are the four main concerns for the group leader. All four should be well developed. You can compare it to an all-round championship in ice-skating. You should be able to ride all four distances well to become a champion, where a specialization in one of the four distances can help you win a medal.

The LCDO model is worked out into a competency list, so that group leaders can see for themselves what their strengths and weaknesses are. It is good to use this in the form of 360-degree feedback. By asking others what they think of your functioning, discussing it with each other and showing how development can take place, but also how the school can make use of your specialties.

2.5 culture and structure

Group leaders work in a certain school culture and in a certain structure. Both culture and structure are quite decisive for the development and quality of a school.

For jenaplan schools, this often means changing from an informal culture to a more professional culture.

We are clear about the school structure in jenaplan schools: form follows function

Too often, however, you see that structures once came into being and it is difficult to change those traditional structures. 'Yes, but that's how we always do things' is a slogan often heard by new group leaders.

Do we dare to let go of the familiar structures because we might do better in another way? Are we willing to experiment with that? And how far do we want to go? The basic principles describe jenaplan as a dynamic school that constantly seeks improvement and where development never stops.

Structures should help you to achieve your goals. We often see structures work against each other. And is the structure beneficial to what it is all about: the child?

Do the community groups get enough opportunities to develop within the school structure, or do all kinds of organizational agreements form a barricade for further development?

The culture and the structure in the school are determined by the people in the school. People make the school. Everyone has a certain role in this, both the team members, the school management and the parents in the parents' association or the participation council. It is important to determine whether each section experiences the efforts in the same way. An open but critical attitude towards each other contributes to quality improvement.

OFFICIAL-POLITICAL CULTURE		PROFESSIONAL CULTURE
minutes	⇒	action list
corridor talk	⇒	addressing each other's behaviour
responding to the person	⇒	responding to someone's actions
speaking for others	⇒	speaking for yourself
spectator	⇒	player
searching for someone to blame	⇒	learning from mistakes: reflection
general team meeting	⇒	inner and outer circle
reconsidering it	⇒	going for it
monitoring and control	⇒	aiming at development
feeling passed over quickly	⇒	no need to know everything
hedging oneself	⇒	taking risks
uniform in changes	⇒	pluriform in changes
effort oriented	⇒	performance oriented
trying	⇒	creating
consultative style	⇒	working style
thinking in problems	⇒	thinking in solutions
starting with document	⇒	starting with design

2.6 Parents and school

Parents form an important group in the jenaplan school. We see the parents as primarily responsible for the upbringing of their children. Parents entrust their children to the school and expect a professional contribution. As a pedagogical school, the jenaplan school can never work without these parents. There is a constant search for the right relationship with parents. This relationship can be diverse and ranges from 'informing each other', via 'helping each other' to 'participation' and sometimes 'control'. Sometimes it means that you listen to parents and make use of their professional input, while at other times you talk to parents about the difficulties in the home situation and recommend them to take a parenting course or to seek social aid.

As a result of social developments and the rise of community schools, the boundaries between the home situation and the (community) school situation are gradually becoming blurred. The development is changing from 'the family unit as the cornerstone of society' to 'the (community) school as the cornerstone of society'. As a result, a community school or integral child center can give even more substance to the pedagogical task of the school.

2.7 The team, a community group

You can look at the school team and the school leader as a community group with a group leader. Often good group leaders become school leaders; they have a lot of experience with leadership, didactics, and organization in their community group. This experience, however, is not put to effective use to lead a team. What remains in a team of the courses, circle discussions, block period, tutoring, instruction, independent learning, celebrations, play and so on? Why do school leaders retreat to small offices and meeting tables? Much of what has been written about the community group can be used for a team. It creates a sea of possibilities.

If a group leader is confronted with a problem, we form a circle and present the problem to the group. We think about what we can do and how we can do it. The tasks are divided, we go to work and after a while we evaluate in the circle and determine our next steps.

When it comes to the school management, the competent authority (the school board) or coordinating school board might also get involved. The involvement of these sections is sometimes in conflict with basic principle 11, which says that the school is a relatively autonomous community of those involved.

Jenaplan schools must therefore be constantly alert when entering into cooperation, to ensure that the autonomy of the school is not too much affected.

2.8 Basic principles

To make jenaplan schools more recognizable, basic principles have been drawn up for the Dutch schools. These basic principles were developed in the nineties by Kees Both and Kees Vreugdenhil.

In the basic principles you will find the answer to the question: "Why do we do what we do, the way we do it?"

The basic principles are also important because they connect the Dutch jenaplan schools. All jenaplan schools are obliged to include these principles in their school plans.

The basic principles are divided into three parts: 'people', 'society' and 'school'.

If you want to work on upbringing, you should be aware of what you want people to achieve. It should be clear which image of the human being you are striving for. This is described in the first five basic principles:

About people

Basic principle 1:

Every person is unique: there are no two persons alike.

That is why every child and every adult have an irreplaceable value.

Basic principle 2:

Every human being has the right to develop their own identity. This is characterized by: independence, critical awareness, creativity, and a focus on social justice.

Race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, social environment, religion, worldview, or disability should make no difference.

Basic principle 3:

Every human being needs personal relationships to develop their own identity: with other people; with the sensory reality of nature and culture; with the reality that cannot be experienced by the senses.

Basic principle 4:

Every human being is recognized as a whole person and, where possible, approached and addressed as such.

Basic principle 5:

Every human being is recognized as a carrier and innovator of culture and as such approached and addressed as much as possible.

People live together. We have wishes about living together. We should have a view of what we want society to look like. The school that wants to manifest itself as the school where you learn to live together must speak out about this. You can see this in basic principles 6 to 10:

About society

Basic principle 6:

People must work towards a society that respects everyone's irreplaceable value.

Basic principle 7:

People must work towards a society that offers space and incentives for everyone's identity development.

Basic principle 8:

People must work towards a society in which differences and changes are dealt with fairly, peacefully, and constructively.

Basic principle 9:

People must work towards a society that manages earth and world with respect and care.

Basic principle 10:

People must work towards a society that uses natural and cultural resources responsibly for future generations.

All these wonderful principles about our image of the human being and our society have consequences for the way in which we give shape to education. Basic principles 11 to 20 deal with this:

About the school

Basic principle 11:

The school is a relatively autonomous, cooperative organization of those involved. It influences society and is influenced by it.

Basic principle 12:

At school, adults have the task of making the earlier statements about people and society the (pedagogical) starting point for their actions.

Basic principle 13:

In the school, the subject matter is derived both from the children's world and experiences, as well as from the cultural goods, which are regarded in society as important means for the development of the person and society outlined here.

Basic principle 14:

In the school, education is carried out in pedagogical situations and with the help of pedagogical tools.

Basic principle 15:

In the school, education is shaped by a rhythmic alternation of the basic activities of speaking, playing, working, and celebrating.

Basic principle 16:

In the school there is a predominantly heterogeneous grouping of children, according to age and level of development, in order to stimulate learning from and caring for each other.

Basic principle 17:

In the school, independent play and learning are alternated and complemented by guided and supervised learning. The latter is explicitly aimed at raising the levels. In all this, the children's initiatives play a significant role.

Basic principle 18:

In the school, world studies are central, and are based on: experiencing, discovering, and researching.

Basic principle 19:

In the school, behavioral and performance assessment of a child takes place as much as possible based on the child's developmental history and in consultation with the child.

Basic principle 20:

In the school, changes and improvements are a never-ending process. This process is driven by a consistent interaction between acting and thinking.

We can look at our school with the basic principles in hand. How close are we to the concept, the starting points, what are our qualities and what are our challenges?

In the past, the basic principles have been explained and made more practical. You can find more about this in the literature.

2.9 Quality characteristics

After drawing up the basic principles, Kees Both, as a national employee for jenaplan schools, wrote a contemporary Dutch theory book, entitled *Jenaplanonderwijs op weg naar de 21e eeuw* (jenaplan education on the road to the 21st century). Later, this book was also translated into German and was called *Jenaplan 21* for short.

In chapter 4 of this book, the author mentions six quality characteristics by which the jenaplan school can be identified. The book is of great value as a theoretical basis for the Dutch jenaplan schools.

These characteristics form the starting points and can serve as a beacon for improvements in the school. When based on these quality characteristics, changes in the school will lead to actual improvements.

By stating indicators to these quality characteristics, they become more practical and applicable in everyday practice.



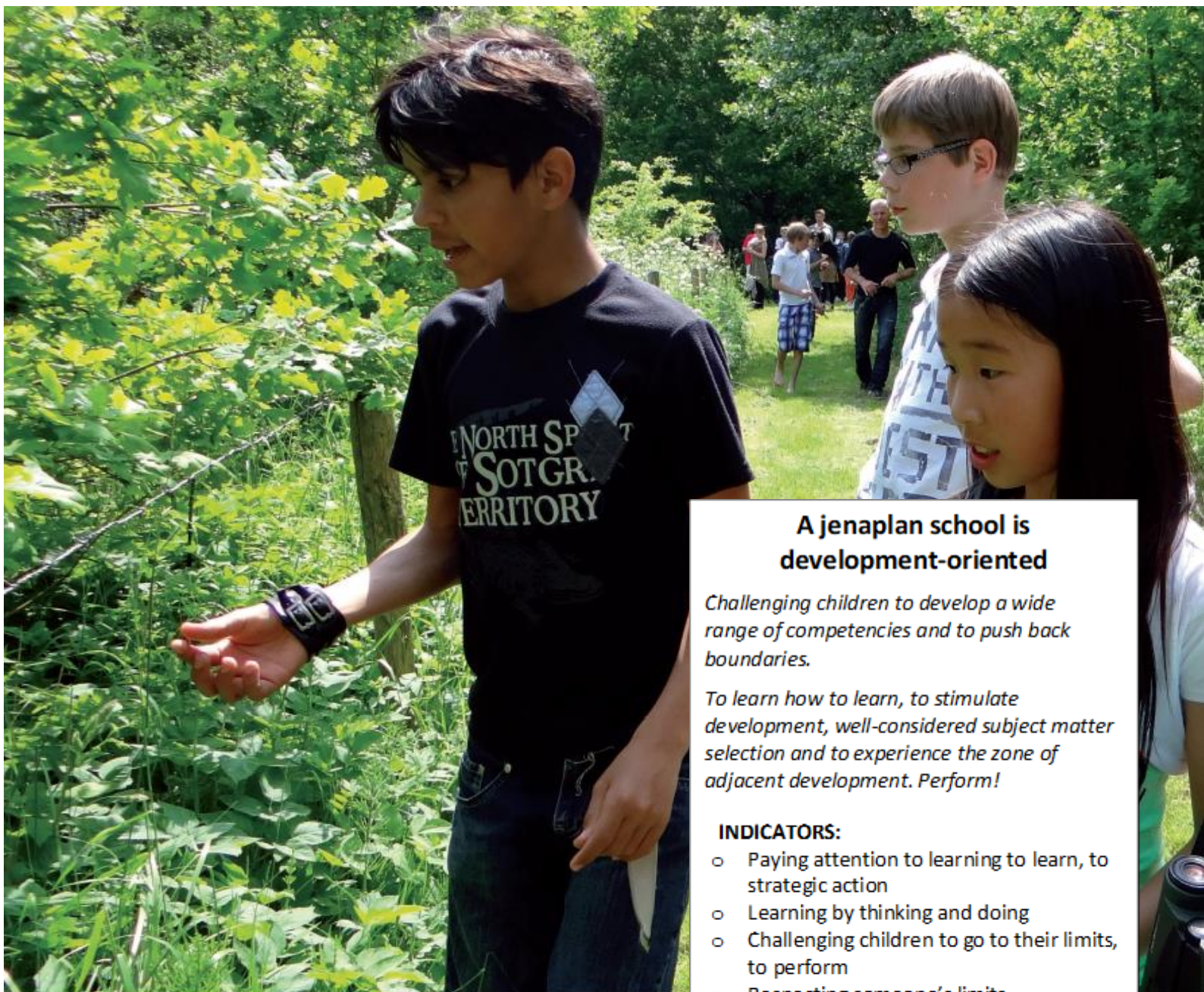
A jenaplan school is experience-oriented

The school is all about giving children a lot of different experiences: learning by experiencing.

In addition, experience-oriented also means: making use of the children's experiences.

INDICATORS:

- Children can and may choose activities
- There is a rich learning environment
- Based on children's basic needs: wellbeing, involvement, and connectedness
- Children's mutual relationships are shown
- Group leaders conduct experience-based dialogue with the children.
- Group leaders question their own functioning in the group
- The classroom is designed by the group
- The grounds around the school encourage play and discovering.



A jenaplan school is development-oriented

Challenging children to develop a wide range of competencies and to push back boundaries.

To learn how to learn, to stimulate development, well-considered subject matter selection and to experience the zone of adjacent development. Perform!

INDICATORS:

- Paying attention to learning to learn, to strategic action
- Learning by thinking and doing
- Challenging children to go to their limits, to perform
- Respecting someone's limits
- A performance culture, not a performance cult
- Letting children experience their zone of adjacent development
- Working with many differentiated situations and assignments
- A good alternation of the four basic activities
- Learning important things by experiencing and by feeling
- Opening doors and windows
- We consciously work on increasing self-management by the children
- We work with the children on self-knowledge (reflection) and a healthy self-image
- The report mainly makes development visible (portfolio).

A jenaplan school is cooperative

Cooperating, helping, caring for each other, speaking, playing, deciding, and celebrating together. All this makes the school a living and working community. Learning is social learning, solving problems together, evaluating them together.

Indicators:

- Reflecting and practicing how we can live and work together as well as possible
- Helping to develop: desk group, buddies, mentorship, tutoring
- Circle discussions in which we examine together how things work
- Speaking TOGETHER, playing TOGETHER, working TOGETHER, and celebrating TOGETHER
- Discussing what to work on, how to work and how to evaluate
- Discussing texts and artistic products with each other
- Establishing relationships between what has already been discovered and what you discover yourself
- Children's work can be found in the documentation center.
- Showing what we have learned and experienced a lot
- Children help to design and manage the rooms.
- Formulating routines together
- Practice decision-making
- Time and care for each other in ups-and-downs
- Celebrating that we belong together (community)



A jenaplan school studies the world

World studies are the heart of education. Characteristic features are experiencing, discovering, and investigating, with a strong focus on small and great topical issues.

Indicators:

- o Education resembles reality
- o Time and space for independent research and discovering
- o Many ways to meet each other
- o Plenty of research materials
- o Moments of wonder
- o Plenty of documentation material
- o Good display of children's work
- o Children show great commitment
- o Critical about social and cultural development in society
- o Plenty of opportunities to do something for yourself
- o Giving personal meaning to subjects and themes
- o Paying a lot of attention to group work
- o Observation circles and reporting circles
- o An organic relationship between world studies and courses
- o Contact with different cultural expressions
- o Have an eye for environmental care
- o Paying structural attention to contradictions, deprivation, discrimination





A jenaplan school is critical

Jenaplan focuses on working towards a humane and ecologically sustainable society. This also means developing a critical and constructive attitude towards developments in society and culture, starting from home: the school itself. Plus, a jenaplan school wants to teach children to think critically.

Indicators:

- o Sensitive to: right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, true and false; social relations, minorities, etc.
- o Learning to deal with differences; contradictions and conflicts are an opportunity to learn
- o Paying attention to the careful handling of things, no throw-away mentality
- o Nature and environment friendly
- o Paying attention to the emergence (history) of contradictions and conflicts and the role of children, black people, women and gays in history.
- o Looking from different perspectives
- o Using imagination for a hopeful perspective
- o Continuing to work towards a better society
- o Questioning things 'that have always been that way'
- o Clear thinking, giving arguments and expressing feelings
- o Enjoying life by lots of celebrations
- o A critical attitude is also appreciated in the team and in the relationships with the parents

A jenaplan school looks for meaning

A jenaplan school pays specific attention to philosophical and existential questions, to meaning. This can be passive: listening (stories, symbols and rituals, silence, prayer, and meditation). It can also be active: acting (committing oneself to others). And by thinking together about questions on meaning and religious and nonreligious experiences about meaning.

Indicators:

- Experiencing meaning, in stories, in conversations
- Paying attention to children's existential questions, in philosophical conversations
- Telling lots of stories
- Paying attention to and caring for each other
- Moments of silence, meditation and/or prayer
- Symbols and rituals are recognizable in celebrations
- We marvel and experience beauty in arts education and world studies.
- Consistency in the rhythmic weekly plan, in being able to make substantial choices of one's own.
- Talking to parents about children's perspective
- Explicit ideological, religious, and humanist education.
- Paying attention to religious and non-religious experiences about meaning!
- Regularly discussing meaning in the team: Why do we do what we do, the way we do it?



On 15 February 2006, a group of jenaplan people met on a voluntary basis to discuss ways to make jenaplan schools more recognizable and ways to improve the quality of jenaplan schools. Thanks to this 'think tank', many schools, organized in regions, have become more active in working on quality improvement. The think tank formulated 12 jenaplan core qualities. Schools must make clear how they work on these qualities. Schools that meet the requirements can now be recognized by a sign at the school and a mention on the site of the Dutch Jenaplan Association (NJPV): www.jenaplan.nl

In practice, this means that, together with other schools in the region, schools work systematically on quality improvement through consultation, exchange, seminars, and conferences. Schools work together to determine which schools deserve recognition.

Part II of this book elaborates on these jenaplan core qualities.

3. ESSENCES OF THE JENAPLAN SCHOOL

The jenaplan concept fits our ideas about good education, or even stronger: We believe that proper education is possible only in jenaplan schools. We believe that a jenaplan school can contribute to a better future society, just as Peter Petersen saw it: the school as a place to practice for a better society. In our individualizing society, the jenaplan school still seems to be the only place where children get the opportunity to learn to live together. And this might be more important than ever nowadays.

But do we live up to this believe? Are we working on it consciously? And exactly what should we teach children?

3.1 Seven essences

The statutory attainment targets also apply to jenaplan schools of course, but we want more! Jenaplan schools should have added value and that added value should be clear to everyone. Getting a grip on the power of the jenaplan school.

After much puzzling, analysing and many discussions with former pupils of jenaplan schools, we arrived at seven essences:

We want enterprising (1) people who can plan (2) and cooperate (3), people who can create (4) something and present (5) it. They must be able to think about their input, be able to reflect (6) and they must be able and willing to account for (7) their actions.

In short, they must learn to be active, to plan, to cooperate, to create, to present, to reflect and to account for their actions.

However, mentioning these essences is not enough if we do not deliberately integrate them into our daily activities at school. Every essence needs an elaboration to help group leaders in setting up jenaplan education, but also to be able to determine the extent to which children have developed these essences.

3.2 Seven times seven

Seven essences, a nice biblical number. So, the next task was to describe seven indicators for each essence. But much of what has been published about these characteristics is not very concrete.

We failed in putting these indicators in a learning line or a logical order. In arithmetic, you first learn to count to ten, then to count to twenty and so, step by step, your arithmetic skills are built up. This did not work with the essences. You can, however, indicate which of them you recognize in a child. What is even more important is that group leaders can see which learning opportunities they have to offer children and which situations they have to organize to give children the opportunity to practice the essences.

Seven times seven shows multiplicity, like 101 Dalmatians or 1001 nights.

3.3 Enterprising

The essence of enterprising concerns these seven indicators:

1. Devising new things and solutions
2. Taking initiatives, raising issues, putting forward proposals
3. Trying out things, choosing creatively
4. Using qualities effectively
5. Showing ambitions, having faith, persevering
6. Deliberate action
7. Tapping into sources of information

When you are observing a community group, you can determine which indicators are visible in a child. You could, for example, in a diagram, use the colours red, orange, and green to show whether an indicator is not, is sometimes or is often found. You can also choose to not, partially, or completely colour a box.

After determining, the analysis is significant, in which several questions have to be addressed:

- What do these data say about this child?
- What do these data say about this group leader?
- Is this the same for every group leader?
- What does it have to do with the child's position in the group: youngest, middle, oldest?
- What does it have to do with the pedagogical climate in the group?
- What could you do to stimulate development?
-

Sometimes you discover that the week is so full of activities planned by the group leader that there is no room at all for children's initiatives. Children are sent from one instruction to another. They do have a block period, but it is packed with tasks that must be completed by Friday. World studies consist mainly of worksheets and writing mini booklets or papers. Enterprising children will then be seen as difficult. Trying and testing is forbidden, and the textbook and the group leader are the only sources of information. In this situation, the question rises whether this is appropriate for a jenaplan school.

3.4 Planning

Children who have mastered planning have the following seven skills:

1. Describing how a period (lesson, day, week) is built up
2. Stating what is expected of you
3. Gathering things quickly and well
4. Doing things in the right order
5. Defining your own learning objectives
6. Planning a day
7. Planning a longer period in a self-responsible manner

Planning is difficult, I experience that every day myself. With everything that has to be done in a brief time, days are often difficult to plan. Sometimes things just happen to you or you feel that you are being lived. Being in control of your life means you must have planning skills. Let's give children opportunities to learn these. Let's not take everything out of their hands but involve them in their own learning process. As a jenaplan school, we want children to be able to do more than just work on their own. We want them to learn to work self-responsibly. To do that, they also need to learn to plan.

3.5 Cooperating

Undertaking action, taking initiatives, is of vital importance. You never hear that people are successful because they scored so well on their final tests when they were young. Successful people do tell you that they are enterprising or good at cooperating. Many books on cooperation have been published in recent years. Yet cooperation seems to have become unimportant, because education, perhaps forced by the outside world, is becoming increasingly individualized. Especially jenaplan schools, parents included, must point out the importance of cooperation: You learn through the other person!

If you work together, you can:

1. Share with others
2. Give others 'time to think'
3. Listen attentively and respect differences of opinion
4. Be socially aware
5. Follow and give instructions
6. Offer to help others
7. Respect school and group rules

3.6 Creating

School is not only about being social, it is also about performing. At a jenaplan school children work hard, they have a lot to do. What we want to emphasize is the creative side of children's actions. There should be more than just following the instructions of the group leader. We want to develop children's creativity and art. The seven indicators in creating are:

1. Investigating, taking things apart
2. Being curious, keep asking questions
3. Producing a lot of original ideas, not be satisfied with 'ordinary'.
4. Persevering
5. Being the best version of yourself
6. Easily switching to another point of view
7. Easily building on the ideas of others

3.7 Presenting

The school should offer children a multitude of learning opportunities. This includes well organized courses where instruction is given effectively. In addition to these courses, a great deal of attention should be paid to what we have come to call world studies. We even say that world studies are the heart of the jenaplan school. Petersen called it 'Gruppenarbeit', which was mainly about social learning and upbringing. According to him, this happened by speaking together, playing together, working together, and celebrating together.

With learning in courses, it is useful to use a test to determine what has been learned. With world studies this is much better done by presenting. We must help children to improve their presentations skills. I often hear from former students that these presentation skills mean a lot in their lives.

If you can present well, you can:

1. Show originality, passion, and courage
2. Behave naturally, authentically
3. Make contact with the audience

4. Use (large) gestures
5. Apply good articulation, voice volume, speech tempo and dynamics
6. Apply good language
7. Manage your performance well

3.8 Reflecting

Learning mainly happens by experiencing successes and by trial and error, by looking back and analysing what you did and what the consequences were. Others, children and adults, can be a mirror for you. You must learn to be curious about what you have done, what you have accomplished. An assessment is meaningless without a discussion following it. You could say: reflecting is learning.

When you are good at REFLECTING, you:

1. Show what you have learned
2. Ask and give feedback (two stars and a wish), you are critical
3. State how things could have been done differently
4. Evaluate your approach and draw consequences from it
5. Review your work, assess it, and draw consequences
6. Argue why you do what you do
7. Compose your portfolio, present your own development

3.9 Accounting for your actions

The last one in the row of seven is accounting for your actions. We raise children to people who feel responsible for themselves and for the group. In my experience people change when they are given responsibility. We know that villains become the best police officers and the biggest troublemakers become the best teachers! We need children to tell us why they do what they do and why they do it that way. Accounting for your action means:

1. Explaining why you did what you did
2. Gathering your own things and cleaning them up
3. Taking care of yourself and others
4. Asking for instructions
5. Participating and taking part in deciding
6. Overseeing the consequences of your own actions
7. Taking initiatives to improve things

ENTERPRISING	PLANNING	COOPERATING	CREATING	PRESENTING	REFLECTING	ACCOUNTING FOR
devising new things and solutions	showing how a period (lesson, day, week) is built up	sharing with others	investigating, taking things apart	showing originality, passion, and courage	showing what you have learned	explaining why you did what you did
taking the initiative, raising issues, putting forward proposals	stating what is expected of you	giving others 'time to think'	being curious, keep asking questions	behaving naturally, authentically	asking and giving feedback (two stars and a wish), being critical	gathering your own things and cleaning them up
trying out things, choosing creatively	gathering things quickly and well	listening attentively and respecting differences of opinion	coming up with a lot of original ideas, not being satisfied with 'ordinary'	making contact with the audience	stating how things could have been done differently	taking care of yourself and others
using qualities effectively	doing things in the right order	being socially aware	persevering	using (large) gestures	evaluating your approach and drawing consequences from it	asking for instructions
showing ambitions, having faith, persevering	defining your own learning objectives	following and giving instructions	being the best version of yourself	applying good articulation, voice volume, speech tempo and dynamics	reviewing your work, assessing it, and drawing consequences	participating and taking part in deciding
deliberate action	planning a day	offering to help others	easily switching to another point of view	applying good language	arguing why you do what you do	overseeing the consequences of your own actions
tapping into sources of information	planning a longer period in a self-responsible manner	respecting school and group rules	easily building on the ideas of others	managing your performance well	composing your portfolio, presenting your own development	taking initiatives to improve things

This diagram of seven by seven relates to the total development and upbringing of children, as it is appropriate for the pedagogical school jenaplan is. It applies not only to children in the community group, but also to the team. It is interesting to see to what extent these essences apply to the team members.

If a school considers these issues to be essential for good jenaplan education, then each group leader will ensure that the children in the group are given the opportunity to develop these skills every day. The group leader will take a step back and offer children the opportunity to develop these essential skills. That is when we work on what Peter Petersen meant by his concept.

4. JENAPLAN ORGANIZATION

This chapter focuses on the organization of jenaplan in the Netherlands. It describes how jenaplan is organized.

4.1 history

The jenaplan working group of the Working Community for Renewal of Education (W.V.O), which is the Dutch section of the New Educational Fellowship (N.E.F.), was dissolved in 1969. At the same time, the Jenaplan Foundation (SJP) was established, which is independent of the W.V.O. The foundation started with a chairperson (Chris Jansen), a secretary (Suus Freudenthal) and a treasurer (Gerrit Hartemink).

The aim of the SJP is described as: "Stimulating the establishment and development of school communities that give the child or the young person as much opportunity as possible to bring his positive possible talents to optimal development" (Article 2, SJP).

From April 1969, the SJP's trade journal *Pedomorfose* was published. Suus Freudenthal had a profound influence on the articles in *Pedomorfose*. In 1984, the magazine *Pedomorfose* became the magazine *Mensenkinderen*, which is published six times a year since then.

In January 1975, the first national employee started working for jenaplan education. It was Eelke de Jong, who remained in office until the beginning of 1982. Kees Both succeeded de Jong in November 1982 as a national employee and later as a study secretary. From 2005 to 2007, Freek Velthausz was the last study secretary. The work was then taken over by a centre of expertise, in which organizations and training courses are represented.

4.2 current events

In 1977, the Dutch Jenaplan Association (NJPV) was founded. This association has a larger democratic structure (board members are elected) and is accessible to everyone through membership.

The jenaplan schools are connected in regions. These regions are geographically composed. In total there are 17 regions, which are led by a regional leader. This regional leader or another member of the region (regional representative) represents the region in the General Board, which meets three times a year.

The Executive Board leads the NJPT and directly manages the staff office. The staff office is made up of the people who implement the NJPV's policy. The Executive Board is of course led by its members (via the General Board meetings) but also by experts outside the General Board meeting.

The jenaplan schools are active in the regions. They work together to optimize working according to the concept. This is based on the twelve core qualities (part 2). Together they try to make each jenaplan core quality more visible at their school.

This is one condition for recognition by the NJPV: working together, learning from and with each other, in a regional context on the twelve jenaplan core qualities.

Schools that are actively involved in their own region get the recognition of the NJPV, made visible by a sign.

5. JENAPLAN TRAINING

Specific requirements are imposed on teachers who work at a jenaplan school. Many teacher training institutes pay only marginal attention to the various traditional innovation concepts, such as jenaplan. This is far from being enough to be well prepared for leading a community group.

Some teacher training institutes offer training opportunities for future community group leaders. Students can be partially trained for the jenaplan diploma. They can complete the course when they have their degree in education and are working at a jenaplan school.

Most group leaders opt for a training when they are appointed at a jenaplan school.

This additional education is organized on a regional basis by organizations and teachers recognized by the NJPV.

Sometimes schools choose to do the training with the whole team. This way, training and school development can go hand in hand, which is a plus. This is a sensible choice, especially for starting jenaplan schools.

Since 2014, the program has been an officially CPION-certified post-HBO (postgraduate) program.

The training can be completed in two or three years and consists of 100 contact hours in addition to internships. The meetings last a minimum of three hours, but can also consist of, for example, a study day or a two-day events.

Jenaplan schools develop a stronger profile when all the group leaders have their jenaplan diploma and when continuous attention is paid to development by attending conferences and seminars and by taking courses.

