



Jenaplan International

Pedagogy in the heart of Education

Online Conference

28 January 2026

For: Jenaplan teachers, teacher-assistants, school leaders/principles and others who embrace the Jenaplanconcept.

Introduction

For the first time a group of enthusiastic international Jenaplan specialist are organizing an online conference to meet each other and think and talk about our wonderful concept.

Prof. Susanne Herker (Austria) will be the keynote speaker. Several teachers, principals and Jenaplan coordinators from Japan, Taiwan, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria Belgium and the Netherlands will present lectures or workshops.

We hope many of you will join us.

Schedule

09:00-11:20 CET ((Chili: 5.00-6.20 AM; Taiwan: 4.00-5.20 PM; Japan: 5.00-6:20 PM)

- 09:00: Welcome by the chairman of the meeting: Štěpán Kovář & Harry Havekes
- 09:10: Keynote by Susanne Herker
- 09:30: short break (to go to break-out rooms)
- 09:45: first round of lectures/workshops
- 10:15: short break (to switch break-out rooms)
- 10:30: second round of lectures/workshops
- 11:00: short break (to join final meeting)
- 11:10: final words and closing by Štěpán Kovář & Harry Havekes
- 11:20: closing

Costs

There will be no costs for the participants

Registration

In order to organize this online conference we need to have some idea about how many people will join us. Therefore we ask you to send a short email with your name, country and email address to Harry Havekes (voorzitter@NJPV.nl). This registration is not definitive, but it will give us some idea of how many people might join us. Please do so **before December 10th**.

Information on the key-note, lectures and workshops

Key-note lecture

Pedagogy as a Moral Compass

Dr. Susanne Herker (Professor Innovative Pedagogy, Grasz, Austria)

Jenaplan pedagogy is developing into a concept of guidance and educational guidelines at a time of constant social change and, above all, educational uncertainty due to the growing diversity of learning groups. By establishing itself as a “starting point,” JPP offers a flexible

structure for school development in a wide variety of locations and their challenges. The goal of educational support for children and young people must be to help them become independent learners, to strengthen their educational process methodically, to train their social and communication skills, and above all to support them in enjoying their personal interests and strengths. For a future for our children that none of us can predict, the basis for curiosity, but also self-confidence and resilience, is indispensable. This will be highlighted in the keynote speech and substantiated with facts from Jenaplan pedagogy.

Lectures/Workshops

1. **The Significance of Introducing the Jena Plan into a Centralized Education System and Authoritarian School Culture – Exploring Its Possibilities and Challenges through Japanese Experiences**

Naoko Richters (Japan)

Over the past two decades, the "Dutch" Jena Plan has gained attention in Japan, leading to the establishment of both the private and the public Jena Plan schools. Two additional schools inspired by the Jena Plan have been established under the Ministry of Education's initiative to diversify education method for non-attending students. Also Several municipalities, including Nagoya and Toyama, are also implementing the Jena Plan concepts in schools. In Japan's centralized and authoritarian educational context, the Jena Plan challenges traditional norms. This session explores its feasibility, potential, and challenges through two practitioners' reports and open discussion with participants.

2. **Everyday Jenaplan school life through inclusion, diversity and mutual respect.**

Gabriele Weber (Austria)

Our school life is built on four pillars: Learning to acquire knowledge; Learning to live together; Learning to act; Learning to be.

We prepare learning environments to strengthen or reawaken the innate curiosity in children. Together, we explore a wide range of methods and possibilities to help them reach their desired goals as independently as possible.

Teachers act as coaches and learning facilitators, and children are active participants rather than passive consumers of learning material.

Through diverse learning environments (classwork, learning centers, project-based learning, gifted and talented programs, free play, etc.), children learn to act democratically, to be considerate of one another, to stand up for what they believe in, to bravely push their own boundaries, and to contribute to achieving a common goal.

The children's questions and their connection to their lives shape our daily school routine. In this way, acquiring knowledge becomes a meaningful experience.

In our school life, children experience themselves as individuals, as "I," who only become "we" through reflective interaction with others, as "you."

Strengthened by the knowledge that much is possible together, a child is able to face daily problems more courageously.

The pictures and impressions from our everyday school life show people who, through inclusion, diversity, and mutual respect, learn to understand themselves and others and subsequently work towards a better world – even if "only" in a small sense.

<https://www.vs-vasoldsberg.at/2025/10/impressionen-aus-dem-schulalltag/>

3. **Exploring the Pathways to High School Jenaplan Implementation**

Štěpán Kovář (Czech Republic)

Although only a few high schools have implemented the Jenaplan concept so far, this is largely due to the perception of its demanding nature. Nevertheless, there are already several exemplary cases of successful practice.

This workshop will examine key challenges, present effective strategies and tools, and invite participants to reflect on how Jenaplan education can be more systematically and sustainably organised at the high school level.

