



# Pupils in eTwinning

Case studies on pupil participation



**Publisher**

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**Original design  
DTP and printing**

Hofi Studio, Czech Republic

**Pictures credits**

iStockphoto.com, Dreamstime.com

**Print run**

300

**ISBN**



Published in November 2011. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the European Commission or of the eTwinning

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# Introduction

eTwinning is an action of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme within the Comenius Programme involving teachers, pupils and schools since it was created in 2005. The aim of the action is to promote interaction and online collaboration between teachers and pupils using the tools of modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

The popularity of eTwinning as an easy, non-bureaucratic way for teachers to collaborate together using a range of online tools has increased dramatically in the six years of its existence and the eTwinning community today involves some 136,000 participants (figure from June 2011). Since 2005, over 54,000 projects have been registered involving more than 30,000 schools. If a simple 25:1 ratio of pupils per school per project – assuming, in the simplest scenario, that there are only two schools involved – is applied to this figure, it is estimated that the number of pupils touched by eTwinning projects is in the region of 750,000. eTwinning offers many opportunities to a participating teacher, such as: being a member of a social networked community, partaking in online professional development, and being in contact and discussing with other teachers in groups. However, the main focus of eTwinning since it began has been for teachers to participate in collaborative project work *with their pupils*, and it is therefore from an examination of the process of pupil participation within eTwinning projects that this report has been written.

The analysis of case studies produced by eTwinning National Support Services (NSS) on pupil participation in eTwinning widens the picture of how pupil involvement is concretely implemented in projects. The factors that act as enablers and barriers are examined and, in some cases, recommendations for future development are formulated based on the comments that came from the teachers interviewed.

The methodology for the implementation of the case studies conducted by NSS is presented in Section 1; the analysis of the finding is presented in Section 2; and, finally, selected case studies are presented in Section 3<sup>1</sup>.

1 A full list of case studies is available on the eTwinning Portal: [www.etwinning.net](http://www.etwinning.net)

# Case study methodology

## Section 1

This report examines the topic of pupil participation in eTwinning based on information gathered from twenty-four case studies carried out by eTwinning National Support Services (NSS)<sup>2</sup> between May and November 2010. Generally speaking, interviews and case studies are methodological tools that are useful for obtaining a better understanding of behaviour, processes and practice observed on the ground as opposed to questionnaires, which are more often used to identify the determining factors of such behaviour and practice (e.g., impact of teachers' age range, subjects taught, gender, training programmes received, etc.).



Information was gathered in a preliminary questionnaire sent by NSS to the selected eTwinning teachers and their school about generalities of the project(s) and follow-up by an on-site interview of the same teacher using a grid specially designed for this purpose.

Two induction sessions for the NSS were organised online<sup>3</sup> by the Central Support Service (CSS) in early Spring 2010 in order to familiarise the NSS with the work to be done at national level, how to use the grids and questionnaires, and answer any questions. The results of the case studies were then sent to the CSS for final analysis.

2 National Support Services (NSS) are responsible for supporting and promoting eTwinning at national level across the 32 countries involved in the action: All 27 EU members states as well as Croatia, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

3 Using an online video collaboration tool

# Analysing the case studies

## Section 2

### 2.1 What is meant by pupil participation?

The concept of pupil participation is defined as: the ways in which pupils' interactions during an eTwinning project actively affects their relationship with their classmates, project partners and teachers. The analysis is thus grouped in these three relationships and the case studies shed light on such interactions by focusing on the exchanges between pupils from different age groups as well as from different expertise or competence levels (e.g., ICT knowledge, verbal and written language skills, etc.).

The first element of pupils' active participation mainly focuses on the day-to-day tasks in an eTwinning project. In several of the case study projects, pupils were asked to make choices about certain aspects of work within the project (e.g., what part of a city to take picture of, what issue to be discussed online with partner pupils, what kind of calendar to be used for the tasks to be carried out, etc.). However, their contribution to the design of the project itself before launching, and the important choices to be made during the project, is nevertheless still rare; these key decisions remain mostly under the teachers' responsibilities. Only one case study of a project, at primary education level, clearly and precisely reports direct pupil participation in the design of the eTwinning project itself and the important decisions taken while running it. The teacher responsible for this project specifically mentions pupil participation as the *raison d'être* to go for an eTwinning project. In this way, it is no coincidence that the teacher who coordinated this project had been trained in creative classroom teaching and defines his role as *advisor/helper/navigator*.

In discussing the use of ICT tools within a project, no particular one is favoured by teachers to boost the facilitation of pupil participation; neither from those available on the eTwinning Portal's collaborative project space (the TwinSpace) nor any public external ones. Many of the ICT tools on offer are usually part of a project anyway (e.g., email, chat rooms, slideshows, image galleries, audio and video files, blogs, online conferences, wikis, etc.) and their use also depends on the nature of the project being implemented. However, The teachers welcome every measure taken by eTwinning to further support and increase pupil participation, such as the creation of the Pupils' Corner in the TwinSpace in 2008. This Corner allows pupils to directly communicate and share with each other without having to pass through the teacher. A further element here is that pupils may be given specific administrative roles for the management of material in this area within an eTwinning project.

## 2.2 Profile of the teachers

A little less than 50% of the teachers interviewed for the twenty-four case studies teach at the primary education level while the remainder teach at a post-primary education level. They teach a variety of subjects: roughly 1/3 of them teach foreign languages (English, but also Italian, German and French); a slightly smaller proportion teach sciences (physics, chemistry, biology or astronomy); and an even smaller number teach transversal subjects (e.g., social competences together with problem solving and creativity) or combined subjects (e.g., biology together with ICT and foreign languages). Of the remaining teachers, one teaches art, another European studies and another history.

All of them, except one, are experienced eTwinning teachers – meaning that they have already managed or participated in several eTwinning projects (from two to sixteen projects). Some of them (six) have participated in a European Professional Development Workshop (PDW)<sup>4</sup>, an eTwinning seminar organised at national level, or in a training seminar not directly related to eTwinning. Six are eTwinning Ambassadors<sup>5</sup>, and a few (four) have responsibilities at school management level (i.e., deputy head teacher or head teacher). Finally, the large majority are highly experienced teachers who have been teaching for many years.

## 2.3 Impact on pupil behaviour between peers in the same classroom

Earlier studies<sup>6</sup> have indicated that active pupil participation is perceived by teachers as having a positive impact on pupil learning behaviour in different ways, such as: increased motivation, a greater sense of responsibility, more solidarity, better team spirit, more efficient learning (especially for complex learning), etc. The question is therefore: what might be the factors influencing this? Does the use of ICT play an important role?

