Programm
Transfer-21
Bildung für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung

Developing Quality at "ESD Schools"
Quality Areas, Principles & Criteria

Compiled by the Transfer-21 Programme's 'Quality and Competences' working group

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Publication Data

This material has been published by the Transfer-21 Programme and was developed by the 'Quality and Competencies' working group.

Contents

0. Quality Areas at ESD Schools

A key challenge for the formulation of concepts for quality development at schools lies in answering the question of how quality can and should be measured.

The present catalogue should provide a basis for schools to identify their own strengths and weaknesses with regard to specific areas of quality development. It is also suitable for use as a framework for the external evaluation of schools. In this manner, schools' ESD profiles can be sharpened, both internally and externally, and quality in the area of ESD can be built upon.

The Catalogue of Criteria

The catalogue of criteria – on the basis of which self-assessments can be carried out – is divided into nine quality areas:

1. Learning culture
2. Learning groups
3. Competencies
4. School culture
5. Opening of schools to the outside world
6. School management
7. School programme
8. Resources
9. Staff development

Each of the individual areas has been attributed a general statement (principle) and a selection of ESD-relevant criteria. These criteria are to serve not only as guidance for self-assessment, but also as encouragement in setting further-reaching goals. The column for 'possible evidence' gives guidance on forms of documentation for quality levels. Other forms of evidence can also be provided, and it is to be recommended that particular attention can be paid to gathering documentation from the very outset. The column for 'possible learning arrangements and methods' is intended to bring out the methodological and organisational pathways for quality development.

The goal of the school should be to use an initial assessment of the current state of affairs in order to reach a common understanding as to which development steps are to be taken and in which timeframe. The catalogue also provides ideas for this purpose.

From April 2007, you will find specialised materials on how such a process of assessment, further development and evaluation can work in practice at www.transfer-21.de.

The Quality Areas for ESD Schools

The nine quality areas for ESD schools were defined against the background of the 'areas of action' described by the SINA Sustainability Audit[1], which in turn was developed on the basis of a range of quality concepts, both from outside the education sector (such as EFQM, ISO) and school-based concepts (such as SEIS/INIS, Schul-TÜV). The quality criteria for the ESD Schools in the SEED Programme[2] were also integrated. Additionally, the quality areas were also developed to fit in with existing guidance and reference frameworks for external school quality assessment in the federal states.

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[1] Bormann, I., Heger, R-J., Manthey, H., Schmalz, A. & Wurthmann, A.: Schulische Indikatoren für NachhaltigkeitsAudit (SINA). Ed.: Verein zur Förderung der Ökologie im Bildungsbereich e.V., Berlin.

[2] Breiting, S., Mayer, M. & Mogensen, F., 2005: Qualitätskriterien für BNE-Schulen. Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung in Schulen – Leitfaden zur Entwicklung von Qualitätskriterien. Ed.: Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur Ref. V/11c, Umweltbildung, Vienna, ISBN 3-85031-057-4.

1. Learning Culture

Learning culture describes the form of learning and teaching, not only in subject-spanning and subject-linking teaching and projects, but also in subject-based teaching. It additionally encompasses the assessment of teaching and learning.

Principles and Criteria	Possible Evidence	Possible learning arrangements and methods
Teaching at our school is characterised by a diversity of forms of teaching and learning, offering all pupils the opportunity to reflect upon present and future living conditions ● We elicit the experiences, interests, ideas and expectations of pupils and use this information to determine the contents and methodological form of teaching. We give pupils the space to participate in decision-making processes in line with their age and abilities. ● We encourage the pupils to engage in self-directed learning, cooperation and mutual support. ● Subject-spanning, subject-linking, project-based learning, sometimes taking place outside the school, plays a broad role. ● Pupils are given the opportunity to learn to appreciate and compare natural and cultural diversity, in order to identify possibilities for widening the range of possible forms of action. ● Theories and concepts from academic subjects and sustainability are used to reflect upon everyday knowledge and actions. ● We place an emphasis on the complex nature of the issues and particularly integrate reflection on differing values.	● Feedback and self-assessment ● Documents on curriculum development, project planning and application ● Project documentation ● Pupils' learning portfolios ● Cooperation agreements with external partners as part of curriculum-related projects	● Project-based learning ● Cooperative learning / peer learning ● Service learning ● Self-assessment of learning processes (Pupils' learning portfolios) ● Learning workshops ● SOL ● WELL ● Differentiation between spaces for learning and doing ● Options / negotiation procedures in the definition of teaching contents ● Peer teaching ● Pupil feedback

2. Learning Group

The learning group is described here separately from general school life and from the learning culture, as this 'smallest social unit' in the school represents an important space for participation and the development of competencies.