In an ever-changing world, it is of the utmost importance to make use of the latest insights and to implement them in the school. Brain research, for example, offers a lot of new information about learning. Many studies show that there is still a lot of room for improvement in education. Jenaplan schools, which want to be at the centre of the world, should be at the forefront of the realization of contemporary education.

Basic principle 20 is clear in this respect: In the school, change and improvements are a never-ending process. This process is driven by a consistent interaction between acting and thinking.

6. JENAPLAN PRACTICE

Jenaplan education is based on a concept. It is not a working method that prescribes how you should provide education in a jenaplan way. Jenaplan schools are at the heart of society and therefore allow themselves to be influenced. Basic principle 11 therefore reads: 'The school is a relatively autonomous, cooperative organization of those involved. It influences society and is influenced by it.'

Schools are therefore relatively free to give form and content to their jenaplan education in their own way. Schools affiliated to the Dutch Jenaplan Association (NJPV) have agreed that the basic principles and the jenaplan core qualities are starting points for the realization of contemporary jenaplan education.

It is therefore self-evident that, despite the shared principles, all jenaplan schools have their own 'colour'. New insights, modern tools and didactic working methods can therefore also be found in the schools.

You learn best when you know why you are learning and what you can do with what you have learned. You can compare it to sports. If you are a member of the football club, you have to train and there are matches. Nobody would join the club just to train. You train to play better in the next match. The match is what matters!

Many schools just train. There is a lot of practice. Children, and sometimes even teachers, do not know what all these trainings are meant for. Often, they do not get any further than saying: 'it's good for later in life'.

The more meaningful the educational activity, the greater the motivation and the more learning there will be. That is why we, in the jenaplan school, look for situations in which meaningful learning can take place.

6.1 Learning environments

More and more schools are developing so-called 'learning environments'. Larger spaces where children can work on self-chosen learning questions. Such a learning environment consists of different areas or workshops. At regular intervals, children can work together in one of the workshops. Some learning environments are organized per three-year group. In this way, children from different middle groups can work together, and sometimes even children from 4 to 12 years old can work together.

Workshops are often structured based on the theory of Multiple Intelligence (Howard Gardner). In this way, the school can provide a wide range of activities.

Not all buildings are suitable for creating a learning environment. Of course, there are other ways to offer children the opportunity to work on their own learning questions or interests. These schools organize optional courses, often with the help of parents.

6.2 Meaningful learning

You can organize functional, meaningful learning in many ways.

Children can learn a lot about products and shopping by setting up their own shop and going shopping in it. They can achieve many learning objectives this way. If you look at the lists of attainment targets and intermediate objectives, many of them can be achieved by setting up a 'real' shop at the school.

Children can also do important work with their group. Sometimes groups think of launching a campaign to help children somewhere in the world. Children are concerned about the fate of other children and are always willing to roll up their sleeves. They become creative in coming up with solutions and seeing possibilities and often need to be slowed down rather than stimulated.

A group, allowed to broadcast on the regional broadcaster for weeks on end, is highly motivated and will do everything in its power to ensure good interviews, interesting reports, and beautiful music.

And a group that has to help organize the school camp will be busy for weeks with devising the activities, making shopping lists and calculating the costs and travel time.

The group discusses the ins and outs of living together. The ideas of the 'class box' help the group leader organize this. There are weekly group meetings with children in charge. There is a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer, who prepare the meeting together. All children in the group can submit compliments, wishes, and questions. In this way, the group becomes more a close-knit group, with joint responsibility.

In Scotland, Steve Bell and Sally Harkness have developed a working method that has become known worldwide: 'storyline approach to education'. In Dutch it is called 'narrative design'.

A wonderful way to devise and work out a story together with the community group, in which the group leader guides the process by asking so-called key questions.

Narrative design is a way of learning that includes many educational activities in a meaningful context.

6.3 School buildings

Because children in jenaplan schools work in other ways than in more traditional schools, there are different requirements for a building. It is important that jenaplan expert draw up educational terms of reference, that describe the requirements for the various rooms, which rooms are desired and in which sizes, and the way in which these rooms should be situated in relation to each other.

The quality of education is not solely determined by a building, but a functional building does make the learning and working easier for children and adults.

A jenaplan school building offers opportunities for children to work alone and undisturbed or to work in small groups, opportunities where community groups can come together, where the different age groups can make use of and where the entire school community can come together.

Dividing and structuring the building conveniently can ensure that certain spaces can be used in a multifunctional way.

The jenaplan concept values the community group, the 'home group'. This is the place where the children and the group leader are 'at home', where they can share their joys and sorrows. This room, which often has a fixed circle, is always the start and end of activities. This is where the children of the group account for their actions.

Ever more schools are housed in a community school together with other organizations. This cooperation can be of added value to all participants in the school, but only if you want to provide education and upbringing based on the same vision. Developing a new building together therefore means that you should pay ample attention to bringing together the people who will be working in that building. At this moment there are many examples in the Netherlands where, unfortunately, no added value has been achieved. Fortunately, there are also successful community schools.

People make the school. Make sure the future users are involved!

6.4 Abroad

The Netherlands has about 200 jenaplan schools. These are mainly primary schools. There are also some jenaplan schools for secondary education.

Even though the educational concept was developed in the German town of Jena, the Netherlands has the most jenaplan schools. This is mainly due to the efforts of Suus Freudenthal-Lutter in the sixties and seventies and to the relative freedom that the Netherlands has in organizing its education.

There are also some jenaplan schools in Flanders, Belgium. These have joined the Dutch Jenaplan Association.

In Germany there are about 50 jenaplan schools. There is also an association in Germany: Deutsche Jenaplangesellschaft. You can become a member of this 'Gesellschaft' as a person. In the Netherlands, only schools can become members of the association.

For some years now there is also a Japanese jenaplan association. Through the many efforts of Naoko Richters, jenaplan is becoming more famous in Japan. Many Japanese come to the Netherlands to learn from our education. In April 2019, the first jenaplan school was opened in Japan. In Hiroshima they will start with more jenaplan schools.

You can also find jenaplan schools in several other countries, for example in the former Eastern Bloc.

Even though there are few jenaplan schools, the jenaplan concept has had a great deal of influence, especially on primary education in the Netherlands. Many of the ideas laid down in the Law on Primary Education (1985) are based on the idea of jenaplan.

Today, you may well conclude that the jenaplan concept can have a great deal of significance for the realization of inclusive education.

There is a regular foreign interest in the Dutch Jenaplan schools. Working with community groups (family-grouping, non-graded groups), the meaningful educational situations, particularly within world studies, the circle discussions, the democratic character of the schools and the happy children in our schools, make educators from all over the world curious about the concept of jenaplan that has been further developed in the Netherlands.



PART II

MAKING jenaplan

Illustrating the jenaplan core qualities of the NJPV by discussing them with
an explanation,
an example,
and with a checklist.

PART II MAKING jenaplan

CONTENT

	page
introduction	36
1. the child's relationship with oneself	38
1.1 identifying qualities and challenges	38
1.2 responsible for learning and planning	39
1.3 assessing one's own progress	42
1.4 reflecting on one's own development and discussing it	46
2. the child's relationship with the other	49
2.1 heterogeneous age group	49
2.2 working together: helping and receiving help	52
2.3 taking responsibility for harmonious coexistence	54
3. the child's relationship with the world	57
3.1 real-life situations	57
3.2 care for the environment	60
3.3 group work is connected to courses	64
3.4 speaking, playing, working, celebrating and rhythmic weekly plan	67
3.5 taking initiatives based on personal interest and questions	69

PART II making jenaplan

Introduction

Relationships are central to the jenaplan concept. In order to underline the importance of relationships the Nederlandse Jenaplanvereniging (NJPV) has formulated jenaplan core qualities, which are classified as follows:

1. the child in relation to oneself,
2. the child in relation to the other, and
3. the child in relation to the world.

Three categories, in which the child is the starting point and the relationship with oneself, the other and the world is described. Each category has a number of jenaplan core qualities that can be expected to be realized in every jenaplan school. The NJPV uses these jenaplan core qualities as criteria to recognize a school as a jenaplan school. A sign of the NJPV visualizes the recognition. With it, jenaplan schools indicate that they, together with other jenaplan schools in the region, are working on making visible these jenaplan core qualities.



The jenaplan core qualities are:

1. the child's relationship with oneself

- 1.1 Children learn to identify and use qualities/challenges in such a way that they feel competent.
- 1.2 Children learn to take responsibility for what they want to and have to learn, when they need instructions, and how to make a plan.
- 1.3 Children are assessed on the progress in their development.
- 1.4 Children learn to reflect on their development and to engage in dialogue about it with others.

2. the child's relationship with the other

- 2.1 Children develop in a heterogeneous age group.
- 2.2 Children learn to work together, give and receive help, and to reflect on this with other children.
- 2.3 Children learn to take responsibility and to participate in decisions about harmonious coexistence in the community group and in school, so that everyone does well and experiences well-being.

2. the child's relationship with the world

- 3.1 Children learn that what they do matters and learn in real-life situations.
- 3.2 Children learn to care for the environment.
- 3.3 Children apply the content of the school curriculum to get to know the world in world studies.
- 3.4 Children learn by playing, working, speaking, and celebrating according to a rhythmic daily plan.
- 3.5 Children learn to take initiatives based on their own interests and questions.

We will discuss all twelve jenaplan core qualities.

We will do this in three steps: EXPLANATION - EXAMPLE - CHECKLIST.

At first, we will discuss each jenaplan core quality. An explanation of the jenaplan core quality, you could say. Each quality will then be illustrated with an example. We will do this alternately with examples from the lower, middle, and upper groups. We will conclude each jenaplan core quality with a checklist. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss them with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on. In doing so you can map out your own practice.

1. THE CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ONESELF

The first four jenaplan core qualities concern the child's relationship with oneself. How well does the child know oneself, you could say. The focus is on the 'self'.

1.1 identifying qualities and challenges

The first jenaplan core quality is about every child having to get to know oneself. Self-knowledge is important. You need it to be able to feel competent but also to indicate what you want to develop.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children learn to identify and use qualities/challenges in such a way that they feel competent.

EXPLANATION

Children have to get to know themselves: to know what you like and what you hate. But also: what you want to do when you grow up, what you are good at, and what you need to learn. You get to know yourself through the other person. You need the other to make progress. You cannot see your talents until you are in a group. You see what is easy for you and what other have trouble with. And, of course, the other way around: what others find easy you might have trouble with. You get to know yourself through the group. It is important that all children can be proud of themselves. But just as important: being proud of someone else. Ultimately, you learn to appreciate each other and be proud of the community group of which you can be a part.

Children also learn that you achieve more together than on your own. You can use your talents for the group, so everyone benefits from your qualities. But you also benefit from the qualities of the others. Together you will make progress.

As a group leader, you play a significant role in helping children discover what they are good at. You will have to offer a rich learning environment. You have to open doors and windows, let children look over the fence. Stimulate children to do new things, to have new experiences. As a group leader, you have to challenge, stimulate, and seduce children to discover, experiment, and research. Respect and trust are essential, just as hope, perspective, and realism. No false hope but a hopeful perspective.

EXAMPLE

When setting up a post office in a corner of your community group, you first plan together with the children, what it should look like. You discuss with them in a circle discussion what the intention is: We should create a post office in the group room. Together with the children you make a plan how to decorate the area. You collect all the children's ideas and wishes. You note down all of them. There are many, so you decide to try and realize ten ideas together. You select these ten ideas together with the children.

After that, the whole group discusses how exactly it should look. This is of course not that simple; everyone has their own idea. But slowly, with some sketches on the interactive white board, it becomes clear: this is how it should look!

Everyone knows that Noortje is good at drawing. Therefore, she is asked to convert the plan into a situation sketch. The group supports this choice, and nobody feels passed over. This way Noortje feels competent and convinced that she is a good artist. She is proud. The group also appreciates Noortje's work. They are proud to have Noortje in their group.

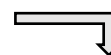
While Noortje is making the sketch, other children work on arranging other things for the post office in the community group. Niek goes to the upper group to ask for stamps that the group can use to postmark the postage stamps. Emmie collects tablecloths that the group wants on the table in the post office. And Femke is already preparing several letters that can be processed immediately.

CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1. you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4. you usually see this. 5. you always see this.



a	children say what they want to learn	
b	children say what they need to learn	
c	children can do and show things they are good at	
d	children are proud of their work	
e	children can choose from a wide range of options	
f	children are given the opportunity to achieve a goal in their own way	

1.2 responsible for learning and planning

The theme of the second jenaplan core quality is responsibility. Children have to learn to take responsibility for their actions: they have to be able to tell why they did things, and why in that way. They learn to make responsible choices for their own development. They need plans for this, and they have to learn how to make them. To make good plans you need goals: you need to know what is expected of you and know what you want to achieve for yourself. Children have to learn how to turn goals into activities.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children learn to take responsibility for what they want to and have to learn, when they need instructions, and how to make a plan.

EXPLANATION

Every group leader should repeatedly ask the group and the children two questions: “*what do you want to learn?*” and “*from whom do you want to learn this?*”. These two questions by the group leader make sure that children learn to take the responsibility they are given. In this way, children are involved in their own development. When children can indicate what they want to learn, it means that they are in the process of gaining control of their development process.

Of course, children's learning is not only related to 'wanting'. Children also 'have to' learn things. As a group leader, it is therefore important to make clear to the children what the goals of the learning process are. Children need to know what they have to learn, so it is important to be clear about the goals. They need to know what they have to master. The task given by a group leader "you have to do arithmetic, task 13" is an activity. It is better to make clear what they will learn from task 13. You indicate a goal. Children can then take responsibility by making clear how they think they will achieve the goal. Maybe even without instructions by the group leader or anyone else.

It is also important to see all this in a time perspective. You discuss with each other when the goals should be achieved, or when you want the goals to be achieved. Sometimes it is done in a day or a week, but sometimes it will take a month, a year, or even a whole three-year group!

Children in a jenaplan school work with their *own weekly plan* as much as possible. This means having their *own* weekly plan: each child has their own and all these weekly plans can be different. The group leader does not make them on Sunday afternoon and has them, neatly printed, on the children's desks on Monday morning. No, the children make their own weekly plan as much as possible.

That makes it their own *weekly plan*: a plan for a week, the clearest period in the school. Everyone makes a plan for a week. It is questionable whether children in lower groups can oversee a period of one week. Some of them will be able to do so, but most of them are already struggling with the question which day of the week it is.

And finally, it also means a *weekly plan*: the document contains a schedule. A plan for the week: when will I do what? This means that an own weekly plan is beyond the level of a to-do list. It is not the group leader's to-do list that states what you have to do this week. No, it is a planning document, a list of things you have to do according to your group leader and things you choose to do or learn yourself. A planning document that every child has worked on. It lets you help children with one of the most difficult things: planning. Estimating how long an activity takes is difficult for everyone. That is why we want to teach this to children by practicing it every week.

And please note: the own weekly plan is not a goal for the week. The week is not successful when the own weekly plan is met. The own weekly plan is a tool. An aid to learn a lot. And the week is successful when you have done just that. Sometimes you haven't fully completed your own weekly plan, but you've finally figured out what's the deal with the past participle. You've had a successful week! And vice versa of course: a diligent child might have done all the group leader's assignments but has no idea of what they learned. In short: the own weekly plan is an aid, not a goal.

Thinking in terms of goals is crucial in a jenaplan school. And not only thinking in goals by the group leader but also by the children. As a group leader, you should talk more about what the children have to learn instead of do.

EXAMPLE

At the end of the morning circle the group leader tells the children what is going to happen. She starts by telling what instruction she is going to give.

“For the youngest: I'm about to teach you a new letter. In fact, it's two letters that sound like 'ou'. It's the 'o' and the 'u'. And they sound like 'ou' together.

The group leader shows the letters 'o' and 'u'. One of the youngest children takes the floor and says:

“Miss, I know another 'ou', but with an 'o' and an 'w'. And that's about pain.”

The group leader compliments Hugo:

“That's right, Hugo. You saw that very well. There are indeed more 'ou's. One with an 'o' and an 'u' and one with an 'o' and a 'w'. I'm about to tell you about the 'o' and the 'u'.”

Of course, the group leader realizes that the instruction of the moment is not necessary for Hugo. He does not need the information. Hugo has already mastered the purpose of the instruction.

“Hugo, you don't have to attend the instruction. Mireille and Gerry, you don't need to be there either. You can work on something else. Just look at your own weekly plan to see what else you have planned.”

The group leader thinks in terms of goals and makes these goals clear at the beginning of the instruction. This makes it easier for children to choose whether they want to join the instruction.

“The other youngest have to see if they want to join my instruction. Noortje and Rik, you need to attend my instruction. I have seen that you can't do the 'ou' that well yet.”

This is how the group leader makes clear that there are children who are not yet able to bear the responsibility of joining an instruction or not. The group leader chooses for Noortje and Rik. They have to attend the instruction.

Of course, the children who choose not to attend the instruction have to answer for their choices later that week. Like Kees and Emmie: the group leader has doubts about whether they should attend the instruction. Nevertheless, Sjors and Emmie get the opportunity to choose for themselves whether they are present. This way they learn to take responsibility.

CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1.you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4.you usually see this. 5.you always see this.



a	children can choose whether they want to participate in an instruction	
b	children check their own work	
c	children pick up the things they need by themselves, and clear them up as well	
d	children can choose from whom they receive instruction; this does not always have to be the group leader	
e	children work with their own (daily or weekly) plan that they largely make, fill in, and plan themselves	
f	children can explain why they did what they did	

1.3 assessing one's own progress

The theme of the third jenaplan quality is assessment. As a group leader, you have to determine the quality of the children's performance. Can you be proud of the group's activity? And should you be satisfied with the development of an individual child? As a professional you have to make statements about this. The same national requirements apply to a jenaplan school as to any other school.

Furthermore, it is especially important that you see the achievements of the community group or of the individual child in the light of the child's developmental history and talents. It makes sense that running a lap around the school in 1 minute and 50 seconds is quite an achievement for Ruben, while Niek does it within one minute. The group leader is rightly much prouder of Ruben than of Niek, even though Niek has performed considerably better.

The quality of the jenaplan core quality reads:

Children are assessed on the progress in their development

EXPLANATION

In a jenaplan school you can make an objective and a subjective assessment. The objective assessments are measured against what a child of that age should be able to do. A pupil tracking system is useful in this respect. It allows you to compare the child to a national average, an objective standard: this is how this child performs compared to their peers, and that is what the child should be able to do. It is a useful tool to work on the goals each individual child should achieve. It also helps the school to justify itself to parents and to third parties, for example the Inspectorate. It gives you a criterion, a frame of reference with which you can compare the performance of children.

In addition, it is important to use the subjective part of the assessment. The performance of the community group and of an individual child should always be seen in the light of the developmental history of the group and the individual child. After all, each person is unique and has their own talents. What is quite an achievement for one person can be quite normal for another. This also brings a pedagogical element into the assessment. You use each child's talents and developmental history to assess their results. This helps to emphasize the progress, aiming to improve the results: 'you're getting better every time, keep it up!'

The school is as an advocate for the child, who has the right to their own development. As a group leader you have to be able to convert the tension between national requirements and the child's development into a plan that is good for each specific child. When performance is disappointing, 'being all over it and increasing the pressure' is sometimes counterproductive. Being a professional, the group leader has to be able to decide that taking off the pressure, giving it more time, is a better option. That means you are practicing your actual profession as a group leader. Do not just follow the schedule of the method or the test calendar but make choices that are good for the community group and good for each child. Choosing the 'right' learning path is not always the same as choosing the 'highest' learning path.

Giving hope is an important aspect of assessment. Without hope, dedication quickly disappears. It is important to give hope in the right way: no false hope, but honest hope. Assessing should never become judging. A good assessment also offers a perspective. It is standing still, so to speak, or rather looking back, to find out how to proceed.

Children also have to learn to assess others and themselves. The group leader should therefore involve the children in the assessing. Together with the community group or together with an individual child they value the achievements. Thinking in terms of goals is necessary to get this process going in children. After all, in order to assess you have to know the goals that were set in advance. Furthermore, it is important to assess the process. Not only the learning outcomes, the product, but also the way to the product: the process. Here, matters such as doing your best (commitment), cooperation and effectiveness play a role.

Error analyses are a necessity in a jenaplan school. It lets the group leader find out why the mistakes were made. Not only the group leader carries out error analyses, children do this as well. An error analysis can be used to find out which instructions or exercises are necessary to achieve a goal. Therefore, children in a jenaplan school learn to check and assess their own work. This makes them actively involved in reflecting on their learning process.

Composing a portfolio is a good learning activity. Children collect work that they are proud of. Things that have worked out well. This collection should to be structured to map the total development of children. And of course, a portfolio has to be based on clear and concrete agreements. A portfolio should be

balanced but also emphasize growth, progress; not only map out development but also offer perspective. The use of direct reporting, of actual work, makes a portfolio powerful. Don't just talk about how beautiful Femke writes but show a copy of her writing.

EXAMPLE

Femke has been in the upper group for over a year, but still has trouble reading books. This means that she tries repeatedly, but rarely if ever finishes a book. She doesn't like reading. And because she doesn't like it, she doesn't do it enough. She hardly practices. She is not good at it and she is not getting any better. That is why she doesn't like reading. There you go, a vicious circle.

The group leader has been thinking a lot about how to break this vicious circle with Femke. During an upper group teacher meeting the group leader once again raises the question what should be done to make Femke like reading. How can we spark Femkes interest in books so that she will read? An upper group colleague mentions the book series 'Dork Diaries' by Rachel Renée Russell. A so-called graphic novel; a cross between text and comic strip. The group leader gives a copy of the first volume of the series to Femke. An instant hit. Femke is pleasantly surprised because reading is now suddenly fun. In a short time, she devours a lot of volumes of the series.

You're supposed to post this kind of juicy stuff online in your BLOG so MILLIONS can read it!!!



Only a TOTAL DORK would be caught WRITING in a DIARY!!

This is THE worst present I have ever received in my entire life! I wanted to yell at the top of my lungs:



"Mom, I don't need a STUPID book with 200 BLANK pages!!"

What I NEED is to be able to "communicate" my "thoughts and feelings" to my friends using my very own cell phone.

Wait! Silly me. I keep forgetting. I don't have any friends. YET. But that could change overnight, and I need to be prepared. With a shiny, new cell!

In the meantime, I will NOT write in this diary again.

NEVER! EVER!!



The community group also sees that Femke is always reading. On her own weekly plan, she has even planned an extra period of 'reading' every day. The group leader sees this and of course approves of Femkes planning. Finally, the reading is getting somewhere!

Almost daily Femke is asked to read something from the book. The reading is not yet fluent of course. But everyone is proud of her. So proud that during the class meeting it is decided that Femke will do the book

presentation she did in the community group, in a shortened version, at the end-of-week assembly. Everyone agrees and Femke does too.


The group agree that Emmie will guide Femke in the preparation of the book presentation during the celebration. Emmie and Femke have their own weekly plans geared together and prepare the presentation.

During the end-of-week assembly Femke does a part of her book presentation for all children of the whole school. Although her reading level is not yet up to standard, her presentation is received with a loud applause during the celebration. Afterwards, during the reflection on the end-of-week assembly in the community group, she receives positive feedback from classmates. Everyone is proud and the group leader perhaps more than anyone.

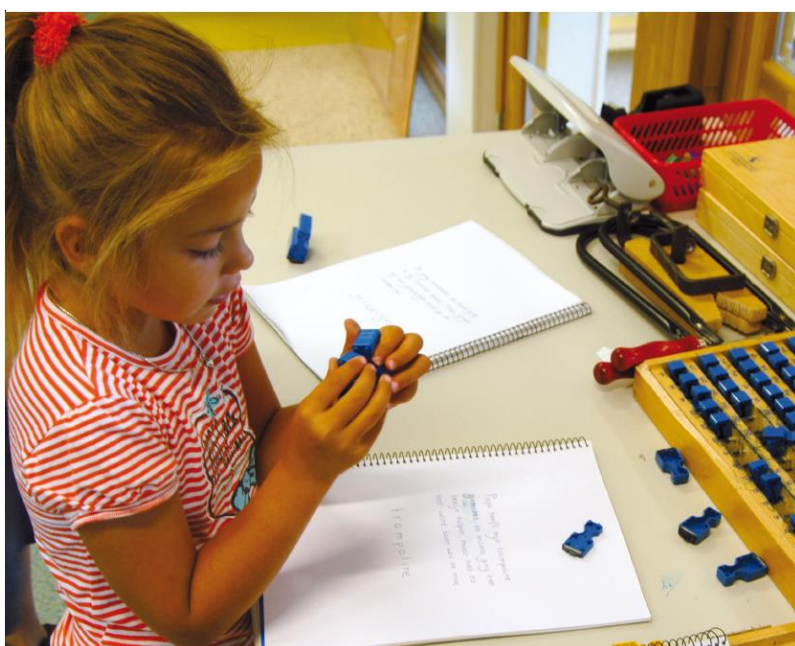
CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1. you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4. you usually see this. 5. you always see this. 

a	children report what they have learned today, this week, this period, this year, and this three-year group	
b	children appreciate themselves	
c	the school defends each child's right to their own development	
d	children look at their actions in different ways	
e	each child's performance is discussed in the light of their own ability	
f	children compose the portfolio together with the group leader	



1.4 reflecting on one's own development and discussing it

The theme of the fourth jenaplan quality is reflection. Looking at yourself, looking at your doings. And it is with good reason that you do that. You want to see what you can improve, how you can become even better than you already are. This applies to each individual, but it also applies to the community group: what are we good at as a group and what can we improve? If the strengths and talents of each group member are clear, the whole group can benefit from these qualities. The individual group members can also learn from each other. For that, it is necessary to talk to each other about development.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children learn to reflect on their development and learn to talk to others about it.

EXPLANATION

You have to examine your actions closely. Think about whether you are doing well or whether you can do better. You have to be critical of yourself. That is what we have to teach children in a jenaplan school. It will help you to gain insight into yourself, into your personality. But it will also help you getting to know and express your dreams and wishes.

For gaining insight into yourself you should not only reflect (look at yourself) but also evaluate. That means assigning value to what you see. For this you need a standard, a norm. And, of course, an expectation: Did you expect to achieve this? Or did someone else (or the group) expect you to achieve this?

In a jenaplan school, being a group leader, you do this with every child. But children also reflect among themselves. The group meeting is a good example of how to do this with the whole community group. We often talk about what we as a community group are good at and what we still need to learn. Individual reflections can also take place here.

The ideal document for individual reflection is the portfolio. Children collect things they have done well and products they are proud of. And they reflect on every bit. They describe why this performance is worth placing in their portfolio. This gives children a guide to look at their own performance in school. With the structure a portfolio offers, they do this systematically, within preconceived frameworks. Self-reporting is something you have to learn.

EXAMPLE

Children need to learn to reflect on their actions. And, of course, learn to talk about it with each other. One way to achieve this is to make a Personal Development Plan (PDP). Adults often find it difficult to make a PDP, but you can easily do it at a child's level. The group leader chooses palm reading for this.

"We're going to read palms today. No, not like a fortune-teller at the fair, who looks at your palm and then tells you how many children you will have. No, we are going to read palms in a different way.

All of you take an empty A4 sheet and put your hand on it. Now use a pen to draw your hand on the paper by using the pen to pass your fingers.

Right, does everyone have their hand on paper?

Now I could take the sheets with your hands, shuffle them and take one out. You'd have to guess who's hand it is. Would that work?

I think it would be difficult. Let's make it a little easier by writing something in the fingers. Things that belong to you."



"Write in your *thumb* what you do well, what you're good at. Don't write long stories, write keywords. Single words or slogans. Write in your *index finger* what you would like to be in the future, or what you would like to do a lot. Write in your *middle finger* what you want to get rid of, what you don't want anymore. Use the *ring finger*, which often wears the wedding ring, to write what you want to stay true to, what you like very much and what you want to do forever, things that, as far as you're concerned, should never stop. And finally, you write in your *little finger* what you want to learn: What do you want to be able to do?"

"If I were to take all the sheets of paper and you'd have to guess who they belong to, it would be a lot easier than without text. But we're not going to do that now. I want you to put your name and today's date on the sheet with your hand. I would like to see this hand in your portfolio. But before you do that, we're going to talk about it. Explain your hand to each other in pairs. Talk about your hand and what you have written. See if you have something in common. You have ten minutes to do this. First five minutes for one, then five minutes for the other. Go ahead."

The children exchange their 'hands'. After this exchange the hands will be discussed in the circle. In a very short time, each child has written a personal development plan. It is good to do this twice a year to determine the development.

This exercise, by the way, is also recommended for group leaders. The questions should then be converted to your own level (see picture below). Another option is to do this at school level.

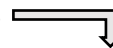


CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1. you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4. you usually see this. 5. you always see this.



a	children have portfolio discussions with the group leader and with other children	
b	children reflect on their own actions	
c	children are given the opportunity to attend (part of) the parent-teacher meeting about their report	
d	evaluation takes place every day (for example: is there an evaluation circle?)	
e	children report and/or write in their own report/portfolio, about their own actions and experiences	
f	children show that they think about what is right or wrong and discuss what they think about it	

2. THE CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OTHER

The second group of jenaplan core qualities are about the relationship between the child and the other. How the child functions in the group, you could say. The focus is on the 'we'.