In pedagogical terms, eTwinning projects use an essentially project-based approach that often incorporates an inquiry-based methodology unlike regular teaching and learning processes. In many cases, the hypothesis can be made that the impact of an eTwinning

4 Professional Development Workshops (PDW) are organised by the Central and National Support Services (CSS and NSS) of eTwinning. They are face-to-face workshops that bring over one hundred teachers from across Europe to focus on a particular aspect of eTwinning and provide an opportunity for networking and community building. For more information: [www.etwinning.net/en/pub/professional\\_development/european\\_workshops.htm](http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/professional_development/european_workshops.htm)

5 eTwinning Ambassadors are appointed by NSS from among active eTwinning teachers to act as promoters of eTwinning in a national context.

6 European Schoolnet (2009). eTwinning Monitoring Report 2009: internal report. Brussels: European Schoolnet ([http://files.etwinning.net/docs/eTwinning%20Monitoring\\_Report\\_2009.pdf](http://files.etwinning.net/docs/eTwinning%20Monitoring_Report_2009.pdf))

project when looking at pupil participation is precisely related to the characteristics of the running of the project work and not specifically its ICT-based activities. Nevertheless, several teachers explicitly report that ICT-based activities play their own part in that they highly facilitate and diversify the work of the project, and dramatically increase the scale at which this can be implemented. The specific impact of ICT-based activities is even more obvious when it comes to simulations in science teaching, for example, where more sophisticated projects can be designed but remain very attractive and receive a high-level of satisfaction and discovery for the participants concerned.



Pupils reportedly show higher motivation when they are actively engaged, work beyond school time with enthusiasm if needed and/or go more often or easily towards in-depth learning. ICT-based teaching and learning processes make it easier to showcase the achievements of pupils throughout a project to the larger community and are very powerful tools for increasing pupil motivation.

Pupils are also reported to feel much more responsible for the whole project in various ways; up to a point for some that they manage, without teacher intervention, to reorganise the division of responsibilities themselves within the group for the sake of the project. They call upon additional competences from new pupil participants (sometimes from another class if necessary) when they feel there is a gap or they redistribute the tasks for a better match between the competences of each participant and tasks to be performed. Generally speaking, when differences in age, preferences or competence levels are observed, pupils seem to be fully able to properly manage such situations, dividing tasks according to their competences and at the same time supporting and encouraging the less-experienced ones to go a step further to become more advanced. All this is reported to take place without extensive teacher intervention.

Teachers find that pupils demonstrate a good sense of solidarity within the class or group, enjoy teamwork, share information and observe how others overcome problems and obstacles or simply proceed safely and efficiently. They help one another by trying to find the best combination between each other's competences and contribution to the project. For example, they spontaneously encourage contributions from pupils who are less advanced in one subject, such as physics, by giving them more responsibility in other components of



the project (e.g., filming, communicating in foreign languages, etc.). Here too, ICT-based activities make a difference: their use enriches the diversity of tasks to be performed and this in turn increases the opportunities for each pupil to find the most suited tasks to his/her preferences and competences.

In a few cases, highly differentiated participation between all pupils potentially concerned in an eTwinning project is reported.

In these cases, teachers attribute such differences in levels of participation to gender or to some exclusion processes between groups formed by pupils. Such observations could contribute to the belief that there is no one fit for all solution in pedagogical scenarios and that individual preferences and social processes will always play a role.

When asked about obstacles to active pupil participation encountered at class level, teachers mention pupils' busy schedules, curriculum constraints, the pressure of examinations and technical problems (e.g., lack of access, technology not functioning and/or lack of maintenance). All these factors are reported as affecting pupil motivation. Some teachers also evoke additional time needed for themselves to prepare such participative lessons; some nevertheless add that this workload is re-balanced later on in the project because the motivation and engagement of pupils allow things to run smoothly. In some cases, it is reported that pupils are not interested in the planning and organisational aspects of a project because they consider such matters to be the full responsibility of their teachers.

## 2.4 Impact on pupil behaviour with partner peers

Emotions, associated with curiosity, function as facilitators for cognitive activities, which are in turn highly increased by online multimedia communication technologies. Emotional involvement associated with the excitement for pupils to enter into contact with 'real' peers living in a different country and culture and speaking another language is reported by teachers to be very powerful in terms of motivation - at primary as well as secondary school education levels.

The subjects discussed between partner peers are also considered to be much more in line with pupils' day-to-day areas of interest, compared to situations proposed by most school handbooks or regular teaching (i.e., without partner collaboration). The teachers perceive this as another source of increased motivation for their pupils.

Pupils experience comparison as a heuristic tool when they are motivated and stimulated to directly exchange with peers who, although live in another context, nevertheless share similar concerns. Comparing the habits, contexts, references, preferences, etc., of their partner peers to their own helps them not only to discover other environments and increases their knowledge and know-how; but also, as a consequence, supports a better understanding of their own environment. Here again, the extent to which such comparisons are made possible by ICT-based pedagogical activities must be underlined.

When it comes to foreign language learning, the added value of ICT-based pedagogical activities is guaranteed. Using ICT can facilitate the giving of direct access – sometimes in real time thanks to audio- and video-conferencing, for example, to native speakers of the same age with whom pupils can exchange through writing, listening and speaking. There is no other way to provide it at low cost, under such a simple format and associated with such a high level of emotional engagement. As noted by one teacher interviewed, *“it gives the pupils knowledge and experience that the teacher could not provide them with.”* The other point to make here is that even if the communication is in a language that is not the native language of either group (which is often the case) the opportunities for interaction provided by the eTwinning activities give an authentic dimension within which the pupils can exchange and converse.

Some teachers underline the fact that, notwithstanding the pedagogical situation or the technological tool used, the personality of each pupil introduces differences, sometimes quite large ones, in the way and extent to which they engage in contact with their partner peers. In some cases, teachers found that some pupils had very little contact with their partner peers due to the imbalance of their class size compared to that of their partner's class.

Concerning obstacles specifically encountered vis-à-vis partner peers, teachers mentioned in several cases the pupils' insufficient level of proficiency in foreign languages or ICT skills. Too big a difference of proficiency in the common language used for the project between the partner classes was also reported as a serious obstacle, as well as differences between the partner classes in terms of ICT equipment. The possibility to establish close bilateral personal relationships between two partner peers is considered by many teachers as a key element in active pupil participation. For this reason, when the number of pupils in each partner class is too different, the teachers report this as having a negative impact on pupils' active participation. Several teachers also mention how the pupils can interpret a partner's withdrawal from the project very negatively.

