

# **ITLS** INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## **Welcoming international teachers at school**



**A guide for mentors, principals  
and the school community**

**Editors:**

**Mihaela Brumen, Vana Chiou, Renate Schüssler & Oliver Holz**





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## Introduction

### The purpose of this guide

This guide aspires to present an insight into mentoring international teachers who have migrated in recent years and are trying to work in a new school system. The aim is to accompany the mentoring process with guidelines, resources and tools. The guide is designed as a mentoring and welcome guide. It can be used by mentors, principals and other members of school staff who wish to support international teachers and provide guidance.

In this guide the term “mentor” refers to the teachers whose task is to make it easier for the new colleagues to settle into the school and accompany them on their first steps in their new classroom, regardless of whether they have been appointed as official mentors or they are doing so through personal interest. As a means of collegial professional scaffolding, it offers reflection materials, prompts and possibilities to be considered and experimented within the framework of everyday practice at school. These materials are provided to enhance reflection and understanding. The mentors themselves can decide what works best for welcoming and counselling in their specific situation and which of the instruments can be used best to support international teachers at their new school.

The guide is based on recent research and the ITTS project experiences and is based on accepted mentoring principles. It can be used by individuals in different international educational settings.

It has been designed in the framework of ITTS project to provide consistent paths of mentoring and to facilitate the professional integration of international teachers in new and often very different education systems.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ITTS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>International Teachers for Tomorrow's School – System Change as an Occasion for Intercultural School Development and Mutual Learning</b></p> <p>ITTS is a European project, launched in 2020 that aims to support, in a strength-oriented manner, the professional re-integration of international teachers with and without a refugee background, who will work or are already working in schools in their new country.</p> <p><a href="https://itts-europe.org/about-project">https://itts-europe.org/about-project</a></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The ITTS project</b></p> <hr style="border: 2px solid #c8e6c9; margin: 10px 0;"/> <p>International teachers worldwide confront barriers during the process of their integration into new school systems in their host country. ITTS aims to support international teachers, their mentors and principals, and their new schools in reflecting critically on these barriers and to collect, synthesise and develop examples, best practice and material to show the benefits of the professional integration of international teachers in unfamiliar education systems. In addition, ITTS aspires to promote open and diversity-sensitive schools across Europe by supporting the professional re-integration of international teachers in European schools.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ITTS Partners</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>KU Leuven, Belgium</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bielefeld University, Germany</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>University of the Aegean, Greece</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>InterCultural Iceland, Iceland</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pomeranian University Słupsk, Poland</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>University of Maribor, Slovenia</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Izmir University of Economics, Turkey</b></p>
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### Who are our target groups in the ITTS project?

- International teachers with or without a refugee background
- Teachers, mentors, principals of schools
- Teacher training students and lecturers
- Participants in in-service teacher training workshops at university colleges, universities, training institutes and NGO's and other relevant institutions



## What we developed in the ITTS project: materials, products and results

- **Stocktaking, documentation and the ITTS-Portal:** challenges and opportunities of the professional re-integration of refugee and international teachers: a comparative analysis from seven European countries published in book form
- **Materials for supporting international teachers** during the transition to a new system and during their integration in their new school
- **Materials for principals and mentors** for supporting the integration of (new) international colleagues in a strength-oriented way
- Workshop designs and methods to integrate **intercultural school development in the training and further education of (future) teachers.**

## Brief results: what we have learned from ITTS so far

ITTS partners worked together to investigate and document different national policies for the professional re-integration of teachers from non EU countries. In addition, they also explored teachers' own experiences of professional integration in international educational settings.

### **The literature and national policies on the professional integration of international teachers in partner countries show that:**

- the size of the student population from non-EU countries is not reflected in the size of the non-EU teacher population
- international teachers face barriers in getting their degrees recognised
- international teachers are confronted with language obstacles
- due to bureaucracy, the professional re-integration of international teachers is not a smooth process
- international teachers usually have short-term contracts and receive low pay
- there is no systematic data collection on the international teachers moving globally.

In addition, the quantitative ITTS-survey conducted with 158 international teachers in seven countries indicates that once international teachers are given the opportunity to work in schools in their new country, they report experiencing high levels of satisfaction.

The results correspond to a study by Bense, who states that “the importance of effective professional support programs in order to ensure a successful outcome for both migrant teachers as well as the receiving countries” (Bense, 2016, p. 47).

### **According to the results of the ITTS cross-country survey, three factors play a particularly important role for feeling welcomed and satisfied when working as a teacher in a new school:**

- the international teachers' own beliefs about their self-efficacy and coping mechanisms
- being perceived as teachers rather than as support staff
- how they are supported in their professional re-integration in their new school.

## Further readings

Brandhorst, A., Schüssler, R., & Hachmeister, S. (2023). Valued and supported?! Which factors have a positive effect on the professional re-entry of international teachers into school? Results of a cross-national quantitative study. In R. Schüssler, S. Hachmeister, N. Auner, K. D'Herdt, & O. Holz (Eds.), *International Teachers for Tomorrow's School – Opportunities and challenges of the professional re-entry of international teachers in selected European countries*. Waxmann.

## Key questions for the development of the mentoring guide

The following questions were the starting point for the development of the ITTS materials and this guide for **principals**:

- What can be learned from the experiences of newly arrived international teachers?
- How can processes be changed to integrate the experiences of international teachers?
- What can be learned from the above to promote reflection on the daily routines and established procedures of the school?
- How can existing school materials and tools be expanded and modified to take into account the perspectives of new international teachers?
- What strategies can be adopted by school principals when working together with new international teachers?

The following questions were the starting point of the development of the ITTS materials and this guide for **mentors**:

- What materials can be used to support mentors in advising international teachers (reflection and feedback sheets, collections of ideas, materials)?
- How should questions, evaluation criteria, and reflection and feedback sheets be designed or existing materials modified in order to support international teachers?
- What formats (e.g. for workshops) can be designed for mentors in order to enhance their thinking and perception processes?
- How can mentors enhance their thinking and perception processes to increase strength-oriented mentoring competences?
- How can mentors influence the patterns of perceptions and discourse of other members of the school staff?

## Chapter 1: International Teachers for Tomorrow's School: basic needs, opportunities and challenges

*Authors: Vana Chiou & Oliver Holz*

### 1.1 The school's perspective: benefits and challenges of international teachers for school (communities)

Schools are settings of dynamic interactions between principals, teachers, students, parents and other school community members. The recruitment and integration of international teachers in schools is a challenge in many education systems as described for the seven ITTS countries in the ITTS publication (Schüssler et al., 2023). Diverse professional experiences and backgrounds of international teachers along with other obstacles they may encounter in a new (cultural) system of the host country may create various challenges. One of them is the creation of a positive and inclusive environment for a warm welcome and strength-oriented integration in schools.

#### Challenges of having international teachers in the educational system

- Creating an inclusive environment in school
- Promoting equality and equity in school
- Promoting inclusion at all school levels

Despite these challenges, schools can benefit from the integration of international teachers in a variety of ways. In their attempt to design and promote a more inclusive environment and to facilitate the professional re-start, schools and teachers develop new practices, revise existing policies, enhance skills and the know-how needed to cooperate with colleagues from diverse working cultures.

#### Benefits of having international teachers in the educational system

- Developing practices to identify international teachers' needs
- Adopting inclusive policies and techniques for international teachers
- Cultivating positive relationships in the school
- Strengthening cooperative behaviour in the school
- Fostering a climate of mutual respect and recognition
- Fighting discrimination
- Exchanging know-how for teaching in different education systems

## 1.2 The international teacher's perspective: what are the benefits and challenges for international teachers themselves?

But not only schools face challenges when integrating international teachers. International teachers also encounter many challenges throughout their integration process in their attempt to get familiar with the new educational systems they are working in. Cooperation and communication with different individuals in the new school are among the challenging tasks for international teachers.

### Challenges for international teachers in the educational system

- Cooperating with new colleagues from a different background
- Adopting and testing new methods, techniques and strategies in teaching
- Adopting new styles of communication
- Getting familiar with the new education system

However, international teachers can also gain several benefits when integrating into a different educational context. Challenges and benefits cannot be seen as opposite poles. International teachers can develop a range of skills, methods, approaches and techniques to successfully acclimatise to their new school while dealing with challenges. The process of their re-entry into school should, in fact, advance the development of their professional growth.

### Benefits for international teachers in the new education system

- Enhancing problem-solving skills
- Enhancing cooperative and communicative skills
- Adopting new teaching techniques
- Developing self-confidence
- Developing self-reflection practices
- Increasing awareness of teaching issues in international education systems
- Developing a sense of belonging to a new community
- Developing professional growth
- Knowing where to ask for mentoring, support and feedback

### 1.3 The mentor's perspective: what are the benefits of and challenges for the professional integration of international teachers?

Throughout the mentoring process, the mentors of international teachers are confronted with various challenges. Mentoring colleagues with different cultural backgrounds and professional experiences who have likely worked in a different education system is a challenging task. Freeman (2019) asserts that while mentoring international teachers, mentors should consider three main areas: meeting basic needs, developing 'interculturality', and providing pedagogical support.