2.1 heterogeneous age groups

The first jenaplan core quality of the *Child's relationship with the other* concerns group composition. The jenaplan concept is based on three-year groups. A group with youngest, middle, and oldest children. The most logical division of three-year groups is an upper group with grades 6-7-8 [age 10, 11, 12], a middle group with grades 3-4-5 [age 7, 8, 9] and a lower group with grades (0)-1-2 [age 4, 5, 6].

By working with age heterogeneous groups, you stimulate the empathy in children because they have a different position in the group every year. They learn what it means to be youngest, middle or oldest in a group. It also makes it easier to learn from and with each other. It is to be expected that you can or cannot do something yet in a community group. Helping each other is self-evident.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children develop in a heterogeneous age group

EXPLANATION

The jenaplan concept is based on three-year community groups. Three different year groups sit in a classroom, forming a community group together. Children are the youngest in the first year, the middle in the second year and the last year they are the oldest in the group. These different roles make it easier to look at other group members from different perspectives. As the oldest you generally know and can do more than the youngest member of the group. That means that other things are expected of the oldest. But also, that the oldest will remember how they felt when they were the youngest of the group. Working with different year groups in a community group stimulates empathy in children. They can easily put themselves in the other person's situation.

Good relationships with group members make a group into a real community group. Group leaders have a specific task. They will have to put energy into the mutual relationships of the group members. The community group has to grow into an effective and safe group. Because the children stay in the community group for three years, there is enough time for the group leader to get to know the children well. It is important to invest in the relationships.

In a three-year community group, it is easy to place children in a teaching role. Explaining something to each other, or helping each other, is the order of the day. Because the children are not of the same age, it is self-evident that you help each other; it is self-evident that you cannot do something yet and that you ask for help. So, in a jenaplan school, you are no longer the smallest, smartest, slowest, chubbiest, etc. of the class for eight years. The tough, strong girl who very easily takes on a dominant role is also the youngest of the community group a few times. This teaches her how that feels. And the shy, withdrawn boy is the oldest once. In this way he learns what it is like to be bigger and more advanced than the youngest of the group, who are about two years younger.

The oldest of the group play the role of 'master', the middle of 'journeyman' and the youngest of 'student'. The oldest will be called upon more often to lead and to take responsibility. The oldest will take the initiative more quickly and introduce other members of the community group to an event, activity, or experiment. On the other hand, behavior of the youngest will be tolerated more quickly. After all, they still have to learn a few things.

Asking for help goes well with the youngest, therefore. This means that a more wait-and-see attitude suits them comfortably. They are the babies of the community group. The role of the middle ones, the journeymen, is a role in the sidelines. The middle ones do not have to show themselves as leaders yet, they are not oldest yet, but they are given space to try it out. The middle ones can easily switch between leadership and receiving guidance; to slowly grow into the role of oldest.

The difference between the youngest and oldest members of the group remains clear because of the three-year groups. There is a difference of more than two years between the youngest and oldest. You have enough age difference to make strong and clear differences between the positions in the group. A tall youngest is still smaller than the smallest oldest.

The children of a community group sit in random groups. Not grouped by year group but mixed together. They sit where it is convenient to sit, where it is convenient to perform a certain activity. The children therefore do not have a fixed seat but sit in different places all the time. Just like at home: there is a place to read a book, to make a sandwich, to fix a flat bicycle tire, and so on. The activity, therefore, determines where you sit. You can see this principle in almost every lower year group, but it often disappears like snow in summer in many middle year groups.

In the community group, children are addressed as group members as much as possible and not by their year group placement. If the group leader would approach the group with 'the sixth grade will do this now, the seventh grade will do that and the eighth grade will do something else', the community group would look more like a combination class. A combination class is a classroom with children where one teacher teaches three groups at the same time. A group leader however leads one group of children.

EXAMPLE

The large age difference between the children in a community group provides a range of possibilities for the group leader. Expertise and experience of the oldest can easily be used in the learning process of the youngest. In turn, the oldest can spend more time learning something.

The children in the Dolphins group are avid writers of free texts (Freinet). Everyone in this middle group writes a free text each week. The youngest also write texts, although many of them have only just started writing. The group leader asks the oldest to help the youngest in making a free text.

"I know that there are a lot of children writing a free text again. It's all going very well and I'm very curious about all your experiences. Many children start writing stories right away. But I also know that for some of us it's not that easy. They will first draw what they have experienced."

The group leader would like some help in converting the drawings into a written text. The group leader asks for help of the children who have already quite mastered writing. She asks these children to help the youngest to get their story on paper. They can write down the story the youngest want to tell.

"Would the children who have already written a free text be willing to help the children convert their drawing into a story? They can write down the story that is in the drawing."

The group leader also uses the community group at other times. For example, some oldest children regularly read from an exciting reading book, and the youngest learn almost automatically how to take care of a news circle. The community group makes it a lot easier to learn from and with each other.

CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1.you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4.you usually see this. 5.you always see this. ↩

a	all children are in a three-year community group	
b	children do not have permanent seating; groups are conveniently put together	
c	children use each other's qualities and talents	
d	to treat children equally, they are treated differently	
e	children are addressed as group members, and not by their year group placement	
f	children work with children of different age, gender, interest, etc.	



2.2 working together: helping and receiving help

The second jenaplan core quality of *the child's relationship with the other* concerns cooperation. Cooperation is important in the jenaplan concept. Together you achieve more than on your own. Everyone benefits from good cooperation, both you and the group you belong to. And it does not matter how old you are. People are social beings and need each other. But cooperation does not happen by itself. You have to learn to work together. In our increasingly individualized society, with ever-smaller families and the decline in volunteer work, school may well be the only place where you can **learn** to work together. That is why jenaplan schools invest a great deal in cooperation. Jenaplan is a school to learn to live together.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children learn to work together, to give and receive help, and to reflect on it.

EXPLANATION

There is often a certain competition in groups. Who is the fastest, the smartest, the most creative? Or who is the first to finish the assignment? This is encouraged by giving all children the same assignment. There is nothing wrong with this. These are mechanisms that are present in every group. But when there is a competitive struggle in a group, children are only concerned with who finished first, who is closest to finishing the task, etc. This will make cooperation more difficult. Because if you help someone else, they will proceed, and you will waste your advantage.

You need to have safety to cooperate. You are allowed to make mistakes, and not punished for them. You can practice until you have mastered something. It is all about mastering a skill or gaining knowledge. It is not important who wins. Making mistakes is not a problem. Making mistakes is part of the learning process. If you need, you can have more time to practice. If there is enough safety in your group, learning will no longer be a competition.

Cooperation also requires respect. There can only be respect if children in the group know the other children's talents. This creates appreciation and respect for each other. Some are good at this, others are good at that. That means that there is solidarity. Brotherhood is a virtue in the community group.

To stimulate cooperation, you have to learn to help. Giving answers is not helping. That is why children in a community group have to practice in providing help. This means that as a helper you have to learn to listen to find out what the child you are helping is asking. As a helper you also have to think in terms of goals: what can't the other do, what goal hasn't been reached? And, as a helper, you also have to learn to explain. How do you communicate this to the other? You have to learn this by doing. Helping someone is not only demonstrated by the group leader in the community group, but children practice for the whole group as well. You can learn how to help well by replaying a help situation.

In order to work together you also have to learn to ask a help question and learn to accept help. Shouting "I don't get it" makes it difficult for the helper. If you need help, indicate as clearly as possible what kind of help you want. A good follow-up question would be: "What don't you get?" And you have to accept the help given. It is useful to first make a plan when help is offered. Afterwards, it is good to evaluate the help. This benefits both the helper and the one being helped.

EXAMPLE

In the middle group The Butterfly Garden, the children are busy preparing a community group evening. The children will invite the parents to come to school with them next Thursday evening from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. The children have made a program with the group leader. The children take care of the evening. Of course, the group also thought about parents having a cup of coffee or tea. Vincent and René have to take care of this.

Group leader: "This morning, I saw that Rudi helped Vincent and René a lot with the coffee and tea. I have already spoken to them about this. I also asked them if I could tell you, together with them, what was going on. Vincent and René, do you want to explain what was going on?"

Vincent: "Well, we had to calculate how much coffee we had to make. And we didn't understand."

Group leader "And then?"

René: "Then we asked Rudi to help us."

Rudi: "Yes, René came to me and then I went to René and Vincent. And then I asked: What don't you get?"



The group leader then lets the children play out what happened. They perform a play together. The group leader stops the play at regular intervals to explain and clarify things. Thinking about alternatives plays a significant role here. The group leader repeatedly asks the group: What could Rudi have done? Or: What could Vincent and René have explained better?

Group leader: "When did you realize that Vincent and René had trouble estimating how many cups of coffee can be served out of one pot?"

Rudi: "At first I thought they didn't know the multiplication tables very well. They had to calculate how many cups of coffee 20 parents drink. Well, if they drink two, that's two times twenty is forty cups of coffee."



Vincent: "Yeah, we had figured that out, too. Then I said: but how many pots of coffee is that?"

Rudi: "And then I thought: if they take a good look at the coffeepot, they'll find out for themselves."

René: "And then we went to the coffee room and asked Sjoerd for the coffeepot and he showed us."

The circle talks some more about why it was good that Rudi did not say that there are ten cups in one coffeepot. Although that would have been much faster, this way is better. Vincent and René even said that Rudi had helped them to find out for themselves. The group leader could not have summarized it any better. The group leader compliments the three boys. They worked cooperated well.

CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1.you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4.you usually see this. 5.you always see this.



a	children learn to ask for help and to provide help	
b	children learn things from and with each other and teach each other as well	
c	children are able to evaluate their cooperation	
d	children form and give their own opinion in the group	
e	group meetings are held at which decisions are taken by the whole group.	
f	children can articulate how they help each other	

2.3 taking responsibility for harmonious coexistence

The third jenaplan core quality of *the child's relationship with the other* is about living together harmoniously.

Jenaplan schools are based on 20 basic principles about man, society, and school. This division already indicates that the jenaplan concept is more than an educational vision. It is therefore not surprising that harmonious coexistence plays a significant role and that there is a jenaplan core quality that pays attention to it.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children learn to take responsibility and to participate in decisions about harmonious coexistence in the community group and in school so that everyone does well and experiences well-being.

EXPLANATION

We want every child to feel at home in a jenaplan school. A jenaplan school tries to be a pleasant school for everyone. Everyone should experience well-being. But everyone should also do well; everyone should be taken seriously. Everybody is seen as a member that matters to the community. That is why everybody contributes to a good life together in school. Everyone is addressed this way: 'You too can and should contribute to a good atmosphere. It is not a matter of leaning back and enjoying. Everyone is expected to take action!'

Harmonious coexistence starts with making room for co-deciding in the community group. The group leader is responsible and initiates this. The group leader ensures that children participate actively in the group. The group leader makes decisions, but always does so in the interest of the group. The group leader constantly lists the opinions of the group members. This makes the group leader similar to a father or mother in a family. They too make decisions in the interests of the family all the time. The group leader does the same for the group.

EXAMPLE

The group's dwarf hamster Sammie is ill. She has a tumor on her belly. Nicole and Fleur have already been to the vet with Sammie. The vet told them that Sammie is seriously ill and probably has cancer. The tumor should be removed quickly. Sammie will need surgery. But it will cost more than 100 euro, the vet said.

Sammie will be put on the agenda of the group meeting. The group has to decide about Sammie's operation. It is a difficult decision. Time plays an important role as well. If Sammie should have surgery, she should have it soon. Waiting a week is not an option anymore.

The group collects arguments during the group meeting. There are a number of arguments to proceed to surgery. Sammie has been in the community group for almost two years now. She is one of the group. And the class cashbox (the group's money) contains 80 euros. Nicole and Fleur have a fundraiser in store. They expect they will raise at least 50 euros. Most children in the community group think that their parents would also want to contribute to the costs of Sammie's operation. Although the class cashbox and the fundraising campaign make it financially possible to help Sammie, there are also children who do not like the expense. So much money for a hamster. For a fraction of the cost you would have a new hamster.

The class meeting is fruitless. Tempers are running high. Should you use all the financial means to save the life of a hamster? The veterinarian cannot guarantee the success of the operation. In fact, the operation could succeed, but a new tumor could grow. Not an easy situation.

After all the commotion the group leader has looked at all the arguments and makes the decision. He decides Sammie will not have surgery. He can argue the decision well and explains it to the group:

"Boys and girls, we have talked long about our sick Sammie. And it's a difficult situation. I have decided Sammie will not have surgery. That hurts me, just as it hurts you. After all, Sammie is one of us. But I don't want Sammie to be in pain now and perhaps be in pain again later. She should have a good life, and we can't give her that anymore. She's in pain now, and maybe again later. The chance that she will get better is very small. That is why we have to say goodbye to her.

I want us to take care of a good farewell. We have to talk to the vet to see how we can do this in a dignified way. Of course, we have good ideas of our own, but it has to be done in consultation with the vet. Sammie deserves a beautiful farewell. Let's gather ideas for her farewell this afternoon. And first, let's get used to the fact that Sammie is leaving us."

After this important decision the group leader ensures that the children take care of each other. The grief is great. Many are comforting Nicole and Fleur. The group leader makes sure that all the grief is cared for. Nobody is alone and everyone is talking about Sammie. This afternoon they will plan the next steps.

CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1. you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4. you usually see this. 5. you always see this.



a	each child learns that they are there for the group and that the group is there for them	
b	children know that their opinion matters, that they have influence on the choices that are made in the community group	
c	we make rules together in the community group	
d	children give each other compliments	
e	children exercise democratic citizenship in the group meeting or school/children's council	
f	children ask themselves and each other questions	



3. THE CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD

The last five jenaplan core qualities are about the child's relationship with the world. How well the child knows their world and their way of discovering the 'big world', you could say. The focus is on the 'world'.

3.1. real-life situations

Children do not develop individually but together with others, in a world that is gradually revealing itself to them, a world that is growing ever larger. By being active in that world, they get to know that world and the role they themselves play in it.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children learn that what they do matters and learn in real-life situations.

EXPLANATION

The most modern teaching method is using topical issues. These topical issues easily lead to great interest and intrinsic motivation; to real and meaningful learning.

In your education you can make use of the small topical issues and the great topical issues. The small topical issues are the events that the children of your community group experience, or even better, the events that you experience with the entire community group. For example, a disagreement or quarrel, hospitalization, illness or death, a win in a competition, a beautiful performance: a wonderful opportunity to learn. A disturbance in the schoolyard is tricky. You can end it by talking about it admonishingly, but you can also see it as an opportunity to learn how to look for good solutions together. And that applies to everything that happens in your group and in your school. As a group leader you should always consider: 'can the children do this, or should I do this?' Everything children do is learning and that goes for hanging up their work, tidying the cupboards, showing new parents around, solving quarrels in the schoolyard or helping other children learn.

By great topical issues we mean the things that take place in our neighborhood, our town, in our country, in the world. Important events should be given a place in our education. If an event takes place in the world that is of such importance that all media pay attention to it, it should have a place in the jenaplan school as well. These events are brought into the news circle and are followed up in many ways by working, playing, and celebrating together.

Together with the group we ask ourselves what significance these events have for our lives and our work in school. There are many different ways to work out our interests. Sometimes a campaign is organized to help others, other times we write a letter or make a documentary.

As a group leader you need to develop the art of using current events and turning them into meaningful education. Opportunities present themselves frequently but are often not recognized because we are trained to carry out preconceived programs. Group leaders must become artists in asking activating questions: real questions that stimulate being active! Petersen talked about organizing pedagogical situations. Situations where the group leader, for a certain purpose, 'seduces' the children to be active as a whole person.

From the management point of view, the school is asked to account in advance for the educational offer that will be implemented. When using current events, we can only justify ourselves afterwards and we need a handy structure for this. The 'Fiets van Jansen' [The Jansen Bicycle, educational tool] is a tried and tested tool for this.

It is of course not always possible to use real-life situations. There are wonderful teaching methods that can help realize education. Make sure that you see these methods as an aid. You use the method and not the other way around: the method uses you. That would turn you into a mere conduit. Teaching methods can give you good ideas, but they should not become a straitjacket. In a jenaplan school the group leader knows very well what the children in the community group have to learn (the goals). This means you can get your learning material from anywhere. If you use teaching methods, make sure that you have more than one method at your disposal. And of course, you do not need a pupil book for every child. The money not spent on expensive teaching methods can probably be better used in another way.

Bear in mind that teaching methods are published by commercial companies that try to maximize their profits by bringing not only a textbook, but also a manual, a workbook, an answer book, and a computer version onto the market. Take a critical look at the methods, based on the goals you know. Also use many sites and weblogs where you can find the most creative ideas and learning formats. And of course, the children of your group can also help with that!

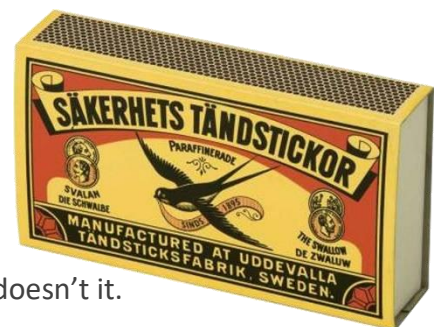
EXAMPLE

Rik comes to school with a bandaged hand. What happened? He explains he was playing with matches. Brushing very carefully along the box at first, a little harder every time. At a certain moment, the match caught fire. He frightenedly dropped the match on the table and the tablecloth took fire. Rapidly, he tried to extinguish the flames with his hand. Because of his screaming his mother was quickly on the spot to extinguish the fire and treat the burn.

Soon all kinds of stories come up about 'playing with fire'. The box of matches with which we light the candle in the morning is suddenly the center of attention. Spontaneously, an observation circle is created.

Of course, the group leader writes down all the questions and classifies them later. There are some wonderful questions, which we will work out with the group:

- How are matches made?
- How does the sulfur get on them?
- What are safety matches?
- Would a match go off in a microwave oven?
- Why can't you light every match under your shoe?
- Which are used more: lighters or matches?
- Why are matches so cheap? It takes lot of time to make them, doesn't it.

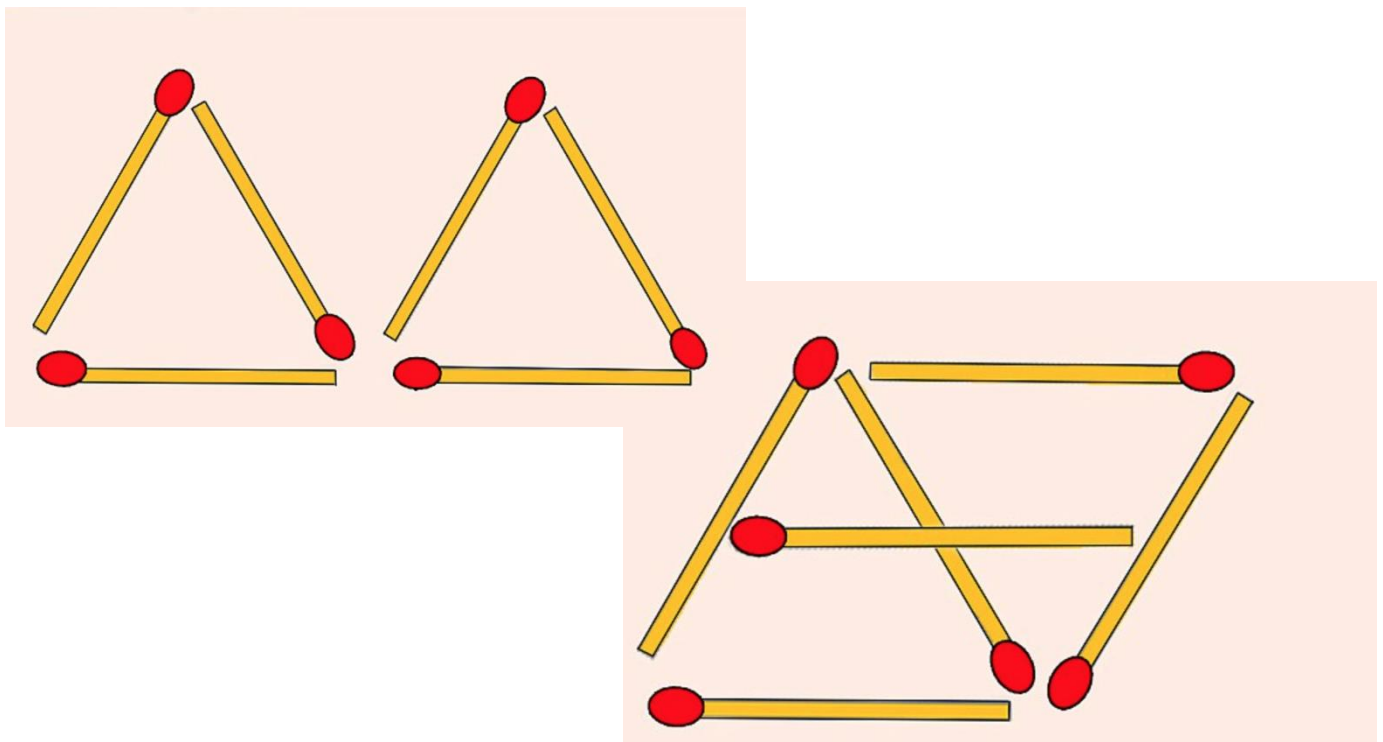


There will also be all kinds of questions related to language:

- Why are they called lucifers sometimes? Pepijn has found on the internet that it means 'light-bringer', but it's also a word for devil, isn't it?
- Children cannot be named Lucifer. That's a forbidden name, says Noortje. Is that right? And why is that so?
- There is also a play about Lucifer. Made by Joost van den Vondel. How does that play go?
- Does the word 'Sulfur stick' mean the same as the word match?
- In English, they're called 'matches', in French 'allumet', in German 'Streichholz', in Spanish 'cerilla', in Italian 'fiammifero', in Portuguese 'palito de fosforo', in Danish 'taendstik'. All different words, which are not alike. How is that possible? Where does our word 'match' come from?
- 'Rik burned his fingers.' You write 'ed', but you only hear 'd'. Are there more words like that?

And arithmetical questions as well:

- What is more expensive: the use of matches or the use of a lighter?
 - How many matches are there in one box? And how are they counted? By weighing?
 - What is the standard length of a match? Most matches are about the same length. Who determines that length?
 - Can you use a full box of matches to cover the entire classroom? Along the skirting boards? Or do you need two boxes?
 - Which do we use in our school: lighters or matches? Who uses them and what for?
 - Who among our group has ever lit a match? And who has used a lighter?
 - Which one of us is not allowed to play with matches? Or use matches?
 - How many seconds can a match burn?
- All these questions are again good for many hours of intensive learning activities. And, of course, the group also looked at all kinds of matchstick art and made some themselves. The whole school was surprised when we presented our project at the end-of-week assembly. And the matchstick art was beautifully displayed for weeks in the display cabinets in school.



CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1. you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4. you usually see this. 5. you always see this.



a	children organize campaigns for people who need help	
b	the group leader trusts the children, the group leader allows the children to do things themselves	
c	the small topical issues (community group and school life) and the great topical issues (world) influence the activities	
d	children come into contact with people, animals, and things inside and outside the school	
e	children discover, experiment, and investigate by themselves	
f	children learn to question all answers: after an answer, a new question is formulated immediately	

3.2. care for the environment

Children must learn to take responsibility for the world. This starts with developing responsibility for one's own environment. Children need to experience what it means to be or not to be dedicated to their own environment. This is the way we, as a jenaplan school, work on the living and working community that we form together.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children learn to take care of the environment.



EXPLANATION

We, as a parent or group leader, love children. We only want the very best for each child and we all work on that! We want to make sure that our children lack for nothing and have a beautiful childhood.

Without knowing it, we often take away responsibility from children by wanting this. In our desire to be a good educator we provide children with everything, we stretch the limits of what is permissible, and we become the child's servant instead of the educator we should be.

If we want to teach children the importance of our environment, we will have to educate them in a way that clearly explains that they are responsible for their own environment. This applies to school and certainly to the home as well. It is a theme on which the school and the parents have to communicate a lot. Very practical things like setting the table, cleaning your room, and mowing the lawn could be the subject of discussion.

In school we teach children to take responsibility for the environment. The way to do this is by continuously discussing what we want our classroom to look like, how we arrange, use, and maintain the common areas and how the outdoor area is arranged.

In the jenaplan school we prefer to talk about a 'school living room' rather than a classroom. The following questions play an important role in the design of the group room:

- How do we organize the room in such a way that we can learn well (work alone, work in small groups, work in larger groups)?
- How can we quickly create a circle, or do we want a fixed circle?
- What does the group leader's workplace look like?
- Which children's products do we display and how?
- What can we do to feel at home in this room?

A separate chapter is devoted to design in part III.

The group leader ensures that the children are explicitly involved in the process. This transfers the responsibility from the group leader to the entire group: the children and the group leader.

While working with the group, rules and agreements develop. These are drawn up together and regularly discussed during the evaluation circle or the group meeting. The group leader should be open to new ideas of the children. The starting point is always the group room being a place where everyone can develop in the best possible way: the group room is not an entertainment venue but a place where all children can learn in the best possible way.

It is well known that we encounter many obstacles in this respect. With thirty children in a classroom of fifty square meters there aren't many possibilities. Certainly not when there are also thirty desks and chairs and a desk for the group leader in the room. The challenge for jenaplan schools is therefore to design and use all the spaces in the school building as optimally as possible. If children are trained in self-responsible learning, they are also able to use other spaces for learning.

Perhaps we should abandon the idea that classrooms should be designed as 'offices for small children'. All those similar looking pieces of furniture do not easily lead to personal responsibility for the environment. If children wouldn't have to sit on the same chair all day but could use different workplaces where they work

sitting or standing up, the ergonomic importance of a precisely fitting chair and desk would be less. In addition, we would be more responsive to the natural need for movement.

We are used to this way of working in lower groups. Unfortunately, this usually ends when children enter the middle groups.

It is important for children to be able to be active in the school environment. An asphalted schoolyard will hardly motivate children to feel responsible. This is different for a school garden where enquiry-based learning is enabled a few times a week and a schoolyard where there is an amphitheater and a watercourse and perhaps even animals that you can take care of!

The learning environment can be shaped in many ways. You learn more if you go out regularly. Make use of the offerings in your immediate surroundings! Excursions are a natural part of jenaplan education. Invite many guests to come and talk or to work with the group.

How nice it would be if the school had a real bus with workplaces! That way every day a community group could go on a trip and learn from the real world somewhere in the country. We would study actual sluices and locks instead of drawing them, or interview people who have won the lottery!

Is there a school out there that wants to exchange a brick classroom for a driving one?

EXAMPLE

It is high time we talked to the group about our group room. It looks boring and normal. Certainly not a group room you would think is a jenaplan room.

We enter the circle where the group leader asks the question: "Imagine that our room would be completely empty and that we could set it up ourselves, how would we do that? What would you like?"

First, we all write down the things we think are important. We talk about it in groups of three and afterwards we enter the circle again.

One of the first things brought in is the wish that there should be a space where the group leader cannot go. The children explain that it really isn't necessary to keep an eye on them all day long. They can decide for themselves what is good and what is not. There should also to be a big cozy table. This is useful for instructions but also to have a cup of tea with a group, and it should have a nice lamp instead of those fluorescent tubes everywhere. Another group has talked about the messy circle; they think that we should buy a round rug so everyone can sit around the rug and the circle will be nice and round by itself.

Yet another group has talked about setting up a laboratory area. One of the boys already knows how to get equipment; his father works in a laboratory and would want to supply some things.

A lot more is discussed in the circle: the walls should be painted, there should be curtains, different lighting, an attic, a reading area, a large bulletin board wall and of course some animals to which nobody is allergic.

As a group leader you are left with a whole list of wishes and ideas. Or is it the responsibility of the whole group? The question automatically follows: "And how do you think we can realize this?"

Soon a community group evening with parents and children is organized. All the children are present and most of them brought their parents. Together we make a plan and agree on how to implement the ideas. And so, a unique school living room is created.

CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1. you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4. you usually see this. 5. you always see this.



a	together with the group leader, children organize their own school living room	
b	children keep their own school living room clean and tidy	
c	children organize excursions and events and invite guests	
d	the community group does not participate in the throw-away mentality	
e	children take care of plants and animals in and around the school	
f	children are active in the administrative activities in the community group	



3.3. group work is connected to courses

We think that group work is a better term than world studies. By group work, Petersen called it 'Gruppenarbeit', we mean the entire community group working on a theme they want to know more about. The theme will be further developed individually or in groups. Children and the group leader report to the group and the group reflects on content and process. The findings of the group work are shown to the whole school community during the big assemblies.

In group work children apply what they have learned in courses. And courses are organized to learn what we need for group work.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children apply the content of the school curriculum to get to know the world in world studies.

EXPLANATION

The community group is the strength of the jenaplan school. The school does not focus on optimal individual development yet recognizes that you are always a human being together with other human beings. Learning to live and learn together is central. Petersen speaks of a living and working community. We get to know ourselves through others. We recognize that we need the other person for our own development.

We create this by working together on subjects and themes the community group is interested in. These themes stem from circle discussions and personal experiences of group members. It is the group leader's task to be curious about the interests of the group members, to stimulate and use them as a starting point for further study and deepening by means of activating didactics: discovery, experimentation, and research.

As you grow older, your living environment is growing bigger and you gain more experiences, so you will need more tools to manifest yourself in that world. You develop these tools in the courses. Schools have long-term courses: courses that take place on a weekly or daily basis, and short-term courses that only take place once or a few times.