## 2.5 Impact on the pupil-teacher relationship

Many teachers report a more relaxed and fruitful relationship between themselves and their pupils when pupils have the opportunity to actively participate in the work of the project. In these cases, teachers let the pupils show them how to use ICT-based equipment, for example, or even let them be in the pilot seat for its use. Pupils are reported to be less reluctant to ask for the support of the teacher on how to proceed to solve content- or organisational-related issues. Cooperation takes place with teachers on one side, pupils on the other, and each bringing their own experience, skills and competences for the sake of the project. As mentioned by one teacher interviewed, *“the teacher becomes the one you learn with.”*

Few teachers report that they have previously been trained in a type of class management based on active pupil participation, cooperative learning between peers, etc. Several of them even plead for the organisation of such a type of training within the eTwinning framework so that they may improve their competence on *“how to give the pupils a central role.”* It is suggested that such training preferably be organised on a school site.

What is also noticeable from teachers' comments is that many of them explicitly say that they will start their next eTwinning project by building on what was achieved with the previous project - with the aim to go one-step farther, especially when it comes to active pupil participation. The teachers plan to give pupils more responsibility in the decisions to be taken, to engage them in the initial design process, to give them a more organisational margin of manoeuvre, etc. Because of such a gradual approach, the suggestion to provide more training support on how to give pupils a central role in eTwinning project work becomes even more justified and coherent.

# Case studies

## Section 3

### Introduction

Twenty-four case studies based on the following schools were received:

	Austria Ingeborg Bachmann Gymnasium in Kagenfurt		Hungary Üllés
	Cyprus Nicosia Grammar School		Iceland Flataskóli, Garðabær
	Czech Republic Gymnázium Boskovic		Ireland Moyle Park College
	Denmark Stadil-Vedersø Skole		Luxembourg Ecole Fondamentale Lorentzweiler
	Denmark Søndervangskolen		The Netherlands Willem de Zwijger primary school in Leiderdorp
	Finland Ohkolan koulu, Mäntsälä		Slovakia SCHOOL B - Primary school
	Finland Pääskytien koulu, Porvoo		Slovenia JZ Basic School Marjana Nemca Kadeče
	France Ecole Primaire Piton B (Piton Saint-Leu, Academy of La Réunion)		Spain School in Zaragoza
	France Collège Antonin Perbosc (Lafrançaise, Academy of Toulouse)		Sweden Uppvidinge gymnasieskola
	France Collège Georges d' Amboise (Gaillon, Academy of Rouen)		United Kingdom St Mary's College Prep School
	Greece 1 <sup>st</sup> Epal Ymittou, Athens		United Kingdom Our Lady's Convent High, Hackney
	Greece Music School of Thessaloniki		United Kingdom Isca College of Media Arts

It has not been possible to include them all in this publication; however, the full set can be viewed online at [www.etwinning.net](http://www.etwinning.net). There are some slight variations in the format of each case study: some teachers were happy to be named and have their opinions discussed while others wished to have their contributions remain private. It is for this reason that in some cases the full name of the teacher and school is not mentioned.

## 3.1 Cyprus

### Nicosia Grammar School

*“Shy and quiet pupils open up. They go through many things during the project, so they bond. Since they have pressure to submit group work on a regular basis, they form strong friendships that otherwise they would not consider at school and these relationships continue after the project ends.”*

#### Context

The Nicosia Grammar School, established in 1963, is a private co-educational secondary school situated in the suburbs of Nicosia with easy access to the capital of Cyprus. The school facilities include classrooms (some with incorporated interactive whiteboards), an equipped conference hall, computer labs, a library, a music room, an art room and three labs for biology, chemistry and physics. The sports grounds include football and futsal pitches; handball, basketball and volleyball courts; and an indoor area with exercise equipment.

Admission to the school requires that pupils pass examinations (in mathematics and Greek for Greek speakers and mathematics and English for non-Greek speakers) with an average no lower than 50%. The school can accommodate ninety-six pupils in four classes (twenty-four pupils per class) and has two additional classes with pupils from the junior grammar school who are exempt from entrance examinations. As all courses are offered in English, a large proportion



of pupils are foreigners or Cypriots who in many cases would prefer to continue their tertiary education abroad. Greek is compulsory for pupils who have at least one Greek-speaking Cypriot parent.

The school provides educational counselling in order to assist pupils in making important decisions about their academic and career choices. A variety of clubs, organised by members of the faculty, are also offered to pupils on a voluntary basis. These clubs, which usually meet in afternoons or during weekends, provide a diverse range of activities, such as visual art, dance, debate, drama, environment, international programmes (e.g., The Duke of Edinburgh International Award), music and sports.

The overall goal of the school is to provide general and specialised education that enables pupils to obtain an International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and General Certificate of Education (GCE), as well as the London Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) qualification. The pupils also obtain the Grammar School Leaving Certificate (Apolytirion) that is recognised in both public and private sectors. Graduates are therefore prepared for British universities, worldwide educational institutions and all public and private universities in Cyprus.

### The teacher

For the last four years, Juliana Saavedra has been teaching science at the Nicosia Grammar School and additionally runs the school's Spanish club. Juliana has been involved in eTwinning since the beginning of her career and is the founder of three eTwinning projects. Recently she participated in a European Professional Development Workshop (PDW) organised by the Portuguese NSS on the topic of *Intercultural appreciation and inclusion: challenging schools*. Even though her school had previously participated in a Comenius Partnership project, she reports that eTwinning was her first experience of collaborative work with schools from other European countries.

### The project

While reflecting on her own projects, she reports that in all of them she put a lot of emphasis on the pupil-to-pupil relationship and communication; however, due to technical limitations as well as personal reservations, her first project was not as successful as her second one. *“Three years ago, not everyone had email accounts. Our school's computer system did not support the chat rooms, therefore pupils had to use it at home. I was afraid that something said in the chat rooms might upset the parents, so I was present in the chat room too, something that was not making pupils feel so comfortable. After the experience of the first project, I did not insist anymore. I had pupils exchanging emails and communication was left up to them.”*



Her second project, awarded with the European Quality Label called “*Fascination of Light*”, was a science project based on real-life applications of physics theory learned in class. The main objectives of the project were to increase pupil participation in the learning process and at the same time raise their awareness of other countries and cultures. In this context, pupils built models and conducted experiments based on the physics theory in their science books.