#### **The mentor's perspective: challenges when integrating international teachers**

- Cooperating with new people from different backgrounds
- Adopting new modes of communication
- Problem-solving

Besides the challenges, research consistently indicates that mentors can benefit in a wide range of personal and professional sectors by mentoring other teachers. Research shows that mentors experience higher professional growth and report career success and satisfaction as a result of mentoring. Furthermore, a positive outcome of mentoring colleagues is the enhancement of a variety of skills such as cooperative and communication competences, problem-solving skills, knowledge of new mentoring approaches, etc.

#### **The mentor's perspective: potential benefits when integrating international teachers**

- Enhancing problem-solving skills
- Enhancing cooperative and communicative skills
- Developing mentoring skills
- Developing self-confidence
- Developing self-reflection practices
- Having the sense of belonging to a community
- Expanding one's professional network
- Enhancing the sense of being effective
- Professional development and career success
- Satisfaction at being effective
- Satisfaction in supporting colleagues

## 1.4 Voices from the field 1: the professional integration of international teachers in Belgium:

Flemish experts and education stakeholders are talking\*...

.....what international teachers tell us.....

***Recognition of qualifications:***

*Clear, but long and de-personalised  
process*

***Guidance for work:***

*Need for correct information and  
acknowledgement of motivation  
(not just the 'quickest' way to  
work)*

***Need to experience***

*that school principals, colleagues  
and pupils are willing to engage  
with international teachers*

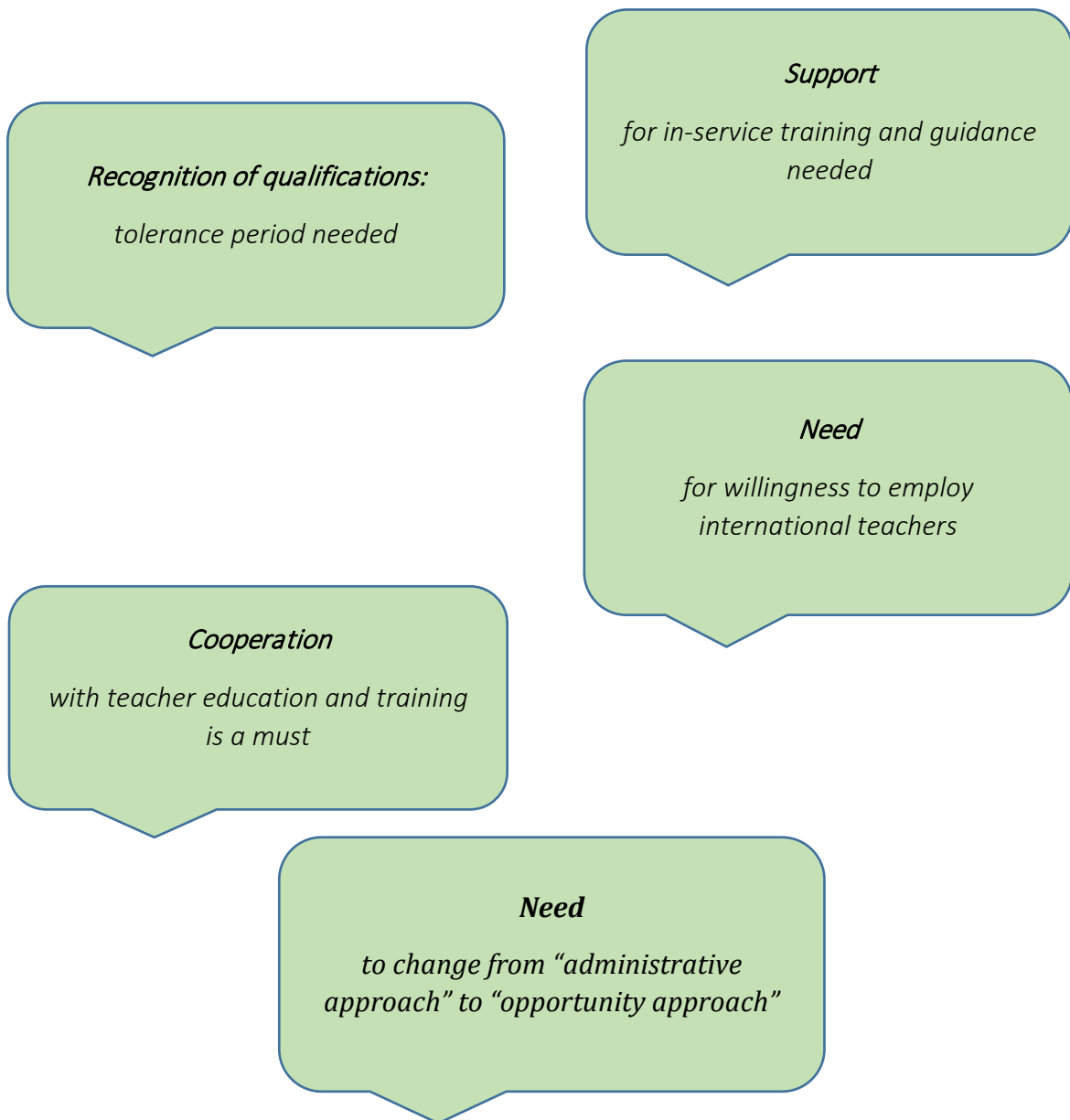
***Need for specially designed  
opportunities for professionalisation:***

*e.g. ICT, school system, educational  
'culture'*

***Recognition***

*for the extra effort*

...what principals tell us.....



*\*Interviews held with these individual stakeholders in the field of education:*

- *Candidate teacher with non-EU teaching degree*
- *Candidate teacher with a refugee background with non-EU teaching degree*
- *Teacher with non-EU background (Flemish teaching degree)*
- *School principal with mixed experiences with international teachers*
- *School principal actively employing and coaching international teachers*

## 1.5 Voices from the field 2: *Lehrkräfte Plus (Teachers Plus)* – a bridge to the teaching profession in Germany

### The *Teachers Plus* programme

In Germany, access to the teaching profession is heavily regulated and the obstacles are very high. It is necessary to study two to three disciplines in addition to educational sciences and have a master's degree or a state teaching qualification. A preparatory in-service training must then be completed, which, depending on the federal state, lasts between 16 and 24 months.

In recent years, a number of re-qualification programmes have been set up to provide teachers with a refugee background or from non EU-countries with a bridge to employment at schools. One of them is the programme *Lehrkräfte Plus (Teachers Plus)* in North Rhine-Westphalia. *Teachers Plus* was implemented for the first time in 2017 at Bielefeld University and since then it has been expanded to four other universities: Bochum, Duisburg-Essen, Cologne and Siegen. From the start, there was close cooperation with the Ministry of Schools and Education (*Ministerium für Schule und Bildung, MSB*). The project was initially supported by two foundations (Bertelsmann and Mercator), and it is currently being funded by the Ministry of Culture and Science.

*Teachers Plus* is a full-time, one-year programme. The most important components are language courses, an intensive school internship, seminars on teaching methodology and the so-called "Pedagogical-Intercultural Qualification" (PIQ). This should provide orientation and preparation for the system change. In addition, methodology and professional language courses are also offered. During the course of a year participants receive extensive guidance and support.



Lehrkräfte Plus Bielefeld – the programme throughout the year

April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Febr.	March	April
[Icon: Speech bubbles]		[Icon: Person with lightbulb]		[Icon: School building]		[Icon: Person with lightbulb]		[Icon: School building]		[Icon: Speech bubbles]		[Icon: Graduation cap]
C1-German language course		Professional communication, Pedagogical Intercultural Qualification (PIQ), phonetics, English conversation course		Internship in schools, accompanied by mentors and PIQ		Professional communication, PIQ, phonetics, subject methodology, English conversation course plus accompanied internship in schools (2 days per week)		TestDaF exam		Graduation		

**Figure 1:** The schedule of the one year re-qualification programme *Teachers Plus* at Bielefeld University (*Lehrkräfte Plus Bielefeld*)



The project is supported by the Ministry of Schools and Education by providing guidance and mentoring hours for school mentors. These mentors accompany and advise the *Teachers Plus* participants during their school internship. Furthermore, the Ministry supports their professional integration with the programme “*Supporting International Teachers*” (ILF). This follow-up programme was specifically tailored to the needs of graduates of *Teachers Plus* and was developed in 2018 for a mentored process of re-entry into school. “As part of the state's own ILF program, the teachers receive a two-year contract of 17 lesson hours, of which 12 are initially guided and then are increasingly taught independently. The remaining five hours are credited for professional development” (Purrmann et al., 2020, p. 32). In the meantime, *Supporting International Teachers* (ILF) is offered in all five state administrative districts. In terms of content, there is close coordination with *Teachers Plus*.

“It was a stony road, but finally I can work as a teacher again. It’s like a dream come true.”

### Case study: Ms Naser

Ms Naser is 37 years old. She studied mathematics in her country of origin and worked there as a mathematics teacher for seven years. She lives in Germany with her husband and two children. After completing the *Teachers Plus* programme at Bielefeld University, Ms. Naser switched to the ILF programme of the Arnsberg district. Accompanied by the ILF programme, she sat in on and taught at a comprehensive school for two years, both individually and in a team. She also took part in methodology and professional language seminars of the ILF programme.

