



Living
Schools
Lab

<http://isl.eun.org>

D3.1. Observation and Methodology Handbook

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Partners

- European Schoolnet (EUN), BE
- University of Wolverhampton (UoW), UK
- Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique (CNDP), FR
- Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa (INDIRE), IT
- Svetimo Informaciniu technologiju Centras Valstybes Biudzetine Istaiga (ITC), LT
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We would also like to acknowledge the work of the National Co-ordinators, the first wave of Advanced Schools and Advanced Practitioners within the network who will help us with the future developments of these materials.

Within these documents, you will find the current draft examples of the materials that we are developing as part of the Living Schools Lab Project. All of the materials will be revised throughout the course of the project.

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Version Control

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Introduction



Dear Colleague,

This handbook has been written for National Co-ordinators, schools and practitioners participating in the Living Schools Lab project in partnership with European Schoolnet. It will be developed further throughout the course of the project. The latest version of the handbook will be available on line in the Partners Area and the Community of Practice.

The purpose of the observation in this project is to collate evidence of practice at both whole school level and classroom level within the Advanced Schools in the network.

We would also like to encourage teachers to take part in regular school and classroom observation to collate evidence for the project, but also to inform their own practice. Ultimately, we want schools to feel confident to use the information from their observation and documentation of practice to encourage continued professional development and learning in schools and networks.

For readers who are not yet part of the LSL network, please refer to the LSL website, where you can download a LSL brochure, register your interest and follow the project. <http://lsl.eun.org>

We welcome your comments and feedback.

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Preparing for the School Observation Visits

During the course of the project, each Advanced School will receive one observation visit from the University of Wolverhampton. It is the role of the National Co-ordinator to organise the visit liaising with the schools and the University.

Each visit will give the Advanced School the opportunity to showcase their best practice in the use of ICT across the school. The most important part to remember is that the purpose of the observation is to document innovative practice in schools; it is not about making judgements or an inspection. However, the intention is that we will be able to collate evidence which will help to inform future work.

The purpose of the observation visit is:

- To look at whole school development in the use and implementation of ICT.
- To look at practice in the two Advanced schools and document ways of working that have been implemented across the school.
- To help define exemplary practice for the project
- To consolidate leading examples
- To interview practitioners
- To understand how effective practice in the use of ICT can be mainstreamed
- To collate ideas that can be replicated
- To share European practice at a national level
- To provide the teachers with the opportunity to share practice
- To feed into the focus group with the Advanced Schools and the Advanced Practitioners.

The National Co-ordinator, Headteacher and the lead teacher will be sent a list of possible dates and asked to prepare a timetable for the visit. There is a guide to help you plan your visit and there are suggestions of the kinds of schedule you might offer. You can adapt this to suit your particular circumstances. Your proposed timetable should be submitted at least 10 days in advance of your visit.

Language

The communication language of the Living Schools Lab Project is English. However, we recognise that it may be easier for some countries to host some aspects of the national events in your home language. It has been suggested that you may be able to agree local support for the observation visit and the focus group. E.g. one idea from the workshop was to see if there could be local support from a University student or English language teacher.

The lesson observations will be with the Advanced Schools and the lead teachers, and it is anticipated that whilst the lesson may be delivered in the home language, this does not prevent the University being able to understand the structure of the lesson and the way in which the content is delivered.

The National Focus Group could be delivered in both English and the home language.

Permission for Photos and Publicity Related to the Project

During the visit, the observer would like the opportunity to take photos, and it would therefore be appropriate for Advanced Schools to gain permission slips for photos and web presence as soon as possible. More information about this is available from Elina Jokisalo (Elina.Jokisalo@eun.org) or the Living Schools Lab website: <http://lsl.eun.org>

Proposed Timetable for Visits

The Link Observation Visits and Focus Groups are in two phases, with six countries in each phase. The National Co-ordinator or the schools can identify a preference for which phase.

The proposed dates are given below and have been circulated to the National Co-ordinators to enable them to document their preferences for the visits. Other dates may be made available on request.

(Please remember when planning, to allow travel time.)

	Phase One Proposed Dates	
	Summer Term 2013	
1	w/c Monday 6 th May	
2	w/c Monday 20 th May	
3	w/c Monday 10 th June	
4	w/c Monday 17 th June	
5	w/c Monday 24 th June	
	Autumn Term 2013	
6	w/c 16 th September	
7	w/c 23 rd September	
8	w/c 30 th September	
9	w/c Monday 14 th October	
10	w/c Monday 21 st October	
	Phase Two Proposed Dates	
11	w/c Monday 11 th November	
12	w/c Monday 18 th November	
13	w/c Monday 2 nd December	
14	w/c Monday 9 th December	
	Spring Term 2014	
15	w/c 13 th January	
16	w/c 20 th January	
17	w/c 10 th February	

Prior to the Observation Visit

Identifying a Focus Theme

Each Advanced School has been asked to identify a focus theme for the course of the project. This will be an area that they would like to develop and take forward during the course of the next two years. Some examples of themes have been offered to the teachers, but this list is not restrictive:

- Whole class technologies
- Use of 1:1 devices
- Collaborative work in the classroom and beyond
- Online collaboration tools
- Web 2.0 tools
- Links with the community
- Home/School Links
- Improving assessment opportunities in lessons
- Interactive technologies
- Learning spaces
- E-Safety
- Future Classrooms
- Technology across the school: challenges and ways forward
- Building digital content
- Other: your own recommendation for a key theme

The National Co-ordinator should ensure that the Advanced Schools have selected a theme.

