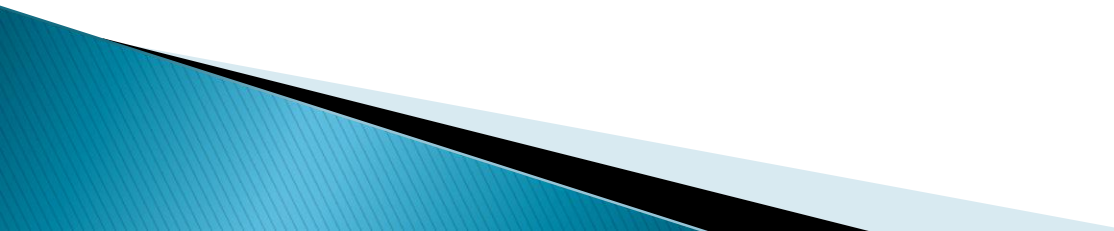# Teachers as Teachers of Teachers-Empowering teachers to empower one another
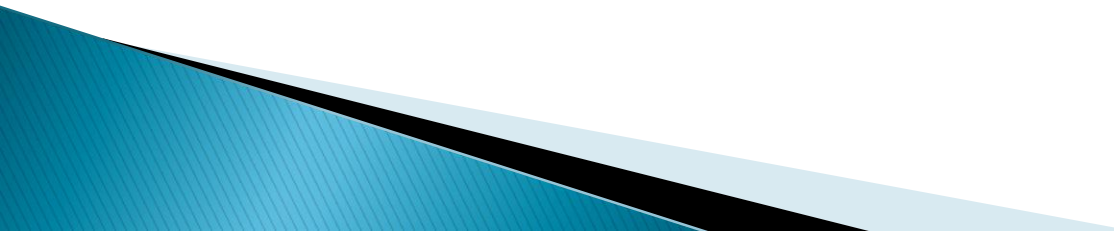
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The Structure of the presentation

- High quality teaching and the deficiencies of the in-service training systems
- Presuppositions of teachers' empowerment to learn in a collegial, situated environment
- The Action Research paradigm for teachers' participatory development

1. High-quality training programs

The European Commission has determined five priorities for increasing the quality of teacher training programs in the EU (European Commission, 2007):

1. Ensuring that all teachers have access to the knowledge, attitudes and pedagogic skills that they require to be <u>effective;</u>
2. Ensuring that provision for teachers' education and professional development is <u>coordinated, coherent, and adequately resourced;</u>
3. Promoting <u>a culture of reflective practice and research among teachers;</u>
4. Promoting <u>the status and recognition </u>of the teaching profession and
5. Supporting the <u>professionalization</u> of teaching

Data: Meta-analysis of in-service training programs (2013)

There is a lack of:

1. Use of Investigation and Research,
2. Reflective and formative assessment Practices
3. Constructive and responsive feedback
4. General Interaction / Supportive Climate
5. Suitable Content and support
6. Sufficient Organization and Communication of the objectives
7. Motivation
8. Effective Duration

Lack of encouraging culture and results

2. What we need for the empowerment of teachers
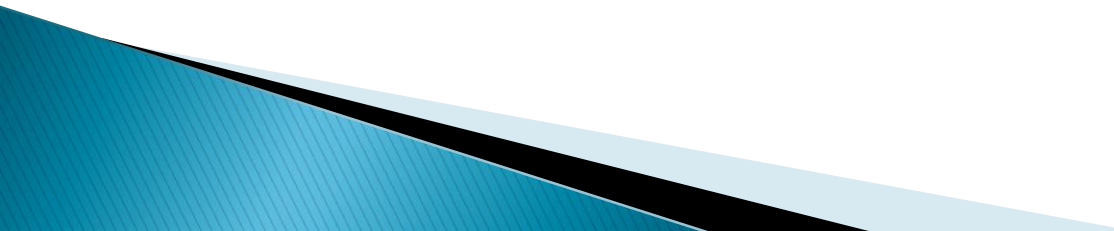
- *Change of the school culture:*
A constructive , reflective social school environment

- The school culture supports teachers initiatives and participation in new actions
- Teachers initiatives and work are valued
- The classrooms are opened to other teachers
- Teachers get the support they need (human and resourced)

- **The school principal acts as a pedagogical leader and coordinator for the development of a collegial supportive culture**

Collegial supportive climate

- In a Vygotskian frame of reference knowledge construction and growth are seen as the result <u>of personal interactions in social contexts</u> (Vygotsky, 1978).

