Photography as a Pedagogical Tool

Project Kit description

School work and learning in formal teaching contexts may be regarded by many pupils as irrelevant to their lives. Many pupils start to become reluctant to learn and adopt disruptive behaviour in the classroom or drop out of school. This has been an issue European, national and local authorities are concerned about. The goal of this project is to make the learning process more motivating, by reaching out the different learning styles and by engaging them in the learning process in a way that is both appealing and unthreatening.

This project takes an action-oriented approach to learning. Pupils are required to take their cameras and go out and observe the world around them in order to look for connections between the learning contents addressed in different school subjects and the reality around them. It can cover a broad range of subjects, Mathematics, Biology, Geology, Chemistry, History, Foreign Languages, Mother Tongue, Arts, ICT, Music, Physical Education and vocational studies (Marketing, Economics, Restaurant Service). Pupils use photography as a tool for observation and knowledge building according to the learning areas they focused to.

The teachers of the subjects involved in the project included objectives, methodologies and activities related to photography and observation in their annual curriculum.

Pupils are encouraged to show greater social responsibility in school, family and local, as well as the European community by assuming their roles in the collaborative groups and by achieving the tasks assigned to them and adopting cooperative rules. The project, based on using photography to teach and to learn, promotes the creation of a wide range of original and creative products which may be made available publically in the project TwinSpace.

Objectives

This project is designed to enrich teachers and pupils with pedagogical experiences so as to achieve greater motivation in the teaching and learning process. We have defined the following pedagogical objectives to meet this demand:

- To improve pupils’ academic results by fostering their observation, expression skills and creativity through photography;
- To foster the development of communication skills in foreign languages with a view to taking up opportunities to participate in authentic intercultural communication;
- To raise confidence and positive self-esteem by attending different learning styles and by valuing other forms of knowledge (non-formal);
- To increase language awareness and stimulate curiosity towards the languages and the cultures of the partner countries through pupils’ interaction and participation in common activities, in the production of joint.

Process

The project development is based on the model of collaborative project work and constructivism and supported by ICT tools provided on the projects’ TwinSpace. An effective intercultural communication, based on collaborative transnational team work, may be carried out throughout all phases of the project: preparation, implementation and evaluation.

PHASE ONE: PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

- Organise the classes involved into cooperative eTwinning group;
- Introduction of eTwinning groups to their eTwinning partners through exchange of introduction letters, group photos etc…
- Competition for the project logo;
- Exchange of information, photos, PPT presentations about school, town and country;
- Preparation and development of eTwinning Pedagogical activities to be implemented in different school subjects.

At this stage, teachers and pupils are learning about eTwinning, the Twinspace and their partners. It is important to guarantee that interaction takes place for introductions and some exchange of information about school, town and country before starting the joint activities.
PHASE TWO: IMPLEMENTATION
- Collaborative implementation of a set of innovative joint activities/ joint micro projects for different curricular areas/ contents that imply the use of ICT and photography:

• Feelings (Participants are invited to express different feelings making a photo)
• Gestures Guess What? (Participants choose ten gestures that they photograph to convey a message and prepare a presentation for a quiz)
• A Photo is worth 1 thousand words (As a follow up of the analysis of Road Dahl’s short story “The Landlady” pupils make their own photos to convey their opinion on the story and other related issues)
• Photomaths (Grasping mathematical aspects in Nature and Architectural creations... and applying maths formula to geometrical shapes)
• Proverbs and Saying in Photos (Participants choose a proverb or saying in their mother tongue and they convey its meaning with a photo)
• Discovering our Fauna, Flora and Rocks (Participants go on a field trip with their cameras and take photos of species. After a selection, they will invite their partners to suggest a name/ caption in English for the specie to create a presentation)
• Meet our town through photography
• Funny signs (Participants take photos of funny Road signs for an exhibition)

Many more suggestions can be found on the project Twinspace.

Phase three: Dissemination of results and assessment

Several activities may be developed in order to disseminate the results of the project, here are some examples:

- European Week of Cultures and languages (exhibitions and intercultural Peddypaper)
- Creation of a T-shirt with seven selected photos from the project activities;
- Creation of a pocket and a wall calendars
- Publishing of a booklet to present the project

After each semester, it is a good idea to produce an assessment report written collaboratively by the teachers to evaluate the impact of the project, identify learning outcomes and difficulties that need to be addressed.

Evaluation

Feedback is essential to monitor and assess the impact of the project on learning and on institutional change of teaching practices as it enables reflection and informed change. For this reason, the data must be collected periodically, twice during each school year (January and June).

The evaluation of the project can be achieved through a variety of processes:
- Surveys based on indicators defined to collect self-reported perception data on the learning benefits and difficulties of the project;
- Interviews;
- Collecting evidence from which the project will map its progress: pupils and teachers work, reports from teachers meeting to discuss the progress of the project, etc.;
- Document analysis: reports issued by each partner school, teachers unit plans and reports, pupils’ achievement results in the involved subjects.

Follow-up

• Information on the project and its progress can be included in the school’s website so that the school’s and the city’s wider community can be informed.
• An e-Twinning Corner can be created with a photo exhibition of the final products so that the whole school can learn more about the project.
• The tasks may provide ideas for other teachers to incorporate in their subjects as they cover a wide range of topics.
• Parents can be invited to view the exhibition as can members of the local community.