## Pupil participation

Concerning pupil participation, the teacher observes that their participation was increased after their involvement in the project. *“Pupils enhanced their comprehension of the subject; they were able to fully understand the importance of the theory and at the same time prepare something practical to display it and then share in a foreign language with pupils from another country. These processes made them understand that they can cooperate with pupils from different countries and are able to use their knowledge to prepare something which they can proudly show to everyone on the Internet.”*

Through the use of email, chat and even some external tools, pupils communicated with each other both for sharing information related to the project, as well as for socialising. They conducted experiments, prepared PowerPoint presentations, posters, a short film about the project and even presented their work during a school exhibition. *“When the project was launched, the pupils were very excited and enthusiastic; they asked more questions, expressed their opinions and wanted to contribute to the design of the project. As the days passed, they felt more and more comfortable. They felt it as ‘theirs’. They felt that they were responsible for the project.”*

In addition, the teacher observes that her decision to engage pupils of different classes and ages in the project was very beneficial for the pupils. Apart from the fact that they communicated with pupils from abroad, they also had the chance to cooperate with their fellow pupils and bond with other classes in their school. *“Shy and quiet pupils open up. They go through many things during the project, so they bond. Since they have pressure to submit group work on a regular basis, they form strong friendships that otherwise they would not consider at school and these relationships continue after the project ends.”*



Apart from the pupil-to-pupil relationship, Juliana suggests that the project has also benefited the teacher-to-pupil relationship. *“I stayed almost weekly with them to perform experiments and answered their questions related to the project through email. This makes pupils feel a bit more special and they feel they get to know the teacher at a different level. As a result, their attention and interest in class improved considerably.”*

### Enablers

The teacher considers communicating with pupils from different cultural backgrounds and learning in an unconventional way as the most important motivating factors for active pupil participation. In addition, the teacher observes that pupils were also motivated by recognition. For this reason she issued certificates for the pupils who participated in the project and made sure that their project would be included in the annual yearbook of the school. *“They wanted to feel that what they were doing was being recognised. Some have even added their certificates in their portfolios when applying for university.”*

It is, however, worth mentioning that the pupils’ involvement in the project was on a voluntary basis since, as she comments, participation in collective projects is neither part of the pupils’ evaluation nor the school’s grading system. Even though the teacher informed all pupils about the specific project through an announcement she circulated to pupils’ mentors, she states that the pupils who finally participated in the project *“were pupils of high academic standards who were fond of these type of activities,”* and as a result it was not difficult to get them to work on the project.

As far as parents are concerned, the teacher mentions that most of them were supportive of the idea but only a few were actively involved. She mentions that in some cases parents had even offered their offices for the purpose of the project or took a day off from their work in order to assist pupils with their experiments or simply be present at their presentations during the exhibition. The teacher comments that parental contribution in the project was very welcomed by the pupils and, along with her personal effort and the pupils’ efforts, it was a very important enabler for the project.

### Obstacles

Considering the main obstacles encountered during the implementation of the project, the teacher reports that initially she had some problems in finding partners. She states that it was difficult to spot her messages in the forum and even more difficult to find partners that would use Spanish as a working language. Even though her objective was to support multilateral interactions, she found that she finally ended up in bilateral projects since some of her initial partners did not check their accounts regularly and were not actively involved in the project.

As far as the pupils' active participation is concerned, she mentions that she did not face any barriers apart from pupils' sometimes busy schedules: *"We had to work during the afternoon hours or weekends for the purpose of the project and I had to compromise and be lenient with changes of schedules or absences."*

She comments that if the school system was not so exam-oriented and activities of this type were considered as part of pupils' education, then it would be easier for teachers to engage themselves and their pupils in eTwinning projects. *"I work with eTwinning for the benefits it brings to my pupils and me as a teacher; however, the school system does not perceive eTwinning as an important part of education. There is no encouragement for these types of activities because they are not considered an obligatory part of their education."*

## Conclusion

Last but not least, the teacher states that she is interested in developing more eTwinning projects and has already recommended eTwinning to other colleagues in her school. However, she thinks that publicity, more training opportunities for teachers and parents on the benefits and use of ICT tools, and pupil recognition are some factors that could contribute towards achieving higher levels of pupil participation.

### 3.2



## Slovakia

### School B - Primary school

***"First we informed pupils on the theme and the goals of the project. The implementation itself was a matter of collaboration. Pupils were given the opportunity to decide on the themes and the development of stories themselves."***

## Context

The primary school is located approximately 20 km from the capital of Slovakia. In terms of the number of pupils, it falls within the range of mid-sized schools: there are 347 pupils and 26 teachers. The three-storey building is quite old and in need of refurbishment.

Pupils have the opportunity to partake in knowledge competitions, participate in sporting competitions and engage in cultural events. The school itself is a participant in numerous projects at both national and international level.



## The teacher

The teacher has been teaching Slovak and German for three years. Although she has been a teacher for only a short time, she is very active in eTwinning; she has carried out two projects, both of which have placed among the winners in the national eTwinning awards. The interview and preparation for this interview took place at a distance since the NSS staff knew the projects and the teacher's work well enough and had already met at numerous events where the teacher presented her work. The interview therefore took place in the form of chats, emails and phone calls.

## The project

Twenty-eight pupils between the ages of 10 and 15 years worked together in the project and another ten cooperated to a smaller degree. The project promoted communication in a foreign language, enhanced development of various ICT skills and focused on learning about traditions, customs and life of people in partner countries. Another important element was the development of creativity and imagination and pupils created collaborative stories that were accompanied by their own illustrations.

Regarding her first steps into the eTwinning action, the teacher explained: *"In the beginning it was more about experimenting; I wished to try something new that would bring changes to often stringent classes focused on reading comprehension or learning grammar by heart using various rules."*

She underlined the fact that she started her first project in 2005 with a certain amount of doubt about her technical skills. Fortunately she found an appropriate partner in Hustopeče, in the Czech Republic, and together with the Czech teacher they formed a well-coordinated and creative pair. *"When I look back, I remember that at first I found using the TwinSpace very difficult and I discovered its possibilities only after a training course. However, all teachers do not have the opportunity to attend such training courses or have enough ICT skills. The pupils demonstrated many ICT skills and were glad to utilise them in the project. They even developed some new skills such as editing text, images, photos and videos."*

Since the project involved five different countries, each team created an introductory text. Each country wrote between five and ten sentences. The next four were all more difficult as pupils had to, on the one hand, link them logically to the preceding ones and, on the other, create such ending that would allow their partners to continue. Pupils themselves chose the theme of the texts and each story contained facts about the participating countries. Once the stories were created, each team produced a story. The stories then served as presentations for the partner countries and thus the process of writing meant that pupils learned to process information, compose text and at the same time learn about foreign cultures and people. They communicated in German so that the project might positively influence the development of their German language skills.

## Pupil participation

The next point concerns collaboration on two levels: pupil-to-pupil (both in the classroom and with partner peers) and pupil-to-teacher. The teacher expressed her enthusiasm about the level of collaboration achieved and described in more detail how, together with her project partner, she managed to build a well-coordinated and creative team. *“Interaction with partners took place in the TwinSpace which we had created for the purpose of the project and which was accessible to all five countries. Through this space, we became equal partners; the barrier between the teachers and pupils was wiped away and teachers rather became ‘advisers’*



*for their pupils. Tension between pupils and teacher was also minimised during regular classes.”* The usual question, “how will I ever use this in my life?” was never asked. Everyone involved was a co-creator and entered the process with his/her own ideas and approach. It was through the project that pupils were able to understand more easily the meaning of the subject content covered in class.