About the 'STEPS' Plan

The 'STEPS' have been proposed as follows:



Each Advanced School has been asked to create a 'STEPS' plan to discuss with the National Co-ordinator by March 15th 2013. This will form the basis of their work within the Living Schools Lab network. This approach has been based upon the model of action research, but offers a plan that can be used by the project at many different levels. It provides a common framework across the 12 countries. This means that regardless of the stage of whole school ICT development, the Advanced School should then be able to work with the Advanced Practitioners to enable them to create a 'STEPS' plan that can demonstrate practice at either classroom level or whole school level. It is recommended that the National Co-ordinator works with the Advanced School and the Advanced Practitioners to identify commonalities between the 'STEPS' and to determine the kinds of support that could be made available. It would also be useful to consider how the 'STEPS' could address National priorities.

During the Advanced Schools workshop (17th and 18th January 2013), Diana Bannister discussed with the teachers the 'STEPS' and gave the teachers the opportunity to begin to develop some of their specific actions.

Collaborative School Development

Prior to the Advanced Schools Workshop, the work package leads met to discuss the types of professional development that schools are engaged with. The table below begins to define some of the ‘Collaborative School Development’ that should be achieved as a result of the project.

	AS1/AP1 School-led	National Coordinator-led	Project/Network-led
Face to Face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS/AP meeting(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National/school visits. AS/AP Focus Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013 workshops, Brussels. AS Observation visits. Focus group: CPD. Validation pilot. 2014 Summer School.
Virtual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS/AP virtual meetings. AS/AP webinars. AS/AP guidance. LSL ‘Learning Lab’ CPD. Moderation of two ‘school development spaces’: theme; school management. Non-moderated forums. Best practice materials. LSL ‘Learning Lab’ CPD. Action research/ experiential development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National dissemination. Webinar – national. Guidance on National initiatives and links. LSL ‘Learning Lab’ CPD. Moderation of ‘National room’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview (skype). Webinar – workshop dissemination. LSL ‘Learning Lab’ CPD. Moderation of two ‘school development spaces’: school management; teachers. Guidance: sharing best practice; action research/ experiential development.

As part of the ‘STEPS’ plan from both the Advanced Schools and Advanced Practitioners, it will be helpful if the schools could consider the ways in which they can contribute to and participate within Collaborative School Development. For example: A teacher may be able to share experience of using ICT in Numeracy or be willing to share evidence of some existing research in their own country.

Link Observation Visit (Proposal)

We would like the link observation visit to include all of the elements below, and we also recognise that you may have your own individual elements that you would like to highlight too. The details of the visit will be summarised on the Whole School Observation Record. We appreciate that the length of the school day may vary, and therefore you may need to adapt certain elements of the visit to reflect the key activities. However, we would like your help to organise the following:

	Activity	Suggested duration (please use this as a guide to prepare the timetable)
1	Tour of the school and observation of key ICT infrastructure	1 hour – Focus on whole school development of ICT In the Whole School Visit Record, you will see the areas that will be discussed as part of the visit.
2	Discussion with the head teacher or a senior staff member about the use of ICT in school (overview)	30 minutes – 1 hour – Focus on whole school development of ICT In the School Visit Record, you will see the areas that will be discussed as part of the visit.
3	Classroom Lesson Observations	Up to 1 hour per lead teacher for classroom observation. We would like to observe the whole lesson. In the Lesson Observation Record, you will see the details that will be observed.
4	Interviews/Discussion with the practitioners involved	45 minutes to 1 hour – this can be done individually or as a group if you prefer – Focus on use of ICT within learning and teaching
5	Interviews/Discussion with the students who have been using the technology (if appropriate – a small group of 4 students.)	30 minutes – 45 minutes (The students may take a little longer if they have examples of work to share.) - Focus on use of ICT within learning and teaching
6	Other areas that you may wish to highlight in your school/situation.	This may include your school focus theme and your ‘STEPS’ plan.

Whole School Visit Record

One of the central aims of the project is to give examples of ‘Showcasing’, ‘Demonstration’ and ‘Validation’. The whole school visit provides an important opportunity for the school to ‘showcase’ existing practice and to highlight areas of innovation and change. This observation record will document exemplary practice for other schools both within and beyond the Living Schools Lab network. Alongside this, it is clear from the outset that not all practice could be replicated across different situations. However, the project will inform future practice about how ICT developments can be mainstreamed and upscaled. Therefore, the Whole School Visit Record will seek to record examples of practice that should be highlighted for ‘demonstration’ to others in the LSL project. The observer will discuss with the Principal and the lead teacher examples of practice that could be mainstreamed and replicated across other schools.