Ms. Naser received support and guidance from a school mentor while participating in *Teachers Plus* and the ILF programme. This support made it much easier for her to return to her profession. In summer 2020, Mrs Naser was one of the first graduates of the ILF program and was then employed at her school. She now has a permanent position as a mathematics teacher. (Case study, modified and abridged, from Purrmann et al., 2022)

“I love mathematics, it’s simply my subject. And I think it’s fantastic to convey my enthusiasm for the subject to my students. Showing them good ways to solve problems. And to make it clear to them: yes, math is also important in your everyday life.”

### Insights:

A documentary in German: <https://youtu.be/FrmapgEFPnU>

A BBC report in English: <https://youtu.be/x3-sDakprn0>

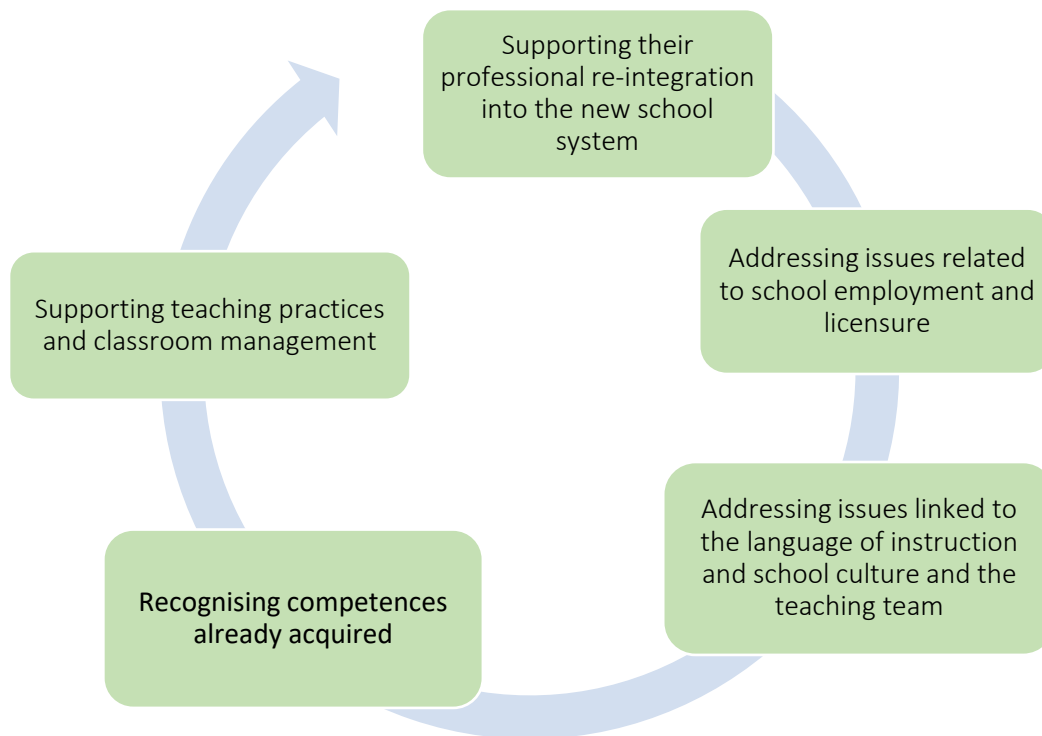


## Chapter 2: How to support international teachers: the role of school staff and administration

*Authors: Mihaela Brumen, Matjaž Duh, Jerneja Herzog & Tomaž Zupančič*

How can school administrations (e.g. school boards, school district organisations) foster the professional re-integration of international teachers in the school districts and local schools? And at school level: how can the staff support new international teachers at school? What can mentors, principals and other teacher colleagues do to support the new teachers? How can they exchange ideas and information and participate in professional discussions with international teachers?

They can offer help in



**Figure 2:** Areas of support for the professional re-integration of international teachers

In addition, successful school-based support and collaboration depend upon clear definitions of the roles and responsibilities of all involved.

## 2.1 Mentoring international teachers: what is the role of the school staff and administration?

### The principal:

- enables effective school-based re-integration of international teachers into the new school by developing clear procedures for this
- initiates support to help international teachers adapt to the new cultural and linguistic environment
- (early in the school year or at the end of the current year for the following year) establishes initiatives, sets up groups and networks and recruits individual colleagues at school to support international teachers in their orientation at the new school
- fosters the on-going professional development of international teachers
- fosters openness, positive relations and collaboration within the school team, the school administration, and other members of the community with regard to international teachers
- ...

### The colleagues:

- recognise the typical needs and challenges of international teachers, in order to help them become familiar with the new education system
- develop and implement an action plan and a variety of strategies to assist international teachers
- provide culturally relevant examples when preparing and training foreign teachers in the language of instruction.
- cooperate with international teachers, develop a collegial relationship with them and create opportunities for open conversations
- support international teachers in communications with parents
- mediate in cases of discriminatory practices (stereotypes, prejudices) with regard to international teachers in the school environment
- model, demonstrate, and organise (self-)reflective and experiential teaching strategies and professional development for international teachers
- assist international teachers in identifying personal strengths, and planning for further professional growth
- help in procuring and managing the teaching materials for international teachers
- support international teachers in classroom management, student-centred learning, and student assessment
- foster the establishment of lasting and strong relationship between international teachers and students at school
- ...

### The school administration:

- supports international teachers in certification, employment and school licensure processes
- facilitates international teachers in their socio-cultural transition and familiarises them with the characteristics of the language and school culture
- directs international teachers towards additional re-qualification programmes (if in existence) to help them gain the necessary competences and knowledge to qualify them to teach at the new school
- helps international teachers find websites, teaching platforms, apps for teaching and social resources
- facilitates networking between school and teachers
- informs international teachers about workshops on their professional re-integration into the new school environment
- helps them to develop a feeling of belonging in the school community and a professional identity
- ...





# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
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## The role of the school staff in supporting new international teachers

### Abstract:

This *sheet for self-reflection and exchange* is intended to assist you as school principals, teachers and other school staff or school administrators in your professional conversations with international teachers who have recently arrived at your school.

You are prompted by these questions to take a moment to reflect on your own school experience. The questions provided together with some recommendations for self-reflection represent opportunities for you to consider and experiment with developing suitable action plans within your own school practice. You are welcome to contribute any additional thoughts and queries.

By *Mihaela Brumen, Matjaž Duh, Jerneja Herzog & Tomaž Zupančič, University of Maribor, Faculty of Education*

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**Type of document:**  
sheet for reflection and exchange

**Target groups:**  
teaching and other school staff, principals, administrators

**Goals:**  
to support reflection and exchange on how international teachers can be made to feel welcome at the school

**Keywords:**  
clarifying, consulting, collaborating, guiding

## The role of the school staff in supporting new international teachers

### Time out —for self-reflection

Consider the context of your school and write down or comment on the following:

Are there international teachers at your school?

If not, would this be interesting/an opportunity for your school and how could your school foster the employment of international teachers?

What could be methods and measures to make the new start and work at your school easier?

How could your school team assist the professional integration of international teachers?

Provide some concrete solutions for your school context.

How would your actions affect the international teacher's personal, professional and emotional growth?



### Recommendations for self-reflection

I  
can

collaborate, interact and advise international teachers on school employment and gaining a teaching licence.

interact with other school staff, such as social workers, school psychologists and offer personal support in the re-integration of international teachers into our school environment.

set clear professional development goals for international teachers

I  
can

help to develop and implement an action plan and offer a variety of strategies to assist international teachers in their re-integration.

organise language sessions and provide culturally based examples to aid their professional re-integration.

create opportunities for open conversation and together we can reflect on our teaching strategies.

I  
can

allocate time and have an open discussion with international teachers and together we can discuss teaching and learning activities.

set timetabled meetings (weekly, fortnightly, additional if needed) to discuss the school context (e.g. teaching, staff meetings, school trips, participation in school events, parent talks, social activities, ...).

...

## 2.2 Benefits of employing and mentoring international teachers at school

### What are the benefits?

There are potentially many benefits of employing, mentoring and supporting international teachers in their professional re-integration at school.

#### For international teachers: benefits of mentoring

- access to the experience, knowledge and support of the new school team
- enhancement of personal and professional well-being because of reduced stress during the re-integration process into the new school environment
- development of language of instruction and socio-cultural acclimatisation
- increased sense of job success, self-confidence and self-esteem
- problem-solving step-by-step and accelerated professional growth
- support for successful induction into the new school and teaching career.

#### For the school team: benefits of mentoring

- close collaboration with international teachers
- increased cooperative learning, enhanced professional identity, socio-cultural acclimatisation and teaching performance
- offering expertise, knowledge and feedback on issues related to school employment and licensure
- re-focusing on instructional practices and the development of (self-)reflective and experiential skills
- opportunity to serve the profession
- gratitude of the international teacher.

#### Bonus for school principals and administrators

- giving support to international teachers
- improving school performance and building productive, effective school management, culture and classroom strategies
- more effective integration of international teacher and reduced time required for their employment process, professional development and problem-solving.

