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Question 1: How can schools be organised in such a way as to provide all students with the full range of key competencies?

In my opinion, it is important that the lessons should be made more interactive – not only in the sense of students taking part in discussions, but also in stressing the relationships between the different subjects, so that the connection is clear. In many schools each subject is taught separately to an extent when each teacher is only interested in the student's performance in the subject he or she teaches. In a complex world developing with such a fast pace everything is related and this should be reflected in the school curriculum in all the Member States. Here, the experience of more developed countries in the EU should be transferred to developing countries, e.g. through seminars and meetings.

Question 2: How can schools equip young people with the competences and motivation to make learning a lifelong activity?

From my point of view motivation is the key to the success of the EU agenda for schools, as well as to the improvement of the quality and competitiveness of the workforce. For this reason, teachers should complement the role of the parents and socialize children in such a way as to teach them how important it is to develop constantly. They should also make it very clear that learning is a continuous process and to achieve an atmosphere of healthy competition among pupils, in order to prepare them for the world of work afterwards. This means that lessons should include everyone and expressing opinions and non-traditional views should be encouraged, not punished or made fun of. It is only in this way that students will be able to develop their creativity and solve problems in the complexity of real-world situations later on.

Again, cooperation between countries is crucial - among countries, as well as within the states and even institutions. In many schools some of the teachers stress the fact that the school is not there to 'feed' information to the students, but to give them directions how to study on their own and to acquire knowledge from different sources about a particular subject. At the same time, other teachers continue using the old methods and want students to repeat rather than to think. I am convinced that more seminars should be organised in order to improve the quality of teaching and to draft some standards to which all member states should adhere.

Another idea is to provide stipends for the students who attend regularly and achieve high results.

Question 3: How can school systems contribute to support long-term sustainable economic growth in Europe?

First of all, the general level of performance in schools should be increased, both for students and teachers, on the national and international level. This could be achieved if the number of early school-leavers decreases, and the attainment of the students increases. If students perform better in school (if they are given the chance, adequate environment, facilities and encouragement to show their best), they will be much more motivated to continue in higher education. More graduates would mean higher wages and higher spending in the economy, as well as more efficiency and competitiveness of the labour. However, awareness about the importance of schools as socializing institutions should be increased, clearly showing people the connection between good education and higher wages and standard of living. One way would be using the media like radio, TV and outdoor media to show short promotional clips or 'adverts'. Funds for these can be provided from national governments or as a part of more centralized projects of the EU.

Question 4: How can school systems best respond to the need to promote equity, to respond to cultural diversity and to reduce early school leaving?

Increasing cultural diversity should be seen as an opportunity, not as a problem. In my opinion, the best solution is to use the same method which has shown best results in learning foreign languages - the earlier one begins, the easier it is and the more fluent one speaks later. If children from different cultures and social backgrounds study together from the first years at school and if teachers provide the right environment for mutual understanding and cooperation, problems will be reduced to a minimum. Obviously the teachers should never tolerate any conflicts based on ethnicity, religion or the like, and should themselves be as open-minded and as impartial as possible.

Another useful tool in promoting cultural diversity should be teaching more foreign languages, maybe at least one should be compulsory. This is already the case in many countries, especially in ex-colonies and other countries with several official languages. However, many other member states still have to learn a lot from their experience and put much more emphasis on foreign languages in the curriculum.

I think 'tracking' and any similar tools should be removed, because they often prove to be unfair and once a student gets on the wrong track, chances are that he or she will remain there. I am convinced that this is not the right way to encourage specialization and motivation, and I also think it is one of the reasons for leaving school prematurely. The 'self-fulfilling prophecy' phenomenon is working fully against the pupils' motivation and puts them in a vicious cycle similar to the one of poverty. For this reason, in all European schools students should be given equal chances and evaluated only according to their performance. There should be strict penalties for any teachers, pupils or other school workers who in any way create cultural pressure.

Instead, it would be better to provide adequate counselling services which would be available for all students, both to help them choose their field of specialization and to solve any personal problems they might have.