- Teachers become Teachers of Teachers in a <u>constructive social school environment</u> (trust, openness, cooperative learning, exchange of ideas and reflection–individually and in groups)

3. The RELEASE program:Identity

- **Title:**Towards achieving Self **RE**gulated **LEA**rning as a core in teachers' In-**SE**rvice training in Cyprus
- Funded by the European Committee- LLL-EACEA: National Authorities' Actions
- Duration: 2012-2013
- Organization: The University of Cyprus
- Partner:The Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus
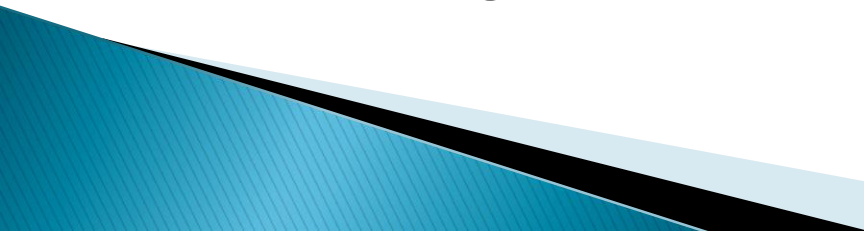- Participants: 'Voluntarily -26primary schools

The RELEASE project

- **The aim of the project**: to support the reform of teachers' in-service training system in Cyprus
- by implementing participatory **action research** at schools
- and through engaging school teachers and school principals in an action research procedure
- Aiming at self-and others' development

ACTION Research advantages

- Action research advocates the **reflective** paradigm of teacher development (e.g. Carr, 2004; Elliott,1993;Koutselini,2008)

- The **reflective paradigm** is challenged by the constructivist principle that teaching and learning must be structured in a personal and meaningful way and must also be constantly developed and adjusted.

- Reflection individually and in groups appears as a necessary tool for conceptual change, that means for teaching self and others.

- '*Reflection on a given pre-understanding brings before me something that otherwise happens behind my back*'. (Gadamer, 1977:38)

- Teaching as living experience is subject to retrospection that provides insights for new action and reflection, a process that helps the cognizing person actively build up new knowledge.

- Educational action research: a process of teaching and learning that facilitates teachers' involvement in authentic, context bound problems

- Within this process improvement is not imposed upon participants but, rather, is generated by their active, collaborative participation and collaboration.

collegiality

Sharing ideas and responsibilities with the people you work with, and learning each from another
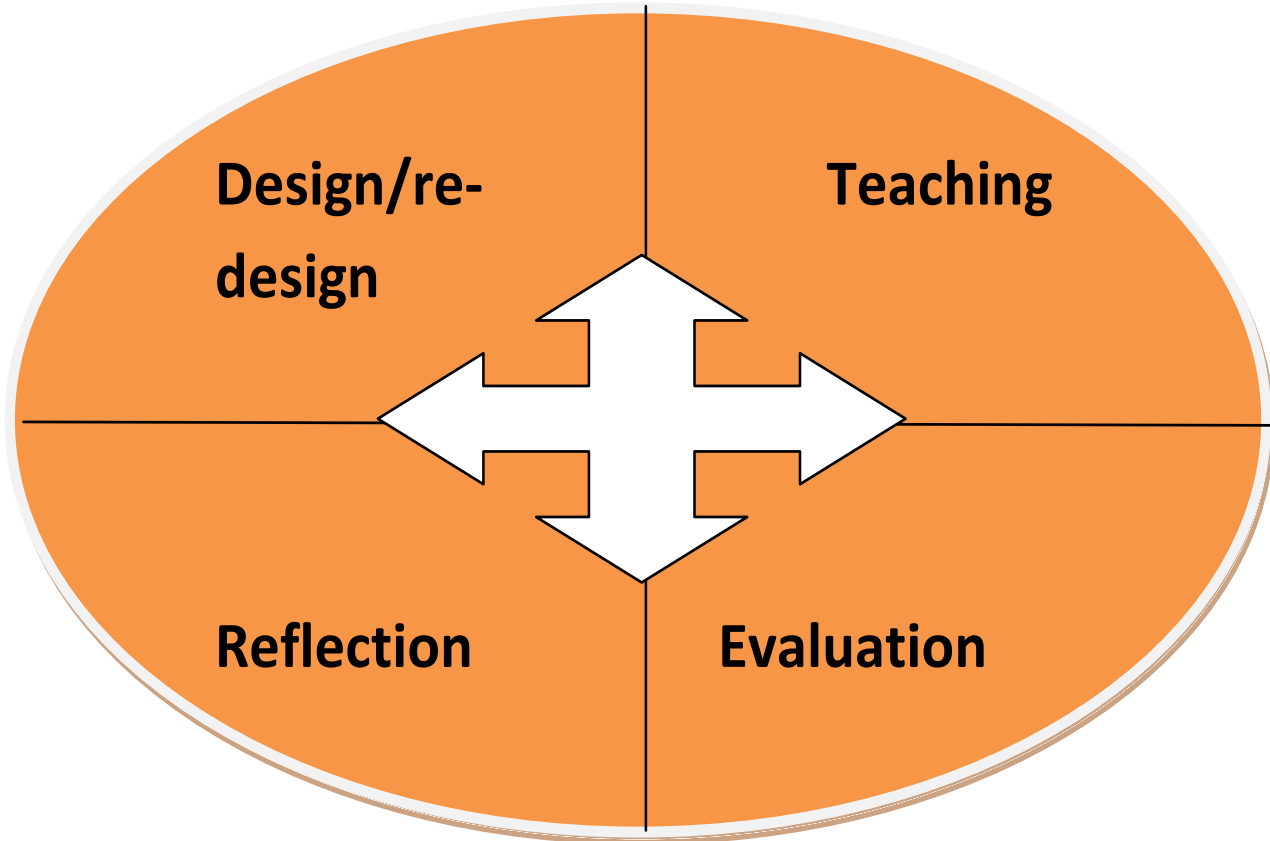
The methodology of RELEASE in-service training through Action research