## Gains for school students

- successfully integrated teachers focus on student needs rather than their own survival or challenges
- increases educational stability due to reduced annual (international) teacher fluctuation
- learning in an inclusive, intercultural and international school environment.

## For the profession: international teachers at school can

- introduce diverse experiences and competences into the professional life of the school and improve effectiveness in the classroom
- offer their professional experience and strategies contributing to student academic progress (e.g. for teaching, internal differentiation, support for work group phases) to the teaching staff
- help build positive relationships and positively change behavioural norms
- foster professional norms that value experimentation, teamwork, cooperation and an openness to new ideas and teaching approaches.





# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
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## Mutual benefits for teachers, other school staff and international teachers

### Abstract:

Let's take time out and reflect on the mutual beneficial aspects for your school staff and school administration in discussions and guidance when welcoming international teachers to your school. Consider your school structure and processes and explain, discuss and share evidence of the benefits of effective team collaboration.

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**Type of document:**  
reflection sheet for  
fostering  
discussion and  
exchange

**Target groups:**  
teachers and other  
school staff,  
principals,

**Goals:**  
to support  
reflection and  
exchange on how  
to welcome new  
international  
teachers at your  
school

**Keywords:**  
benefits, school  
team consultation,  
collaboration,  
guidance

## Mutual benefits for teachers, other school staff and international teachers

Consider the context of your school and comment on the following:

How would you identify benefits of mentoring to international teachers at your school?

How could you benefit from your collaboration with international teachers? What can you do to help them overcome some starting difficulties at your school?

### Recommendations for self-reflection:

I  
am

a *contributor and support provider*, aiding and advising international teachers and contributing to our work together.

a *collaborator and assistance provider*, and I work shoulder-to-shoulder with international teachers as we reflect, discuss and cooperate at our school.

an *initiator and co-creator*, someone who understands the typical needs and challenges the international teachers face at our school, we design and jointly create our teaching plans, lessons and materials and develop mutual confidence.

### Further readings

The Alberta Teachers' Association. (2017). *Mentoring Beginning Teachers: Program Handbook*. <http://ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Alb-non-AV-18-ATA-Mentoring-beginning-teachers.pdf>

The Northern Territory Department of Education. (2017). *A Teacher's Guide to Effective Mentoring*.

[https://education.nt.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/427583/2017\\_teachers\\_guide\\_to\\_effective\\_mentoring.pdf](https://education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/427583/2017_teachers_guide_to_effective_mentoring.pdf)

## Chapter 3: School development in a migration society

*Author: Renate Schüssler*

### 3.1 Introduction

Migration processes worldwide are shaping and transforming societies. Additionally, they have a fundamental influence on schools. The origin-related diversity of students, of teachers and other staff members, is one of many dimensions of diversity that a school must take into account. This is necessary if the school aspires to both value the potentials of its students and teachers and at the same time meet their needs.

Dealing with migration in schools has gone through a turbulent history: from the assimilation of “foreign” students and a deficit-oriented view of them, to the over-emphasis on difference and folkloric inclusion of “culture”, to the demand for a democratising school in a migration society (Mecheril, 2015) and an appreciative and resource-oriented view of diversity. These different approaches initially focused primarily on the migration-related heterogeneity of the students, however in recent years, international teachers have also come into focus.

The various phases of intercultural education are clearly shaped in educational discourses: from deficit-orientation to an emphasis on difference and to a recent call for democratisation and transformation of education in a migration society. However, in the real school situation a juxtaposition of all three approaches is visible: “In institutional contexts and especially in everyday school life [...] diversity is still seen as a problem or as the cause of certain problems.” (Dietz, 2011, p. 104).

In addition, the diverse demands placed on teachers and the staffing levels in schools mean that teachers are responsible for too many students at the same time. This makes it difficult to see all students in terms of their individual challenges and strengths and to support them in accordance with their individual needs.

Typical pitfalls, challenges and issues associated with the dimension of migration in schools are, for example:

- Differences in performance are often explained one-sidedly as caused by migration or “the other culture” instead of taking into account a variety of other categories, in particular social inequality and gender.
- This is also reflected in evaluation practices. Unfair forms of performance evaluation can occur, e.g. influenced by the first name or by the ascribed or factual origin, are repeatedly proven by research (e.g. Lorenz et al., 2016).
- Pupils – whether they want it or not – continue to be perceived as representatives or ambassadors of a “different culture” with the well-intentioned “intercultural breakfast” or other folkloric elements – even if this is uncomfortable for them; they do not want their supposed “difference” to be emphasised and their family might have been living in the country for three or four generations.
- Teachers with a different background from that of the majority society are clearly under-represented in schools (Schüssler et al., 2023). However, they can be important as a role model and identification figure given the heterogeneity of students.

- The native languages of the students are usually given too little consideration. In many countries, lessons in the native language only take place outside of regular lessons.
- Too many teachers still know too little about language-sensitive subject teaching and how to implement it.
- Classes are usually too large for teachers to support their students in accordance with their individual strengths and needs. This situation is exacerbated by the growing shortage of teachers in many countries.

### Time out — for self-reflection

What is to be done? If, as a teacher, I take the cultural background of individual students into account, this can often lead to an over-emphasis on their (supposed) origin. If I try to be “neutral” and treat all students equally, this leads to blindness to existing inequalities and differences. The poet Pat Parker describes this basic problem of any kind of difference-sensitive perspective with the lines:

*“The first thing you do is to forget that I’m black.  
Second, you must never forget that I’m black.”  
(Pat Parker)<sup>1</sup>*

**Self-Reflection:** What does this mean when I think of the students in my class and of specific teaching situations?

**By way of explanation:** With these lines, Pat Parker is describing the basic problem of every difference-sensitive perspective. This always represents a tightrope walk because in order to problematise discrimination based on the assignment of characteristics to certain groups (Fereidooni, 2016) and to change it, attention is often deliberately drawn to these differentiating characteristics. In gender studies, this is called the “dramatisation of gender”, which initially over-emphasises differences. In this way, gender-based discrimination is made visible with the aim of overcoming it.

The situation is comparable with the so-called “othering” (Attia & Foitzik, 2009; Said, 2012; Spivak, 1988) of migrant others. Addressing the issue creates (new) boundaries that we actually want to overcome (cf. also Shure, 2021). This paradox cannot be resolved. It is all the more important to be aware of it. It therefore requires constant reflection on our own thoughts and actions, and we have to clean the lens through which we look at our students.

### For reflection or discussion:

- Does the tightrope walk described above seem familiar to me? Please share an example.
- In which situations have I already experienced othering?
- What would have to change in my school to prevent othering?
- How can I get more information or further training on this topic?

<sup>1</sup> “For the White Person Who Wants to Know How to Be My Friend”, <https://www.mangoes-and-bullets.org/for-the-white-person-who-wants-to-know-how-to-be-my-friend/>





# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Let's talk about: reflection and exchange on the basic understanding of culture by the teaching staff

### Abstract:

With the help of the worksheet, the teaching staff can start an exchange about the basic understanding and the inclusion of culture and migration at their school. This requires time and additional input and can be realised, for example, as part of in-service training. In this way, ideally, a mutual understanding of the concept of culture can be achieved.

*By Renate Schüssler, Bielefeld University  
Guiding questions translated by Carina Göke*

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**Type of document:** sheet for reflection and exchange

**Target group:** teaching staff

**Goals:** to facilitate exchange and a reflection process on culture

**Keywords:** culture, basic understanding, school

## Let's talk about: reflection and exchange on the basic understanding of culture by the teaching staff

As soon as one takes a closer look at intercultural or migration-related issues, one runs the risk of reinforcing existing stereotypes and clichés. Talking about “culture” might reinforce boundaries which society and the school are only partially conscious of.

In order to avoid such traps, it is advisable to first pave the way for a shared basic understanding of the concepts of “culture” and “migration society”. This could be done, for instance, as part of conferences, instructional days or teacher training days. Case studies could be used as a starting point to encourage the sharing of individual perspectives and analyses of examples. Or one uses methods from intercultural or racism-critical educational work, such as the albatross exercise (*see materials at [www.itts-europe.org](http://www.itts-europe.org)*), to make everyday perception traps tangible. On this basis, an agreement can then be reached on the questions below for reflection.

It is worth taking a break from daily routine and reflect on your own and your colleagues' attitudes.

## Guiding questions for reflection and exchange on a basic understanding of culture

1. What personal experiences and understanding of culture do I have?
2. How do we talk about migration and culture at our school?
3. Is there an appreciative approach to different languages and cultural diversity at school? How can we promote such an approach?
4. What is our understanding of culture? And what kind of understanding do we wish for?
  - ❖ Is culture equated with nation or ethnicity (“The xx just have a different culture.”) and is it used as a relatively closed concept? Is culture understood as folklore and are clichés reinforced? Is culture understood as a collective identity? Is culture used as an explanatory model that sets up demarcations between the majority and the “others”?
  - ❖ Or: Are we talking about the (socio-)cultural imprints on our real-life students Marie, Mustafa, Tomasz? (Socio-)cultural imprints which are fluid and changeable, influenced by geographical, social and family background, by educational background and political attitudes, by gender and age, by individual preferences and decisions, by space and time? Do we take into account the dynamics and changeability of these cultural imprints?
5. How can we ensure that every student, teacher and staff member at our school is perceived as an independent person? That they are not perceived as representatives of a (culturally defined) group, but as individuals with their personal strengths that need to be supported in accordance with their individual needs?