Well-known long-term courses are arithmetic and language. A short course can be learning to interview or learning to make a digital presentation.

Courses are most successful when children understand the personal benefits of learning what is offered. It is up to the group leader to clearly explain what you can do with what you learn in the courses.

If you organize the courses within the community group, it is easier to connect group work to course work. If your courses are mainly determined by following a teaching method, working in a community group will of course be very difficult.

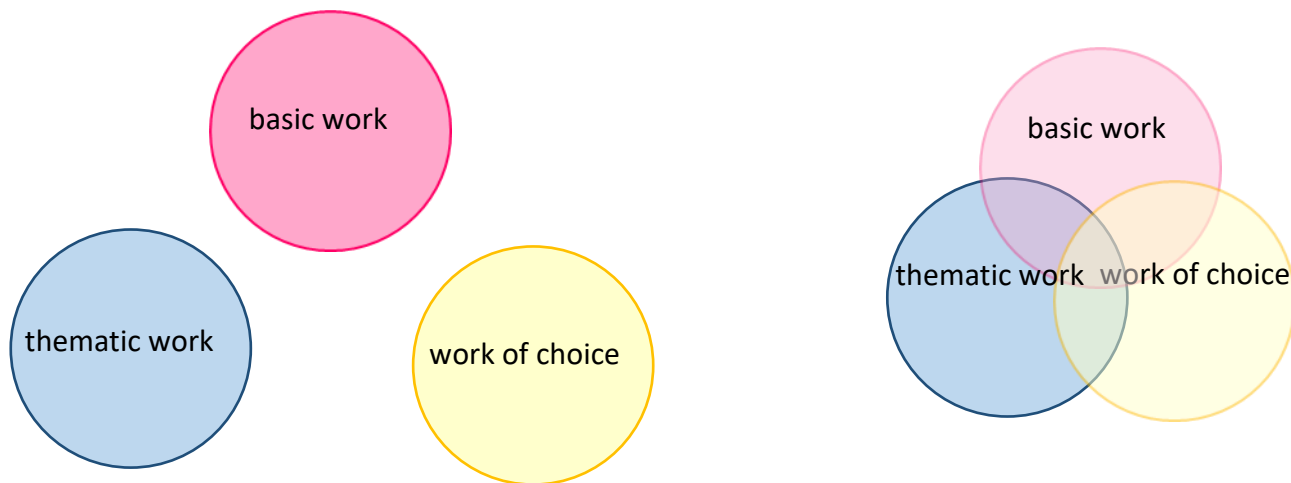
It is easier to connect group work and courses if you work on the basis of goals. You can learn to work with meters and centimeters by measuring the schoolyard and making a nice map for the school garden instead of sums from the arithmetic book. You can learn about Amsterdam by answering questions on a sheet of paper but organizing a day trip to Amsterdam yourself is more effective.

Education comes to life when you can link learning objectives to current events. Many methods have been developed to achieve this. 'Dat's Andere Taal,' 'DATplus' and 'Dat Telt' are publications that can help schools to achieve this. In these publications, group work and the realization of language and arithmetic goals are integrated. Group leaders have to become capable in designing education in this way. This differs from being a mere conduit of a method writer.

In order to get a clear overview, you could speak of three types of work in the school:

- Basic work (the attainment targets and the school's own objectives: objectives that we believe as many children as possible should achieve)
- Thematic work (group work, initiated from small and great topical issues)
- Work of choice (learning objectives chosen by the children themselves)

You could offer these three types of work alongside each other. You will become more of a jenaplan school if you succeed in integrating these three types of work:



Over the past few years, excellent methods have been developed that try to link the three types of work together. Schools can make effective use of these methods. Remember, however, that methods can never make optimal use of the topical issues in your own community group: The most modern method of all is using topical issues! Always try to stimulate curiosity for the world of now.

EXAMPLE

Some children talk about being interviewed by someone from the local radio station. In fact, they had asked the reporter more questions than the reporter had asked them. They were really curious about how things work in radio. The other children are on the edge of their seats now as well. The signal to act! In the circle there is a lot of talk about radio. The question arises of course whether we could make our own radio broadcast. Not just for fun but an actual broadcast. We talk about a plan to achieve this. How should we approach this?

All kinds of ideas come up:

- We could take a look at the radio station website
- We could write a letter or email
- We could trace people who work for the broadcaster and talk to them: find a name and think of questions!
- We could make an initial recording to show how good we are!
- We should find out more about the technology, about sound recordings, etc.
- We should learn to ask good questions for preparing interviews.

We work hard in groups. The group leader constantly makes sure that we look critically at what leaves our school. We have to present ourselves in the best possible way!

Soon we get an answer. The program maker of the radio visits our group. He thinks it is a good plan, at least if we manage to deliver quality! We are allowed to make a children's program between 10 and 11 a.m. on ten Saturday mornings. It has to be interesting and entertaining: good music, interesting interviews and of course news about our own town. We also get a coach, an employee of the broadcaster. He will join us every Wednesday morning and Friday afternoon to take a critical look at all our products.

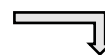
You can imagine what happened! We worked with full conviction, we became famous in town and country and learning became effortless. Ten Saturdays to remember! When the radio editors proposed to stop the broadcast during the holidays, the children protested: the broadcast would of course continue! And did they learn? What attainment targets did they achieve? Almost all of them!

CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1. you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4. you usually see this. 5. you always see this.



a	group work and courses have to do with each other	
b	children know the goals of the courses: they know why they have to learn this or how they can use it	
c	children's experiences are the starting point of group work	
d	what children learn in arithmetic and language, they apply during world studies	
e	children read the newspaper, watch the news: they know what is going on in the world	
f	children learn by doing things themselves, by being active	

3.4. speaking, playing, working, celebrating and rhythmic weekly plan

Petersen distinguishes two ways of learning: individual learning and social learning. He distinguishes four basic activities in 'learning together': speaking together, playing together, working together, and celebrating together. These activities can be found wherever people live together. If one is absent, something is wrong! These are the circumstances in which people are raised. If you want to work on the upbringing, you have to make sure to address these four activities, preferably in a rhythmic alternation.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

Children learn by speaking, playing, working and celebrate according to a rhythmic weekly plan.

EXPLANATION

Each educational innovator creates a concept with a central theme. In Steiner's case it is anthroposophy, Montessori has the development material, Parkhurst (Dalton) has independence, in Freinet the group decides on the learning and in Petersen's case the pedagogical situation is the central theme.

Pedagogical situation: A lively group of children full of questions around a group leader, who organizes the group with a pedagogical purpose in such a way that each group member is stimulated and driven to be active as a whole person.

The group leader's task is much more to activate all children than to provide instruction, to give lessons. If you succeed in getting children to work from intrinsic reason, you will achieve the most. It is important, however, that you work from a clear intention. Group leaders are mainly concerned with the question: What do I do to make sure that the children are activated? The best way to succeed is by knowing your group well, knowing how to motivate your group, knowing what interests, what hobbies the children in your group have. This is a hugely different task than keeping order or making sure your group is quiet. We want to see active learning children in a jenaplan school: it should be a workplace where children learn in many different ways!

Pedagogical situations are situations in which group work is carried out. This is a better fit than having pedagogical situations during courses. Making sums from the arithmetic book is a lot of work but has nothing to do with the pedagogical situation 'work', as is meant here.

The group leader has to follow the group closely and pick up signals while they work. If you notice a decrease in attention, you should arrange for a different activity, for variation. You stop working together and proceed to playing together, for example. The moment of transition to another activity therefore depends much more on the group's attention span than on the clock. This creates a daily schedule in which the rhythm of the group determines whether activities last longer or shorter: a rhythmic daily plan.

Else Petersen has done research into the basic needs of children. She has identified four needs that are important for a child's development:

- Children need exercise
- Children need consistent leadership
- Children have a need to work alone
- Children have a need to work together

By taking these needs into account, the education in your group will run smoothly. It is not okay for people to work in exercise books or complete worksheets all morning. So, make sure there is not only a rhythm in the time that activities take place, but also in the form. For example, cooperative working methods can be employed to get children to move about more and to work together in a clear structure (consistent leadership), after which they can process what they have learned individually.

School life should not only consist of written assignments. We have to realize that in the first twelve years of life 80% of the connections in your brain disappear because they are not used. This means that opportunities will disappear if we do not use them.

At the same time, learning is a complicated process. You may not get better at language by doing more language exercises. You could get better at language by doing music or by exercising more. A growing amount of brain research shows that it is of the utmost importance to be active as a whole person. This is something that Petersen claimed almost 100 years ago. Other scientists concluded this as well, such as Howard Gardner, who indicated the importance of multi-faceted activities in his theory of Multiple Intelligence.

Parents, too, will have to be challenged, stimulated to undertake activities with children: sports, nature, visiting museums, making music, philosophizing, painting, gardening, going to the theater.

Schools, as professional educators, need to take the lead and emphasize the importance of the development of the whole person. This should also be the message to local and national politics.

EXAMPLE

Children of the lower group are playing outside in the sandbox. One of the children comes and tells us that he has found a stone in the sandbox. Yes, how would that stone have gotten into the sandbox? Maybe there used to be a castle on that spot?

That idea, that question, leads to a huge digging in the sandbox by a growing group of toddlers. And of course, all kinds of 'precious' materials are found. Stones from the castle wall, but also stones that must have been from a tower or from a jug from which they served beer! And because it is wet under the sand, the moat of the castle must have been right there.

Reason enough to look for books about castles in the school. Some children already want to make a painting of the castle because they think they know what it looked like.

Rik's father knows a lot about the past, about history, he would probably want to come and talk about the past and about knights and castles. And of course, we also visit the museum to look at old things. Very nice, these 'excavations'.

It all seems to happen by itself. Knight games are invented and played; there is no longer a house area, but a castle room. Lances, cannons, and coats of mail are crafted and of course we show what we have made in the end-of-week assembly. We also perform a play about knights with a self-written song.

Every time we sit in the circle and talk about the knights and their castle new plans emerge: we could also ...

In the end we have a beautiful exhibition. The toddlers show children of middle and upper groups around to tell them about their castle. And every time a father or mother enters the school, he or she is dragged along to the exhibition.

We have worked so hard, played so intensively and what a wonderful performance at the end-of-week assembly we have experienced, with a real exhibition as the crowning glory of our work!

CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1. you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4. you usually see this. 5. you always see this.



a	how long an activity lasts (e.g. a circle) depends on the involvement of the children and to a lesser extent on the clock	
b	children learn in a good balance between speaking together, playing together, working together, and celebrating together	
c	children also play and celebrate during block period	
d	children celebrate together what they learned	
e	children are challenged to be active as a whole person	
f	each child makes their own planning in consultation with the group leader	

3.5 taking initiatives based on personal interest and questions

Learning goes naturally when your interest is aroused. If you want to know, want to learn, you do not have to be stimulated. Everyone knows, sees and recognizes this.

That's why it would be great if children were continuously interested in what they have to learn.

Unfortunately, this is not always so. As adults, we can search for education to fit with children's interests and questions. This is what the final jenaplan core quality is about.

The jenaplan core quality reads:

**Children learn to take initiatives
based on their own interests and questions.**



EXPLANATION

It is good to adapt to children's interests. It is referred to in the preamble to the attainment targets of primary education as well. By connecting to the children's world of experience, we bring education to life. It becomes easy to motivate children when group leaders adapt to the world of the child.

Children have a lot of questions, especially in the lower groups. By addressing these questions, you can create a living and working community instead of a teacher's school. When the teacher repeatedly imposes what the children have to do from Monday morning to Friday afternoon, a big motivation problem will arise. The main reason for getting children to work will be extrinsic motivation: rewards. In jenaplan schools we really try to listen to children and to get to know their world and use that as a starting point for the day-to-day activities.

It is necessary, therefore, to think in terms of goals in jenaplan education. Bearing in mind what the children need to learn makes it easier to address these goals in your community group. It makes you flexible as a group leader. This differs from slavishly following a teaching method, where your hands and feet are tied to the schedule, the structure of the method and you cannot go anywhere.

Jenaplan education stimulates children to develop their own questions and interests: address your questions. Try to find answers and immediately discover new questions. The group leader needs to stimulate this attitude. That works out best when the group leader also shows curiosity. By not immediately stopping the child's question with an answer, curiosity will grow. It will make it easier for children to take the initiative to embark on a learning adventure together.

Children should however be supported by the group leader. They will have to learn to enter into a learning adventure. In addition to stimulation, a plan is useful. What are you going to do? And what result will you strive for? Together with other children or with the group leader you will need a strategy and a plan. And of course, a division of tasks: Who will do what? That way you will have a plan to work on. Of course, this work plan is not the goal, but a tool. You can easily change the plan.

The work plan is also necessary for proper reflection. Did everything work out as planned? Did the project succeed? Have the goals been achieved?

The easiest way to work on the basis of children's questions and ideas in jenaplan schools is with group work (world studies). This is practicing 'living' education, connected to real life instead of 'playing school'.

EXAMPLE

In the lower group Joris comes in with a caterpillar after playing outside. Miss Elselien and Joris look at the creature in his hand. "I think it's sick," says Joris. "It's completely green. And it's hardly moving." Miss Elselien takes a glass jar and together they put it in. "I'll call him Wim," says Joris.

The group is in the midst of a project about the dentist. The house area has been converted into a dentist's office and a display table has been set up with all kinds of dentistry equipment. The children are working on assignments about the theme and Miss Elselien has already set up a meeting with her own dentist.

“All of you, please come into the circle,” miss Elselien tells the children, “Joris wants to show you something.” Joris shows the sick Wim and all children listen fascinated. “We should build him a house,” says Ilse. “No, a hospital,” says Kees.

The children are completely fascinated by the sick caterpillar Wim. Joris has also told them that he has seen more caterpillars, which do move. Quickly, a number of children get four more caterpillars from behind the beech hedge and bring in the leaves they sat on as well. In the circle the group talks about what Wim has to eat to get better. They figure that Wim wasn’t sitting on a leaf like that for no reason. That's probably what he ate. Now they haven’t just gotten friends for Wim, but food as well. There should of course be a stay for the caterpillars. And water. The tasks are divided and the next morning there is a plastic box, fully equipped for Wim and his friends.

It goes on the next day. “Maybe he got sick from eating these leaves?”, “And are the other four his brothers?”, “Are they even boys?”, “Is Wim even sick?”, “And where is his mother?”

“Maybe he has a toothache”, says Ms. Elselien. “Does Wim have any teeth?” she asks out loud. The children press their noses against the plastic caterpillar box. The group is completely absorbed in Wim's teeth: where they are, how many there are, how a caterpillar keeps its teeth clean, and whether there is a caterpillar dentist.

At the end of the week, the children and miss Elselien present their learning adventure about Wim at the end-of-week assembly. They show the rest of the school about caterpillar teeth and the group tells the story of Wim. With a self-written song and rhyme of course.

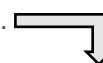
The dental project has taken a strange turn. Even the dentist learned a lot about caterpillar teeth during his visit to the group.

CHECKLIST

With this checklist you can map out your own practice. Fill in the score for your own group. Ask others to give their opinion and then discuss it with each other. Talk mainly about the points you disagree on.

Enter the following score:

1. you hardly see this, 2. you sometimes see this. 3. you often see this. 4. you usually see this. 5. you always see this.



a	children notice that the group leader is curious about their opinion	
b	attention is paid to both the children’s and my perception of the world	
c	children learn to present	
d	children are challenged to undertake action	
e	children work in interest groups	
f	each child can work on their own research	

PART III

BECOMING

jenaplan

Becoming more and more jenaplan in three stages: GOOD – BETTER – BEST
A description for developing jenaplan in your community group or in your school.

PART III BECOMING jenaplan

Contents

	Page
Introduction	74
1. a pedagogical school	75
2. group formations / cooperative learning	78
3. speaking together	81
4. playing together	84
5. working together	87
6. celebrating together	91
7. interior design	95
8. block period	98
9. rhythmic weekly plan / own weekly plan	101
10. courses	103
11. group work	106
12. reporting	109
13. three-year community group	112
14. parents	115
15. care	118
16. leadership	121
17. ICT / social media	123
18. asking questions	125
19. meaning	128
20. tips for at home	130

PART III becoming jenaplan

Introduction

In this part we will try to help group leaders to becoming more and more jenaplan in their community group. We will do this in three stages: good-better-best.

GOOD will describe a community group where all jenaplan elements are present. *BETTER* will describe an improved situation, where clear progress has been made compared to good. *BEST* will reflect the ideal situation in the community group.

This is primarily an example of how it could be. There can of course be all kinds of reasons why schools make different choices. We would mainly like to stimulate the conversation about the ideal jenaplan school, so that substantiated decisions will be made, based on the jenaplan concept.

These descriptions of good-better-best are given by the way of 19 themes.

We have chosen these themes because they all play an essential part in designing the practice of jenaplan. The themes are randomly ordered. The first theme is no more important than the 19th. In part 20 we pay attention to the role of the parent.

From good to best, BECOMING more and more JENAPLAN. In this part, your development in becoming more jenaplan can be shaped theme by theme. Of course, you can also use this chapter to manage school development as a team.



1. pedagogical school

There are many conditions that a school needs to meet to make learning easier for children. Security, a safe environment, acknowledgement, good relationships, all summed up in the concept of pedagogical climate. In his school, Peterson primarily opted for upbringing. The jenaplan school is a school for upbringing. In *Der kleine Jena-Plan*, Petersen speaks of 'Menschenschule', People's school. The emphasis is not on teaching, but primarily on upbringing.

Adults in the school should constantly realize that they have this upbringing task. In everything you do you are an example, you bring up. There is no way to not bring up.

People learn continuously, we have to be aware of that. From that awareness, we make specific choices in what we do and, especially, don't do in a jenaplan school.

When you enter a jenaplan school you should immediately recognize the atmosphere: it's good to be here, this breathes an atmosphere where everyone is recognized. Here, you notice that all people know each other, are interested in each other, and that you can be who you are. Jenaplan schools invest in relationships, not to ensure that everyone behaves in an exemplary manner, but to give everyone what they need. Not all children act the same, behave the same and are allowed to do the same. We base ourselves on different educational needs, we are sensitive to who you are.

Getting to know each other, building relationships, requires investment and takes time. We give ourselves that time because we know that a good relationship is the basis for optimal development. The better you know someone, the better you can help them with this development. It creates commitment and connection. Education therefore starts with an interest in each child. Who is this child? How does it develop?

The interest in children is not only expressed by the adults in the school, but also by the children. Children should feel at home in their community group. It's where you share your joys and sorrows with each other. It is the place where they know and understand you. We know people are social beings, that they need each other. One always needs the other to get to know oneself better. We realize this and integrate it in the way we give shape to our education.

The power of the group is our basis: a common knowing, wanting and, consequently, doing. Together, we are always concretely defining what we think is important in order to show it, do it and call each other to account for it. This applies to everyone in the school: group leaders, children and parents. Everyone is a partner in this. Everyone needs each other for this.

good

In the community group everybody knows each other by name, and we address each other by our first names. We practice this intensively at the start of the school year. Every day when children enter the group room, they are greeted in person: a handshake, some personal attention or a chat. Not only does the group leader do this but so do the children. We want everybody to be 'seen'. This provides a smooth transition to school life.

Because we know each other well, we also know where we stand; we trust each other. Group leaders constantly show they have great confidence in the children. Children are allowed to do many things themselves, are allowed to try things out and are often given the opportunity to draw up plans and carry them out.

Especially during block period and world studies, the group leader stimulates the children's input. Of course, there is much learning and work to be done, but there is also a lot of freedom. The children do not only carry out assignments they receive from their teacher but can also choose for themselves. Always! Even if they cannot work very quickly.

In the jenaplan school we therefore do not work with tasks that are practically the same for all, but we make plans together. And of course, we know plans do not always succeed. With each child we try to make plans that lead to success, by critically looking back and ahead. This gives us the energy to do even better next week! And fortunately, we have an entire community group with many experts to help us with that.

better

To function even better, group leaders can use the children as a mirror for their actions. The group regularly discusses the performance of the group leader. He is curious to see how he can do even better next time. Children can indicate very well what good educational behavior is. And as a group leader you are forced to substantiate your behavior.

We also regularly talk to our colleagues about our performance in the community group. The motto 'being there for the group and being there for the school' is what drives us.

We think it is important that children come up with their own solutions in the community group. We give them time for that. We are of course curious about their solution methods and we have confidence in the children's strength. You notice that everybody is curious about each other and about how to learn things.

In the group we give children the opportunity to think for themselves about how they want to learn things. We primarily look at what the children need to learn: the goal. We let the group think of the 'how'. By telling each other about different ways to learn things, we become more inventive and learning becomes a real adventure!

During block period children work on assignments that the group leader has given them. However, there is an equal amount of time for each child to work on their self-chosen work.

We are used to closing each part of the day in the circle. Sometimes we do this quickly, other times we have to talk extensively about how things are going in our group.

When report cards are written, the children tend to a part themselves. We discuss what we are going to write about and collect work that shows how far we are in our development. In our portfolio we collect work and photos which indicate the beacons of our development. For each work, first the teacher and then the children write why they think the work is important enough to be in their portfolio. And of course, the children are present at the meeting between the parents and the teacher. After all, it's all about them!

best

In our community group there is a planning circle after the start of week assembly. There is plenty of time to plan the week. The group leader makes clear what needs to be learned that week. He expects a lot of the children, but they are used to it: we have to work hard at school! Of course, there is also boring work that just has to be done.

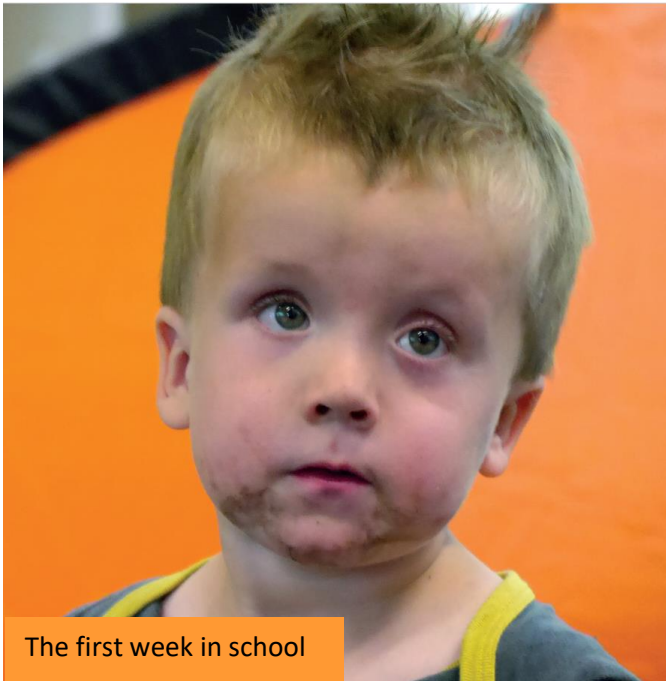
Luckily, there is also time for all sorts of plans. There is a lot happening with the children in the group and in the big world. Because we talk a lot about these things in our circle, we are always looking for themes that we want to learn more about. We have long been used to not looking up everything on the internet. You never know if the information is correct and a lot of it is not very easy to understand. We often talk about how we can find the answer to a question or who can tell us more about it. We like inviting people or writing or calling them. We are used to children organizing and preparing this themselves.

Fortunately, there are three-year community groups. For each problem you can find a group member to help you. Especially the youngest members of the group often don't yet know who an expert is in what. They find out soon enough though. The children agree on who will give instructions about which subject. We note all of this in our own weekly plan.

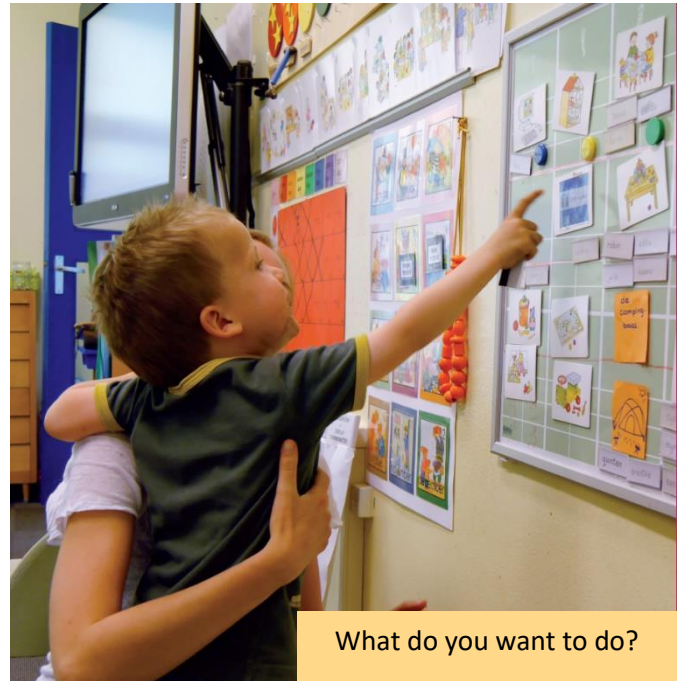
The work is planned this way and all sorts of other things are discussed. For example, we always choose a different rule to which we will pay attention that week. In the community group everybody notices that we are all equal. The

rules apply to everyone, including the teachers and parents who come to help. We are used to complimenting each other, especially when it is about something that did not go so well before.

All the children's ideas can be discussed in the circle. Together with the group we decide if it is a good idea. The teacher has the final say, however. Sometimes it occurs that something is not allowed. The group leader will always explain why it is not allowed or possible.



The first week in school



What do you want to do?



Look together who can help you



Join us !

2. group formations

Peter Petersen developed his educational concept in the period after World War I. Three of his brothers, Carl, Emile and Lorenz, died in this war. It was a horrible time when ever younger men, boys still, were sent to the front to fight. In the end, about 20 million people had lost their lives.

After the war, a movement arose to never let such a horrible war reoccur. For Peter Petersen this was the reason to think about what that would mean for education. He developed a new educational concept in which the word TOGETHER was written in capitals. He wanted to create a Menschenschule, a people's school. A school where young people can learn how to live together in a good way. The school as a place to practice for a better society. And living together, upbringing, always takes place when we speak together, play together, work together, and celebrate together. These are the four basic social activities found in every culture. If one of these activities is absent in a form of society, something is wrong.

The Jenaplan school should therefore be a living and working community.

The school knows many group formations. Children work at desk groups a lot, sometimes in pairs, better still in groups of three or four. The community groups consist of children from different year groups. Jenaplan works with lower groups, middle and upper groups. For various reasons, intermediate groups can also be seen regularly. Children mainly learn in their own community group. In a three-year community group, children will be the youngest in the first year, then the middle and, lastly, the oldest. After that, they will enter a new community group where they will be the youngest again. It is important for children to experience these different roles. They know what it is like to ask for help but also what it is like to offer help. They cannot always be the biggest, smartest or fastest. In this way, children will develop empathy.

By replacing only one third of a group each year (out with the oldest, in with a new group of youngest children), the group culture will stay intact, and the remaining children will play an important role in the formation of a new group.

We give children many opportunities to learn from and with each other in the community group. The group leader is more of a director of the learning process than a teacher who speaks a lot himself. In the spirit of Jan Ligthart, we try to be a school where the principal does nothing, the teacher does little and the children do everything.

Jenaplan schools also establish relationships between the different community groups. Children from the middle and upper groups can help children from other groups to learn, they can mean a lot for the other children in the school because of their experience and expertise. Every week we experience this together in for example communal celebrations such as the start- and end-of-week assemblies.

In everyday life in the group, children are not tied to their own seats all day. You sit where you can do your work well. We see this happening all the time in the lower groups, yet it also happens in middle and upper groups.

If you look at the different group compositions in a community group, you can see there is a great diversity. See chapter 5, page ...

good

To turn a group of children into a real group, you can start by using all sorts of cooperative learning activities. Cooperation starts with getting to know each other, first the names and then getting to know each other better. This can be achieved by all kinds of introductory games. After this, mutual trust has to be built. In the first weeks of the school year the cohesion in the group is determined. So, use this period to invest in and focus on group formation. To make effective use of cooperation, you need to make rules and agreements. Rules and agreements as an aid to cooperating successfully. These rules are of course always positively formulated. Do not state all that could go wrong, but rather state how we would like things to be.

Peter Petersen drew up a sort of constitution for this for his school, the group law: "Here, we only do what we all want together."

The day always starts with a circle talk. You can work with free or permanent seating arrangements. You can also choose to work with changing seats, for instance based on a certain order such as distance to school, date of birth, number of fillings in teeth and so on.

The teacher leads the circle talk and enables a variety of circle talks. Group games are often played in the circle as well.

During the courses, different types of cooperative learning activities are used: practising together, helping each other with your work. Many cooperative learning activities have already been devised before. Naturally, group leaders use these a lot. There are many books with ideas in the staff library.

better

Petersen did not make up heterogenous community groups to make things difficult, but rather to make them easier. You should, however, use the children's input a lot.

The group room has a permanent circle. This means the group can enter the circle quickly and look ahead and back. Circles are often prepared and guided by children. Everyone, including the group leader, is part of the conversation and follows the agreed rules.

Children work together in functional groups. Especially during block period thought is given to choosing a good workplace: find a place where you can do your work well! In the evaluation circle, we look back and discuss whether we have made the right decision.