Principles and Criteria	Possible Evidence	Possible learning arrangements and methods
In our learning groups, democratic rules and norms of fair behaviour and openness towards one another are observed. Every group member takes active responsibility in and for the learning and school community, and receives appropriate recognition. This is documented in learning development. • Learners' personalities are recognised and accepted in their differences. • Learners are given an opportunity for dealing with the issues of ESD on their own. This may take the form of pupils' companies, pupils' agencies, in environment teams, with the help of mediators or through service learning. • The learners take part in the tasks that arise and assume responsibility for problem-solving (Activities: events held by the pupil representation and other pupils' groups, pupil newspapers, mediation concepts, breaktime radio stations, press work). • The themes of sustainable development provide opportunities to discuss different attitudes and values within the learning group.	• Learners' questions and problems are followed up in teaching and on school administration boards. • Themes are oriented towards the lives and experiences of the learners. • Forms of recognising and overcoming conflicts in school life have been integrated. Learners are actively involved in drafting the corresponding rules. • A published catalogue of common rules and rituals. • Displays on the tasks, achievements and functions of the learners. • Number of groups under the responsibility of pupils. • The various positions on the questions are key elements of teaching and are reflected in pupils' work, portfolios, learning diaries, displays, pupil newspapers and similar.	• Negotiation of a common code of conduct towards one another • 'Morning circle' at primary schools • Contracts between teachers and learners • Assumption of responsibility • Class councils

3.　Competencies

A more comprehensive guide with detailed descriptions and numerous sample tasks is available on the topic of competencies at www.tranfer-21.de, by following the links 'Materialien'; 'Lernangebote und mehr'.

Competencies describe 'cognitive skills and abilities which the individual possesses or can learn, allowing them to solve certain problems, as well as the attendant motivational, volitional and social skills and abilities required to be able to apply these solutions successfully and responsibly in a range of situations' (Weinert 2001, p.27)[3].

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[3] Weinert, F. E.: Vergleichende Leistungsmessung in Schulen – eine umstrittene Selbstverständlichkeit, in: Weinert, F. E. (Ed.): Leistungsmessungen in Schulen, Weinheim and Basel 2001, pp. 17-31

Principles and Criteria	Possible Evidence	Possible learning arrangements and methods
Our pupils acquire *Gestaltungskompetenz* in the area of education for sustainable development. ***Gestaltungskompetenz* describes pupils' abilities to apply knowledge on sustainable development and to identify problems of non-sustainable development. This means, they are able to draw conclusions from studies into the present or future in the areas of ecological, economic and social development in their varying relations of interdependence, and take decisions on the basis of these conclusions, understand these decisions and apply them individually, as part of a community and politically in order to further sustainable development processes.** *Gestaltungskompetenz* is broken down into **ten part-competences**: • Gather knowledge with an openness to the world and integrating new perspectives • Think and act in a forward-looking manner • Acquire knowledge and act in an interdisciplinary manner • Ability to plan and act together with others • Ability to participate in decision-making processes • Ability to motivate others to get active • Ability to reflect upon one's own principles and those of others • Ability to plan and act autonomously • Ability to show empathy and solidarity with the disadvantaged • Ability to motivate oneself to get active.	• Results of teaching assessments • self-assessments written by pupils • Feedback sheets • Learning portfolios • Internal school curricula • Library stock / Media centre (size of collection)	• Negotiation of a common code of conduct • 'Morning circle' in primary schools • Contracts between teachers and learners • Assumption of responsibility • Class council

4.   School Culture

The term 'school culture' applies to the school as a space for living, characterised by its 'climate', its relationships and its forms of participation and communication.