## 3.2 School development in a migration society

### Why talk about school development in a migration society?

If diversity is recognised as a reality in society, in schools and in the staffroom, school development<sup>2</sup> measures must also address this. In general, school development (Dalin, 1998; Rolff, 2013) is a systemic and actors-driven approach to improve learning and living at a school from the bottom up. School development aims to change the school “from below” so that different levels contribute to improved learning. The entire school community should participate in the work of school development, which should engage as many school stakeholders as possible.

In order to take the existing diversity into account, the goals, processes and measures of school development must be examined to see whether they are in line with the requirements of democratising education in a migration society. “Resource-oriented approaches take the place of a problem-oriented approach. Diversity management strategies start from the school as an organisation in which different dimensions of diversity exist, including one’s origins.” (Krieg, 2013, p. 9). Elements of intercultural, racism-sensitive and anti-bias work should be included. Intercultural school development is therefore about a “changed view of the school as an institution and those responsible within it and on the reality of school changed by migration processes as a whole, as well as an adjustment of the institution’s structures, methods, curricula and modes of behaviour to suit a student body that is plural in many dimensions” (Karakışoğlu et al., 2011, p. 17).

In order to avoid an overemphasis on culture, in the following we will speak of *school development in a migration society*.

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<sup>2</sup> In general: school development is a systemic and actors driven approach to improve learning and living at the school from the bottom, which means that school development is a task for the whole school community.

## Objectives of school development in a migration society

Based on the previous statements, the following goals of school development in a migration society can be identified:

- recognition and promotion of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity
- adjustment of the institutional structures, methods, curricula in consideration of the diversity of pupils and staff
- avoiding deficit orientation, but perceiving (cultural) diversity as an enrichment
- knowing the individual needs and strengths of each pupil (and staff member), to be able to foster the educational opportunities of each individual
- questioning beliefs of “normality” and reviewing prevailing guiding principles and rules, routines and communication
- including anti-racism and anti-discrimination approaches
- fostering (self-)reflection and open-minded attitudes on the part of principals, teachers and other educational staff
- underlining (self-)reflection as a key component of the professional competence of teachers (in a migration society).
- 

### Time out – for self-reflection

- How do you personally think about these goals?
- Considering the current reality of your school situation, do you believe that these objectives can be achieved?
- How could you be enabled to accomplish these aims?

## Dimensions of school development in a migration society

### What is it about?

An overview of the various school development fields in a migration society is provided below. The collection has been generated from various sources. It follows the structuring of general school development (Rolff, 2013) into four fields and it incorporates some of the elements listed there:

- organisational development
- staff development
- development of teaching and learning
- school outreach

In addition to these elements of school development, aspects have also been included from handouts on *intercultural* school development (e.g. Karakaşoğlu et al., 2011; Kiel et al., 2017; Krieg, 2013). On this base, further adaptations have been developed against the background of the theoretical considerations regarding school in a migration society (Mecheril, 2015; Steinbach & Leiprecht, 2015).

Organisational development	Staff development
<p>Recognition of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of pupils and staff as part of the school programme</p> <p>Intercultural work with parents and family</p> <p>Employment of international teachers and staff</p> <p>Taking intercultural organisational development into account in conferences, work groups etc.</p>	<p>In-service teacher training, training of other staff members in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- intercultural competence, reflection on their own intercultural competences</li> <li>- anti-racist perception and classroom-management</li> <li>- communication- and conflict-mediation strategies</li> </ul> <p>Strength-oriented integration of new international teachers</p> <p>Team teaching</p>
Development of teaching and learning	School Outreach
<p>Cultural diversity as an inherent component in the classroom</p> <p>Diversity-sensitive curricula and teaching-learning designs</p> <p>Diversity-oriented textbooks and materials</p> <p>Questioning of what is perceived as 'normal' at school</p>	<p>Networks with local intercultural organisations</p> <p>External cooperation with local, regional and international partners and institutions</p> <p>Exchange programmes</p> <p>Participation in networks such as "Schools without Racism, Schools with Courage"</p>

It should always be noted that (intercultural) school development is not a sure-fire success. Many of the associated measures require additional resources, as a qualitative study by Kiel et al. (2017) clarifies with a few examples: "It was found that intercultural school development cannot be successful without additional resources, as well as further training over the longer term. Solutions for existing language barriers that affect teachers, pupils and parents require structural measures." (ibid., p. 243).

### How to get started?

At the beginning of school development processes, it is advisable to take stock of the situation and to develop some of the topics covered in it theoretically and conceptually:

- Where do we stand?
- Where do we want to go?
- What do we need for this?
- What do we need to know or be able to do?

Another method are the so-called SWOT analyses. They are used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regard to the school development process.

The different methods can be carried out in relation to an overall inventory or in relation to individual aspects. Thus, these methods can also be used with a view to analysing (intercultural) school development – and more specifically – with regard to greater involvement by international teachers in the school (see the grid for “Evaluation and planning: international teachers in (our) school”, Chapter 3).

### Further readings

Kiel, E., Syring, M., & Weiss, S. (2017). How can intercultural school development succeed? The perspective of teachers and teacher educators. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 25(2), 243–261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2016.1252421>







# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Reflection sheet: intercultural school development at our school

### Abstract:

This material contains a series of guiding questions that can be used to reflect on the state of school development at your own school from the perspective of migration. The questions can be used as a basis for reflection and evaluation processes. You can either work with all the questions or with a selection. You can add your own questions and concerns.

*By Renate Schüssler, Bielefeld University*

*Guiding questions translated by Carina Göke, Bielefeld University*

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**Type of document:**  
reflection sheet

**Target groups:**  
principals, teaching staff

**Goals:**  
exchange of ideas, experiences etc. on school development

**Keywords:**  
intercultural school development, reflection and stock taking

## Reflection sheet: intercultural school development at our school

Now we want to take a look at the actual lessons and work at your school. These questions can be used as the basis for reflection and evaluation processes. You can either select some of them or try to answer and discuss the questions comprehensively. Of course, not everything can be implemented at the same time. In addition, some questions also depend on the financial and human resources of the school.

### Possible guiding questions for the discussion at school:

1. Have you noticed discriminatory or ethno-/eurocentric content in the teaching materials – if so, how do you deal with it?
2. To what extent are the diverse linguistic competences of your students incorporated into lessons and school life at your school? How do you ensure that this does not convey a static or closed concept of culture?
3. To what extent are linguistic and intercultural aspects taken into account in interaction with parents?
4. How does your school respond to issues like racism, intolerance and violence if they arise?
5. Are teachers sensitised for a critical approach to racism and other discriminatory behaviour? If not, how can they get prepared for this?
6. Have you already conducted teacher training in global learning, intercultural education or climate justice at your school?
7. Is a critical approach to racism and discrimination part of your school development?
8. Does the question of how to deal with racism and discrimination play a role in internal or external teacher training; if so, how could it be strengthened?
9. How does the school teach newly arrived students with a refugee background? Do you reflect on whether this is appropriate or how it could be improved by the school and the teachers?
10. Does your school use out-of-school learning places for intercultural or global learning; if not, what possible opportunities could be offered in future?

11. Are there any international school partnerships or joint projects with schools from other countries at your school? How do you avoid clichés and stereotypes here as well?
12. To what extent does global justice play a role in your school development or teaching?
13. To what extent is your school committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and uses them for teaching and school organisation?
14. Does your school participate in exchange programmes? If so, how do you try to avoid clichés and stereotypes in the preparation and follow-up phases for the students?
15. Do teachers from other countries work at your school?
  - a. If so, what is their position in the teaching staff and how do the staff integrate them?
  - b. If not, how could teachers from other countries be recruited, hired and integrated into the teaching staff?
16. Do you offer lessons in students' language of origin at your school? Is this integrated into the regular school lessons?
17. Does your school also provide multilingual information for parents?
18. How could parent-teacher meetings be designed in a language-sensitive way?
19. How can you support the acceptance of your intercultural efforts through public relations (press, internet presence, information booths, events...)?
20. Do you have financial and human resources for intercultural education? If not, how could you get this funded?