We get to know each other very well in the group. That is why we know the strengths of all children and put them to use! With the group we divide tasks and discuss who can best carry out the tasks. Sometimes you choose or get a task because you are an expert. Other times you choose a task to practice new skills.

best

In your group you know of course who is good at arithmetic or who can spell flawlessly. The group makes use of these experts when necessary. This allows children to learn mostly from each other, and not just arithmetic and spelling but also skills in crafts, music, sports, cooking and many other things. Sometimes, children are even allowed to give optional courses by themselves!

In the community group, plans are discussed together with the children. Perhaps for a whole week in the upper groups, for the middle groups for one or more days and in the lower groups for each work period.

The group agrees on who will give instructions. Sometimes this will be the group leader, yet it is better when children give instructions. Of course, they are given enough time to prepare very well. We know you learn a lot by explaining how things work to others. The group leader asks specifically those children to give instructions who are just about ready. The groups are always composed in such a way that everyone learns as much as possible, that is the starting point. Actual learning plans are made, so focus on what has to be learned, and not on how it should be learned. You can think about the how together. Children often have original ideas to learn things. Most of the time, these ideas can be implemented.

There is a weekly plan, but we do not always stick to it; a weekly plan is a tool, not a goal. Sometimes circle talks take a long time, other times they are quite short; when you are done talking, you pick another activity. During a good circle talk, the participants are used to asking (follow-up) questions when someone shares something. If there are no more questions or remarks, the circle can be closed. These conversations lead themselves, in a natural way. There is no need to raise your hand most of the time, because we pay attention to each other. You can see if someone wants to share something!

The children work in three-year community groups. Children are not addressed by their age-group. You are who you are, and together you try to learn as much as possible. When instructions are given, we ask who needs them. Some

children in the third-year group can read a book, while others cannot read a single word. Together, the group leader and the children make sure everyone performs to the best of their abilities!
If you know what you can do and what you have to learn still, the group can enable you to work hard and learn a lot.



3. speaking together

The jenaplan school is a school where children have a clear voice. Jenaplan schools are schools with circle discussions. The circle is the place where children and group leaders meet. Jenaplan schools are used to starting the day in the circle. By now, many schools have adopted this custom.

Talking to each other also means listening to each other. Talking and listening belong together.

Discussion has many forms: dialogs, group discussions, circle discussions, but also team discussions and parent-teacher meetings.

For discussions to be meaningful, there should be a safe environment, where all feel free to say what they feel or think. Each member's contribution should be appreciated. Children's questions should be the starting point of educational activities wherever possible.

The group leader plays an important part with the younger children. He provides activating questions, open questions that lead to discussion and exchange. Gradually, children can take over this role of the group leader, until finally they can prepare and lead a circle discussion all by themselves. This can be seen, for example, in a group meeting.

Because speaking together is a basic activity, we see this a lot in school life. There are many sorts of circles:

- News circle, where news from the children and news from the world is discussed.
- Reading circle, which is mainly about getting children to know and appreciate books and challenging them to read them. Or where we try to understand texts together.
- Observational circle, where we look closely and observe. It is about taking time to look closely at ordinary things, to wonder about them and ask 'it' questions.
- Theme circle, where a certain subject is discussed, for instance in response to an event, a movie or a newspaper article.
- Texts circle, where children read their self-written texts, and where texts are discussed and improved with the group.
- Philosophy circle, in which philosophical questions are the subject of discussion. We philosophize to teach children to think.
- English circle, in which the listening and speaking of the English language is practiced.
- Reporting circle, where children report on themes they have studied. It is important to share your learning result with the other children in your group.
- Evaluation circle, where we regularly discuss how the group and the children are doing, what we are content about and what we plan to pay attention to.

In addition, there are many other circles, such as planning circle, birthday circle, music circle, game circle and instruction circle.

The circle is always the place where children of the community group meet and where all members account for their functioning in the group. The group is therefore the place where you feel safe, where you feel at home: your 'home group'.

In our individualizing society, the jenaplan school wants to pay plenty of attention to the social learning, the group learning. For many children, school is the only place where they can practice living together in a larger group. In a jenaplan school you can do that in the four social basic activities, of which speaking together is one.

good

Every day we make sure there is a circle talk, usually at the start of the day. We make sure the circle is nice and round, for this way we can all see each other. We give children the opportunity to talk about their own lives, we are curious about what they have experienced.

Children also prepare circle talks. The group leader ensures that the children know exactly what is expected of them. For some circles there might be information sheets that tell you what to think of and what agreements there are. It might help to give the children a checklist when preparing a circle talk, so that they won't forget anything. Children who present something in the group should experience success. It is the task of the group leader to make sure that happens.

The group leader sometimes chooses permanent seating arrangements, and sometimes flexible seating depending on the situation in the group. The group leader also pays attention to children who talk all the time. These chatterboxes are curbed, while the others are stimulated. At the end of the circle talk the children look back as well: "How do you think it went?" Agreements are made about taking turns.

We practice group discussions as well. If necessary, children are given specific roles to improve the discussion. For example, there can be a *task captain* and a *time keeper*. The group leader ensures the discussions run smoothly.

better

There is a permanent circle in the community group. The seats are put up, so the group can quickly sit in the circle at any time of the day.

The rhythmic weekly plan includes fixed moments for circle discussions. These are often prepared by one or more children. The group leader also prepares circle talks on a regular basis.

In addition to these prepared circles, there are unprepared circles as well. There are moments when it is necessary to talk together as a group. This often occurs at the request of the group leader, but the children can also indicate that they think a circle talk is necessary.

Reflection and evaluation circles are held often: looking back together to figure out what we are satisfied with and what we will do differently next time.

Everyone in the circle is an equal discussion partner, including the group leader. All attend to the rules and take turns the way the group decided on.

The community group is used to having different kinds of circles. The circle really marks the beginning and end of work periods; first we plan together, and in the end, we look back to see if it worked. This allows the children in the group to really learn how to learn.

In addition to discussions in the circle, you often see children talking to each other. There is a lot of cooperation. Children find each other to make use of each other's qualities. This is stimulated. Working together at a jenaplan school has nothing to do with cheating or giving answers.

best

In the community group, we start and end every part of the day in the circle; this is a part of the daily routine. Circle talks have very various lengths. When the involvement is great, a circle talk can take up to an hour and a half, but sometimes the group is done talking in ten minutes and starts doing something else.

Taking turns in the circle is not hard. Children listen well and pay attention to each other. This way everyone knows when to speak. You could say it goes naturally.

The different types of circles take place according to a rhythmic schedule. For example, every Thursday there is a reading circle and once every two weeks on Friday there is a philosophy circle.

You notice that the children listen carefully, and summaries of what has been discussed are given regularly. Often,

the group leader has this role. After such a summary, new questions often arise automatically. By using LSQ (Listening, Summarizing, asking deep Questions), the circle talks have real depth.

In addition to all the discussions children have in the community group, they are also involved in school life. Children take part in group meetings of their own community group, and in the pupil council or children's parliament. Together with the children, we want to make the school a beautiful living and working community.

Children are also invited to (part of the) the meetings with parents. Children are asked to give their opinion about the learning and living in the school, and we would like them to take part in discussing their own development as well when we sit around the table with their parents.

In the school, great attention is paid to speaking together. We want the children to contribute a lot, yet we do not want cheeky children. We want children to stand up for their own interests but also learn to take the interests of others into account. We practice this in many different conversational situations. It is wonderful to see how attentive and enthusiastic children talk about the school to guests visiting a jenaplan school.



4. playing together

Playing is learning!

Playing is therefore serious matter; serious, but often very pleasant and entertaining. Young children copy what they see and experience. In the house or doll area you can discover what it is like at the homes of the children.

Children learn a lot by playing, by imitating: role modeling. This will often last a lifetime without us even knowing that we are imitating another. In our culture, advertisements influence us to imitate what they show us. Play will affect us throughout our entire life.

Because it is usually a pleasant way of learning, it is good to not only play with young children, but with children in the middle and upper groups as well. And with the team and the parents in the school. A jenaplan school should be characterized as a school where everyone plays together. Playing relaxes.

To find out what kind of teacher you are, you could even ask children to imitate you as a group leader. They will enlarge your positive and negative characteristics. A great chance for group leaders to get to know themselves better.

When playing, you are always free to decide how much of yourself you put in, and how much is acting. No spectator will be able to tell. This allows you to practice and find out how the reactions will be if you behave in a certain way. In school we teach children to express themselves in all sorts of ways. Sometimes children do not know how to find the right words or cannot find a way to express a situation clearly. To ensure we all understand what is meant, we can re-enact these situations. The roles are divided and the child who wants to talk about an experience, will indicate how to play. In this way a simple text of an exciting experience can become a beautiful story:

Crocodile

*I went to the zoo and
petted a crocodile.*

Emmie

Watch out

Have you even petted a crocodile?

Well, I have.

**I went to the zoo and
petted a crocodile. There was a keeper
with the crocodiles at that moment. He lifted
a small crocodile in his hands
and walked straight up to me.
I startled and hid behind my father.**

**Then I could pet the crocodile.
I was very nervous, but my father helped me.
The crocodile's skin was cold and wet.
Then the crocodile moved.
I yelled and jumped back.**

**Luckily, the keeper held him tight.
But my legs were trembling.**



Play can put new ideas into your head. After all, when you play, anything is possible. A chair becomes an airplane, a table is a castle: knights in planes, chased by witches on brooms!

Creativity increases enormously when reality becomes play.

Because play is so very versatile, it is important to play every day. It should not be limited to the lower groups. Children in the middle and upper groups can play wonderfully with sand and water as well and can have a fantastic time in the building area. Use it in your education.

Computers can fascinate children with games, in which they can achieve ever higher levels. Building knowledge and skills are wrapped up in games. This is motivating and makes learning easy!

In all corners of the world you see children playing outside. Regardless of the means available, they think of all sorts of situations for play. It's the simple means that lead to creative play. On a swing, you can't do a lot more than swing, but with sand and water you can build all sorts of things, and a cardboard box becomes a house, a hiding place, a package, a robbers' den... Pure play without any ulterior motive; exciting to look at and criminal in thinking this is not effective learning time!

Next to free play, there is a lot of time for guided play in the jenaplan school. Children learn to act. They quite regularly present their experiences to the whole school at the start- and end-of-week assemblies.

CHILDREN ARE DELIBERATELY EDUCATED IN THIS BY MEANS OF A LEARNING PATH:

1. End of week assembly in the group, free play, game area, house area, puppet show, easy terms
actor, acting, pretending, imitating, end of week assembly, rules of the game, puppet show, inventing
2. participating in celebrations, recognizing drama texts, imitating, role play, theatrical terms
costume, grease paint, playing a part, imitating, audience, celebration, presentation, role play, theme, reality play, fantasy, announcing
3. writing a play, presenting, evaluating (what is good, how can it be improved), terms
props, setting, character, mime, scene, enter, go off, stage light, spotlight, stage exercise, concentration, drama text, scenario, script, jump-in-game
4. writing texts for production, working on farewell production, hard terms
make-up, prompter, director, screenplay, stage direction, silent action, illusion, stage production, farewell production, farewell performance, musical

In italics: activities and related terms children need to acquire

In jenaplan schools you regularly see all kinds of situations being reenacted:

- Children playing and learning in a shop.
- Children playing and learning in a post office.
- Children playing and learning in a travel agency and flying in an airplane.
- Children decorating Saint Nicholas' bedroom.

Through play, children learn to deal with reality. They practice in meaningful situations that resemble reality. A great preparation for the big world outside the school.

good

At least one game is played in the circle every day, often at the start of the day to make the transition from home to school run smoothly, but also to celebrate being together again.

Games are often used when practicing. There are multiplication games in the group, games to learn difficult words, cabinets full of puzzles and other self-checking games.

After a period of hard work, the group leader will offer fun energizers. In this way, there is enough variety and children have a chance to move about. Children need this!

The group leader provides a good alternation between work and play.

The group leader often takes part in games in the schoolyard and occasionally comes up with new games. There is a large 'parachute' at school, with which the group does all sorts of games.

better

Play is a standard part of the rhythmic weekly plan.

Play is specifically used to examine all kinds of things. Play is often the first exploration of a subject. When children play out situations starting from their ideas about a subject, their knowledge about the subject is activated: play it out!

Play is used to enlarge the ability to empathize. Children are given a certain role to experience how they feel in that role. The bully will play the bullied child and vice versa. This will bring about mutual understanding.

One example is the use of a narrative design. Children can fully identify with a certain role. Children who initially play the role of candy factory director, really become the leader of the group in the following weeks. After all, they are the director. "Yes, sir, no, sir" is what the poor candy designer and secretary say all day. Luckily, it is only a game, and next time the roles will be completely reversed!

best

The community group uses a playful way of working. The separation between work and play fades. The group leader tries to liven up the education in a playful way. You can see this in every age group. Playful, however, does not mean that education is turned into a 'game'.

Children, too, often organize play in all sorts of forms. The day starts with the day opening in which play has a permanent part. The children can draw from a card-index box with all sorts of games, but also look for new circle games themselves.

New themes to be studied always hold lots of elements of play. Situations are played out and often compared to how it would have been in real life. You can use serious themes (the crowning of Charlemagne) or light-hearted ones (how Charlemagne used the bathroom).

The team also performs for the children on a regular basis: singing, miming, acting, performing a puppet show. The team sets the right example!

On parent-teacher evenings, parents are activated by using forms of play as well.

5. working together

Young children are like 'learning machines.' All day, they try things, mimic things and they never stop practicing. When they are four years old, they go to primary school. That is when school work begins. Very often the learning changes, because children have to do what the teacher has thought up. There are examples to copy, you cannot choose but you have to follow the teacher's program. In short, things need to be done, work needs to be done. In the jenaplan school, work needs to be done as well, because it is compulsory. But that is not all! You can work for yourself and work for and with others. And you are a member of the community group and have to do work for your community group.

Working together is practiced explicitly in jenaplan schools. If we want a better society, we will need to learn and practice this in school!

In the jenaplan school, children are stimulated to take responsibility for learning and living. Older children and group leaders are there to help. Of course, the group leader can think of exactly what to do and how to do it. However, we want to teach the children to make their own decisions as much as possible. What you learn, your goal, should be coordinated with the group leader and the group. How, with whom and when is increasingly up to the children to learn to decide.

You consult with the group leader and the community group:

- what you are going to learn

You decide for yourself with the help of the group leader and community group:

- where you are going work
- when you are going to work on it
- how you are going to work on it
- in which order you will work
- what materials you need and how to get them
- how you are going to present what you have learned
- how to preserve what you have made

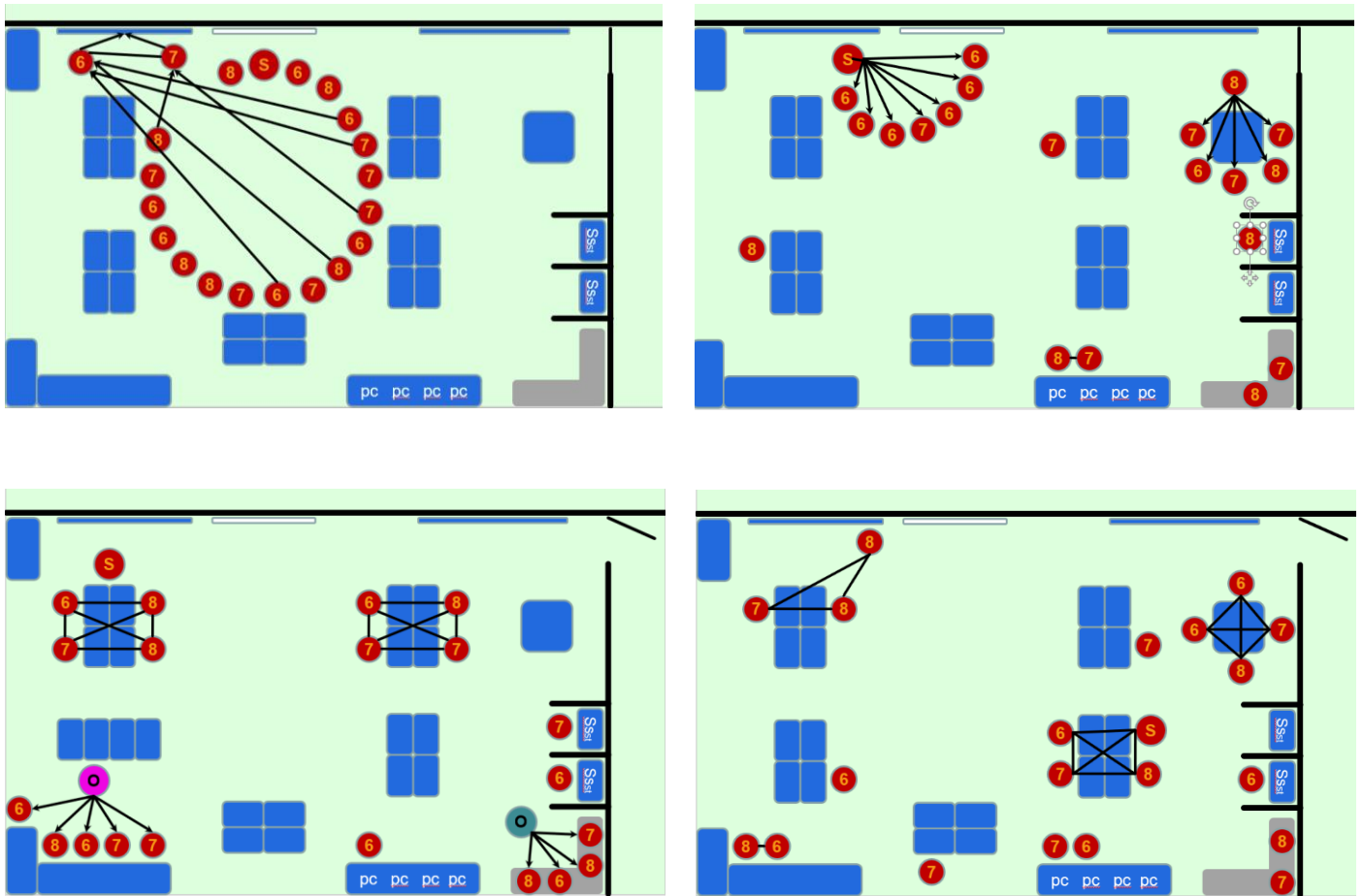
In jenaplan schools, it is not just about gathering knowledge. It is of course very important and useful to have ready knowledge. This will enable you to do well on tests and to act quickly. You should also understand what you have learned, you should gain insight. The understanding will grow when you are able to apply what you have learned. By applying it, knowledge will become truly yours. Personal experiences ensure you remember better: if we have been in Norway ourselves, we can state five important places without any effort. If we have to learn them in school, it will be a lot harder.

So we have to use and apply what we learn. And eventually, the intention is that everything we learn will enable us to think of or develop new things again.

In the jenaplan school, the focus is on TOGETHER. We ensure that children in the community group take responsibility for the learning of all children in the community group. Helping each other is a matter of course. That is why it is important that children of different ages and qualities learn together in a group.

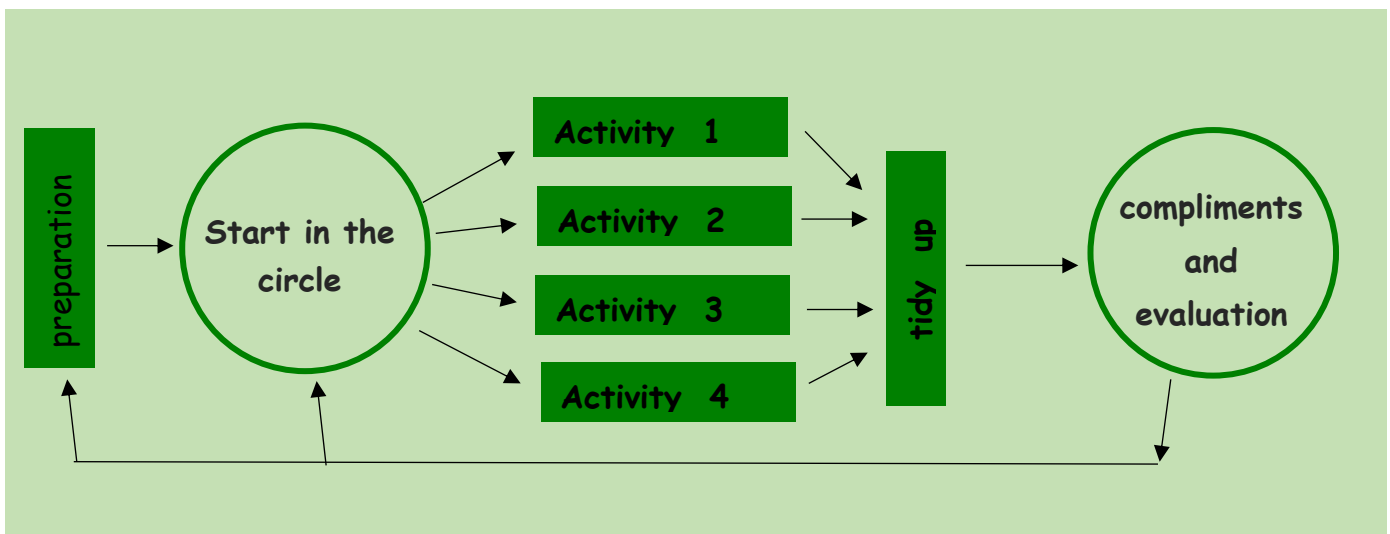
Children with an age difference of two years can mean a lot for each other! Because a third of the group leaves every year and another third of youngest enters, children fulfill different social roles: from asking help to offering help. The community group regularly discusses in what way working together can be better organized. We make use of the children's talents and let them give instructions and explain things to other children. The group leader is more of a group director than an instructor.

You see all kinds of organizational formations in the community group in which children work together. Important principles in working are independence and responsibility, both for the child and for the group.



Workingsituation in an upper group. The lines indicate communication.

Working together always follows the same pattern. Being organized from a joint responsibility, the work begins with the entire group, usually in the circle. Then the children start working and finally there is another evaluation in the circle, from which points of improvement are formulated for the next work period. In this way, the group leader and the group constantly work to improve the process of cooperation.



For the children, independence also means having certain skills and a certain attitude. When children are independent, they can:

- look for solutions
- not look for the group leader every time
- help each other
- accept each other's help
- work at their own pace
- work in their own way
- find satisfaction in self-found solutions rather than in the group leader's approval

There are basic conditions for achieving self-responsible learning. Children have to

- be able (to be allowed) to use their own way to achieve the goal
- be able to work together
- be able to give and receive help
- know what is required (think in terms of goals)
- be able to assess their own product for themselves

Independent means you do the work yourself. If you get stuck, you cannot directly go looking for the group leader. This is not always pleasant. It can also be annoying when your neighbor does not understand your question or when others keep asking you for help. Working independently is something children need to adjust to slowly; they need to learn. This does not happen by itself. The group leader has to support them.

Developing independence in children is a goal many schools want to achieve. A system where children need to be able to work for themselves for a while so that the group leader can work with a smaller group of children, demands that these children can work independently. This is not something you can just expect of children. They need to be given the chance to develop this!

good

Children are given an outline of all the tasks that need to be carried out. This can be a task list for a specific work period, for a part of the day, a day or a week. It is primarily the 'to-do list' of the group leader.

Children are free to choose the order in which they will perform the tasks. If there is still time left, they can choose their own work, for example from the 'take-your-pick cupboard'.

Sometimes children are free to work on assignments, and cooperative learning formats are used.

In circle talks, we explain to children what is expected of them, what 'independent' means. The group leader always makes sure children are given tasks they can perform independently.

better

Attention is paid to group formation. Children have more responsibility and work at desk groups. At these desk groups older and younger children work together so that they can help each other. Children have to get their own materials and tidy up afterwards. Agreements have been made about the use of materials, how to ask for and offer help and about the work noise. A work period often starts with twenty minutes of working quietly.

The group leader is less active and uses the work period to help small groups of children and to observe the children in the group from time to time.

Children work on tasks which often have multiple goals. They take good care of materials and have a clear planning. The group leader tries to be ahead of difficult situations. Children learn to deal with them in the circle and during certain exercises.

best

There is a lot of cooperation in the community group, based on the children's qualities and talents. To make sure no children are excluded, a lot of attention is paid to showing talents. Together with the group we look for those as well!

The group provides a clear structure and a learning path for cooperation. We discuss with children which skills need to be further developed to make the cooperation more functional.

As with arithmetic, there is also a learning path with skills for cooperation:

- to look at each other while talking
- to react in a friendly way
- to give the opportunity to join
- to dare to contribute
- to participate in a group assignment
- to let each other finish talking
- to accept each other's contributions
- to stay with your group
- to talk and work quietly

- to share materials with each other
- to continue to work on the task until it is finished
- to ask each other questions
- to respond to what someone says
- to repeat what someone says every now and then
- to complement each other
- to work with all group members
- to offer to explain something
- to ask another for help

- to help each other without telling answers
- to put yourself in someone else's position
- to accept a difference in opinion
- to maintain a good relationship
- to come to terms about something with each other
- to criticize ideas, not people
- to solve problems together
- to criticize in a friendly way
- to build on ideas
- to stimulate and motivate the group



Cooperation does not always look the same. The way you cooperate depends very much on your personal characteristics. Human Dynamics distinguishes emotional, physical and mental dynamics. These dynamics play an important part in the way you function in a group. The group leader should recognize and acknowledge this. The difference between boys and girls also plays an important part in cooperation. Let children explain why they do what they do the way they do it. Be curious about the children's approach. They are unique in this, too!

6. celebrating together

The celebrations show the quality of the jenaplan school!

Celebrations are not always festive. Celebrating rather means experiencing life's joys and sorrows, experiencing belonging together; a true encounter of people who are connected. To meet without being a must.

"We have to organize a celebration," is not a phrase used in jenaplan schools. The celebration is a natural result of earlier events.

Celebrations also function as a calendar. They mark time. In our culture we value moments like this. We tell our children: "Just three more nights before..."

These fixed moments in a year are recognizable for everyone. This also applies to school years, church years in the different religions and to our calendar year. There are recurring moments when we as a community celebrate together, experience our togetherness with each other.

We are familiar with the following celebrations, amongst others:

1. Religious celebrations
 - Christian: Christmas, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost
 - Jewish: Pesach, Purim, Feast of Tabernacles, Bar Mitzvah
 - Islam: Ramadan, Sugar Festival, feast of Sacrifice
 - Hinduism: Holi festival, Diwali
2. General celebrations
 - New Year's Eve
 - Valentine's Day
 - King's Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Mother's Day/Father's Day
3. School celebrations
 - first day of school
 - school party
 - start-of-week/end-of-week assembly
 - spring festival
 - harvest festival
4. Individual celebrations
 - birthday
 - death
 - anniversary
 - wedding
 - farewell
 - newcomers

When talking with former pupils of a jenaplan school, it is not surprising that the conversation rapidly turns to the celebrations. That perception, those experiences, seem to run very deep.

It is therefore unfortunate that the celebrations in the jenaplan school are under pressure of all sorts of external influences. We have to make sure to keep this important existential pedagogical situation alive.

Starting and ending the week together is important for a living and working society. A clear start and a clear end to a period makes sure that you can control and overlook time.

Next to speaking, playing, and working together, celebrating together plays an important role in the jenaplan school. We should deal with it as such.

This applies to the small celebrations such as the day opening or a child's birthday and to the large celebrations with the whole school community.

Celebrations, just as other educational activities, have a certain order. There should be time and room for preparation.

Thought is given to:

- form which presentation form will be used
- content what we want to tell the others
- layout the place, the setting, decor, seating of the audience
- clothing clothing and grease paint
- music important for the atmosphere
- language suitable for all spectators?
- techniques light, sound, digital presentations

The preparation is followed by the performance. This has important points too.

- How does the performance start, how do we present the performance?
- What highlights are to be experienced?
- How do we end?

After each celebration there is a reflection. We look back to learn. The reflection is best done in one's own community group, as soon as possible after the celebration. So, we should not leave school immediately after the celebration, but return to our own group for a reflection. Together we can make sure the next celebration will be even better. Of the lower groups we expect a different presentation than of the upper groups. We speak with respect about each other and learn to appreciate everybody's input.

good

We make birthdays into a festive day for every birthday boy or girl. Of course, there is singing in the morning, there is a party hat, there are congratulations and perhaps even a present. As the children get older, they start organizing the birthdays on their own. We know exactly when someone's birthday is because each group has a self-made birthday calendar.

In the school we are very alert to special occasions. We keep each other informed of these occasions. Sometimes these are cheerful occasions but other times they can be very sad. We are used to paying attention to them in the group. We make beautiful cards or send letters. When someone had died, we put up pictures and light a candle. We talk about the grief and try to help where we can.

When there is a festive celebration, we make a beautiful gift together which we offer to the party pig and of course there is a big party when the teacher is getting married, when one of the children has had a brother or sister, or when someone has won a judo championship!

Joint start and end-of-week assemblies are hard to realize, but we come together once a week with all the children of the entire school for the midweek assembly on Wednesday. The teachers present a new song, read from an exciting book and children from all groups get to perform something beautiful as well.

We start and end the week in the circle in our own community group. The group leader and the children prepare this in turns.

better

Each day in the community group starts with a day opening, prepared by the children. They prepare a serious and a playful part. That way we start each day in a cheerful way!