4. **Jenaplan as a community school in a white, highly educated middle neighbourhood?**
Inge Willen (Flanders)

Our Jenaplanschool is located in the center of a larger city and attracts mostly children from white highly educated parents. How does the desired diversity of Jenaplan schools relate to the (often monoculture) neighbourhoods in which they are located? As Jenaplan practitioners, can we focus sufficiently on learning and living together? Does this challenge the Jenaplan concept? Or does a differentiated population put the Jenaplan concepts under pressure as well?

5. **Citizenship Education by Law, and Dutch Jenaplan's Answer. Exploring the role of schools and stemgroup leaders in populist times.**

Geert Bors (Netherlands)

Different from Petersen, whose life coincided with five distinct political systems, Dutch Jenaplan was shaped within a stable democratically oriented Europe, carried by the postwar Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a living remembrance culture of 'Lest we forget'. When it comes to citizenship education, which was first signed into law in 2006, Dutch Jenaplan has solid answers with its pedagogical attentiveness to the development of personhood within the stemgroup as a community (see Bors et al., 2025). However, not unlike Jena in the 1930s, many democracies are currently under pressure from autocrats and populists. Current-day teachers almost need to be more resilient in their defence of democratic values and institutions than many of our politicians are. In this workshop, based on our 2025 Jenaplan and Citizenship Education-publication, we explore how we can strengthen our stemgroup leaders to establish themselves in their pedagogical roles, in times of societal friction and anti-democratic sentiments.

We will address 'Petersen's paradox': is it still desirable or feasible to temporarily shield off children from larger society in order for them to grow as humans within the stemgroup, to then return them to society as well-rounded citizens? How can we partake, together with parents, in the raising of their children, in an increasingly polarized society, where (higher) education is often accused by populists of being "political" and "moralist"?

6. **Group dynamic games**

Katrin Kager (Austria)

Group dynamic games promote social skills in elementary school classrooms, strengthen class cohesion, and support children's personal development. Through playful interaction, students learn to cooperate with each other, resolve conflicts, and develop empathy. These games create a positive learning atmosphere, promote mutual trust, and improve communication skills—important foundations for successful learning and coexistence in school.

7. **Children Encounter AI – Learning in Digital Worlds**

Nicole Scherr (Austria)

Primary school students should be introduced to the responsible use of artificial intelligence as early as possible and in an age-appropriate manner. In doing so, they learn to understand digital technologies, critically examine them, and use them creatively for their own learning. This practical article presents possible didactic concepts for implementing artificial intelligence in interdisciplinary, Jenaplan-oriented teaching projects at primary school.

(Needs to be scheduled in the first workshop round)

8. **City of Children – Project week at the Jenaplan School in Nuremberg**

Nicole Applis (Germany)

Jenaplan education aims to encourage children to try new experiences – so that they can get to know themselves and their potential, their strengths as well as their weaknesses. They should retain their joy in doing, tinkering and crafting, remain curious and try new things.

Sixteen years ago, we came up with the idea for a special project. Every year our school is transformed into a “city” for a week, where children can try out a profession of their choice in the mornings. They are paid for their work, just like in real life. In the afternoons, they can take advantage of various leisure activities, make their own plans or continue working in their chosen profession. In the process they learn and experience core competencies. They often take control of their own learning. Without workbooks, they unconsciously learn a lot, including in the academic areas of mathematics and German. Valuable skills and abilities become apparent, even to their parents. In our workshop we involve you in the process and our special city life.

9. **Switching Sides, Expanding Minds: The Janusian Summit Model**

Stef (Taiwan)

The workshop introduces “The Janusian Summit Model,” a unique debate format designed to cultivate Janusian Thinking—the ability to hold dual perspectives. The core feature of this global issues debate is the role reversal after the first round (affirmative becomes negative and vice versa), forcing students to step out of their comfort zone and genuinely engage with opposing viewpoints. The summit was successfully implemented as a 2-month-long course collaboration between Netherland’s Metameer Jenaplan Boxmeer and Taiwan’s Kai-Ping Culinary School under the theme of “The Social Dilemma”. The model is highlighted as a practical application of the Jenaplan educational philosophy, demonstrating how Janusian Summit aligns with its core values to promote a comprehensive world orientation and holistic development.

10. **Klasse!Meeting**

Freek Velthausz (Netherlands)

With the Klasse!Meeting, children learn to hold meetings independently, without the intervention of the teacher, and to make decisions together (democratically). This way, they work on citizenship development.

The goal of the Klasse!Meeting is to give children responsibility for themselves. Students learn to reflect on their class and their own actions. They learn to deal with and understand different opinions and viewpoints. The students implement decisions that have been made through democratic discussion. With the Klasse!Meeting, students learn how to make a positive contribution to the group and how to engage in constructive discussions.