*Developed from elements taken from: Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium (Ed.). (2000). Sichtwechsel: Wege zur interkulturellen Schule. Ein Handbuch. <https://www.nibis.de/uploads/2med-eckert/ibus/sichtwechsel.pdf>*

### 3.3 The role of international teachers in school development in a migration society

Having international teachers in your school can bring many benefits. This has been revealed, for example, by a qualitative study (Hachmeister, 2022) in which international teachers, their principals and mentors, but also the educational administration, were surveyed. The following potentials were made apparent by the findings of this study:

#### THE POTENTIALS OF INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS – WHY THE SUPPORT IS WORTHWHILE:

- International teachers' specialist knowledge from their studies/training
- Professional experience
- Knowledge of their culture of origin
- Closeness to and trust on the part of immigrant pupils due to
  - › their own migration/refugee experiences
  - › their experiences of integration/coming to an unfamiliar society
- Identification and role model function
- Multilingualism and language sensitivity
- (Critical) reflection on teaching methods, habits, ideas of "normality"
- Opportunities for system comparisons: as teachers and as parents
- Promotion of diversity awareness and diversity-oriented thinking at school
- Encouraging students to deal with their migration and refugee experiences
- Challenging and promoting intercultural competences among teachers and students
- Tolerance of ambiguity and frustration
- High degree of motivation and ambition, commitment

(cf. Hachmeister, 2022, p. 26)

**Figure 3:** Possible potentials of international teachers

The results of the quantitative study of the ITTS project with 158 international teachers from seven countries surveyed also show that it is worth employing international teachers at schools (cf. Brandhorst et al., 2023). Support for them and a welcoming culture at the school also have a positive impact on international teachers' satisfaction and self-efficacy.

#### Further readings

Hachmeister, S. (2022). *Zugewanderte Lehrkräfte in der Schule: Potenziale fördern und Herausforderungen begegnen. Eine Handreichung für Schulen*. Universität Bielefeld, Bielefeld School of Education (BiSEd). <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2962407>

Brandhorst, A., Schüssler, R., & Hachmeister, S. (2023). Valued and supported?! Which factors have a positive effect on the professional re-entry of international teachers into school? Results of a cross-national quantitative study. In R. Schüssler, S. Hachmeister, N. Auner, K. D'Herdt, & O. Holz (Eds.), *International Teachers for Tomorrow's School – Opportunities and challenges of the professional re-entry of international teachers in selected European countries*. Waxmann.

In order to take a more specific look at the situation of international teachers as part of school development, we turn again to the dimensions of school development in a migration society from Chapter 3. Here we take a closer look at those aspects that are particularly relevant to the situation of international teachers. They are highlighted in the table below:

Organisational development	Staff development
<p><b>Recognition of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity</b> of pupils and <b>staff</b> as part of the <b>school programme</b></p> <p>Intercultural work with parents and family</p> <p><b>Employment of international teachers and staff</b></p> <p>Taking intercultural organisational development into account in conferences, work groups etc.</p>	<p>In-service teacher training, training of other staff members in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- intercultural competence, reflection on their own intercultural competences</li> <li>- anti-racist perception and classroom-management</li> <li>- communication- and conflict-mediation strategies</li> </ul> <p><b>Strength-oriented integration of new international teachers</b></p> <p>Team teaching</p>
Development of teaching and learning	School Outreach
<p><b>Cultural diversity as an inherent component in the classroom</b></p> <p>Diversity-sensitive curricula and teaching-learning designs</p> <p>Diversity-oriented textbooks and materials</p> <p>Questioning of what is perceived as 'normal' at school</p>	<p>Networks with intercultural organisations in the neighbourhood</p> <p>External cooperation with local, regional and international partners and institutions</p> <p>Exchange programs</p> <p>Participation in networks such as "schools without racism, schools with courage"</p>

### Time out – for self-reflection

- How do you personally feel about the highlighted aspects?

- Think about your own school reality: which of the aspects highlighted could be included or developed in your school?

In the following chapter you will find tools and materials for supporting the professional re-entry of international teachers at your school.

## Chapter 4: Materials for supporting the professional integration of international teachers in schools

Here in Chapter 4, we will present some methods and tools to support a strength-oriented professional integration of international teachers in schools.

### 4.1 Overview on the materials

- ✍ Evaluation and planning: new international teachers at our school
- ✍ Reflection sheet: supportive personal attitudes for the professional re-start of international teachers
- ✍ Welcome checklists for new international teachers
- ✍ Materials for facilitating and engaging in professional reflections, feedback and exchange
- ✍ Understanding the organisation of the school
- ✍ Well-being: how do you feel at your new school?
- ✍ (Self-)reflection on lesson planning and teaching
- ✍ Reflection on professional re-integration at school
- ✍ Reflection sheet to prepare feedback meetings







# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Evaluation and planning: new international teachers at our school

### Abstract:

The worksheet can be used for understanding and analysing the situation of international teachers at your school. Two simple analysis models are presented.

The communication can take place during an in-service training day or at a meeting of the school development steering group.

The results are recorded and incorporated into further work on the school programme.

*By Renate Schüssler, Bielefeld University*

To cite this material: Schüssler, R. (2023). Evaluation and planning: new international teachers at our school. In M. Brumen, V. Chiou, R. Schüssler, & O. Holz (Eds.), *Welcoming international teachers at school – A guide for mentors, principals and the school community*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2978276>

**Type of document:**  
evaluation grid

**Target groups:**  
principals, teaching staff

**Goals:**  
evaluation and planning

**Keywords:**  
school development, analysis, evaluation

## Evaluation and planning: new international teachers at our school

Proven methods for the evaluation and planning of school development make it easier to communicate, take stock and define goals. We apply these evaluation and planning methods to the following fields of action:

- *Recognition of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of (pupils and) staff as part of the school programme*
- *Employment of international teachers and staff*
- *Strength-oriented integration of new international teachers*
- *Cultural diversity perceived as a 'norm' in the classroom*

The communication can take place during an in-service training day or at a meeting of the school development steering group. The results are recorded and incorporated into further work on the school programme.

### Method A: mediated understanding process

- Where do we stand?
- Where do we want to go?
- What do we need for this?
- What do we need to know or be able to do?

### Method B: SWOT analysis

This method can be used for one or all four fields of action at the same time.

- *Recognition of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of (pupils and) staff as part of the school programme*
- *Employment of international teachers and staff*
- *Strength-oriented integration of new international teachers*
- *Cultural diversity perceived as a 'norm' in the classroom*

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>





# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Reflection sheet: supportive personal attitudes for the professional re-start of international teachers

### Abstract:

The reflection sheet is based on the results of a qualitative study (Hachmeister, 2022, p.47). International teachers, principals and mentors were asked about their experiences with the professional re-start of international teachers at their school. The study showed that the personal preconditions or attitudes listed below are helpful for creating a warm, productive and welcoming climate at school.

The work with this sheet can help you to get clear about your personal position and to get involved in exchanges with other colleagues.

*By Silke Hachmeister & Renate Schüssler, Bielefeld University*

To cite this material: Hachmeister, S., & Schüssler, R. (2023). Reflection sheet: supportive personal attitudes for the professional re-start of international teachers. In M. Brumen, V. Chiou, R. Schüssler, & O. Holz (Eds.), *Welcoming international teachers at school – A guide for mentors, principals and the school community*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2978277>

**Type of document:** sheet for reflection and exchange

**Target groups:** mentors, international teachers

**Goals:** to facilitate reflection and exchanges on your own attitudes

**Keywords:** reflection, attitudes, welcoming culture

## Reflection sheet: supportive personal attitudes for the professional re-start of international teachers

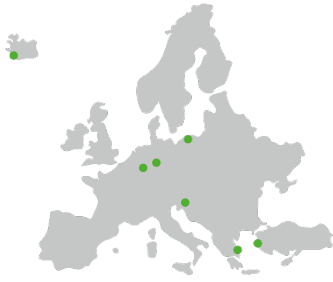
### IN A NUTSHELL

International teachers	Mentors and principals
Openness and curiosity, embracing new things	Openness and curiosity, embracing new things
Patience, time and commitment	Patience, time and commitment
Reflection skills	Creating opportunities for reflection and exchange
Willingness to learn and exchange	Tolerance of ambiguity
Tolerance of frustration and ambiguity	Allowing room for questions and taking teachers and their questions seriously
Seeing themselves as learners, dare to ask questions	Transparency and clear structures
Independence	Being a contact person for subject-related and organisational processes at the school
Motivation	Clear distribution of tasks between mentors and teachers
Ambition and effort	Binding agreements
Interest in and involvement in school-related tasks beyond one's own teaching	If required: support for lesson plans and their implementation
	If required: support for the international teacher

Source: Hachmeister, S. (2022). *Zugewanderte Lehrkräfte in der Schule: Potenziale fördern und Herausforderungen begegnen. Eine Handreichung für Schulen. Universität Bielefeld, Bielefeld School of Education (BiSEd)*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2962407>

### Reflection and exchange:

- How about you? Do these attitudes correspond to your own experience?
- What would you like to achieve with regard to your personal attitudes?
- Which framework conditions do you need to create a good welcoming culture for new (international) teachers at school?



# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Welcome checklists for new international teachers

### Abstract:

You are expecting new (international) teachers at your school. The questions in this collection can make it easier for them to settle in.

The questions can serve as an orientation for new teachers at their school. And for you as a mentor, principal or teacher already working at the school for a long time they can be a reminder of whether you have thought of everything when introducing the new colleagues to your school.

Of course, the questions can be supplemented or modified so that they take into account the specifics of your school and the local situation.

The checklists can be expanded, modified and supplemented. They are inspired by the checklists in the *Teachers Plus* portal.