There is of course room to tell each other very important things and after that the day opening begins. A newspaper article, a poem or part of a book is read. Then, we play a game. The group also has a card-index box with all sorts of game descriptions. We use these when we feel the need for 'something different' during the day as well.

We encourage children to come up with original ideas. We try to minimize imitating celebrities. Of course, we give the opportunity to do that from time to time, but we mainly fill the celebrations with self-created presentations.

The recurring annual celebrations are celebrated with the entire school. We always come up with original ideas.

Santa Claus for example always has a wonderful adventure and that always includes a special celebration. It is customary for teachers and sometimes parents to be on stage and do a play.

Presenting is something you will certainly learn at the jenaplan school. In the eight years you attend our school, you will have to give lots of presentations. After every presentation, the children and group leader will say what they thought was good ('two stars...') and what could be improved ('...and a wish'). In this way we teach each other to get even better in presenting.

In presenting we pay special attention to:

- Originality. There are many ways to present. There is a list of ways on the walls of our group. Of course, you can have a show-and-tell, but you can also show a scale-model or make a video clip. You'll always receive extra 'stars' if you come up with something nobody has done before.
- Your attitude. You should act naturally, pay attention to see if there are any questions, and don't be a stiff in front of the group!
- Your language. You should talk clearly and use language everyone understands.
- Care. The things you show should be well cared for. Do not show any grammatical mistakes or messy work!

In the reflection circles we discuss these four points after presentations, as well as after each celebration. This ensures that the celebration is and stays interesting.

best

In our school every week starts with a joint start-of-week assembly. Group leaders and children look ahead to what is to come that week. New ideas are presented to the children. The celebration always starts with a fixed ritual.

Everyone knows this, so it is very quiet. At one school they light a candle, at another a song is sung, whatever they are used to. Children give beautiful presentations. The start-of-week assembly really makes you want to start the new week! Sometimes a new book is presented, sometimes a new song or a game for the schoolyard. We sing for birthday boys and girls and introduce new people at our school: new children, students or guests.

After that we talk some more about plans of our community group in our own circle and then we start planning the week.

The week always ends with an end-of-week assembly. These are very interesting. The community groups present all kinds of special things they have been working on the past week. We see a multitude of presentations:

- a photo presentation of a visit
- exciting stories that children have written
- a report of research
- a newly learned song, with movements
- beautiful products that are made
- beautiful poems
- complicated building structures
- a quiz

- tasty dishes from the kitchen
- ...

We show each other what we have learned and experienced in an attractive way. And the end-of-week assembly is presented again by the children.

We always close with a song so we can enter the weekend cheerfully!

We usually close the week with presentations on stage, but from time to time we will choose different forms. For example, we set up an exhibition we can visit, or we wander about as an audience along several stages spread throughout the school. When the weather is nice, we often think of activities in the schoolyard. Our amphitheater is a great place to close the week.

In our education, we pay a lot of attention to theater. When we work in the group, we use a lot drama as well. It is a good way to explain things to others. We think it's so important that we also have a learning path for acting. This enables us to systematically work on quality improvement.

We are used to seize many opportunities and turn them into a celebration. We camp together at the beginning of the school year. We have gotten rid of the well-known school outings to amusement parks. We organize a camp for the entire school. Many parents want to be a part of this. We specifically organize them at the beginning of the year, so we can look back on it with great joy for an entire school year. We start immediately after the end of the holidays when we come back to school. The start- and end-of-week assemblies and the school activities all have to do with the theme of the adventure we are about to have together. And when, after the first four weeks, we have come through this adventure in good shape, we have become a close community and we have gotten to know the new children in our community group very well.

We are used to seize every opportunity to celebrate together. Not just the festivities; when sad events happen, we come together to be sad together, to comfort each other and be there for each other.

Celebrating, the best moments in school life.



7. interior design

“We know a school should rather look like a jungle, a farm, a laboratory or a labyrinth than an office building... and yet (almost) all schools look like the last.” Guus Kuijer (1980)

Because of Peter Petersen being one of the first to design his school interior in a different way, it is interesting to read what he wrote about it in *Der kleine Jena-Plan*. Some statements:

- There are desks and chairs that are easy to move, depending on the situation.
- In the group room there are four-square desks and desks for one, which are also suitable for two.
- The most preferred group consists of three or four children.
- The group of two is eventually pedagogically negligible or even dangerous because it will pave the way to cliquishness.
- All the teacher needs are a special chair and cupboard space.
- There is no absolute permanent seating arrangement, places are chosen freely or determined by the groupwork of the moment.
- Actual freedom of movement: children move about freely in the room, even in the school. *Exercise is the food for the growing child's body*; preventing it is an assault on its health.
- One who misuses the liberty will be called to account by the group and the group leader.

Designing your classroom interior and school play a great part in the way children work. We recognize Petersen's statements above in nearly all lower group rooms. This changes immensely from the middle groups and up. Children sit in permanent groups, often put together by the group leader for a certain purpose. This is when, in the eyes of parents and often children as well, the actual learning starts: sit at a desk with paper and pencil and quietly do the tasks given by the teacher and do this for a long period of time. If you can't keep this up for long, you are a troublesome pupil, a very active child, unfocused, etc.

We often expect children to have a work attitude we cannot even maintain ourselves for that long.

It is much better to design your group room interior in a way that there is a multitude of different work spaces: places where you can work together, where you can work alone. Places with an active or rather a passive sitting position. Let children find the place where they can do their work optimally. Let's take an example from the way of working in the lower groups. Fortunately, they are not used to all children doing the same task at the same moment.



good

The classroom looks homely. The desks and chairs are not seated in rows, but there are desks forming groups and desks and worktops where children can work alone. There is a display table where beautiful items are exposed. You can tell what theme the group is working on. Areas are formed by placing cupboards in the classroom. Items are arranged clearly in them. Teaching aids that belong together are placed together in a cupboard. There is a cupboard for language and arithmetic, for crafts and one is filled with books. The walls are used as notice board, where children's work is displayed beautifully. Not put up arbitrarily, but beautiful texts and drawings with passe-partouts around them. We also see a planning-board. It shows who is working on what.

Of course, there is a place where you can easily form a circle. This is sometimes done in the middle of the classroom and sometimes in one of the specific areas.

For special themes such as Christmas, the room is decorated cozily. The big lights stay off in the mornings, and candles are lit.

Together with the children we make sure our group room stays tidy.

Nearly all the work is done in our own group room. Sometimes children work in other spaces outside the group room.

better

There is a permanent circle in this group room. This is convenient, because the group can quickly come and sit in the circle at any moment, without furniture having to be moved. This circle is not only used for the circle talks, but also serves as instruction and presentation area. This is where the smartboard is as well. Children can receive instructions from one of the children or from the group leader without the rest of the group being bothered too much.

In the group room there are desk groups and places to work alone to the side of the room. There is also a study booth where you can really focus on your work.

When you enter the classroom, you can see the group journal or log. Children write and draw in the log every day, so everyone can see what they worked on. You see all kinds of areas in the classroom: arithmetic area, measuring and weighing area, language and writing area, experiments area, art and crafts area, reading and listening area, building area.

During block period you see children work on their own weekly or daily plan in the different areas. You never really see all children do the same thing, except in the circle of course.

In the lower groups you see a lot of thought has been given to the design of the cupboards. Most of it is visible to the children. It is as if the teacher was on her knees in front of the cupboards to see to it that things were arranged practically. Of course, there are frequent discussions with the children about organizing all things practically.

best

From the outside you can see this is not an average school. There are all sorts of practical places to play and work around the school. You have places where you can enjoy running and exercising, places where you can sit quietly, talk to each other or just do some work. You can also see artistic work in the schoolyard: there are benches with mosaics made by children, which together form a kind of amphitheater.

Also, there are all kinds of trees and shrubs and gardens where children can work. There are even some animals and a barn.

When you enter the school, you see the building is not just a collection of classrooms, but a building where children can learn in many ways. No space has been left unused. You see all kinds of learning places, workshops in handy spaces. When children show you around, they can tell you about their language printing workshop, their theater, the

silence center, and the music studio. Between the classrooms you find open learning squares, furnished with functional areas. In this school, everyone is responsible for every space.

All groups start and end each part of the day in their group room, where, once again, we see the permanent circle. The group rooms are mostly used by children who like to work in silence. Many children use the workshops in the school. You can work together with children from other community groups there and ask for explanations from someone who can explain things to you properly.



8. block period

Many schools work with periods, true to tradition. Mostly periods of 50 minutes. This happened at the first jenaplan school in Jena as well. These periods are long enough to give instructions, yet too short to work things out or to study things. Therefore, two hours were paired to form a 'block of two periods': block period.

In *Der kleine Jena-Plan* Peter Petersen writes: "From the first day of school the children work freely, self-motivated and largely independently."

During block period children work, play, and talk together. It is a longer period for practicing, studying, experiencing, discovering, and exploring. They work on assignments that practice for instance language arts and arithmetic, yet they also work on world studies or prepare a class meeting or end-of-week assembly.

In the lower grades these periods are often called 'work of choice'. In the middle grades this organizational form often disappears. At this point the teacher becomes active, becomes the producer, and the children become more and more consumers. Jenaplan schools believe that learning is an active process: you do the learning! Or, as Jan Ligthart wrote: "In a good school the principal does nothing, the teachers do little and the children do all."

During block period, children work increasingly independently, and become ever more responsible for their own learning. Children in the lower groups of a jenaplan school choose to work in theme areas or to do assignments by means of, for example, a planning board. This way of working is gradually transformed into a weekly plan during their time in primary school, where they organize their assignments and self-picked work handily. Children mostly work with their own weekly plan, and not with a weekly plan imposed by their teacher. Children have to do a lot in a jenaplan school, but they are also allowed to make their own choices. The group leader and the community group help children to draw up well thought-out plans. The children's personal responsibility and planning skills will become ever greater this way. Children learn to make their own choices and have to justify themselves to the group and group leader. They do this in a reflection circle, where the group looks back at the block period:

- How did it go?
- What did we learn?
- What went well?
- What do we want to do differently tomorrow?

Such a reflection circle is important to make sure that self-responsible learning is systematically acquired. Constantly looking back with the group to think of how to go on: working together on learning together.

For example, you can decide with the group to work quietly for the first part of block period. You then plan the work that needs a lot of concentration at the beginning of block period.

In their own weekly plan, children work on:

- Assignments from the group leader
- Work of their own choice, often as a result of conversations with the teacher
- Work devised by the group

For block period to be successful, four conditions should be met:

- 1 You need to think in terms of goals. Children are relatively free to think of the way they want to achieve these goals. This will meet the desire to learn in many ways.
- 2 Children need to be able to work independently. This means you should organize your group room in a functional way and potentially other spaces as well, and children should have learned what to do if they have a question or a problem.

- 3 Children need to be able to cooperate very well. They should have learned how to help others properly and how to ask for help. But also, how to work together in a group, how to divide tasks, how to make sure the work is finished in time and how to show accountability.
- 4 The group leader and the children need to have a proper administration. You need to have a clear view on what you have already learned and what you still have to learn. Overviews, linked to clearly stated goals, need to be available. Digital solutions can be very helpful.

good

Children have their own weekly plan, in which the group leader largely decides what should be done. In addition, there is room for assignments agreed on with the community group.

Children are free to decide when and what to do, and perhaps even with whom. Every day there is a period in which children can work on their weekly plan. Preferably every day, but at least once a week, there is a reflection circle in which they talk about how things are going. Children who have not finished the work of their weekly plan have to answer for it. Together with the community group, the group leader decides whether the reasons are acceptable, and agreements are made for the next week.

We work with a weekly **plan**; it is a tool to organize your work. Plans do not always work, and you will have to adjust them. If the reasons are not acceptable, at first the child is asked to think of a solution. In the end, it is the group leader who will decide how to continue. Always with the aim of teaching the child to take responsibility for their own work.

better

There is a block period at set times every day. The different subjects have all been placed in this block period. Children do not all work on the same subject at the same time. We do not want that because not all children need the same amount of time for each subject. Instructions are also planned according to needs. You often hear the question “who needs instructions?” The instructions are not all provided by the group leader. Children who are experts in something are often used for giving instructions.

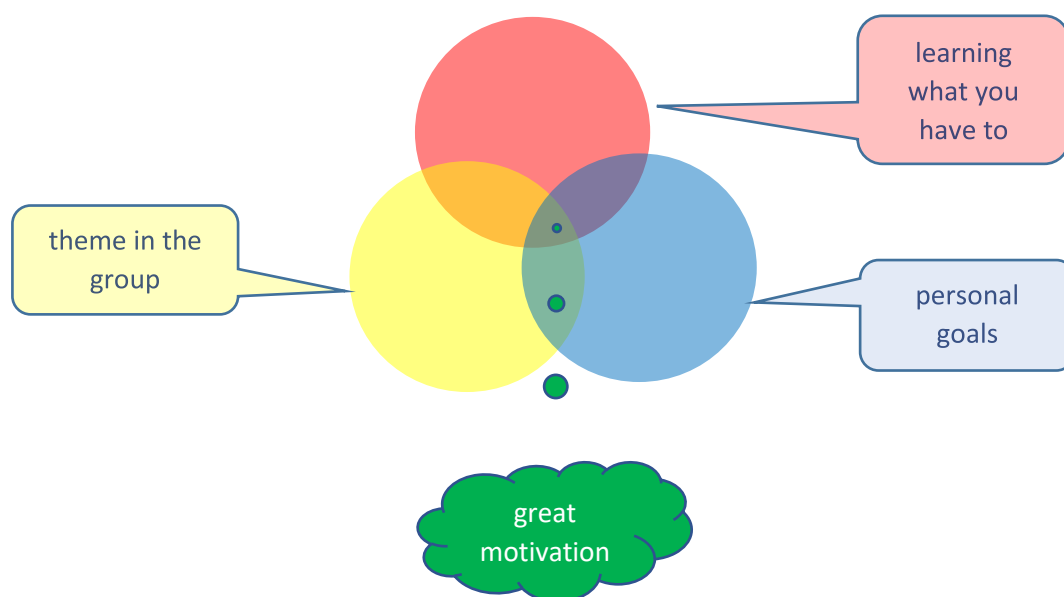
This is why a three-year community group is so convenient: you can make a lot of use of the differences in the group. The oldest children who help a lot now, will be the youngest in the community group next year. And what’s more, you learn the most when you have to explain things to others!

The group often sits in the circle for a while for fine-tuning, and the group leader has a lot of conversations in between as well. These talks are always about what should be done to ensure that everyone can learn optimally. This ensures that the responsibility for learning primarily becomes the responsibility of the child, the group leader and the group.

best

In their self-chosen way, children work on goals that are determined by the group leader, the children themselves or by the group. Every child has made their own planning for the block periods. During block period, children choose the place where they want to work. The school has more workplaces than just the group room and children sit where they can do their work properly. Therefore, you can find places to work quietly and alone, places to work together and places where you can work with a little more noise. The entire school building really is a workplace for children.

Children’s own initiatives are appreciated. It is all about finding the right balance between ‘what you have to learn’ and ‘what you want to learn’. We strive to match the things the school wants, the themes we work out with the group, and personal choice and interest:



The development of block period is shaped by regular evaluation by the group leader and the group. The evaluation will lead to new assignments for a following weekly plan.

The evaluation is not just about quantity but mostly about quality. Many things have to be accounted for by everyone to the group. It is not so much about “what did you do?”, but more about “what did you learn?”

By addressing the group repeatedly, a joint responsibility for the learning of each group member is created: “How can we help someone who is not as good at something yet?”

It is good to keep and archive the weekly plans because they form the basis for reporting.

The group leader gives support where it is needed during block period. He is responsible for the children’s success and has to adjust when needed. Children should not be left to fend for themselves.

Because the group leader has more of a directing role during block period, there is time to offer help where it is needed. The group leader has a helicopter view and has a less active approach. That is why during block period the group leader **appears** to be lazy.

In block period, children learn ‘vitaly important’ matters; there is much practice in the essences described earlier (part 2).

Planning is important; children learn by experience how long something lasts, children handle themselves more and more, feel responsible and don’t need the group leader as much. It seems to happen by itself.

In conclusion, we can distinguish three important elements in block period:

- 1 Making a to-do-list: what do I have to do, what do we want and what do I want?
- 2 Planning: What will I do when, where and with whom?
- 3 Reflection by yourself, the group, and the group leader: what did I learn, did I do well and what will I do differently next time?

9. rhythmic weekly plan

Traditional schools work with set schedules. The jenaplan school works with a rhythmic weekly plan. A schedule is much more normative: all activities mostly take about the same amount of time. In a rhythmic weekly plan, there is variation: in time and activity.

Not all activities are equally long. An activity will stop when the group leader notices the group has lost its concentration. A group discussion can therefore take ten minutes, but it can also last for over an hour. We follow the rhythm of the group.

Rhythmic variation also takes place in activities. Children learn together, socially and individually.

The learning together takes place in four social basic activities:

- Speaking together
- Playing together
- Working together
- Celebrating together

The individual learning takes place in the three individual basic activities:

- Reflecting, philosophizing
- Experimenting
- Praying, meditating

Every morning and afternoon start in the circle. This does not have to take very long. It is the place where group members can meet. Is everyone present, did anything special happen, and can we start our work?

Every daily period ends in the circle in which we discuss and perhaps show what we all have learned. Matters can be rounded off and the group's administration can be brought up to date if necessary.

The weekly plan contains different kinds of circles. There are unprepared circles, prepared circles and reflection or evaluation circles.

The Monday morning circle, a narrating circle, is an unprepared circle: you do not know what the children will contribute. You respond to what the group contributes and how the group responds, in organizational form as well. Prepared circles are for instance the reading circle, the news circle and the theme circle.

Rhythm in a weekly plan also has to do with exertion and relaxation, rest and motion. The group leader should take care of good variation. After a period of concentrated working there is a need for exercise by performing an 'energizer', for example. And after exercising, a calm period is welcome. After having played outside you might organize a period in which everyone reads calmly. Everyone, that means including the group leader!

It is practical to plan block periods of different community groups at the same time. This allows for exchange. Children can work together with children from other community groups, and group leaders are available for children from different community groups. This allows you to make use of the specific qualities of group leaders and children. In this way two group leaders can take responsibility for two community groups.

good

A rhythmic weekly plan with good variation better fits the children's needs. Else Petersen did research about children's needs; 'The basic strengths of childhood development'. She concluded that children need:

- consistent leadership
- exercise
- working alone (independently)
- cooperation

A good variation between working calmly and exercising, between producing and listening provides a better motivation. A good variation between the different subjects, between thinking and doing, also helps children learn. You can learn in many ways. Group leaders should make use of this. Of course, assignments and exercises need to be done. However, you can also learn by using various cooperative learning formats that allow children to move freely through the group room.

better

Like no other, the group leader knows what suits the group. A weekly plan is only a tool to achieve good results. The group leader takes the liberty to occasionally deviate from the weekly plan when there is a good reason. Often, situations present themselves in the group to which you have to respond. If there was bullying during the break, you need to address it immediately; that moment is an opportunity to learn a great deal about bullying and preventing it. The weekly plan is not set out in detail but is built up from larger blocks. This is possible because the work is often connected. A reading comprehension text might have a lot to do with a topical issue, with language skills, and with the group work.

best

Not only the group leader but the entire group is responsible for the weekly plan. At the beginning of the week the group's weekly plan is discussed together. The group's weekly plan and individual weekly plans are coordinated. Children's initiatives are stimulated and affect the weekly plan as well. Children increasingly organize activities, invite guests, plan field trips, organize campaigns and influence the planning of the week this way. The rhythmic weekly plan is a means for structuring the learning of the group.

WEEKLY PLAN		Theme in the group					Language					Math			Art				And ...				
Name:	Week:	Group theme	Own theme	timeline	Topography	reading	writing	speaking	vocabulary	Grammar	Free Text			Target 1:	Target 2	Target 3:	Music	drawing	painting	Tinkering			
											exercise	writing	illustrate										

Monday	Tuesday	wednesday	Dthursday	Fryday
Storytelling circle	Reading circle	Presentation	Free-Text-circle	observationcircle
Make your weeklyplan	S (ilence)	s	s	s
Newspaper & fruit	Newspaper & fruit	Newspaper & fruit	Newspaper & fruit	Newspaper & fruit
outwards	outwards	outwards	outwards	outwards
Gymnastics	Silent reading	Silent reading	Silent reading	Silent reading
				Wochenabschluss
Reflectioncircle	Reflectioncircle	Reflectioncircle	Reflectioncircle	Reflectioncircle
lunchbreak	lunchbreak	lunchbreak	lunchbreak	lunchbreak
				Elective course
Reflectioncircle	Reflectioncircle	Reflectioncircle	Reflectioncircle	Reflectioncircle

How I worked:			
Monday	😊	😐	😞
Tuesday	😊	😐	😞
Wednesday	😊	😐	😞
thursday	😊	😐	😞
Fryday	😊	😐	😞

Intentions:

For the Portfolio:	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

--

10. courses

Schools spend much time on courses offered from textbooks. There is a pupil book, a guide book for the teacher and often a workbook for the child. Workbooks and textbooks are increasingly being replaced by digital possibilities. It is essentially about pupils gaining knowledge, learning strategies and practicing skills.

This knowledge and skills are offered systematically. The methodology is conceived by didacticians or formed throughout history. For example, in an arithmetic book, children learn to multiply before they learn to divide, while in their doings they apply dividing first. And is it useful to learn to calculate with fractions in fourth grade or to start learning to read in first grade in the first week after the summer holiday?

It is understood that jenaplan schools do not always find these methods useful. Methods have been devised to make things easier for teachers. We'd rather start with children: How can we stimulate many children to learn a lot?

Of course methods are convenient. They are well thought-out, they have beautiful learning formats and exercises and you should certainly use them. It is sensible to make use of multiple methods so you can draw from a great arsenal of exercise material. The group leader helps children with their development and offers the right exercise material to challenge children to learn a great deal.

Courses offer only a part of reality. Components are isolated and practiced. Children, but adults as well, often do not know how to put it to use and why they should practice it. Reasoning that 'it's useful for later' often is not very motivating. The motivation to make an effort is much greater if you understand what you can do with what you have learned. It makes perfect sense that the results are much better if there is a personal goal attached to the learning: what can you do with what you have learned?

In jenaplan schools we try to make the courses as functional as possible. In school children learn in two ways: by means of courses and by means of group work. Courses are the most effective when they are related to group work. Group leaders need to specify the relation between group work during instructions. Good instructions don't take too long and are effective. The following points are important:

Preparation: Make sure you prepare well, gather the materials and ask yourself if there are any children in need of pointers or help before the instruction.

Activation: Make sure you are clearly visible for the instruction group, give a clear starting signal and start with a motivating introduction. Summarize what already happened, assess what the children already know and make clear what they can do with what they are about to learn.

Presentation: State the learning goal: "You're going to learn..." And then, together with the children, you decide who needs the instruction. After that the presentation starts:

- take small steps
- keep a good pace
- use clear language
- indicate the main points
- give examples
- show illustrations
- represent, for example, draw
- present interactively
- pause long after a question
- use humor
- summarize
- check whether everybody understood
- and practice immediately after instructions

Practicing: Give short tasks and use 'do-phrases'. You activate the children by thinking aloud and by asking many questions. Try to involve all children and ensure successes. Compliment individual children and the group. If there are children who do not understand, do not explain it in the same way again, but try a different approach.

Processing: After practising you start processing immediately, preferably for a period of 15 to 20 minutes. Stimulate cooperation and look around closely, so that you can give immediate feedback and correct errors right away. That is helpful!

Reflecting: Ask the question: "What did you learn?" Magnify what went well and encourage them a lot. Talk about the process as well: "What made it go well?" Indicate which steps were made and show the connection to group work again.

Looking back: Look back at what you learned a lot: "Remember last week when we..." Show, preferably with the children, what was learned, which step on a learning path has been taken.

Crucial to effective instruction is the careful dealing with time.

During instruction there is a shift from teacher driven to pupil driven activities. Long lessons often lead to children nodding off or reduced activity and participation in children, and eventually problem behavior. Good instructions are clear and concise.

Using many examples and demonstrations helps, as well as following up on what children already know.

In a jenaplan school, instructions are 'custom-made'. They follow what children already know and have yet to learn. Children are not given instructions because they are in a certain year group, but because they are ready at that moment. We want to ensure an uninterrupted line of development, as is required by law.

good

The group leader has different ways of giving instructions. Because the goals are clearly stated, it is also clear for which children the instruction is intended. There are hardly any class instructions. Sometimes groups are given instructions at an instruction table. In other cases, a small circle is formed.

The group leader tries to involve children explicitly. Good questions are asked, and the children are given time to think after a question. We encourage them to think. There is no need for raising hands in such a small instruction group. Children pay attention to each other and the group leader pays attention to the children. This creates a natural learning situation.

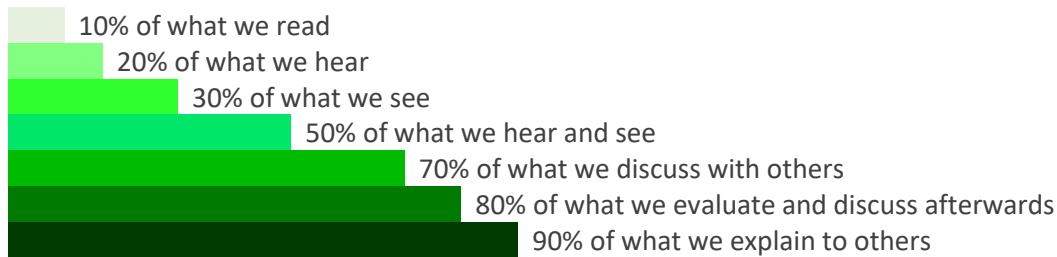
better

The group leader explicitly asks the children to decide whether they should attend an instruction. In certain cases, the teacher will decide for a child. In other cases he decides to let children experience the consequences of their choice.

For example, instructions about a spelling matter are given because many children have a lot of difficulty with it. And children having a lot of difficulty with large division sums come to the instruction table for 15 minutes. Or the teacher will sit with children who are learning how to hold a pair of scissors.

Instructions don't stand alone, they have a clear connection to other activities in the group. Working with graphs is instructed for instance because the group is going to have a traffic census. Children who have worked with graphs before are invited to say something about it. The group leader tries to activate children as much as possible. Learning by doing. An important factor in choosing learning formats is their effectiveness.

We remember:



best

In the group we make use of the children's qualities. The principle of student-journeyman-master is often employed. Learning from and with each other goes without saying. This means children provide instructions as well. In addition to the question "who needs instruction", the question is asked who will provide the instruction. If different community groups in the school work together, the children can also choose a teacher from another community group because he is very good in explaining arithmetic. We need to plan this together!

Sometimes children go to other community groups to help children learn. Poor readers from the middle groups read to lower group children in the book area and upper group children help children from the middle groups how to make a PowerPoint presentation. Of course, these children have learned how to help other children. You do not give the answer but let them discover for themselves. You do not tell them the answer is wrong, but you tell them to give it another try, or you try to explain it in a different way. The ideas of Howard Gardner (Theory of Multiple Intelligences) are well established in the school. Children know and experience that you can learn in many ways. You can practice the multiplication tables by reciting them, by calculating them, by singing a song about them, by 'stepping' on them, by making a diagram and so on. There are many ways to learn!

Courses are important. You practice something, preferably something you need, to be able to apply it afterwards. You can compare it with sports. You have to train to make sure you win in the competition. And you practice the things that did not go so well during the competition in the next training. There is always a connection between the competition and the training. In that same way there should be a connection between the courses and the group work, between understanding, remembering, and employing.



11. group work

We have two activities in the Jenaplan school: courses and group work. We prefer to use the term group work instead of world studies.

Many people understand world studies as the integrated working on science subjects (such as geography and history) in the form of themes and projects. In the Jenaplan school however, world studies mean something else. When speaking of world studies, Jenaplan schools mean talking together, playing together, working together, and celebrating together. In courses you work alone or together at learning and practicing knowledge and skills. In group work, together with other children, you practice 'learning to live'. You do this by talking, playing, working, and celebrating together; the four basis activities.

Group work is like the competition, the courses are just training. If you are only allowed to train, motivation will disappear. It is the competitions that ensure great involvement!

Group work is mostly about wonder, curiosity, learning how to learn (the process) and critical thinking. This is only possible in connection with others and with the world. Learning to live in relationships and getting to know yourself as well. Group work starts with questions: your own questions and questions of the group. And every answer raises many new questions. As Kees Both says: you should not answer questions, but question answers.

With group work starting with the group's questions, you cannot start with a fully outlined plan for the group. That plan will come later, and you will make it together with the group!

The first step in group work is always to arouse the interest, motivation, draw the attention of the group. Sometimes the interest is there spontaneously, and you will notice the entire group is filled with questions, about a current topic for example. Other times you might find it important to work out a certain theme with the group, and then it is up to the group leader to get the children to be on the edge of their seats. If you manage to do that, the rest will happen almost automatically; if we have many real questions, we want to get to work!

The first step in group work is mobilizing interest. You can arouse this interest in many ways. The better you know the children in your group, the better you know how to accomplish this. Sometimes you succeed by having a discussion circle, other times by organizing a field trip or inviting a guest. It's the group leader's responsibility to make certain the group is activated. Children are far too often consumers in the educational processes. We should let children be the producers, especially in group work. It's the children who should be active!