The initial reactions of the pupils were diverse. One group of pupils had already had an experience with projects in previous years and was happy to continue with another one. Another group of pupils had a slow start in the project; however, after overcoming the initial barriers, it got much better. Pupils could compare their work as all teams uploaded their work in the TwinSpace. They could admire visiting cards and photos of their peers from abroad and gradually got to know each other. Pupils who had met before looked forward to seeing each other again very much. *“When I announced the theme of the project and informed pupils about the partner teams, their feedback was very positive. The project triggered their curiosity and they asked about the partner teams. Other partial activities were developed throughout the year during the course of the project to add variety to our collaboration.”*

Pupils were actively involved throughout the whole project. *“First we informed pupils about the theme and the goals of the project. The implementation itself was a matter of collaboration. Pupils were given the opportunity to decide on the themes and the development of stories themselves. They used their knowledge and experience to create project activities and they could edit the blog and propose various procedures within our collaboration.”*

The teacher also shared her experience with the initial steps in the project and suggested a collaborative meeting activity that would cement the entire team. *“The first project activity*



*was to search for a logo. Children from all participating countries sent their contributions, one of which was collaboratively chosen as the project logo. This was the first step towards embracing the project. It was already at this stage that pupils presented some results of their work and, for the first time, could take credit for project outcomes. They took it very seriously.”*

The teacher revealed that the greatest surprise was how pupils of different ages learned to communicate and collaborate together in a creative and open way. *“Another issue related to pupil interaction, which I wanted to deal with in the beginning, was the age difference of pupils (10 to 15 years old) involved in the project. However, pupils themselves, who approached project work as a solid team, resolved it. They divided project tasks into easier and more difficult ones and wiped out the unnecessary age barriers that often prevail in the common organisational structure of a school. They worked as equal partners. If anyone needed help, others helped. The same issue was also encountered by the other partners where the age difference was even greater but it also did not cause any trouble due to their work on collaborative tasks.”* These relationships built on common experiences and collaborative project work brought a positive atmosphere to the entire school and pupils of different grades learned to communicate and help each other. They changed their approach to one another and created a much more open and friendly environment.

Because the project involved five different countries, partners had to focus on harmonising their schedules and project management, which required more effort than a project with just two partners. The teacher describes this project stage as an opportunity for more collaborative activities, which enhanced the project and improved the pupils' relationships with each other. *“Having five countries involved in the project meant four weeks of waiting to give pupils enough space to get to know each other better, learn more about the partners' countries and how partners spend their regular class time. We supported the project with short-term activities and mini projects. While performing the tasks, pupils worked in teams, created their own German class plans and prepared their own study material. They had to learn to work both independently and collaboratively. They had to divide their work and assign appropriate amounts of time to complete the tasks and help each other. They helped us, the teachers, to better incorporate the project in the curriculum. The aim of the partial tasks was to make the project more interesting because translating and creating text is something that pupils do in their regular class time.”*

### Enablers

In the interview, the teacher pointed to the reasons for pupils' active involvement, which was the central aim of the project. *“In my opinion, anyone who wants to start a similar project has the same goal, which is to involve their pupils actively in the educational process. Texts created by pupils themselves are much more interesting than impersonal texts in textbooks. At the same time, solving problems while completing tasks helps pupils to acquire regular subject*



content. Our goal was to have pupils see for themselves how important the knowledge of a foreign language is nowadays. Through collaboration with partners from various European countries pupils spontaneously realised the importance of the knowledge of a foreign language, which motivated them to learn. This kind of learning is to some extent a form of prestige because the acquisition of knowledge through project-based learning means that you are not just a bookworm and that you are 'in'."

The project clearly defined the positions of the teacher and pupils, where the teacher merely suggested ideas while pupils created the activities. The teacher described her position as that of "a

*helper and navigator.*" They used brainstorming, discussions and then collaboratively agreed on an appropriate solution. Pupils realised that the Internet was not just a space to chat and play games but that it makes their work significantly easier.

As with any other type of work, during the project some pupils were not interested in project activities and stopped participating in them. This concerned pupils who had expected the project to be just something to fill their free time with computer games. Others participated in the project on a regular basis. For this reason, other means and forms of collaboration were discussed. *"Friendships between older and younger pupils, as well as international friendships, served as a sufficient motivational factor. The same can be said about the mini projects which pupils regarded as fun. A photo story which pupils made up or carnival masks they created were enough of a compensation for the required work with texts and they eagerly awaited new story sequels that their partners invented. The pupils' creativity was their greatest motivator to keep them participating in the project."* Some new aspects of work with technologies brought about some worries for the pupils. For example, they were hesitant when they were supposed to tell jokes in front of a camera but in the end, the output of such work generally motivated them to further active involvement. According to the teacher, interaction is a decisive factor in project development. This applies to interaction between partners as well as interaction between team members, which also includes the teacher.

In the next part of the interview, the evaluation format and approach of the school's management towards these activities were discussed. The teacher had not created

a specific evaluation form; she instead made an arrangement with her pupils that after completing all their duties they would be given free time to spend on their hobbies. They exchanged emails, chatted, drew pictures and some of them even used the Internet to prepare for the following day's classes. Also, the teacher had some sweets and little gifts to give to her pupils as a reward for completed assignments. Those who had difficulty completing their parts of the assignment received help and advice from her. They organised a huge pizza party to celebrate the end of the project – a reward that the pupils chose themselves and truly enjoyed.

When necessary, the school management always agreed to release the teacher and pupils involved in the project from regular everyday activities. It was always very appreciated and helped with the organisation of exchange stays and travels abroad. Naturally, the type of systems of working – both within a team and individually – was discussed. For some decades, the school system in Slovakia has not been supportive to innovative approaches, collaboration and creativity. The situation has since changed and teamwork and team communication are used more frequently than before.

The teacher confirmed that through these approaches, pupils learned to collaborate, take suggestions from their peers, respect the opinions of their peers and take into account the fact that they were equal partners. Pupils in this school then created smaller-scale projects within the school's curricular subjects. The school also started to organise "project weeks" for each grade. For the teacher, collective forms of study are not used sufficiently in the education process and only used on a small scale in projects. However, teachers are currently receiving education in this field and the teacher attended a seminar on creative classes in a methodological-pedagogic centre and received eTwinning training on project development.

The project was also interesting because it involved the parents to some extent. They helped with costumes, the necessary technology (e.g., lent their cameras) and helped children take photos. They considered the overall atmosphere positive and excused the occasional late coming home of their children due to the processing of project outputs.