*By Renate Schüssler & Sabrina Hermann, Bielefeld University*

To cite this material: Schüssler, R., & Hermann, S. (2023). Welcome checklists for new international teachers. In M. Brumen, V. Chiou, R. Schüssler, & O. Holz (Eds.), *Welcoming international teachers at school – A guide for mentors, principals and the school community*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2978278>

**Type of document:**  
checklist

**Target groups:**  
mentors, teachers,  
principals

**Goals:**  
to welcome  
international  
teachers and  
facilitate their  
orientation at their  
new school

**Keywords:**  
checklist, welcome,  
orientation

## Welcome checklists for new international teachers

Have I thought of everything? What does the new teacher need to have/ to know?	Done
School key, mailbox, email account, their own place in the staff room	
Notification of illness and absence, substitution regulations	
How to get the timetable, an overview of the classrooms, an overview of the classes	
What regulations apply to the supervision of students?	
Who can the new teacher contact with their questions?	
Who can the new teacher contact in case of conflicts or emergencies?	
Exchange of contact details (mobile phone number, email address)	
Data protection agreement, service regulations, school rules	
Regulations on infection prevention	
Other:	

Who does the new teacher need to know?	Done
Principal	
Teachers	
Teachers teaching same subjects	
School social workers	
Employees in the field of inclusion	
Office staff	
Caretakers	
Is a guided tour of the school possible to get to know the school buildings, the team, the work areas etc.?	
Is it possible to sit in on classes with colleagues of the same subject?	
What other possibilities for cooperation exist?	
Other:	



What do I want to know about the new (international) teacher?	Comments
Teacher training	
Work experience	
Preparation for the teaching profession in the country of residence	
Subjects, favourite subject	
What is important to her/him about her/his job?	
What are personal preferences, hobbies, and other things the teacher might want to share, such as marital status?	
Can a personal profile with a photo etc. make it easier for the new colleague to introduce herself/himself and to settle in at school?	
Other:	

What does the new teacher need to know content-wise about the work of the school?	Comments
Is there a school programme, a specific school profile, special priorities?	
What structures of cooperation are there: across the school, in the subject, in the classroom, inter-professionally?	
What resources and structures of support are there in the classroom: team teaching, support staff for inclusion etc.?	
Are there common rules for classroom management?	
How can the new teacher be prepared for the specifics of some classes?	
How can the new teacher be prepared for working with parents?	
How does the new teacher acquire textbooks and teaching materials?	
What is the media equipment like in the classrooms? Is an introduction needed on how to use various technical media?	
Is there a staffroom for the preparation of lessons and meeting colleagues?	
What needs to be considered in the area of service and infrastructure?	
Other:	





# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Materials for facilitating professional reflection, feedback and exchange

### Abstract:

Let's take time out and reflect on how to facilitate effective professional reflection, discussion, and exchange with colleagues as well as an appropriate welcoming culture at your school. The material covers four topics: school organisation, well-being, lesson planning and teaching, and the new professional start. The material gives recommendations for professional conversations with colleagues, where issues and challenges might be discussed and appropriate plans for action can be developed.

*By Mihaela Brumen, Matjaž Duh, Jerneja Herzog & Tomaž Zupančič,  
University of Maribor, Faculty of Education*

To cite this material: Brumen, M., Duh, M., Herzog, J., & Zupančič, T. (2023). Materials for facilitating professional reflection, feedback and exchange. In M. Brumen, V. Chiou, R. Schüssler, & O. Holz (Eds.), *Welcoming international teachers at school – A guide for mentors, principals and the school community*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2978279>

**Type of document:**  
collection of materials

**Target groups:**  
teaching staff

**Goals:**  
to reflect and exchange ideas on facilitating professional discussions

**Keywords:**  
clarifying, consulting, professional discussions

## Materials for facilitating professional reflection, feedback and exchange

Effective professional reflection, discussion, and exchange with colleagues as well as creating a welcoming culture at your school involve open, transparent conversations during which issues and challenges might be discussed, and appropriate action plans can be developed. They might include:

<p align="center"><b>Understanding the organisation of the school</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Well-being: How do you feel at your new school?</b></p>
<p>Conversation partners: the new (international) teacher with the principal, other teachers</p> <p>The focus of the conversation is on the school processes, policies and procedures.</p>	<p>Conversation partners: the new (international) teacher with the principal, other teachers</p> <p>The focus of the conversation is on the international teacher's self-confidence, emotional welfare, sense of self-efficacy and work routines.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Reflection on lesson planning and teaching</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Reflection on professional re-integration at school</b></p>
<p>Conversation partners: the new (international) teacher (for self-reflection), with the mentor, other teachers</p> <p>The focus of the conversation is on lesson planning and on the international teacher's work in the classroom, working out how to assess student learning or how to (self)-evaluate one's own teaching.</p>	<p>Conversation partners: the new (international) teacher with the principal, mentor, other teachers</p> <p>The objective of the conversation is to reflect on various aspects of the international teacher's school practice and integration, barriers and challenges and how they could be overcome together.</p>

On the following pages you will find some materials for facilitating professional reflection, feedback and exchange in the above mentioned fields.



# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Understanding the organisation of the school

### Abstract:

The following reflection sheet aims to inspire effective discussions and the exchange of ideas about the school organisation, policy, the employment and certification process, and the procedure for gaining a teaching licence for the new school.

*By Mihaela Brumen, Matjaž Duh, Jerneja Herzog & Tomaž Zupančič, University of Maribor, Faculty of Education*

To cite this material: Brumen, M., Duh, M., Herzog, J., & Zupančič, T. (2023). Understanding the organisation of the school. In M. Brumen, V. Chiou, R. Schüssler, & O. Holz (Eds.), *Welcoming international teachers at school – A guide for mentors, principals and the school community*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2978280>

**Type of document:**  
sheet for reflection and exchange

**Target groups:**  
teaching staff  
principals

**Goals:**  
to discuss, reflect and exchange ideas on an effective understanding of the school organisation

**Keywords:**  
school organisation, policy, processes and procedures

**FOR DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE:  
Understanding the organisation of the school**

School:

Conversation with:

Date:

With your new teacher, share and clarify the following points:

- Your school's educational policy:
- The process of employment and certification at your school:
- The procedure for gaining a teaching licence for your school:
- Access to the school curriculum:
- Access to school media and technology (e.g websites, teaching platforms, apps ...) to facilitate networking:
- The evaluation process for students' achievement:
- The involvement of parents in your school curriculum:
- Attendance at teacher training programmes and workshops for teachers at your school:
- The location of resources, classroom equipment, important notifications (e.g. excursions):
- Any (extracurricular) tasks:
- Other:



# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Well-being: How do you feel at your new school?

### Abstract:

The following reflection sheet is designed to facilitate effective discussions and conversations on the international teacher's self-confidence, emotional welfare within the context of their new school career and context, challenges and insecurities they might have, and self-efficacy. Discussions about well-being encourage new teachers to find their own way to become integrated in the new working environment.

*By Mihaela Brumen, Matjaž Duh, Jerneja Herzog & Tomaž Zupančič,  
University of Maribor, Faculty of Education*

To cite this material: Brumen, M., Duh, M., Herzog, J., & Zupančič, T. (2023). Well-being: How do you feel at your new school? In M. Brumen, V. Chiou, R. Schüssler, & O. Holz (Eds.), *Welcoming international teachers at school – A guide for mentors, principals and the school community*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2978281>

### Type of document:

sheet for reflection and exchange

### Target groups:

teaching staff

### Goals:

to discuss and reflect on international teachers' emotional welfare

### Keywords:

emotional welfare, school routines, discussions

**FOR DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE:**  
**Well-being:**  
**How do you feel at your new school?**

School:

Conversation with:

Date:

With your new teacher, discuss and exchange ideas based on the following prompts:

- How do you feel at our school? How did you feel earlier in the year?
- What have you been most excited about up until now?
- What are two things that are challenging for you at the moment and you would like to discuss with me?
- Can you ask colleagues for advice?
- Do the colleagues ask you for your own opinion or feedback? Can you make contributions to your colleagues' work with your own suggestions?
- As an international teacher, you bring different experiences and competences to our school life. In which situations are these strengths beneficial to you and appreciated by others? How is your international background valued (by your colleagues, students, school administration) at school?
- Are you called in by the colleagues to engage in conversations with international parents?
- Do you feel overburdened by international duties?
- Other:





# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## (Self)-reflection on lesson planning and teaching

### Abstract:

The following reflection sheet encourages the teaching staff to consider and compare various aspects of their lesson planning, teaching practice and its impact on students to guide their future actions, and help develop their teaching competences.