- Engagement of School principals
- Collaboration for focusing on problems-issues identified by the schools:
  - – Differentiation of teaching and learning
  - – Learning standards
  - – Critical thinking
  - – Action plans
  - – Conflict resolution
- Continuous feedback by trainers and researchers at schools (synchronous) and asynchronous through the platform (www.forumrelease.com)

ACTION RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Design/redesign: Action Plan
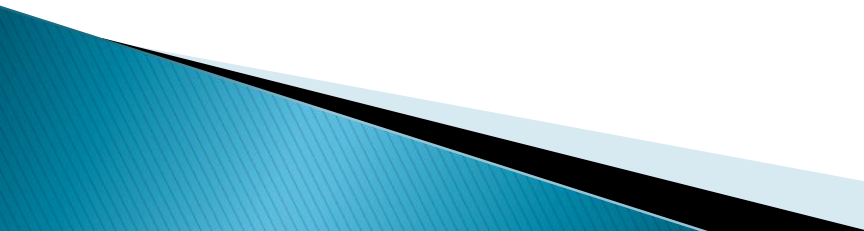
Teaching: Meeting the needs of different students

Design/re-design

Teaching

Reflection

Evaluation

Reflection: Self- Evaluation
And situated learning

Evaluation and Formative Assessment
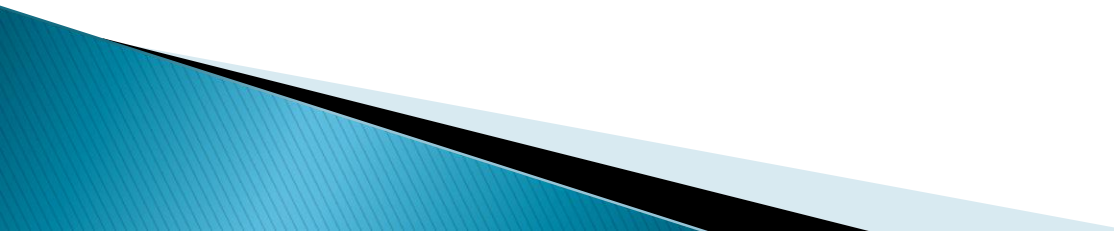
Results: Listening to teachers voices…

- *"Increased consciousness of what we teach and why: <u>Now we know what we are doing and why.</u>"*
- *"The project resulted to a shift of our pedagogy: <u>from teaching the texts to teaching the child;</u>"*
- *"<u>From close doors to co-teaching</u> and sharing experiences and actions".*
- *"Realization of the idea that the effective teacher cares for the student and not just the teaching material; <u>the idea was put into practice</u>"*

Individual and group reflection:

- *"facilitated self –assessment and self- improvement"*
- *"enhanced the interaction, trust, and supportive climate between the project's participants";*
- *" <u>participation of the principal</u> encouraged active involvement ,facilitated the process, and <u>motivated the participants</u>"*
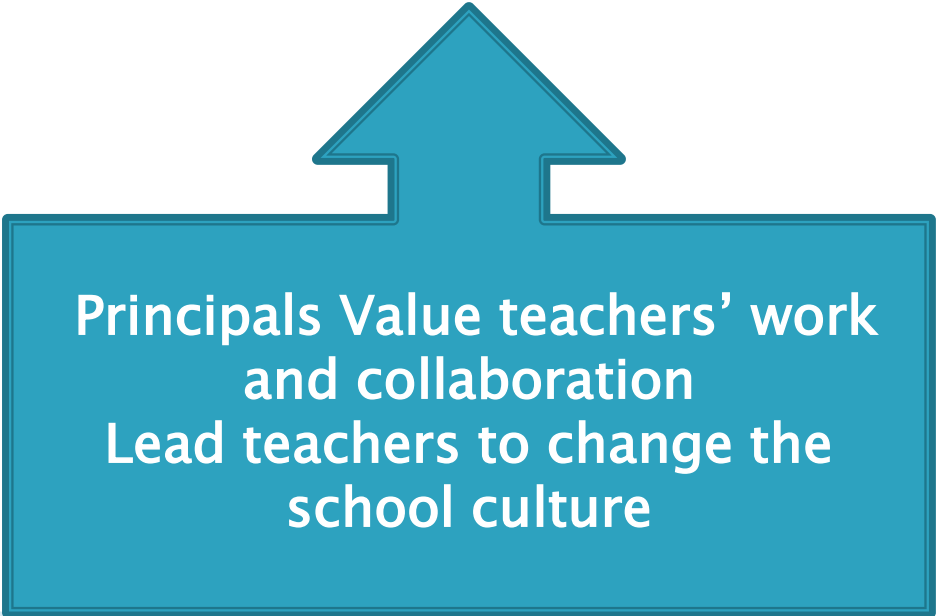
Listening to teachers' voices…

- **Indicated**

- Confidence to implement new approaches;

- Development of good practices i.e., co-teaching; sharing of ideas; trying out new approaches; giving the one to other feedback

- Progressively greater comfort using new teaching practices;

- Development of motivation for success;

- Need to continue after the completion of the research;

- Challenge for the whole school;

- Change of the everyday routines;

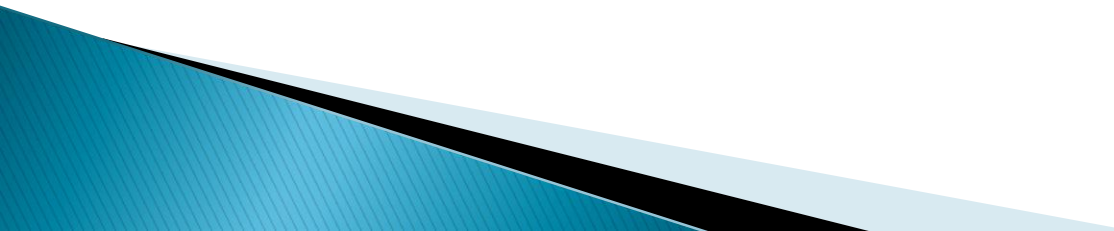# The principals' role and the school based professional development

- Give voice and Listen to teachers' voices
- Ask for identification of "problems", "issues", "difficulties" that prevent quality of teaching and effective learning
- Encourage the formation of groups of interests that undertake initiatives for the scientific investigation and facing up to the problems
- Provide support with collaboration with external experts

- Provide time and space for coordination, action, and reflection
- Express interest on the ongoing activities
- Facilitates reflection and action

Principals Value teachers' work and collaboration
Lead teachers to change the school culture

CONCLUSION…

- Need for programs supporting <u>the reform of teachers in-service training systems</u>

- <u>Getting school principals and primary school teachers actively engaged in their own and other teachers'professional development;</u>

- <u>Action research</u> procedures at schools promote <u>collaborative situated learning</u> and development with <u>emphasis on school and teaching real problems</u>

CONCLUSION

Empowerment and emancipation means how we:
- ✓ give voice to all participants;
- ✓ deal with group dynamics and trust building;
- ✓ motivate participants to act choice fully;
- ✓ stimulate them to work with their feelings and thoughts;
- ✓ convince them to believe in their authority to act on their decisions;
- ✓ elicit their implicit preconceptions about their roles.
- ✓ inspire them towards genuine reflection
    - ▸ **to liberate themselves from the imposed theoretical knowledge.**
    - ▸ **Encourage situated learning at schools**