The University of Wolverhampton will record and document practice within the whole school and the classroom. The Whole School Visit Record proforma builds upon the application form and has been separated into the same themes. This data will eventually form the basis of the case studies to be included in the interim and final reports.

Preparing for the Lesson Observation

During the school visit, we have asked if we can observe two whole lessons. This will enable the University to collate more details about the use of technologies within learning and teaching. It is anticipated that the teachers who are observed will be lead teachers or supporting teachers in the project. It is important that we observe the whole lesson, as this will give us the opportunity to understand more about the structure of the lesson and the types of activities that the students are engaged in. The teacher does not need to deliver the lesson in English, however if the teacher cannot speak English, it may be helpful if another person was available to translate for the observer. Ultimately, the observation aims to capture the use of technology, the role of the teacher and the role of the students.

We have developed an observation proforma and we will use this to record any notes.

Ideally, the observer should have the opportunity to meet with the teacher prior to the lesson to understand more about the context for the student's learning.

We would like the observation to last for a whole lesson i.e. 50-60 minutes.

- The observer will sit at the back of the classroom or in a seat allocated by the teacher.
- The teacher can ask the observer to help students within the lesson. (if required)
- The observer should record all lesson notes on the observation proforma and a copy of this will be given to the teacher.

The teacher should not try to do something different for the observation visit, For example, do not try to use technology for the whole of the lesson time, if you usually only use technology for the starter and plenary. The students will soon notice if you do something different to what they are used to.

After the Lesson

Ideally, the teacher who has been involved in delivering the lesson will have the opportunity to meet with the observer after the lesson. This will give the teacher the chance to clarify any particular details and to discuss with the University any observations that have been made.

The teacher should also make a copy of the lesson plan available in English or any lesson notes. We have included an example of a simple lesson plan within this handbook, but if you already have a different way of planning your lessons, it would be helpful if you could share this.

Focus Group

The purpose of the focus group is to bring together the Advanced Schools and the Advanced Practitioners that are involved in the project with other schools at a National Level. This will give the Advanced Schools the opportunity to share their school and to look at the areas of focus within the project. It will also give other schools an insight into the work of the project.

Your National Co-ordinator will decide about where to host the event and arrange the invitations for other schools. Ideally, this will be hosted in one of the Advanced Schools. We would envisage that this be a group of about 30 teachers. However, you will need to determine the number according to your venue and ease of access. It may be that you offer some schools the opportunity to attend a webinar or online event.

It is anticipated that each country will want to organise the focus group slightly differently.

Ideally, we want to use the focus group to:

- Talk about the Living Schools Lab project
- Encourage the Advanced Schools to share their practice
- Invite other schools and practitioners to join the network
- Share elements of practice from across the project
- Focus on the key themes from the Advanced Schools
- Give other schools the opportunity to network and share ideas

We envisage that the focus group will last half a day. The National Co-ordinator can organise the timing of the focus group to suit the national agenda and the work of the Advanced Schools. This is completely flexible and can be altered to suit the day. (e.g. if you would prefer to start later in the day, this is fine. You may also want to alter the length of the sessions. Please use the table below as a guide.) It is recommended that the focus group is on the final day of the visit.

Each Advanced School will have the opportunity to make a presentation about their use of ICT at school level and at classroom level. The schools should also share the types of support that they provide to other schools both locally and within the network.

If your school works with particular commercial suppliers, you may also want to invite them to contribute or participate in this session.

A Guide to Planning the National Focus Group

This is provided to the National Co-ordinator as a guide. The content can be adapted according to the context. For example, you may want to do this as an after school session. Some countries may have difficulty bringing all the teachers together face to face. However, in this situation, the National Co-ordinator may want to explore an online environment for this session.

Date of Focus Group		
Suggested Timing	Title of Activity	Purpose/Activity
10 minutes 9.00am-9.10am	Introduction	
30 minutes 9.10am – 9.40am	Overview of the Project from the University of Wolverhampton	The lead contact from the University of Wolverhampton will share the work of the Living Schools Lab Project.
45 minutes 9.40am – 10.25am	Advanced School One Questions and Answers	This will give the Advanced School the opportunity to share what they are doing within their school and as part of the network.
15 minutes 10.25am – 10.40am	Break	
45 minutes 10.40am – 11.25am	Advanced School Two Questions and Answers	This will give the Advanced School the opportunity to share what they are doing within their school and as part of the network.
11.25am – 12.30pm	Share my school Group activity for other schools	The University of Wolverhampton will work with the National Co-ordinator and the two Advanced schools to identify the best activity. This will relate to the key focus themes that have been chosen by the schools.
15 minutes 12.30pm – 12.45pm	Plenary Questions and Answers	The University of Wolverhampton will address any key questions with the schools. There will be opportunity for new schools to express an interest in joining the network.

Appendix

Documents to be included:

- Link Observation Visit – Example Timetable
- Whole School Visit Record
- Lesson Observation Record
- Lesson Plan Example (Schools can use their own)



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