FOCI 2010 COLLATED FEEDBACK

**COMMENTS ON THE CONTENT:**
Content was pretty interesting as it was not something that is covered in the hundreds of conferences in Istanbul. I really did not have time to digest the input I was exposed due to either personal reasons or workload. What I really liked was the format.

Exchanging ideas rather than imposing pushes your brain to think about what you already know or think. It is also interesting to see that an idea when liked is improved cooperatively in a way you never thought of before.

Starting with a whole-group discussion was a very good idea because it let us know a little bit about each other and helped people become more honest / open about their institutions.

I believe the focus group discussions served their purpose very well. The groups being small led the discussions to be held more effectively. People could ask almost anything to each other and what’s more important, they could get very sincere answers from each other. Personally speaking, I brought a lot of new ideas to my own institution.

Apparently, the group leaders were very well-qualified, experienced, and enthusiastic. Specifically speaking, Denise managed the low-level learners group very well.

Once more, I’d like to thank you, dear Deniz Hanım, Jonathan & Leah & Melike, for this invaluable initiation in the field of curriculum development. It was a great opportunity to meet with colleagues from different institutions, and also a great relief to realize that we experience more or less the same problems. Generally speaking, the organisation was great in terms of the points listed above. With this 1st step, as different institutions in the same field, we had the chance to get to know each other, to discuss relevant curricular issues through 3 focus groups separately and to share our insights coming together at the end of the day. Via this format, we specifically focused on our group’s issue, but at the same time gained new ideas from the final presentation of other groups. Then maybe we felt like discussing other group's issues as well:

There was so much to think about and take away from the one working session attended, I wonder how it can be possible (without having hundreds of participants!) to be able to better “participate” in the other two. Certainly the feedback at the general session in the late afternoon was beneficial, but it was extremely difficult to decide which of the three sessions to attend, and I came away feeling there was much more to have been learned. That said, I feel it was very positive that the group overall was "restricted" to one participant per university - it did allow much more contact with new colleagues.

This one day event was in some ways more beneficial than 3-4 days recently spent at IATEFL. Well done - congratulations to you all for the great day

I really enjoyed and benefitted from hearing the issues and practices in different prep schools. It looks like all of the major challenges we face are more or less the same. I guess establishing a more structured joint force on finding ways to overcome these challenges would help us all.

**GENERAL AND ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS:**
Great -venue, facilities, refreshments, lunch, content and format of the programme and friendly and helpful advice and information at all times. Transportation was good.
Date and timing of the programme was OK although it was the end of last level. It is impossible to find one that fits everyone.
The environment made me feel I was in an international event. The rooms, materials, pre and post sessions were all more than OK.

I don’t know how to comment on refreshments. I wish you informed about refreshments so that I wouldn’t have driven. :) I like to see the empty half of the glass but yours was full.
The curriculum team -Melike, Jonathan, and Leah- you did a super job, it was a very impressive symposium. Everything was arranged perfectly well.
Thank you very much.
Excellent organization - both before and during the day. Organizing and running even a one-day event can be very stressful, and this one was done perfectly!
I personally was highly appreciative of the work by so many from your Department - facilitating the three sessions was excellent, for example.
Your keeping in touch with us at regular intervals, letting us know about the content, the other participants etc. kept us motivated towards the event in the very first place.
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You gave us a very warm welcome early in the morning and kept your hospitality throughout the event. Timing of each session was arranged very well. There were max. 5-10 min delays, which was OK. Refreshments were extremely good. Simit, cheese and tea for breakfast was a perfect idea. We didn’t need to ask for anything because the cookies, fruits and drinks were always there when we needed them. And they were all very delicious. As you gave all the details regarding transportation prior to the event, I had no difficulty getting to the school, and it was very kind of you to escort us to the service buses in the evening.

The organization of the event was perfect. The date, rooms, refreshments, transportation, and information was well-planned and everything went well.

The organization was great! The whole thing worked like a clock. The date and the timing of the event fit well into our calendars and we had enough time to discuss and present the issues raised.

It was a well organized event. The date of the event, Friday was a good choice, especially for those coming from other cities.

Timing, content and format of the program were satisfactory. Informing the participants before and during the event made us follow the program more easily without being lost :-). There weren't any problems about rooms and transportation. Serving so delicious refreshments was very kind of you. Special thanks to Sabanci Curriculum Team (Jonathan, Melike, and Leah) for being so helpful and organizing such a great event !!!

**SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

With hindsight, for the introductory session, less time for each participant so that those at the tail end get equal time to present their issues.

By using online discussion board/blogs, ideas might be improved beforehand so we will have more to talk.

I know that the end of the Spring Term is the period for various conferences, seminars, forums etc. in the field. That could be why there is little chance for an impossible overlap between the dates of such events. As far as I know, on 28. May, there was a conference in Ankara about prep school issues. That could be why some other (state) universities could not join. Just a suggestion: we can check for the other events in the field for the best date to be determined, unless dates of the other events are announced later:)

If, from now on, we are going to continue with our FOCI meetings at different institutions, we can focus on one specific area in each. Thus, we can enlarge the discussion group and have deeper insights into that specific area. Or, there could be 2 focus groups (for 2 specific curricular issues), and morning and afternoon sessions can swap for everyone to have the chance to discuss and share about both.

As it was a crowded group and an intense study, we could not discuss in depth some points. I think we should think of ways to make most of this limited time or extend the event to two or three days. The focus groups need to be allocated more time.

It was a fruitful experience for me and a good opportunity to exchange ideas. However, there are two points I want to mention as suggestions:

In the morning, we had a whole group session where we were supposed to mention about the problems in our institutions, innovations, etc but we suddenly started to talk about the programs of the institutions which were already in the booklet or in our e-mails. To avoid this, the participants may be told just to talk about only the points you have assigned beforehand.

In the interest groups, there may be some experts on these issues and they can guide us to find our ways for the solutions to the problems we have. However, I hesitate about this suggestion because I fear that the expert may turn out to be a “dictator” who says "it is right" or "it is wrong", which will be quiet the opposite what we need.

In the next session(s), it will probably not be required to take so much time to make “introductions” in the first general morning session. If many of the same participants attend, and given that we can now exchange views between sessions, we should have the ability to proceed more quickly to the first work.

To better focus the discussions in the small groups, we could fill in a form explaining the curriculum changes we presented in the morning. This would have saved time and we would have made a more informed decision about which group we would have liked to be in. I realized that there were some common experiences, like moving to modular system, some institutions are going through, which may not be relevant to some others. If people going through the same experiences came together, the discussions in the small groups would be more focused and it could have created an opportunity for cross institutional projects.

Another idea would be designing concurrent sessions in which people from different institutions present the curriculum changes they made in a more structured format. This would have given us more time to ask detailed questions. I guess the issue was to fit
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everything into a day but maybe we can try different activities in different events and see which ones work the best.