If the children are interested, questions will follow automatically. And children don't all have the same questions because they all have different prior knowledge about the subject. This prior knowledge needs to be activated and made available to the entire community group. It is good to show children's individual learning questions, for instance by using individual mind maps. Everyone makes a mind map, including the teacher. The teacher's mind map is based primarily on what the children need to learn according to attainment targets and school objectives. From these individual mind maps you can create a group mind map. This will be the starting point for working on the theme. As a group you visualize in this mind map the connection between all those questions from the group. As soon as the community group is divided into subgroups and the tasks have been divided, we can get started. Of course, we have had many discussions about the goals we want to achieve, what we need to achieve them and how to acquire what we need.

All groups work towards a presentation. The task of the group leader is mostly to help the children so that they are successful at their presentation later.

When the work is finished, presentations follow in a variety of presentation forms. There can be talks, PowerPoint presentations, scale-models, radio plays, videos, exhibitions and so on.

After each presentation, every child in the group records what has been learned. In this way, the knowledge of one group is transferred to the entire group: learning from and with each other!

In the administration the group leader records what goals have been achieved.

Group work can take many forms. We can organize long-term projects. For a quarter of a year, a group of children might be doing a weekly radio-broadcast on the local broadcaster, filled with current events, interviews and music, or you can organize your own theater performance with script, set, clothing, music and dance.

From time to time it can be challenging to experience a storyline approach with the group. Steve Bell has provided us with a wonderful didactic tool with his 'storyline to education'.

In group work children experience that they can make meaningful use what they learned in the courses. Children often discover that they want to do something they cannot do yet. A great opportunity to organize a short or a long course to teach a new skill.

good

The world is a whole and does not consist of school subjects. Neither is your brain divided into segments like most schools use. It would be a good start to integrate the subjects more closely with each other, especially the science subjects. Fortunately, there are methods that work with themes in which many subjects are integrated.

Through life-like themes, children can work in a way they can choose themselves. The group leader checks if they work on the goals that need to be reached in the end.

Children are stimulated to choose different ways of working. New ways of working are regularly introduced and, if necessary, demonstrated by the group leader. There is always something new to choose, which gives a boost!

The theory of Multiple Intelligence, developed by Howard Gardner and elaborated in many ways, holds a wealth of ideas to offer many ways of working.

Children are invited to use a variety of presentation forms. These presentations are mainly intended to show what you have learned.

In courses, such as arithmetic, we usually use tests to determine what has been learned. In group work, the presentation is the way to prove what you have learned. It's not only about knowledge, it's also about the process: how did you handle it, how did the cooperation go, the planning?

better

Learning questions are the starting point for group work. This concerns the learning questions of the community group, not the individual learning questions. The learning questions are structured as described in the introduction. Together, the learning questions of the children and of the group leader form the mind map with the learning questions of the group. This group mind map forms the route planner for group work. Based on their own interests, children work out a part of the group mind map. This makes them responsible for informing the other children of the community group about this part of the mind map. The group leader ensures that connections are always made and makes them visible in the group mind map.

The components that are not worked out by children but are important, are prepared and presented by the group leader.

Children are encouraged to collect their information from primary sources.

If you use primary sources, you will get information mainly from experiments, research such as a survey, observations and interviews.

Of course, secondary sources are useful as well. We want to teach children how to deal with them critically.

Secondary sources include books, newspapers and the Internet.

We have to teach children that the Internet is useful for finding information quickly, but it does need a critical attitude: is the information correct, who put this information here, are you allowed to just use it?

For the presentations we let children use four different types of presentation forms:

WRITTEN	
wall poster	class newspaper
paper	mind map
brochure	blog
poem	website

VISUAL	
exhibition	dish
scale model	display table
clothing	image
floor plan	model

EXPRESSION	
play	video
opera	lip dub
musical	song
dance	pantomime

ORAL	
speech	interview
forum	radio play
discussion	quiz
debate	radio broadcast

best

An important part of the week consists of group work. Together with the group leader, the children discuss what they are going to work on and what learning goals need to be achieved.

Real learning always starts with wonder. From this wonder you want to get started! You will explore and use your own community group for it at first, and after, you use the possibilities outside the group too. Searching for the ins and outs. Next, you use the information you find to work on producing something, you choose a presentation form. Together with others you need to check if everything you have found is correct, so you can share it with others in your own group, in the school at the end-of-week assembly or even outside of school. This means you can recommend thinking or acting in a certain way to others. Sharing knowledge is the goal and it is the future! With shared knowledge, others can move on: ever more knowledge, ever more possibilities.

In the jenaplan school, the celebration at the end of the week, the end-of-week assembly, is the moment when you share your acquired knowledge and experience with the other children and group leaders of the school. Parents are often allowed to attend.

The questions of the community group and the group leader form the basis for the group work. In the group mind map the learning questions, structured in the individual mind maps and the mind map of the group leader, come together: the basis on which we can always fall back to provide structure in the work.

In group work, the children can display their talents. The community group makes use of these talents and often divides the work to make the best possible use of these talents, but also to stimulate others to develop talent as well. They can help each other!

Using talents (matching) on the one hand and on the other hand developing new skills (stretching).

The children mainly use primary sources. Always look for authentic sources to learn from. In practice, this means that children spend a lot of time out and about, invite many guests to school and do meaningful work.

This meaningful work can take longer. Preparing a school camp, writing, preparing and performing a musical together, organizing an international exchange and redesigning the schoolyard are meaningful activities which children can work on intensively and with great motivation.

And that's learning!

That's when group work is the heart of the jenaplan school!

12. reporting

Working with children means being accountable to all of those involved. That means first and foremost to the children themselves. Others, though, should also be involved in reporting on a child's development.

In the community group you talk about the development of the group and of all children in the group. Children know very well what the others are good at, what the learning goals are, how to stimulate or help others in their development. Children are very capable of assessing themselves. They are often much stricter on themselves and each other than the group leader or the parents.

The whole team of group leaders, the school leader, and care coordinator are involved in reporting. There should be coordination between the reports in the different groups, and, in the context of accountability to 'third parties', there should be an overview.

Schools should think about the transfer to the next community group: what kind of preliminary information do you need to be able to help a child with its development? And that also applies, in addition to all kinds of legal requirements, to the transition to another primary or to a secondary school.

Furthermore, the government is increasingly asking for an account of the results. These are measured against an average, related to the level of education and the origin of the parents.

Jenaplan schools have a dilemma when it comes to comparison with averages. Based on the jenaplan concept, we want to work on the total development of children, and we want to look at development in the light of the possibilities of each specific child. For some children this means that the bar should be lower and for others the bar should be much higher or different!

Jenaplan schools are not based on averages, they do not aim for all children to score on or above average.

Working on optimal development opportunities for all children means that the differences between children are getting bigger. Working based on common, universally applicable goals means that children are slowed down to further develop their personal talents.

In his school, Peter Petersen distinguishes between objective and subjective reporting. The subjective report was a letter, written to the child. It had a pedagogical purpose, meant to stimulate the child in its development.

The objective report was mainly intended for the parents. It looked more at the development in relation to peers and at the most suitable form of secondary education.

For the children in the community group to get a correct picture of their development, it is important to regularly, preferably at the end of each part of the day, look back with the group on what they have learned and how they have worked. From these reflection discussions, issues for the future are formulated. This gives children the opportunity to get to know themselves and their possibilities better, step by step.

Even after carrying out written and oral assignments it is good to get feedback as soon as possible. Returning notebooks, having them checked, receiving them back and then carrying out the next task takes a lot of time and is often not very efficient.

Discussing the assignments together, with other children in the group or with the group leader, searching for the errors yourself with the help of a verification code, often leads to much better results.

Reporting is seen much more as a tool for the development of children. Most of the time it is unnecessary to assess children's work. We test to discover what has been learned and to determine how we should continue. Not to categorize children or to give them a level, a grade or any other assessment.

good

Nearly all of us have grown up with reviews. We received a grade report, a report with poor, adequate or good or maybe even with filled 'dots'.

A first step can be to provide insight into the development phase. Indicate on a line of development how far a child

has progressed in relation to for instance a school year or the primary school period. This makes the next step clear to everybody and we can discuss how to make that step. Children who have insight into the learning goals and know what the next step is, will want to work towards it!

In recent years, the emphasis has shifted to language, reading and arithmetic. Mainly because the government has labeled these skills as basic skills, and, by means of testing, uses them as such to determine the quality of primary schools.

Long ago, Pestalozzi made it clear that it is important to develop the powers of the head, heart and hands. This starting point is of great importance for jenaplan schools as well: working on a broad development! This should also be reflected in reporting. Reporting to parents takes place several times a year and does not have much of an assessing character. There are regular evaluation circles in the groups. We mainly talk about what went well; 'two stars' are given. But we also discuss the 'wishes', because we want to do better next time!

A lot of self-monitoring activities are used when practicing skills. It is good to know right away whether you are doing it correctly. New digital forms of exercise are becoming increasingly available and provide children with immediate feedback. What's more, the group leader can usually see how children have performed. And it prevents the teacher from having to go home with a large pile of exercise books and having to spend relatively too much time on examining them.

better

Reporting is more meaningful when children and teachers do this together. In the report to the parents, children write about their performance and express their opinion about their school life, community group and group leaders.

In the report children can write about for example:

- do you like going to school?
- do you feel at home at school and in your group?
- do you have enough friends?
- what are you good at?
- who do you work with a lot?
- what do you like to do?
- how is your planning going?
- what do you think your work looks like?
- how is the asking and offering help going?
- do you hardly ever argue with each other?
- is there a lot of fun in your group?
- does the teacher compliment you often?

Of course, you report about a past period. However, you should mainly focus on the period ahead of you: what have you learned from the past period and what are good plans for the future? This is how you express expectations, preferably in a positive way, and this way it becomes easy to look back in between to know how to continue.

There is a difference between subjective and objective reporting. Parents and children should get a good picture of the possibilities and impossibilities of their child. At the end of primary school, the advice for further education should not come as a surprise.

The school looks critically at test results and deals with them in a responsible manner. The school realizes that tests only represent a small part of reality and should therefore be considered as such.

best

Children have a very good insight into their own development. They regularly work on their own portfolio. The portfolio contains evidence of personal development. These documents are always accompanied by a report of a portfolio discussion.

During the discussion, achieved learning objectives are identified and new learning objectives are determined. A portfolio can be composed in different ways. Some schools have a paper portfolio folder with written work and photos. There are ever more possibilities to show your development digitally by means of digital portfolio modules, by creating your own website or weblog, or in other ways. Children can teach each other how to use these possibilities.

If we want to activate children to practice self-reflection, we have to teach them to determine learning goals by themselves and teach them how to determine whether a goal has been reached. We discuss questions such as:

- What do you want to learn?
- How are you going to learn it?
- How are you going to show/present what you have learned?
- What are we going to do if you did not succeed?

This way of learning means that there is a lot of insight into learning paths and learning goals. Children have a great deal of freedom in the way they want to achieve these goals. Discussions take place in the community group to determine how to achieve the goals. This creates a multitude of learning opportunities, and children can learn from and with each other, using the available talents.

Reporting is not a one-way street. Teachers do not only report on the pupils, but the pupils also report on the teacher. So, children make a report for the teacher as well, because the group leader wants to become an even better group leader and needs the children for that.

This way of reporting is much more in line with the essences as described in part two of this book. We want enterprising children, who perform together with others and take responsibility for their own development, their overall development!



13. three-year community group

A community group is a whole, and not a collection of children from three different years or groups. So, you are not in third grade, but in a middle group.

When you join the community group, you will just continue to learn where you left off in the earlier group. After the summer holidays, the youngest children in the middle groups do not start reading for the first time. There are children who already know how to read and write and there are children who are not ready for it yet. The entire community group feels responsible for the learning of every child in the group. We help each other with this. Together we make plans and implement them. We know that children learn a lot from each other, and we like to make use of that. Learning is a complicated process. And learning is something you do yourself. It is up to the educators to make sure that children are offered a lot of opportunities to learn. Children see other children as examples, want to be able to do what other children can do, and want to do it well! The best way to do this is in an environment where you are challenged and where you feel safe.

The group is your 'home group'. It's where you can be who you are, where you share your joys and sorrows, where you feel at home. In a strongly individualizing society, for many children the Jenaplan school is the only place where they can learn to live together. Eight years of learning to live together and learning to work together. Let's make sure that lots of children are given that opportunity!

In a community group you will experience what it is like to be the youngest in a group and to be the middle and oldest. Each role has its own responsibility. Children learn to ask for and offer help. Children experience what it is like not to be able to do something yet. Children experience what it is like to be new to a group. Children grow from student to journeyman and master, a centuries-old principle. And when the oldest want to show how important they are, all you have to do is say: "Remember when you were the youngest..."

Children are in the same community group with the same group leader(s) for three years. Three years to work on development together. Three years to build relationships, to understand each other. And that relationship is necessary for development because 'without relationships, there is no performance'.

The children of the community group sit in the circle several times a day. This is the place where the group consults, learns, makes plans, plays and celebrates.

The learning of skills takes place in smaller groups. Children learn basic skills from each other and teach them to each other at desk groups. These are conveniently arranged: children sit down where and with whom they can do their work well. There are also permanent desk groups in Jenaplan schools, arranged by the group leader or by the children themselves. The desk groups should always be arranged in such a way that you benefit greatly from them, that you can learn a lot from them in the broadest sense of the word.

Groups of children also come to the instruction table or sit in a small instruction circle to receive instructions. Very often children help and instruct each other, and the group leader is more the director of groups of learning children. Children with specific talents are used to teaching skills to other children. And it is not always the best child that can help and explain. Especially for a child who does not read very well, it is challenging to read to younger children. Practice first, and then read to the children. It will make you important, and you will want to do it right!

Jenaplan schools make special demands on group leaders. This is necessary to be able to work in community groups successfully. The group leader is mainly an educator and less a didactician. The prerequisite for a good community group is a positive pedagogical climate. This can be achieved by working on the following four elements:

LEADERSHIP

The group leader should primarily be a leader in the sense of 'educator', should be inspired by the Jenaplan concept and above all be able to reflect well. A group leader loves to learn: we have to do better again tomorrow. They reflect continuously and are, of course, a good example for the children. Most of all, they show how to do things. If you show that books are exciting and that you like to read, this will certainly have a positive influence on children.

CONTENTS

The more you know, the better you can perform. Group leaders need to know what the jenaplan concept is all about and be aware of the learning objectives as well. A group leader thinks in terms of goals. Education is based primarily on 'what you have to learn' and not on 'what you have to do'. If you discuss with the group what needs to be learned, children can come up with their own plans for how they want to learn. You can give the group more responsibility this way. The more you know, the better you can teach.

DIDACTICS

Learning is what children do themselves. It is important for group leaders to know how to activate children. Topical issues should often be the starting point for learning. It starts with wonder, curiosity. This gives rise to real questions to which we want an answer. We look for that answer mainly in primary sources by discovering, researching and experimenting and by asking people and things.

ORGANISATION

If you want to work in a differentiated way, you need to be a good organizer. If you let go of children to a large extent, you will need a lot of structure. Structure provides freedom. If you give children complete freedom, chaos will arise. Good management, good planning and good cooperation with colleagues, parents and children are indispensable elements.

The jenaplan concept requires three-year community groups. This is what we want, but sometimes it might not work yet. And, of course, good two-year groups are preferable to bad three-year groups.

Three-year community groups are an important basis for jenaplan schools. If you cannot realize these yet, you as a school must learn how to realize them in the future. In the following sections, under the headings 'good, better, best', we will describe how to grow in this process as a group leader and as a school.

good

Children are in three-year community groups. For learning basic skills, we work a lot in progression groups. For the most part these correspond with the different year groups. Children who are at about the same stage of their development come together at fixed times for instruction and possibly for processing as well. For example, there may be progression groups for arithmetic, language and reading. Children have the opportunity to sit in different groups for different basic skills. It is therefore possible to be much further along with arithmetic and not be as advanced with reading as your peers.

Working in progression groups requires good consultation between the group leaders. Ultimately, group leaders are primarily responsible for the learning of the children in their community group. You need to know how your children are doing in the different progression groups.

The circle talks and working in themes are the main activities that take place in the community groups. There is a big difference between the organization of the courses and of group work: the courses take place in progress groups and the more thematic work happens in the community group.

Group work consists of speaking together, mostly in the circle, playing together, working together on themes and celebrating together.

In group work and in the courses, a lot of attention is paid to cooperation. The education is organized in such a way that children get many opportunities to work together.

better

Children of the three-year community groups work in desk groups of three or four children. Group leaders are very aware of the talents of the children. These are therefore used quite often. Learning deliberately starts with what children can already do. In this way, the group leader can encourage children to learn from and teach each other a lot.

We look for these same talents in the group leaders. For example, we make use of the specific language skills of one of our colleagues, so that children in equal three-year community groups or even the entire school can take part. Plus, it is motivating to work with your passion.

We mainly look for talent. We do not start from what you cannot do, but from what you are good at. If learning is difficult, we look for the right entry to encourage learning. If you do not succeed in rattling off the multiplication tables, we will try to do it with a song or by stepping on them like steppingstones.

best

In the three-year community group children do not have their own place to sit. Just like in many lower groups, you choose a place that is convenient for you to do your work properly. You will notice many different workplaces in the group room. There is of course a permanent circle, so we can quickly get together to discuss something. There are places to work together and places to work alone and undisturbed. There is a large instruction table and there are areas with different functions, often depending on the theme the group is working on.

The theme on which we work is the starting point for learning in the group, for as far as possible. We make use of writing texts, expanding vocabulary and reading strategies, and all of these have to do with the theme. If necessary, effective instructions are given. We all understand why we should learn this.

The children have an overview of the learning lines and goals as well, so that they know what they need to work on. Together with the group, we talk a lot about the way in which the goals are to be achieved. Children come up with many ideas for learning. We do not work with worksheets much, but we do a lot of meaningful work. We know what we are working towards: an exhibition, an interview, a documentary or a musical.

There are many beautiful learning spaces outside the community group. Children have learned to care for them. They do not disturb each other and contribute ideas about how we can turn the school into an even better living and working community, a workshop for children in and around the building.

For this purpose there are weekly class meetings and a children's parliament. That is how we work together to create an interesting, challenging learning environment for all children.



14. parents

Parents have the primary responsibility for raising their children. They choose for their child a school that matches well with their upbringing. Parents who are looking for the right school for their child, can best attend the schools during school hours on a normal day. That's when you will find the atmosphere and way of working that is characteristic for the school.

In the Netherlands, schools still have a lot of freedom to organize their education as they see fit. Of course, all schools have to follow the law, and they have to prove that their education, especially language, reading and arithmetic, is well organized. Most schools in the Netherlands do this by means of a pupil tracking system. The results are passed on to the inspectorate and have to meet the national requirements. Some experimental schools have different ways to make clear whether their learning improvements meet the set requirements.

Of course, education, and certainly upbringing, is much more than just language, reading and arithmetic. Jenaplan schools also set other quality requirements, which are described earlier in this book. The basic principles, the jenaplan core qualities and the quality characteristics help to make clear what objectives jenaplan schools are pursuing.

These goals are quite ambitious. Therefore, jenaplan schools are accustomed to specifically involving parents in school life. Jenaplan schools absolutely need parents to realize all their ambitions. Together with the children and group leaders, parents need to work towards a close-knit living and working community. Each with their own role and responsibility.

good

When you are having a baby, from one day to the next you will be a father or a mother. You are responsible for a child that is totally dependent on your care in the beginning. You have to educate this child towards adulthood, towards complete independence and self-reliance.

Just as jenaplan schools want to work on the total upbringing of children, we want parents to try and work on the same as much as they can. This means that we ask parents to work on an intensive relationship with their children. They should pay a lot of attention to their children, be really interested in what they are involved in and take the time for this. Every day there should be moments of being together and looking back: how was your day, what were the beautiful things, what are the plans, how can I help you. A good moment would be the family meal at the dinner table, when there is a lot of time for each other.

Just like the school, parents should help their children discover the world and explore it. Many different experiences help children in their growth into adulthood. Together with your children you go out and wonder about plants and animals. You visit exhibitions, enjoy music, theater and sports together. You let your child get to know the world step by step.

In addition, you know that young people need to be able to stand on their own two feet one day. Montessori said: "teach me to do it myself". This is an important task for educators. Becoming independent has a lot to do with giving confidence. As a parent you take care of your child, but you also have to slowly let go of them, give them confidence to make their own decisions. And the better you know your child, the better you know what preliminary work you have to do to let them go.

Based on these ideas, parents and school work together to create a good pedagogical school for all the children in the school. This can only succeed if the school and the parents keep in close touch. Parents and school show mutual understanding, where parents understand that as a group leader you are responsible for a large group of children and the group leader understands that the parents feel a great deal of responsibility for their own child. Together you have to find a good balance.

Many of the school's activities need extra hands. For parents of jenaplan schools, it should only be natural to offer your help in one way or another a few times a year. Many schools have all kinds of parent working groups, so that parents can offer their talents to their child's school.

If you want to work on a good school together, you should show it. Parents therefore visit the evenings the school organizes with and without the children, parents' evening or theme evenings about education and upbringing, and, if something needs to be done, the parents are ready to help!

better

Active parents want to put in a word about the school. All schools have a participation council, consisting of parents and staff members. This council advises the board of the school or has to give its consent. Jenaplan schools often have an extra critical board, which stands up for the importance of that one jenaplan school within a larger board. In addition, schools have a parents' council or parents' association. An association has a more official status. Parents can use this council or association to provide good support and assistance to the school. In good cooperation with the team, activities are undertaken to help achieve the specific goals of the jenaplan school.

Community groups often have one or more community group parents, who ensure that the group can function properly. All kinds of practical matters are taken care of by these parents and new parents to the group are welcomed and guided. Of course, these parents organize meetings if necessary. Everything to constantly be able to take another step forward, together with the group leader and the children.

The joint responsibility is also reflected in the reporting. The school does not only report to the parents, but the parents report to the school as well. This often starts at the first meeting when a child is enrolled in school. Parents are of course curious about the school, but the school is also curious about the child. It is therefore good that children come along for the application interview. The school wants to know which beautiful person is going to visit the school. Sometimes the parents have one minute to brag about their child's qualities!

best

In the past it often happened that parents took the initiative to set up a jenaplan school. This is still possible, but a lot more difficult now. With parents as administrators of the school, the parents' responsibility was very great. In the present time, it takes a lot of knowledge and effort to achieve this, but fortunately they still exist.

In recent decades, many jenaplan schools have become part of large organizations. Sometimes schools will have to struggle to maintain their own identity. Parents can play an important role in supporting the school, because it is the parents who determine the school's right to exist!

A close cooperation, in which the jenaplan school is an actual community of children, parents and teachers (and in that order!) is a strong community. Working together to realize the jenaplan concept in a contemporary way creates strength. The jenaplan concept can play an important role in the realization of community schools and the cooperation with pre-school and after-school childcare. Parents can be sure that the different organizations work with the children based on the same principles of upbringing. This benefits the children!

We are slowly moving towards a time when school hours are changing, when the school day for children will look different, when children's lives will take different forms. In the end, parents are the determining factor. And that is how it should be, because it is their children at stake!

This does need an active attitude on the part of parents. They have to take their responsibility. The time when mothers stayed at home all day and were available for parent support is over. Parent participation needs a different approach.

Parents decide whether children at daycare can play outside in their earliest years, can discover and investigate, can go out with the daycare workers. Parents determine whether their children are mainly trained for tests. Parents determine whether talent development, social-emotional development, nature, music, culture, art and exercise are important elements in their child's school. Through their free choice of school, parents show what they consider important.

The jenaplan school wants to train for the future. We do not know what this future will look like, so we do not know

what children need to be successful later. The children's parents at our schools are active in the current world of work and income. They can offer their knowledge, experience and talents to the school and help children to discover, get to know and experience today's world. Together with the jenaplan school, parents can prepare their children for a happy life. That is our joint task!



15. care

Each school wants to give each child the care and attention it needs. And each child needs care. We have had a period when a lot of extra attention was paid to children who developed below average. Schools for special primary education have been set up for these children. Later, the focus was also on children who developed above average. And so, schools and departments in school were created for gifted and talented children. Petersen wrote in his *Der kleine Jena-Plan* that it was of the utmost importance to keep children of different talents together. Children can learn from and teach each other so much more that way. The school's task is to organize education in such a way that learning from and teaching each other can actually be realized. Children's talents then become useful for the whole group. Of course, this applies not only to cognitive skills, but to all skills. Howard Gardner explains in his theory of Multiple Intelligence that it is good to develop all intelligences. He calls this 'stretching'. By letting children work together, they learn from each other how to draw better, how to do arithmetic, how to run, how to sing. If learning is difficult, it is wise to use a well-developed intelligence. This is called 'matching'. You use the 'multiplication song' if you want to help musical children learn the multiplication tables. The group leader should therefore have a large arsenal of activities at their disposal to help children learn. Fortunately, there are many useful overviews and sites available to help children and group leaders with ideas. That's when learning becomes challenging, varied, multi-faceted. Learning becomes a celebration, a reason to celebrate; this is the third element in the theory of Multiple Intelligence, in addition to stretching and matching.

Basic principle 2 explains that we believe that every child has a right to his or her own development. This is difficult to achieve if you are forced into a straitjacket by the government in which all children have to perform alike at the same time. Children who cannot meet these expectations are often referred to as 'care pupils'. This disqualifies a child at an early age. We have to ask ourselves whether we are helping the child by doing this.

We prefer to talk about care teachers rather than care children. Ultimately, it's the teachers who do not succeed in adequately helping a child in their development. It is therefore a good thing that the actions, when it comes to care, are increasingly shifted from the child to the teacher. Teachers should always ask themselves: "What can I do and what can the group do to enable this child to learn, to develop?" They should ask the child the question: "What do you need from us to move forward?"

Plans are especially effective when we make them together with the children and the group.

We want to look at development in a broad perspective. This perspective should be addressed openly in conversations with parents. It is not about being able to take part in the highest form of secondary education, VWO (pre-university education); it is about the right learning route that leads to a successful life. Together with parents and all the experts in the school, we have to ensure that there are optimal opportunities for all children.

The fact that sometimes we have to admit that we do not succeed is sad but real. We have to keep looking at the learning process critically and ask ourselves three questions:

1. Is this child developing sufficiently?
2. Do we have enough professionalism to help this child?
3. Is this group strong enough to help this child?

Jenaplan is based on a positive perspective. We are interested in children, we like to look at the children's qualities. Education should be based on interests and qualities, and not on mistakes and what you cannot do. Learning will happen when you want to learn, when you are motivated, when you have a passion, a motivation.

good

Decent records are kept so that the group leader knows how far every child has progressed with the course-based subjects. There are handy overviews for arithmetic, spelling and other language and reading components.

If a parent has a question about the progress, the group leader can quickly and clearly show and explain how the child is doing. Because the children are in the same community group for three years, the group leader knows by heart what the status of the children's learning is.

In addition, the group leader knows the children that well that he knows how the children learn, how they go about things and how to help the children as group leader. The group leader knows that Rik needs a lot of monitoring and that Els needs a lot of space. Each child is guided and encouraged in their own way, so that the achievements are as you may expect.

Consequently, children occasionally carry out other tasks or sometimes skip an instruction. Children who already understand can either carry on with their own work or continue to work on the group work that the group is working on, for example writing a letter to the vet with an invitation to give a demonstration in the group.

Children are all given enough space to successfully realize what they need to do. When they need more time to complete the task, the group leader frees up more time by cancelling or postponing other compulsory activities. Children do not move on until the foregoing has been mastered. Go for quality!

The group leader is clever enough to offer another exercise for achieving a certain goal and can come up with a solution for achieving success.

In staff meetings about children, it becomes ever more clear what makes a child tick. Together, group leaders discuss the experiences they have had with the children. They constantly learn from each other how the children perceive, react and learn.

In deciding how to proceed with a child, it is important to determine and analyze together how the learning processes have been.

A lot is taken care of by the group leader. They are in charge and decide what happens. All is geared to the specific needs of the children and to the group as well. There is a lot of differentiation in pace.

better

You learn best when you practice what you cannot do yet. It should not be too easy, because that would only show what you have been able to do for a long time. But it should not be too difficult either, that would frustrate you because you will think: "I'll never be able to do that!" The work should be in the zone of proximal development (Lev Vygotsky).

The group leader knows pretty well how far the children are in their development. The fact that this development does not always run smoothly, and that development often happens in small and sometimes large leaps, is well known and is accepted as a matter of course.

The learning style also plays a role in responding to children's personal development. Group leaders have a wide range of learning activities at their disposal.

While the children are working, the group leader regularly sits down next to them to see how they handle their work. Not to control or improve, but out of sincere interest. Therefore, the group leaders' questions are mostly about the approach and expectations. They are curious about the children's learning processes.

The focus is not only on each individual child, but also on the group. One group is much more an 'active group' than another group, that might like to sing or loves drama.

The group leader knows a lot about the children and also knows a lot about the group's characteristics.

The group and the children have discussions about tailor-made education. Again, there is reflection on the approach, both individually and as a group. The group leader asks curious questions: 'How could we do that, what are we going to do to make sure that next time everyone is satisfied?'

The main theme in staff meetings about children is how to motivate this group, how to motivate these children. How do you get these children on the edge of their seats, even with less attractive activities? How do you inspire this group so that there is more care and attention towards each other?