Another important aspect of the project was presenting its outcomes to a wider public. *"We used information boards to constantly inform our colleagues and schoolmates in the school, and regional press to inform people in town. To make the project work visible outside our town, we created an information blog where we posted outcomes, success stories, articles, etc. You can even access our collaborative TwinSpace where you can see all the outputs, documents, presentations, recordings, videos, etc. We also presented the project at both national and international conferences as eTwinning methodology training courses. When we closed the project, we presented our year's work at an exhibition at the school's end-of-year ceremony."*

## Obstacles

In terms of the risk factors of the project and further implementation of ideas for international school partnerships, the teacher admitted some minor problems related to the lack of ICT skills. However, the problems were gradually overcome partly due to good cooperation between the teachers and great efforts put in by the pupils. As the school management supported the project and the teachers had previous experience with project implementation, the project work did not bring about any serious problems.

The most essential component of the project's success was the relaxed atmosphere, which was achieved through an innovative teacher-pupil relationship. The teacher's approach was less direct and the teacher allowed for pupils' opinions and tried to help them when necessary. The above-mentioned friendships were an element of pupils' active involvement and in some cases coincided with a sense of competition in order to always create something 'better'. The mini projects also played an important role in pupils' active involvement because during their implementation pupils presented both their work and themselves. The whole project made regular classes much more interesting and the teacher was strongly motivated to try new approaches and educational techniques. *"It is a good way to make German classes significantly more attractive. Pupils find communication over the Internet very attractive, let alone the opportunity to communicate with children from other countries. Furthermore, communication is the most important aspect in teaching foreign languages."*

Thanks to ICT, pupils also communicated in their free time. Pupils wanted to use foreign language in order to communicate with their friends abroad. This was also a way for pupils to assess their own language skills as well as their ICT skills. They learned to produce interesting web page designs using Word, make presentations in PowerPoint, process videos and audio recordings, use MovieMaker and work with table editors. Most importantly, pupils learned to communicate, i.e., lead appropriate conversations with their peers.

## Conclusion

The collaborating teams are optimistic about their future intentions and want to continue to carry out collaborative projects. Projects serve to enrich the education experience, although only a small number of teachers feel confident enough to break the barriers of traditional teaching forms and undertake project work. The reluctance of other teachers may have many reasons such as the perception that the planning phase is very time-intensive and perhaps their reluctance to try out something new after years of a routine that they have found effective.

What is the greatest benefit of the eTwinning action? *"In my opinion, the action is one of the inevitable components of modern education processes, which combines pupils'*

*knowledge and ICT skills. The implementation of projects can be seen as a bonus that allows pupils to use their theoretical knowledge in practice and helps them better understand required class content. Perhaps the eTwinning Portal could in the future focus on direct communication with pupils involved in projects, so that they can share their opinions, requests and comments.”*

### 3.3 United Kingdom: Isca College of Media Arts

*“Seeing the people they were going to be working with made the prospect real to the pupils and motivated them from the outset.”*

#### Context

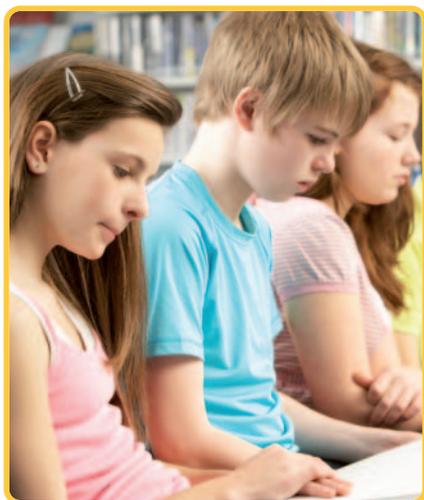
Isca College of Media Arts is a comprehensive school of 750 pupils aged 11-16 years with 80 staff members. It is situated in the city of Exeter in South West England. The school has held a media arts specialist status since 2004 and aims to “*enrich all aspects of teaching and learning through innovative use of arts techniques and communication technology*”<sup>7</sup>. Most pupils are of British heritage although 5.1% do not speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion with special education needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, and these include pupils who have specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) or who have social, emotional and behavioural issues.

#### The teacher

Isabel Sastre is an art & design and media studies teacher at Isca College of Media Arts with thirteen years teaching experience. Isabel specialised in painting during her fine arts degree at University of Salamanca and became a fully qualified art teacher in Spain in 1994. Isabel combined her early teaching career with postgraduate studies in art education, cultural management and a Master in museums and exhibitions. She has experience working in education departments of international museums and art galleries, developing and delivering art education programmes for schools, families and community groups. Isabel moved to England in 2003 and is currently part of the creative arts team at Isca College, which focuses on introducing new technologies and media into the National Curriculum. Isabel discovered eTwinning through a Google search for international partner schools and got involved in this project shortly after registering. This is the first eTwinning project that Isabel and Isca College have been involved in.

7 [www.iscacollege.co.uk](http://www.iscacollege.co.uk) – Function – Media Arts – Specialist School Aims

Isabel was keen to point out the professional development that working on the project offered her. “At a personal level, the benefit has been in my improved confidence, technical ability and creativity as a teacher. [An] innovative aspect was my learning process; it did stretch my creativity and ability to plan and deliver my lessons so that my pupils could eventually multitask and combine their everyday learning with a few more added objectives and extra tasks. Every lesson would have a slot of time dedicated to the project, from calendar, digital cameras and display management to showing the latest photo updates on the project gallery.”



## The project

### Description and objectives

The project was called “*Travel Buddies*” and involved two mixed ability Year 7 classes of 11-12 year old pupils at Isca College working in collaboration with similar schools in Essen, Germany and Trezzano, Italy. The concept of the project was to use the exchange of soft toy ‘mascots’ to facilitate English language learning in Italy and Germany and to enrich the art and design curriculum at Isca College. Over a two-month period, pupils were asked to take the mascots received from their partner schools to a place in their local area that is important to them. They

took a photograph and wrote a description of the place they chose, as well as of themselves and what it is like to live in their country. The photographs were shared online using the project’s photo gallery on the eTwinning Portal and letters that the pupils produced were sent and shared by post as the culmination of the project.