Principles and Criteria	Possible Evidence	Possible learning arrangements and methods
School life is oriented towards the values and goals of sustainable development and provides all involved with opportunities to have their say, get involved and help to decide on relevant issues and themes. ● All involved in the school are informed of the relevance of ESD in general education. There is a widespread openness to support the school in its development towards sustainability. ● Opportunities are provided in school life to practice and experience sustainable lifestyles. ● Opportunities for pupils, teachers and parents to have a say and get involved in all issues and themes that affect them are supported by institutionalised participation structures. ● Project work, active involvement and initiatives on the part of pupils – beyond the activities of the pupil representation – are extensively encouraged, promoted and supported. ● Relationships with one another are respectful and appreciative at all levels. ● Integration of people and groups which require particular support or attention is self-evident at the school. ● Pupils act out democratic forms of conflict resolution in the classroom. Negotiation and conflict resolution processes are fostered.	● Informative material on ESD is generally available. ● Interviews ● Minutes and documentation contain references to ESD initiatives. ● Measures such as saving energy, recycling, sale of fairtrade products at the school kiosk, etc., are implemented. ● Steering and project groups on ESD measures are active, involving the participation of all at the school. ● Participative approaches are to be found in planning of goals and measures for the school programme, and are documented.	● Projects, initiatives, etc. ● Sustainable school companies ● Future workshop ● Forums using grassroots democracy; conferences for learners, teachers and parents ● Representative organs with real cooperative decision-making ● Conflict resolution / mediation

5. Opening of the School to the Outside World

The term 'opening the school' encompasses the opening of the school to the life of the community, including cooperative joint work with external partners such as educational establishments, civil society organisations and other institutions.

Principles and Criteria	Possible Evidence	Possible learning arrangements and methods
Our school maintains cooperation arrangements with external partners in order to achieve the common goals of sustainable development in the school, in the local community and beyond. • The school is part of local, national and/or international networks with relevance for ESD. It encourages the pupils to take initiatives in this area. • The school works in close cooperation with organisations and authorities outside the school in order to open up external spaces for experience and learning and to promote social participation. • Pupils take the role of independent partners and can assert their own interests. • The school allows the local community to express their wishes and make use of it as a 'communications centre'. • Results of changes in the school or community that are based on joint activities are cultivated and maintained. These results are regularly assessed for their suitability in implementing the school's sustainability-oriented goals and are developed further. • The school works together with other schools to develop relevant ideas on ESD and to exchange and compare ideas and information.	• There are agreements on goals and cooperation with external partners such as environmental associations, development associations, consumer advocacy groups, companies, youth workers and other schools. • Documentation on corresponding cooperation projects. • Displays, photos, etc., documenting the corresponding activities. • School companies with contact with partners. • Membership in networks and competence centres with relevance for sustainability.	• Situated learning • Parental involvement • Network building with other establishments • Excursions • Cooperation arrangements with stakeholders from (civil) society • On-site learning • School companies / cooperation arrangements between schools and companies

6.   School Management

School management encompasses all management tasks at the school, as carried out by the school administration and other responsible parties at the school.

Priniciples and Criteria	Possible Evidence	Possible learning arrangements and methods
Our school management initiates, encourages and supervises school development towards sustainability and motivates all members of the school community to participate actively. ● The school administration encourages all involved at the school to formulate perspectives for the school's future development, in order to plan long-term work on ESD at the school. ● The school develops quality criteria for ESD in line with its visions of ESD and uses these quality criteria for internal assessments. ● There is a steering group for ESD which meets regularly, in which not only the school administration and teachers are actively involved, but also the pupils and parents, and in which responsibilities and authorities are unambiguously stated. ● The school management ensures a transparent flow of information to all groups of participants at the school. This information is understandable and reasonable for all groups addressed. ● Internal school administrative processes are designed in such manner as to allow sustainability-oriented planning to be implemented. ● The school introduces processes to make the achievements of ESD and the experiences gained in dealing with difficulties useful for the whole school.	● Recordings / resolutions of steering group meetings ● Minutes from school conferences, displays, etc. ● Minutes from sessions or other (school development) processes, in which democratic decisions are recorded ● Task descriptions for steering groups or sustainability officers with corresponding distribution of responsibilities ● Distributors for internal school information and documents ● Planning documents ● Parents' letters, pupils' newspapers, lesson plans, etc. ● Completed auditing processes ● Attribution of available time slots for the planning of ESD measures	● Steering groups ● Quality circle ● Expanded school administration ● Audit processes ● Questionnaires/Interviews ● Meetings between school boards, and school management meetings ● Public relations work

7.   School Programme

The school programme is the written quality concept for the school. Besides describing the framework conditions and providing a peda-gogical analysis of the current situation, it also contains the model, development goals and corresponding practical planning of work, with its respective emphases, measures and assessment strategies. 'Development' in this case refers to the continuous process of school devel-opment and review of the programme.