*By Mihaela Brumen, Matjaž Duh, Jerneja Herzog & Tomaž Zupančič,  
University of Maribor, Faculty of Education*

To cite this material: Brumen, M., Duh, M., Herzog, J., & Zupančič, T. (2023). (Self)-reflection on lesson planning and teaching. In M. Brumen, V. Chiou, R. Schüssler, & O. Holz (Eds.), *Welcoming international teachers at school – A guide for mentors, principals and the school community*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2978282>

**Type of document:**  
sheet for reflection and exchange

**Target groups:**  
teaching staff

**Goals:**  
to discuss and reflect on classroom events and experiences

**Keywords:**  
lesson planning, teaching practice, collaboration

**FOR DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE:  
(Self-)reflection on lesson planning and teaching**

School:

Conversation with:

Date:

With your new teacher, discuss and exchange ideas based on the following prompts:

OR

Try to reflect on your own lesson planning and teaching:

- How does your lesson planning differ from planning your lessons in your country of origin?
- How do you include the curriculum/syllabus/standards in your lessons?
- How does your lessons reflect principles and best practice of effective learning?
- To what extent do you adjust your future lessons to take account of past experiences?
- How do you fully engage all your students and hold their interest throughout the lesson?
- What other evidence do you collect to determine if the learning objectives have been achieved?
- What do you want me to focus on in your lesson planning or teaching?
- What would you like me to know about how you plan/design your work in the classroom to make sure you develop as a teacher?
- Other:



# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Reflection on professional re-integration at our school

### Abstract:

The following reflection sheet encourages a better understanding of various opportunities, challenges and barriers linked with the professional entry into your school. Such discussions can reveal a great deal about the school practice and your experience in this new professional start.

*By Mihaela Brumen, Matjaž Duh, Jerneja Herzog & Tomaž Zupančič, University of Maribor, Faculty of Education*

**Type of document:**  
sheet for reflection and exchange

**Target groups:**  
teaching staff

**Goals:**  
to discuss and reflect on the professional school re-entry

**Keywords:**  
school re-entry, collaboration, support

To cite this material: Brumen, M., Duh, M., Herzog, J., & Zupančič, T. (2023). Reflection on professional re-integration at our school. In M. Brumen, V. Chiou, R. Schüssler, & O. Holz (Eds.), *Welcoming international teachers at school – A guide for mentors, principals and the school community*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2978283>

**FOR DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE:  
Reflection on professional integration at our school**

School:

Conversation with:

Date:

With your new teacher, debate and exchange ideas based on the following prompts:

- How do you cope with your new teaching tasks?
- As a new teacher in our country/at our school you are faced with several issues. Please explain your experiences with respect to the following: language, formal requirements/acceptance of degrees, different system of teacher education, different role of teachers, different interaction with students. How can I help to ease these issues at our school for you?
- What kind of support do you receive from the colleagues (e.g. with regard to professional competences [lesson preparation, teaching, classroom management], extracurricular tasks, orientation in school)? What kind of additional support would you appreciate?
- Do you feel yourself to be under observation and judged? If so, how?
- How do you handle complex school demands?
- If conflicts with students, colleagues, parents, school administration arise, how do you resolve them?
- How can I help? What can I do to ease your integration into our school system?
- Taking into account your experiences with your entry into our school so far, where do you see yourself in, for example, 5 years' time?
- What do you wish for your professional future?
- Other:

## Time out — for self-reflection

Consider the context of your school and write down or remark on the following:

Brainstorm a list of any kinds of information or processes on school organisation/management, well-being, lesson planning, critical discussions that are necessary to meet the needs of your international teacher(s).

Think of the persons who might know answers to the prompts above or be able to help your international teacher to find answers.

What are the impacts of the personal, professional and emotional support, reflection and exchange with international teacher(s) that your school is providing?

What impact do these discussions have on your school practice and on the teaching/learning processes of the new teacher?

### Recommendations for self-reflection:

I  
can

find people/contacts who are willing to share their professional experience and find time to regularly discuss, share ideas, and reflect together with international teachers, to develop respectful, trusting relationships at and beyond our local context.

try to find the important information on professional qualifications, competences and other regulations, and through on-going discussions with international teacher(s) support and guide him/her through personal and professional experiences within and outside the school.

explain to the colleagues at our school that international teachers need sufficient and gradually increasing levels of autonomy and freedom; and opportunities to innovate and take measured risks in our school practice.





# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Reflection sheet to prepare feedback meetings

### Abstract:

The reflection sheet serves as a template for a reflection meeting between new teachers and their mentors or colleagues.

The aim of the sheet is to prepare a feedback meeting and to give guidance for the meeting. It can help to identify strengths, challenges and needs and to prepare the dialogue partners for a substantive exchange.

The sheet can also be used to provide feedback between colleagues who have already been working longer at the school.

*By Renate Schüssler & Kristina Purrmann, Bielefeld University*

*Developed on the base of material from the project*

*Lehrkräfte Plus Bielefeld*

To cite this material: Schüssler, R., & Purrmann, K. (2023). Reflection sheet to prepare feedback meetings. In M. Brumen, V. Chiou, R. Schüssler, & O. Holz (Eds.), *Welcoming international teachers at school – A guide for mentors, principals and the school community*. <https://doi.org/10.4119/unibi/2978284>

### Type of document:

sheet for reflection and counselling

### Target groups:

new teachers, colleagues, mentors

### Goals:

suggestions for reflection and feedback, identification of strengths and needs

### Keywords:

reflection, feedback, performance, needs

## Reflection sheet to prepare feedback meetings

Date of the meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

How are you doing at your (new) school? Draw a personal conclusion from your activities and your teacher role at your school, considering

- the different tasks of a teacher: classroom management, teaching, educating, assessing, extracurricular tasks, school development
- the different groups of people at your school: teachers, principals, other staff, pupils, parents, and
- situations in and outside the classroom.

Questions for reflection:

What was surprising for you? Please describe a specific situation that has been particularly important to you.

How do you perceive yourself in your (new) role?

In which situations have you received positive feedback or have felt appreciated?



In which fields do you think your strengths lie?

What particular challenges do you face?

Are the challenges you experience inter-culturally determined (differences in the education system, the role of a teacher, everyday practices, language etc.)?

How do you deal with these challenges? What could you change personally?

What should be changed at school? What are your wishes and needs?

Which further learning needs do you have? How could we deal with them?

What further topics should be focused on in the meeting?

Your conversation partner (mentor or another colleague) would like to point out the following aspects:

The reflection meeting has taken place and our joint conclusion is:

---

Date and signature of the (new) international teacher

---

Date and signature of the mentor

---

## Chapter 5: What next?

*Authors: Vana Chiou & Oliver Holz*

### One step closer to completing this mentoring guide...

...the question arises: how easy has it been to write a mentoring guide for international teachers? How easy has it been for the authors who come from different European countries and have experienced different education systems, to combine their experiences, knowledge and literature to write this mentoring guide? It has not been easy. And we believe that this reflects, to some extent, the challenges associated with welcoming international teachers to their new school.

Mentoring international teachers is not easy. We may state that it is a challenging task because mentors and principals who wish to foster the integration of new international teachers at their school must take into consideration a variety of factors that may affect the smooth induction and welcoming of international teachers. The aim should be to receive them with open arms by acknowledging, accepting and appreciating them.

The objective of this guide has been to provide mentors, principals and school communities with information, guidelines and options for improving their mentoring skills and practice in the context of school and to integrate intercultural aspects into their school development work. The guide has been developed in the framework of the ITTS project and is based on its findings along with the relevant literature.

It is a multifaceted guide that provides mentors and principals with:

- information about the challenges and benefits of integrating international teachers into a new education system;
- information about the roles of mentors, principals, other staff members and the school community when welcoming international teachers to a new education system and mentoring them;
- options and recommendations for mentoring international teachers based on the recent literature and research findings, and
- materials, such as reflection sheets, advice and other methods and tools designed to facilitate and support the mentoring process.

We have adopted a holistic approach by compiling and incorporating guidelines and materials that could be used in diverse international educational setting. We believe that this approach enables mentors and principals to apply these guidelines and to use the materials created in accordance with their needs and the provisions of their educational system.

## What next?

We assume that, if you are reading this mentoring guide or looking for advice in it, you are either a principal, a mentor or a teacher who has chosen to support an international teacher. We also assume that you are interested in enhancing your mentoring skills and practices and growing as a professional as well. In addition, we think it is worthwhile seeing the welcoming of international teachers as part of a holistic school development approach in a migration society.

We hope that this mentoring guide will help you to find useful information, ideas and suggestions for the welcoming and integration of international teachers at school.

## Feedback

For us, who designed this guide, it would be useful to have feedback from you.

- Did you find it easy – readable? If not, please reflect on the challenges faced when reading a mentoring guide.
- Did the structure of the guide help you to find the information you were searching for?
- Did you find useful information on mentoring international teachers at your school? If so, what specifically?
- Do you feel that more information or materials should be included?
- What did you like most in this guide? How might these ideas change things in your situation?
- What did you miss in this guide?

In addition to this, it would be also important for us if you would care to share your experience of using the materials provided.

- Which materials have you used?
- Have you found it easy to use the materials in the mentoring process?
- Would/Did you make any changes in order to adjust them to your needs?
- Can you suggest any improvements?

If you would like to share your experience of using this guide or your ideas on how we can improve it, please contact us at [itts@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:itts@uni-bielefeld.de).

Your feedback is always valuable!

## Are you interested in further information and materials?

If you are interested in more information and materials from the ITTS project, please visit our website: <https://itts-europe.org/>

In addition to our mentoring guide, on our website you can also find materials for international teachers and for university teachers. There are also suggestions for where to find the publications of our research studies from all the ITTS partner countries and our international survey on the professional re-integration of international teachers at school.

**Thank you for being a supportive mentor and principal! Thank you for reading  
and working with this mentoring guide!**

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# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING



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