Discussions about and knowledge of personality dynamics and group dynamics are of great importance. There are no standard problems or ready-made solutions. The individuality of the group and the authenticity of the group leader always play an essential role in searching for a successful approach.

Together with the group leader, the child decides what attention and what care they need. There is respect for the child's ability and the child has more room to decide what is good for them. There is more room for a personal approach.

We pay attention to group dynamics; we consider the right approach for this group.

best

The school pays a lot of attention to the question for every child: 'what do I have to do to be a good group leader for you?' This way you let children think about a good learning environment and make them more responsible for their own development.

You can only create this learning environment together with the group. This means that from the first day in a school year you have to consciously pay attention to group formation. The group has to become a real group, a safe 'home group'. You can share your joys and sorrows in such a group. It is where you can discuss your learning problems with each other and think about how you can help each other to get everybody to perform at their very best.

In the group you look for qualities in each group member. You use The Feedback game for children, for example, to discover each other's strengths. When groups are formed, children can choose based on qualities and can ask for help from certain experts in the group.

Children are given increased responsibility for their own learning. From the beginning of the school year, the school pays a lot of attention to the *jenaplan* essences so that children take responsible initiatives and plan their work in consultation with other group members.

Children in the upper groups largely fill in their own weekly plan and thus have a great responsibility for their own learning. Of course the teacher will keep a good overview of the goals and progress, of individuals and the group. Because we make the connection between courses and group work as clear as possible to the children, the motivation is greater; if you know why you have to practice something, if you know what you can do with what you learn, learning will be easier.

In (portfolio) discussions the question is often addressed what children should and want to learn. Group leaders will help children to choose which skills to learn and which knowledge to acquire.

The group leader follows the children closely and provides a functional (pedagogical and didactic) group plan.

In staff meetings about children, we talk much more about the group leaders than about the children. In fact, we should speak of 'staff meetings about group leaders' instead of 'staff meetings about children'. After all, the question is always: "What can I, as a group leader, do to inspire this child, to motivate it and to encourage it to make progress in its development?"

We discuss this with other group leaders. Together we are responsible for all children: "How did you do that when Theo was still in your group and what do you do when they are all slumped during circle talks?"

Together with the group leader, children arrange what attention and care they need. There is a lot of respect for children, there is a lot of trust in children, there is a lot of room for children.

The group leader has developed a clear view of thinking in terms of goals and insight into the learning of each child.

16. leadership

Many people think children in a jenaplan school are free to choose what to do and how to do it. Frightening images of children making a mess loom up in the minds of some people. People who know jenaplan schools from within, will notice that there is a lot of structure, that there is clear and consequent leadership and that children know very well what can and cannot be tolerated in their school.

A jenaplan school is a school of children, parents and teachers, and in that order! That does not mean there is an atmosphere of non-commitment. The school can only function properly if the adults take their executive responsibility seriously. Children and their development are always the starting point in realizing quality education. The adults make sure the children learn as much as possible. The school offers children many opportunities for development, provides a rich learning environment.

Jenaplan schools have community groups. Children are in the same community group for several years. They feel safe in this group, here they can share their joys and sorrows. The community group is led by one or more group leaders. The group leader makes sure that children are activated. Children are challenged to be active. The group leader does not answer questions, but rather asks them: activating questions that make children explore, discover and experiment.

The group leader makes sure to know the group well, works on a good relationship with each child. This enables him to ensure the right decisions are made in the group. If necessary, the group leader will decide what is best for the group. Or as Petersen says: "The group leader is as a good father or mother to the group." That means that in many cases children are not treated all alike. Children differ and require their own approach. When you discuss this with children, they will show a lot of understanding. Children see that there are many differences and see that it is fair when you treat children differently!

A lot of attention is paid to the children's own personal responsibility. Group leaders make sure that children do not depend on them. You will not notice if the group leader is not in the group room, everybody just keeps on working. The children do not work for the teacher but know they are doing important, meaningful work. Children lead each other as well. Together, the children in the community group are responsible for the learning of all children in the group. The group leader will regularly discuss this in the circle and take it into account when planning the work of the group.

The group leader's basic task is to activate each child. With everything that needs to be done he asks himself: "Do I have to do this or are the children able to do it?" And children have a lot of abilities! Jan Ligthart declared over a hundred years ago: "In a good school, the principal does nothing, the teachers do little and the children do all."

good

The group leaders in the jenaplan school are friendly. There is a pleasant, cheerful atmosphere in the school. There is frequent laughter and you can tell the adults in the school love children. The school is available to the children and their parents and tries to work on a good school life in a good atmosphere. It is customary that people listen carefully to each other. Everyone knows the jenaplan concept and knows what this means for the school development. A balance is sought between the concept and the daily reality. The principles of the jenaplan concept are shaped pragmatically.

Group leaders often take decisions. They do not take them for their own benefit but in the interest of the community group or the school. Group leaders show this explicitly in their work in the group. It is not just about individual interests but about the interest of the entire group and the entire school as well. We learn to live together at school!

The group leader is like a friendly spider in the web, who knows what is going on in and around the group.

The group leader uses:

- 1 Compliments, both individual as for the group.
- 2 Active sentences: telling the children what to do ('could you be quiet' instead of 'you kids are so noisy').
- 3 Expressing positive expectations: you will succeed, you can do this, keep going, you're almost there!
- 4 Humor. In the group, in the team, in the school, there should be frequent laughter. Not to laugh things off with a joke, but to create a cheerful atmosphere!

In a good jenaplan school, the group leader takes care of everything for the Father's Day present, makes sure all materials are there and gives an example of what the product should look like: this is what it is supposed to be! Children can, for example, choose from three gifts. For each gift there is a plan of work (first do this, then that). The group leader has decided on these options.

The group leader decides for the group and for each child, based on observations and thought (and of course the jenaplan view). The group leader is like a prompter.

better

The group leader involves the children in the activities to a greater extent and leaves more things to the children, 'lounges around' more with his hands in his pockets. However, the necessary resources are provided, and the available time is indicated. The initiative is left more to the children and the group leader observes. The group plays an important part in what happens, but the group leader remains the determining factor and makes sure plenty of opportunities are created for the group.

At a better jenaplan school the group leader asks the children of the group what they want to do for Father's Day. The group decides what will happen. Children are stimulated to take an active part and eventually the group decides what will happen: everyone makes the same present or everyone makes a different one. A lot of freedom and a lot of responsibility.

The group leader decides for the community group and the children. This is based on the discussion with the group in for instance a group meeting or as a result of, for example, a portfolio discussion with a child. The group leader is in charge, together with the group, he is a director on stage.

best

The community group functions as a relatively autonomous group. The group draws up plans and makes its own decisions, in constant consultation with and with the approval of the group leader. The activities of each group member, including the group leader, are discussed. It is self-evident that all group members reflect. Children are in charge most of the time and often you won't even notice the group leader's presence. The group leader functions as a director, who is very alert but practically 'invisibly' present. Just like in a play where the director can be found in the wings but not on stage. The children are given much room to manoeuvre and have to account for themselves to the whole group at regular intervals.

The group decides what should happen to celebrate Father's Day. It might be a good idea to make one common gift that everyone worked on. All fathers will then get the same product that all children worked on. Or maybe it is not a wrapped gift but a song, a poem or a beautiful poster. Children might arrange a show together. The group is challenged to think of something original. Maybe the group will manage to brew an original and unique Father's Day beer!

Group and child decide with the approval of the group leader, who remains ultimately responsible. The group leader is the (invisible) director in the wings.

17. ICT / social media

The use of ICT resources has increased enormously in recent years. Most schools have been rapidly equipped with interactive whiteboards and ever more children have access to computers, laptops or tablets. Many digital possibilities have become available for education. Jenaplan schools want to be in the heart of the world and it makes sense, therefore, that the schools make use of these possibilities. However, they search for good ways to make optimal use of the advantages of the digital world and, in addition, to avoid the disadvantages as much as possible. It is not easy for schools to choose the most suitable hardware and software. A critical attitude is of the utmost importance. The first question is always what you want to achieve with children by using ICT. Secondly, we have to find ways to prevent children from becoming computer addicted and, if they are, to help them overcome it. A pedagogical school will therefore have to establish a good and critically thought-out ICT policy.

There are interest groups that point out to schools the negative consequences of, for example, radiation from the use of wireless networks. Some people think that computers should not be used in schools because children have been sitting in front of a computer at home for many hours. Computers, however, are an integral part of our society, and therefore belong in schools as well.

An overview of ICT possibilities:

Practicing with subject matter

In addition to workbooks, many methods offer software that allows children to practice with subject matter. This material is often self-correcting, and the group leader can see what the children in the group have achieved at the push of a button. Children are more motivated when they can practice in games. It is much more exciting to get further and further into a digital game world by carrying out assignments properly. Achieving a higher goal challenges you to go further. Also, you can practice skills in games through constantly making decisions about what to do in certain situations. For example, you can practice social skills without any direct consequences, have a dry run.

Looking up information

Children are full of questions. All kinds of search engines will help to find information. To make good use of them, children need to learn how to formulate a good search. A good search ensures that you do not get a hundred thousand hits, but that you get the information you need faster. Once you've found that information, you have to learn to assess it critically. Not all information is reliable or properly answers your question.

Staying up to date

You can inform your group about events anywhere in the world at any time of the day. As a jenaplan school, we want to make use of topical issues. Bring the world into the classroom! An (again critical) look at the digital world can be the beginning of meaningful educational activities.

Presenting

A computer offers wonderful possibilities to compose and display presentations. In addition to PowerPoint and Prezi, children can learn to how to create presentations with cartoons, films, photos, drawings etc.

Communicating

The computer is a powerful means of communication. You can keep in touch with people all over the world. Also, you can ask general questions that can be answered by anyone. You can acquire and share knowledge this way. It also enables you to improve your communication skills, for example in a foreign language.

Through weblogs and websites, you can show the entire world what you want to say.

And maybe a sick child in hospital of a grandmother in Maastricht enjoys watching the presentation of one of the children at a school in Den Helder via webcam.

Administration

Schools have to account for their actions to an ever larger extent. More and more cabinets with more and more files have been brought into schools. It is much more convenient to digitalize this! Many digital pupil monitoring systems have already been developed, of course. This development however is still in its infancy. Monitoring systems exchange information and make it available to children and parents, supervisors, the inspectorate and others involved.

Development is made visible via 'hard' data and different types of portfolio. Jenaplan schools should look for a monitoring system that fits in with the school's principles.

In addition, it is convenient to use the computer to arrange parent-teacher conferences or to exchange other information, for example via a school app.

good

Computers are used to support the practice of particularly language and arithmetic skills. This means children can work on their own development at their own level. The group leader can easily keep track of the progress.

To realize this, there are enough laptops and tablets available. The workbooks have to a large extent been replaced by digital exercises. Computers are mainly used for transferring knowledge and searching for information. There is a digital 'chalkboard' in the group. It is used to watch programs and as a 'dust-free blackboard'. Children can show presentations on it.

better

Structural attention is paid in the school to learning digital skills. Children learn how to use the keyboard and learn what all the keys and buttons do. They also learn how to properly look for information on the internet. It is not customary to copy and paste texts from the internet. Discussing internet texts is an integral part of reading comprehension.

Children become skilled in composing presentations, they become competent in inserting and editing photos.

Children who are interested will be introduced to the possibilities of Excel, Publisher and other programs.

To achieve all this, children have access to enough PCs.

best

Digital possibilities are frequently used, not only to practice but also to create new things. Children are stimulated to use their computer skills to design new things. Some children create games and exercises for other children. The computer is used as an important means of communication. Contact is maintained with other schools, both in the Netherlands and in other countries. Sometimes this leads to an exchange, with the help of European aid. Every community group has its own website or weblog. It functions as a class newspaper so that anyone who wants to can stay informed about the ins and outs of the group. The group uses digital images to take a critical look at itself. There is regular filming and looking back. This way the children develop a critical view and the group can discuss how to do even better next time; a way of looking at the group as a football team in the premier league. On Mondays they, too, look at the footage of the match to analyse and think about how to improve things!

And of course, every child has a tablet or laptop at their disposal.

Despite the regular use of computers, a lot of attention is paid to learning by using primary sources in these groups. Information found on the web is always limited. Exploring, interviewing people and experimenting should always be important activities at the jenaplan school. Even in a digitally skilled group, a rhythmic alternation of activities is of the utmost importance!

18. asking questions

From the moment children learn how to talk, they start asking questions. Children look around with curiosity and want to know how everything works. They ask questions all the time. Asking questions, this curiosity about reality, is what makes children learn. They want to know what's going on. We find this attitude very valuable. We should make sure children don't grow out of it.

Questions lead to active learning. Answers, on the other hand, stop curiosity. It is much better for educators to answer questions with new questions than to give answers. Kees Both writes: "You shouldn't answer the questions, but you should question the answers."

You might also say: 'After each answer ten new questions arise.' The world is such a complicated place that what we know is always far less than what we don't know. We must perpetuate the wonder about this complex world. This wonder ensures that we keep learning, that we keep discovering.

In many schools, the 'didactic question' is the most important. Teachers ask questions to which they already know the answer. All they want to do is check whether the children can give the right answer. It's mostly the teacher who asks the questions and the children receive compliments if they give the correct answer.

In the jenaplan school the questioning attitude of children should be of paramount importance. Questioning each other, being curious about each other and questioning reality. Whenever possible, curiosity about our world should be the basis of our education. If you ask questions that you really want an answer to, you will go looking, researching, learning.

In many circle talks, this questioning attitude plays an important role. Sometimes a newspaper article raises all kinds of questions, other times an experience or a presentation by one of the children does.

Group leaders have a questioning attitude as well. They are curious about the children's solutions and ask questions such as:

- How can we find out?
- How can we do that?
- What can we do to make sure everyone understands?
- What ways can we think of to learn this?
- How do we make sure that we are a group where everyone is happy?

Group leaders never stop asking questions. Children's questions can't always be converted into learning activities. Often, we have to ask follow-up questions to find out what real questions are hidden behind the first one.

You can ask questions to each other, but you can also ask questions to the world around you. One of the best-known articles from the first Dutch jenaplan magazine *Pedomorfose* was entitled 'Ask the ant lion itself' by Jos Elsgest. If you want to learn something about animals, you can ask the animal questions and find the answers by observing, researching or experimenting.

And every time you will discover that new questions come up after each answer. The more answers you find, the more new questions will arise.

Activating questions may have the following properties:

- multiple answers are possible
- they encourage the children to analyze and think
- they pave the way to children's imagination
- they offer children the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences
- they give children a chance to activate their own knowledge
- they offer children a sense of safety
- they give children their responsibility
- they lead to new questions, including those asked by the children

It's not easy to ask such questions. Adults can sometimes find it hard to accept that children know and can do so much, and that they want to know and do so much. Teachers often unconsciously think that they should have a monopoly on wisdom.

You can learn to ask activating questions. Starting a circle discussion with an activating question will make things much more interesting.

Some tips for preparation, execution and evaluation:

- Don't radiate that you already know how to do it all. For example, ask the children for help. Use 'unfinished' language by not finishing sentences and hesitating in your choice of words. This will give the impression of worrying. But don't play games too often. If you fret for a bit, it will happen automatically.
- Don't hesitate to be silent for a while after a question. You give the opportunity to think by doing this. You can also elicit mutual discussions by asking about children's experiences and then ask follow-up questions. It is important to establish a creative thinking climate.
- Remember that your reaction to the children's answers is very important for the following questions. If you react negatively to an idea, a child will watch out before accepting your invitation the next time. So never say: "No, that's not possible." If you find an idea inappropriate, stimulate to think again, for example by asking: "How do you see that? Can you give an example?" or by involving others. An idea that seems unusable at first, can perhaps be made executable by someone else after some changes.
- It's okay to act a little. But take the children very seriously after that, especially in their feelings and experiences. Ask about those. You're not making yourself vulnerable, but rather strong if you also show some of your own feelings.

good

Children ask their questions in the circle. These questions are discussed, and, in some cases, children are given the opportunity to work on their learning questions. If they are real knowledge questions, they will look for the answers. It also happens that the answer has to be found by investigating. Together we plan how this research should be carried out. Sometimes these investigations happen in the group: plants or animals are carefully observed, and drawings, graphs and reports are made. Other times a survey, a traffic census or an interview is chosen.

Children report their findings. The group leader helps children by making sure the presentation is successful. The preparations are regularly reviewed in between.

The answers to the learning questions are mainly sought in primary sources. So, we primarily look for the answers from the animals, people or things themselves and less on the computer or in a book. We mainly use the real world to ask our questions and don't use copy-paste behaviour as much.

better

Questions from children are discussed in the circle. By questioning each other we try to formulate our questions as clear as possible. This is also a way to find out whether there are children who already know the answers or perhaps have ideas on how to find the answers.

Children cooperate a lot and don't just start working on their questions. First a mind map is made to better map out the question, the theme. These mind maps can be discussed and supplemented with the group leader or in the circle. After that, plans are made for the research and the presentation.

Each presentation ends with: 'Who wants to ask another question?' Often all kinds of new questions arise, which in turn will lead to a new research.

Questions about living together in the community group are also regularly discussed in the evaluation circles. At least once a week there is an evaluation circle in which questions from the children and questions from the group

leader are discussed. Children are invited to come up with their own answers. The group leader invites them to do this by showing a questioning attitude.

best

The community group works on a common theme. The group leader ensures that the group gets interested. The better you know your group, the better you know how to interest and motivate the children. It is the group leader's task to get all the children on the edge of their seats. If the interest is sparked, the questions will follow. These questions can be very diverse and sometimes only indirectly related to the theme. This multitude of questions should be structured.

The first step in the learning process is to compile mind maps: each child compiles a mind map and the group leader does the same. The mind map of the group leader is mainly based on the learning objectives the school strives for; attainment targets and school objectives.

With the entire group, all these mind maps are merged into one group mind map. This way it becomes clear what the group will be working on. Also, it becomes clear which children have the same interest in certain questions and can therefore work together.

After planning, the group goes to work.

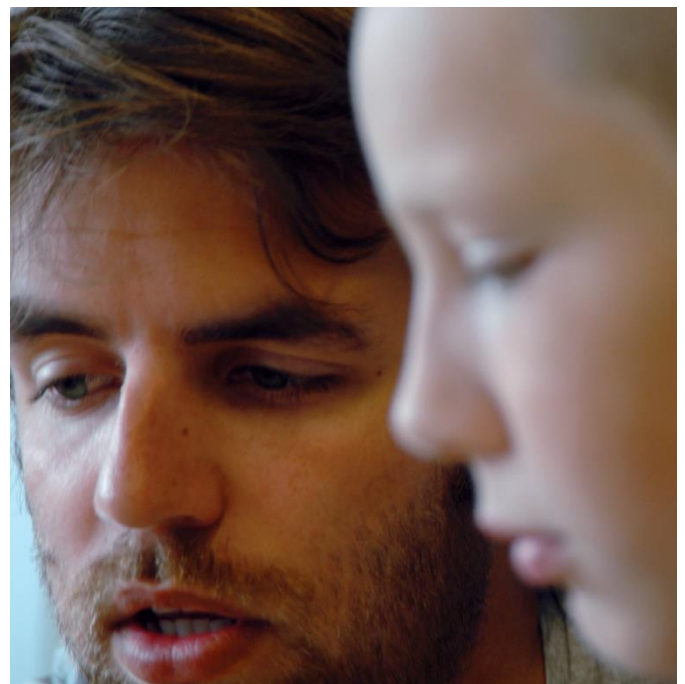
Progress is always discussed during reflection discussions in the circle. The group mind map lies in the middle of the circle and is supplemented, expanded and sometimes changed. This way it is always visible which questions the group is working on.

The whole group works on the same common theme, where the different subgroups become experts in a specific part of it.

That's why it is interesting to listen to the presentations. Everything has to do with everything, and the group mind map shows the connections between the different sub-themes.

There is a weekly class meeting in the community group. One of the fixed elements is 'questions'. These questions can be submitted in writing throughout the week, they hang visibly on the wall of the group room. Together with the secretary, the chairperson prepares the class meeting. If necessary, the person asking the question is asked for an explanation or is given 'speaking time'.

Children's questions are appreciated in the school. These questions are always the start of education.



19. meaning

The jenaplan school has a positive outlook on the world and on life; our children deserve a positive perspective. The school is seen as a place to practice for an even better society. Children in the jenaplan school are made jointly responsible for this.

In circle discussions, in stories and poems, with music: children work a lot about the world, our world. It comes down to the place they and all others occupy in it. Stories from different religions are told. It is all about people who were important to the world, who were or still are an example. And we think about what we ourselves would do in certain cases, in our own community group as well. How do we take care of each other? How do we deal with each other? Is everyone allowed to be as they are? To get to know each other better, there are exercises and games in which everyone's uniqueness is appreciated. And of course, we talk about the children's future, what they want to be when they grow up and what life will be like. Sometimes guests are invited to talk about their life and work, a development worker for example, or a doctor.

In the circle we philosophize about the great questions of life. Where do I come from? Where was I before I was born? Where do I go when I'm dead? It's not about finding the right answer, but by talking to each other we think about these questions. We philosophize about all kinds of other things as well, it's a kind of brain gymnastics.

Children ask the most beautiful questions and all answers are good! Everyone can say what they think!

Every week there are moments when it is very quiet in the community group; we listen to the silence. Sometimes there is prayer or meditation. These are beautiful moments. It is nice to have a quiet room in school. Children can go there if they want to rest for a while. In the quiet room you aren't allowed to talk, you can read in poetry books and you could light a candle. Some children never go there, others love to go there for a while. It calms their mind, they say.

During celebrations there are fixed elements. When the celebration begins there is a fixed sign: a bell rings, a candle is lit, or a song is sung. Also, celebrations always end in the same way.

Work made during crafts or world studies is carefully examined, questions are asked, and compliments are given. The group leader tries to make the children aware of what is special about the work. You focus on the deeper meaning by doing this. It also helps to create work that is really you; everyone tries to make something unique out of it.

Occasionally we look ahead. We do this in the community group, but also during meetings with children and parents. Group leaders ask how children and their parents see the future, which school they are going to attend later and what they want to be. When reports are written, children also have to write how they think they are doing and how they look to the future.

The team also pays attention to the purpose of what they are doing. A central question is always: "Why do we do what we do, the way we do it?"

The jenaplan school wants to stay alert by regularly thinking about the purpose of its doings.

good

Hope, perspective, is important. Children are never given a negative opinion. Group leaders ensure that children are always offered a positive perspective. Realistic and positive. Children are helped in their development with faith in the future.

The jenaplan school pays a lot of attention to the meaning of the activities. In reflection circles, children look back at what has happened. The consequences of the events are discussed, and we consider how things would have gone if we had done things differently.

If something went wrong, we help children with questions like:

- What is it about, what do you want to talk about, what happened?
- Why do you think it happened?
- How do you feel?
- What would be best for you?
- What are you going to do about it in any case?

In the circle, children talk to each other about questions of life. Every now and then there is a philosophy circle. The group leader shows a lot of trust in children, and many positive expectations are stated. And together the group comes up with answers to the miracle question: "Imagine that tomorrow would be great, what would that day look like?"

better

In the community group a lot of attention is paid to wishes: individual wishes of children, wishes of the group and wishes of the whole school. Sometimes when it is difficult to find the right words for a wish, children might be able to draw them.

There is time to dream about wishes, to fantasize about them and then talk about them together. Very often it turns out that others have ideas about how you can work on such a wish. The children's extensive networks of people with specific qualities (parents, uncles, aunts, neighbours, cousins, sports club trainers and so on) are also used for this. By saying what you want, you often get a lot of tips! Then all you have to do is make a plan and carry it out. Of course, that's not always easy, but if you persevere you can achieve a lot. And there is always the community group to give you 'stars and wishes.'

The group also talks a lot about the ideals of other people and the stories they tell about them. All those people with their ideas and ideals have worked on a meaningful life, on a meaningful society in their own way. Children are curious about them, they are their examples.

best

It is fascinating to talk about wishes and their realization. Achieving wishes yourself is a lot more complicated, but not impossible if you work hard!

And that is what happens! Steps are taken to realize positive changes in school. Via the group meeting, children are sent to the children's parliament of the school. There, the wishes are discussed, and they agree on what the school will work on. Improvements are not only made in school, but also in the town or city. Occasionally, campaigns are organized to help people elsewhere in the world. In the group meeting, 'our wishes' are a fixed element. These are discussed seriously and often lead to action!



20. tips for at home

Some parents send their child to a jenaplan school because they know something about jenaplan and think it fits their upbringing. Other parents choose the school because they live in the neighbourhood or just because it is a nice school. All these parents are of course very welcome.

Working together with the parents on the development of the children, of all children in the school is very important to jenaplan schools. An active role of parents is therefore appreciated. Jenaplan schools pay a lot of attention to informing parents about the way the school works and why it works the way it does. For many parents, a jenaplan school is a very different type of school than they are used to from their own school days.

At jenaplan schools, children learn so much more than just language, arithmetic and reading. These are of course important skills, but there are many other things that are vital for a successful future. Together with the parents and their children, jenaplan schools want to map out the future, want to help children to make the right choices.

Parents are therefore allowed to participate in the discussion in school. Not on all kinds of technical matters — the group leaders are trained for this — but on all kinds of pedagogical matters. And not just to participate in the discussion, but also to cooperate. A jenaplan school is a school full of activities. These activities cannot all be carried out by the teachers alone. You need parents for this, otherwise it will not work. Together with children, parents and teachers we work on a beautiful living and working community in the jenaplan school. Children, parents and group leaders cannot do without each other!

Children don't start learning from the moment they go to school. Children start learning when they are still in their mother's womb. Everything that happens to a child affects their development. Parents should realize that children learn a lot more outside school than in. What parents do with their children, the upbringing, has a big influence on the future of a child. Learning has to do with the connections between the brain cells. Connections you don't use become useless. In the first twelve years of your life, 80% of the connections disappear. So, children have an enormous amount of learning opportunities. If we don't give them the chance to use this, even more connections between the brain cells will disappear. Let's take advantage of the fact that children are 'learning machines'! Without wanting to be complete, we will mention things that parents should undertake with their children. It is not meant as a checklist but much more as a list of ideas. We don't want to deny them important experiences. Together, parents and school must ensure a broad development, so that children learn to make good choices in their own future.

Help children become independent.

1. Give children their own tasks from an early age (tie laces, clean up toys).
2. Complicated tasks can be done together. While doing them, you ask: "How would you do it?"
3. Let your child try things, don't take over immediately, but help with tips from time to time.
4. Annoying chores are also part of the job. Come on, you can do it!
5. Give children time to learn. Be patient! And good enough is good enough, it doesn't all have to be perfect.
6. Mistakes are allowed, they are part of learning.
7. Children also need to learn to enjoy themselves on their own.

Language and arithmetic are important.

1. Read to children a lot, show them pictures and let them talk about them, sing songs and say rhymes!
2. Practice what you preach: If you as a parent read books, read the newspaper, then children will do the same. You are an example!
3. Make sure there are shared moments every day without much distraction. For example, have dinner together every evening, where everyone talks about the experiences of the day.
4. Create sequences: from large to small, thick and thin, many and few, left and right.
5. Look around and find things related to numbers. And count every now and then.

6. Play many games with children. Playing together is part of jenaplan!
7. Give children plenty of opportunity to draw, write, mess about, build!

Into the great wide world.

1. Take your children outside by bike, train or bus. Take them to the shop, the market, the Christmas parade, the schoolyard, step on the ice!
2. Visit a museum.
3. Go and watch sports games.
4. Go to street festivals, a music performance, theater or go outside as the brass band comes along.
5. Make a kite with your child and go kite flying.
6. Visit the sea, build sand castles and catch crabs.
7. Go into the meadow, jump into a ditch, walk between the cows and don't step in a cow pat!

And what's more

1. Building huts and climbing trees.
2. Caring for an animal.
3. Going into the forest and searching for 'game'.
4. Searching for small animals and watching young birds.
5. Picking flowers (where allowed).
6. Making a nocturnal trip.
7. Getting lost

Our children have their whole lives ahead of them. Let's help them become the 'architect of their own future'. Initially, children need their parents very much, but we have to gradually let go of them bit by bit. Children do not thrive in a 'glass box'. Of course, letting go also involves risks, they are part of life. We have to prepare children for these risks, and we have to teach them how to deal with them. They need a lot of experience for this. If we show children what the world has to offer, we offer them opportunities to make their own choices for their future. A future of which we do not know what it will look like at this moment. Helping children find a good place in their world is the responsibility of the school and the parents!



**Not at the back but at the front
Into the world!**

The authors



Freek Velthausz (Gaanderen, NL, 1959)

Pedagogical Academy

University: Educational sciences and general pedagogy

Jenaplan group leader

Jenaplan school leader

Working for Jenaplan Advice and Schooling: coach, counsellor and teacher-trainer



Hubert Winters (Lobith, NL, 1952)

Pedagogical Academy

Jenaplan group leader

Jenaplan school leader

Owner Jenaplan Advice & Schooling: coach, counsellor and teacher-trainer



jenaplan
advies & scholing

JAS is an international centre for training and supervision of jenaplan schools and jenaplan teachers.

In our centre (www.hetbovenveen.nl) we receive groups from all over the world to inform and educate about the jenaplan concept and the contemporary developments of this concept.

We organize study trips, seminars and internship visits at Dutch jenaplan schools

If you have any question, send a mail to: info@jenaplan.nu