Principles and Criteria	Possible Evidence	Possible learning arrange-ments and methods
Our school has a model which serves as the basis for setting goals in promoting sustainable development. It has a school programme which contains the corresponding goals, measures and structures. ● Teachers, pupils and parents are actively involved in the drafting, imple-mentation, assessment and review of the school programme. ● Sustainability topics are integrated into internal school teaching plans and curricula. ● The programme of work contains an analysis of the current situation in the specific local context (e.g. NGOs and Agenda 21, private enterprise and sustainability etc.) and involves these bodies in the work. ● The school gives learners sufficient time to work on topics of sustainable development. The teachers also have sufficient time to reflect upon and clarify issues of ESD at the school. ● The stated goals of the school programme and the steps taken are com-municated internally to teachers, other staff, pupils and parents, and also to non-school partners and the local authorities. ● The school programme presents the school as a sustainable organisation.	● The school programme is a written docu-ment, constituting evidence on contents, participation levels among various groups etc. ● Questionnaires are completed as to time constraints and the school's internal and external communication ● The school – as a sustainable organisation – is monitored for staff and resource management (see 8. – Resources; 9. – Co-workers)	● ESD School programme ● School programme work with use of negotiation processes, future conferences, future workshops ● Self-assessment workshops / assessment conferences ● Strengths-resources and strengths-wishes analysis (SWOT)

8. Resources

Resources are all materials and financial resources (purchasing; waste disposal, etc.) but also connection to transport arteries.

Principles and Criteria	Possible Evidence	Possible learning arrangements and methods
At our school human, material and financial resources are used on a sustainable basis. • At the school, purchasing policies for supplies, equipment and food are based in equal measure upon environmental and social sustainability and on economic viability. • The school makes exemplary use of sustainable technologies for the future. • The school attempts to set an example of careful management of resources in participative cooperation with everyone at the school, in areas such as heating, electricity, water and paper. Evidence of the results achieved is presented inside the school and to the local community. • The available financial resources are applied in such manner that the school's goals in the area of sustainability are achieved (for example with regard to training, resource management, etc.) • School trips, excursions and school events are planned and carried out with respect for sustainable development. • The school creates appropriate conditions to safeguard the health of all members of the school community.	• Displays, photos, etc. demonstrating resource-saving measures and their results • Plans, checklists and data on resource management. • Documentation on the further development of resource management • Checklists for the purchasing of (fairtrade) materials • Documentation on the implementation of a systematic and/or sample-based assessment of equipment, materials and suppliers in the school • Practical behavioural training for teachers and learners • Participation in competitions on energy saving, etc. • Solar cells, heating using renewable energies	• Sustainable school companies (i.e. travel agent, office supplies shop) • Project work • Working groups

9.   Staff Development

Principles and Criteria	Possible Evidence	Possible learning arrangements and methods
All staff at our school are empowered and motivated to work together for sustainable development, developing ideas and perspectives for lessons and school life and making their work more professional. • Reflection on and improvement of one's own professional activities is an important focus in team meetings, staff meetings and board sessions. • Regular times are advertised for team meetings and there are agreed forms of cooperation and communication. • Staff feedback and consultation sessions take place regularly. • School staff hold qualifications in the practical areas of ESD topics. • There is an internal school approach to staff development and training, oriented towards the priorities of the school programme, which is focused on sustainable development. • Continuous and further training opportunities can be used by staff as a group. • Opportunities for information and communication are available and are used by teaching staff to find out and discuss activities for sustainable development. • There are incentives at the school for staff members to take part in activities on sustainability.	• Minutes and reports of meetings • Weekly plans and timetables at the school • Feedback and consultation process among colleagues • Certificates • Qualification portfolio for teaching staff • School training plan • Job descriptions, freeing up time, hiring • Social recognition	• Development of team structures • Supervision and staff feedback • Training and study days • Gathering materials • Staff consultation • Meetings on learning, curricula and subjects