In the context of pupil participation, the objectives set focused on: inclusion - specifically that every pupil, without exception would actively take part in the project and complete all aspects of the tasks set; team work - during lessons pupils and teacher would think together and share ideas, concerns and initiatives, developing respect, talking and listening skills; and self-management and decision making - every pupil was given the chance to choose the location of their photograph, the timing and the presentation style used. When asked why meaningful pupil participation had been central to the design of the project, Isabel commented that, “*I was looking for initiatives to promote pupils’ active participation and ways to introduce more pupil input and continuity in lessons. We only have one hour a week for art and design, which can be too dispersed for Year 7 pupils. I thought this*



*project would create a line of connection throughout my 'Scheme of Work'.*"

Isabel successfully built the work done by the Isca College pupils into the cross-curricular 'Scheme of Work' for creative arts and guidance. Its title was "Order and Chaos" and in art and design the main focus was looking at architecture styles, imaginary cities and skylines. Isabel elaborated that, "*the project has complemented our lessons with added learning objectives in the following lines:*

### ➤ **Art and design skills:**

- ▶ *Photography (use of digital camera, composition, distance, viewpoint)*
- ▶ *Development of presentation and visual communication skills*

### ➤ **ICT skills:**

- ▶ *Image downloading, resizing and printing using Photoshop*

### ➤ **Literacy and written communication skills**

### ➤ **Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning:**

- ▶ *Possessing a sense of self-worth and personal identity*
- ▶ *Relating well to others and form good relationships*
- ▶ *Having the ability to work co-operatively with others*
- ▶ *Understanding their own and others' cultures, traditions and have a strong sense of their place in the world."*

## Pupil participation

The initial project idea was conceived by the partner in Germany and then developed in collaboration with the other partner schools so each could make it relevant to their school curriculum which was done comprehensively in Isca College by Isabel. The pupils were not involved in the planning stage of the project, as Isabel wanted to design the project activities to link strongly into aspects of her 'Scheme of Work' specifically relating to architecture.

The pupils were very excited when they discovered that they were going to be involved in a project like this, particularly when they realised it would involve working with partners and peers in Germany and Italy. Isabel commented that the pupils felt as though there was "glamour" about the prospect of working with fellow pupils in other countries and pupils began to see a future where working with people from across Europe was possible.

The fact that Isabel was able to show her class photographs of the pupils from Germany on the eTwinning Portal immediately grabbed their attention and made them very keen to get involved in the project. "*Seeing the people they were going to be working with made the prospect real to the pupils and motivated them from the outset,*" said Isabel.



Although the project activity was heavily focused on curriculum enrichment much of the key work like the photography was actually conducted by the pupils outside of the classroom environment and in their own time. This was largely down to Isabel wanting to empower her pupils to make decisions and use their initiative to develop their own work. The nature of the project meant that parents were aware of the work being done in class and it gave an opportunity for them to be indirectly involved. For example, many took their children to the chosen places of interest and helped with the photography.

When asked about the impact that the project had Isabel explained, *“the work that the pupils did and more importantly the processes that they followed made a huge positive impact on the art and design ‘Scheme of Work’.* The pupils were given the opportunity to work independently, think freely and to make autonomous decisions about what they contributed to the project.” All within the framework of the curriculum, enriching their understanding and the work that they were already undertaking was of great value. *“For my pupils, the project has changed the way they understand learning in my subject. The teacher is now someone they learn with. It has made them more confident learners, willing to take risks and face a challenge. It has also provided us with very interesting conversations about prejudice and stereotypes, about our identity and the world out there.”*

## Enablers

Isabel also noted that, *“the project was successful in creating positive dynamics in the classroom. It was an adventure that teacher and pupils started together: we shared the fears and enthusiasm of doing something together for the first time; we overcame the difficulties of the coordination and meeting deadlines, and we celebrated the expectation and conclusion of receiving our mascot back with loads of letters. The project has provided us with the unique experience of working and learning together.”* The success of the project can largely be attributed to the robust planning of the project, the simplicity of the idea and particularly the strong curriculum focus, which gave the project activities credibility and grounding in day-to-day class activity.



## Obstacles

The only obstacle encountered came right at the end of the project when the pupils at Isca College received the letters from their partners. There was a feeling amongst the pupils that the quality of the work produced was slightly below theirs and the assumption was that the pupils in Germany and Italy had not worked as hard on the project. This highlights the impact that the project work had on Isabel's pupils: they were proud of the work that they had produced and looked forward to sharing their outputs with their international peers.

## Conclusion

The project has clearly had a positive impact on both teacher and pupils at Isca College, which can largely be attributed to the strong focus that was put on active pupil participation from the outset. When you consider this was the first collaborative international project that Isabel and the school had been involved in, it makes the results even more notable.

Since the "Travel Buddies" project finished, Isabel has attempted to implement another eTwinning project involving her 13-14 year old art and design class, which was a less successful experience unfortunately. School pressures and working with an older set of pupils who were a little less consistent and receptive meant that the environment and timing was not right for this second project to succeed. This shows the truly organic nature of eTwinning; not every project will be a huge success and good projects do require the right set of circumstances to thrive. Isabel remains undeterred though: *"I really admire eTwinning and look forward to new and more successful partnerships and projects."*

### 3.4



## Spain: School in Zaragoza

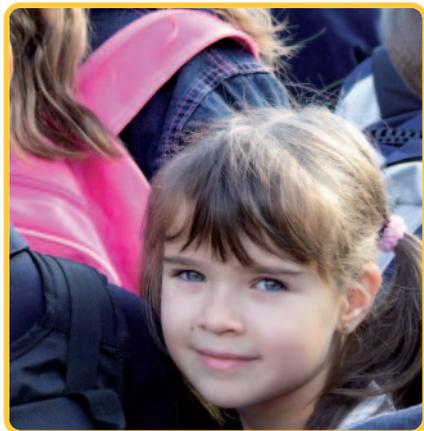
*"One of the keys to reaching this degree of commitment was giving little importance to the language used and more to the message transmitted."*

## Context

The school featured in this case study offers studies of compulsory and non-compulsory secondary education and vocational training (business administration) to 12-18 year-old pupils. The total number of pupils is 400, with a teaching staff of 50 members. It's located in a small town in the province of Zaragoza, in the Autonomous Community of Aragon, far from big urban centres, with little possibility of mobility and a smaller cultural life. Among the local population, including pupils, there is a remarkable feeling of mistrust to new things. The participation in the eTwinning project described here has led to the engagement of the school in a Comenius Partnership project, though with different pupils and teachers.

## The teacher

J.M. has been a teacher for fifteen years, though he has been assigned to this school only for the last five. For the academic year 2010-11 he has been in a different school in Zaragoza, the capital city of Aragón. He is a teacher of French and also the head of the French department and coordinator in his school for the Teachers' Resource Centre of the area. He has founded two eTwinning projects, one of them ongoing and the other one reported here.



Before working in eTwinning, he had developed other initiatives, such as the creation of a blog, with which he tried to foster the central position of pupils in their own learning. However, he states that in none of them did he get the results achieved with his first eTwinning project. Interested in collaborative learning, and confident that he possesses the necessary training and skills to put this kind of learning into practice successfully, he continually tests out new ways of working. In this regard, he thinks that the education system (in general as well as in his school) doesn't help foster this more experimental methodology. However, such a methodology, whose advantages

can be sometimes felt as overwhelming or feared as drawbacks, implies creating an atmosphere in the classroom quite different to the traditional one.

