



BE TWIN – Building eTwinning teams

Project Kit description

The project aims at integrating eTwinning into daily teaching as a methodology, not as a single experience within a limited space and time.

The project is very simple, it can be integrated into all curricula and it is minimally invasive. All it requires is the willingness, curiosity and collaboration of teachers (the more, the better). Of course it needs a coordinator in each of the involved schools, but teachers will be quite independent in their activities. Therefore, it can be a good starting point for the development of any teachers' team.

This formula works best with just two partners and a "one to one" pupil-twinning: every pupil has his/her "twin" in the partner school. However, the project can be adapted to suit different situations (there could be a twinning of classes instead of individual pupils, which may be easier for the teachers to manage).

Each teacher can use the most suitable technological tool(s) for them and their planned activities such as;

Free image editing websites (photofunia, picnik, hairmixer, befunky, MagMyPic, Fototrix, etc)

Simple avatar+voice tools (voki),

Creative brainstorming web applications (bubbl.us, mind42),

Image editing tools (MovieMaker, Animoto)

Google docs/Google maps + blogger as collaboration tools.

Youtube to host videos

Slideshare for ppt sharing.

The TwinSpace may be used as the central meeting point of the project for both pupils (pupils' corner) and teachers, to take advantage of all tools in the TwinSpace as well.

It is advisable to use the Project Diary on a monthly basis to keep track of the different steps in the project.

Objectives

- To create a team of teachers involved in eTwinning within the school (not just one/two subjects) so that the pupils can face a variety of consistent stimuli
- To implement the didactics of eTwinning with both the pupils' and teachers' team (i.e. cooperative learning via the use of technology)
- To encourage peer learning at all levels both teachers and pupils
- To let the teachers experience (often for the first time) new strategies involving technology, collaboration with European partners, cooperative learning and self-instructing through sharing of ideas and practices
- To let the pupils gain satisfaction and commitment for the whole learning experience, not merely for this or that subject

Note: In relation to curricular goals, all involved disciplines retain their objectives as required by the National curricula or framework.

Process

Step 1.

At the beginning of the school year, before beginning the implementation, the project must be:

- a) Officially discussed among colleagues to agree on the particular focus per subject;
- b) Approved by the teachers' team involved (not all of them may want to take part, but many may be willing to try).

Step 2. A pre requisite at this stage is that all involved teachers have to agree to develop at least one of the normal activities within their subject(s) that have to be worked on in a shared capacity between "twinning" pupils. In order to do this the teacher must work together with the same subject teacher in the partner school, either together or with the help of the

Key competencies



Subjects

Cross Curricular, Pre-school Subjects, Primary School Subjects

Level

3-20

coordinating eTwinning teacher. This means re-thinking some of their normal lessons from an eTwinning perspective (national & inter-national teamwork, use of ICT in a creative way, access to the TwinSpace and blog, etc.).

They can choose when and how to work on the project – no deadlines, no stress.

No need for extra hours, no need of experts (teachers are the experts in their subject), no need of magic ICT powers (as little as ppt, paint etc will be enough), complete integration in the curricula. The staff room area in the TwinSpace can be used here, or a synchronous tool such as Skype.

Step 3. Is to add the collection of products to the TwinSpace (note: they have to be shared products, not added products – which means pupils of the partner schools have to work together on them).

When the collections are in place the pupils can reflect, share their ideas and deepen friendships, in the pupils' corner and blog.

Step 4. Dissemination! Don't forget to disseminate, report & celebrate your pupils' work. Let them "market" their project in parents' meetings, school celebrations, and all sort of school-related events. Let them feel the leading actors in their project (they are!). Even simple activities such as photo/video displays or exhibitions of the pupils' works could be enough to make the pupils feel the constant cooperation with their partners.

Take advantage of school websites, institutional websites and of course eTwinning to keep a record of your experience so that others can benefit from it in the future.

Evaluation

As for the different subjects involved, assessment follows the normal disciplinary criteria. This means there will be the normal tests/exams related to the various activities.

Self-assessment strategies, both during the project and summative at the end, should be discussed and planned in advance by teachers.

One possibility is to create self-assessment questionnaires for both pupils and teachers.

Parents could also be interviewed as part of the evaluation process.. After all, the object is to work for lifelong learning with all the actors in the project (including families).

Follow-up

Such a simple project, where teachers do what they're used to, but in a new way, can be the starting point of a long-lasting collaboration between the partner schools.

It can be the first step in the development of a teachers' team (great with eTwinning, but useful for any kind of didactics).

There can be spin-off projects in the different disciplines (this is a methodology project, but there can be lots of thematic projects starting from here).

Don't underestimate one of the greatest advantages of eTwinning: all materials, strategies, methodologies, activities developed during the project will always be available to others, for unlimited time and for free (provided the TwinSpace is public). Which means learning from others' experiences – no need to make the same mistakes, no need to reinvent the wheel!



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