As for the subject he teaches, French, he considers interaction and communication with and among pupils a central point and he tries to negotiate with them some aspects as the exams dates. He thinks that other aspects, such as the teaching content, are more difficult to debate.

In 2008-2009, he enrolled and finished the online teacher-training course organised by the Spanish NSS. He values the course very positively, not only regarding the knowledge of eTwinning, but also the didactical approach. Finally, despite eTwinning initially being unknown in his school, he has always felt supported by the head teacher, who highly values the teaching of foreign languages. After J.M.'s experience, three more teachers at the school became interested in participating in eTwinning.



## The project

With the main goal of giving pupils in their fourth year of compulsory secondary education (15 years old) the opportunity to practice a foreign language by communicating with other European pupils of the same age and share interests and necessities, he started a project. Two schools founded it: a Spanish school where French was taught and a French school where Spanish was taught. He tried to make his pupils aware of the advantages of knowing a foreign language and of the most common mistakes implied in the first stages of its learning. Besides, the project facilitated a broader knowledge of both cultures: Spanish and French. A blog was published and pupils posted articles on several topics using the foreign language they were studying and exchanged opinions on them. In this sense, the project had a full curricular integration.

J.M. was the only teacher at his school involved in the project. Nevertheless, he considers that, even if the participation of other colleagues could have brought some benefits, it would also have complicated the development of the project, mostly due to the lack of confidence of some of them and to the fact that he was the only one who knew about eTwinning. The teachers made the first planning of the project without pupil input, as they considered that these first stages are already quite complicated in order to coordinate activities for two different educational systems. When the project was introduced to the pupils, they were really surprised because it was going to be the first time they participated in any activities of this kind. Along with the development of the project, pupils started to assume a more participative and leading role and they ended up being the ones who proposed the topics to be dealt with.

To reach these kinds of project goals, it was necessary to spend the first month of the academic year informing the pupils about what they were expected to do, as well as giving them some technical training though, regarding this aspect, many times instruction was from pupils to teachers. Later, the blog was started. Pupils posted entries and commented on their partners' contributions. The work was organised both individually and in groups; either between pupils in the same school or mixed between partners. Nevertheless, group work wasn't as successful as the individual one. Even though the pupils were instructed on how to organise teamwork, the teacher thinks that, not being used to it, they felt more comfortable and self-confident when they worked individually.

On the other hand, parents were not involved in the project. When asked about it, the teacher stated that he had never thought on that, but, even if the involvement of parents had been possible, pupils may have been less prone to work spontaneously, knowing that their parents would know what they were doing. He disseminated the project among the teaching staff. He explained to his colleagues what they were doing and encouraged them to take part in similar projects. He also provided them with a justification as to why his pupils needed to use the computer lab.



## Pupil participation

Though the involvement of the pupils was a goal from the very beginning, the levels of participation and initiative they showed were much higher than initially expected. There were moments in which such a high participation posed a problem for the teachers, as they couldn't cope with so many publications and any control on them became really difficult. Nevertheless, only one of the articles had to be censored: Pupils had been asked to post some typical expressions in their languages together with an explanation and a Spanish pupil chose a quite inappropriate expression to work with. Bearing in mind that the blog had more than 1,000 entries and more than 2,000

comments, and that the vast majority of them were published exactly as they had been created by the pupils, self-control and self-moderation by pupils can be considered a great success.

Before starting this project, there hadn't been any contact between pupils of the two schools involved, but their involvement in the project was more than good and they soon started to appreciate this way of working. Though it was the first time they worked in an eTwinning project, the teacher had been giving lessons to this same group for three years and he always tried to foster communication and interaction among pupils. In his opinion, this may have facilitated their quick, spontaneous engagement in the project. Pupils' spontaneity can be traced back to the creation of their own categories in the blog and according to the topics they decided to deal with in their articles. Many of them had the initiative of writing about topics that hadn't been proposed by the teachers.

On the other hand, though, as stated previously, the teachers made the first planning and initial design of the project, the pupils decided on the times, including the weekly session they would devote to the development of the activities.

## Enablers

According to J.M., one of the keys to reaching this degree of commitment was giving little importance to the language used and more to the message transmitted. Pupils were given freedom regarding the topics they would talk about, and were allowed to do it in any way as far as the message was conveyed, not focusing on the correctness of grammar or spelling. Apart from that, the different degrees of participation of the pupils depended basically on the



personality and learning style of each of them. Some pupils felt very comfortable with all the interaction with their partners, whereas others – many of them used to getting high marks in foreign languages - felt more confident with a more traditional teaching method and had a lower participation. Thus, even though all of them accomplished the assigned tasks, some limited themselves to the compulsory activities, while others had a much more active participation, which helped them in a significant way to pass the subject at the end of the year, with results that were beyond their expectations.

It also seems that the integration of the project in the curriculum was important to foster involvement. Namely, it was explained how the project would contribute to the final assessment of the subject, not only counting the number of entries and comments published, but also their quality (from the point of view of the content), as well as taking the initiative in proposing new topics.

J.M. adds that the use of ICT tools also fosters the motivation of pupils, as they are used to participating in social networks in their free time and working with a blog as part of the classroom tasks is seen as something normal. Some of them even collaborated with the teacher in the management of the blog.

### Obstacles

As J.M. states, “if I were sure about the key factors to get this degree of involvement by the pupils, I would repeat the project step by step.” In his opinion, the results of these projects are sometimes a question of luck in regards to both partner teachers and pupils. He remembers another project (not eTwinning), which was not as successful as this one, maybe because at that time he lacked experience with these methodologies. He notes that in this eTwinning project, both teachers were discovering the implications of this kind of project at the same time, which made mutual understanding and balanced work easier.

J.M. mentions the necessity of planning the relation between the pupils’ participation in the project and the school subject’s assessment, though he warns that this could prevent them from being so “fresh” and spontaneous, as they might focus more on their marks than in taking risks and proposing new initiatives. Thus, he thinks that this integration of the project in the final assessment could be reinforced only if the involvement of the pupils doesn’t happen spontaneously from the beginning.

He also thinks that, even though it was not his case, language can be an obstacle for other teachers who may want to get involved in a project like this. Besides, he thinks that NSS should train teachers in how to foster pupils’ involvement and give them advice on how to give pupils a central role. He even suggests that on the eTwinning platform itself, some guides or tips could be included highlighting elements that could have a positive or negative influence on the engagement of the pupils in the project. Finally, though he

considers himself privileged for participating in these projects, he thinks that the low level of professional recognition given to teachers who get involved in this kind of actions (eTwinning or others) is a major obstacle.

## Conclusions

Though J.M. is aware of some aspects of the project that could have been improved, the active participation of pupils is the main factor. He did not find many obstacles in the development of the project, and he intends to participate in more eTwinning projects, always trying to put the pupils' participation at the center, as he cannot imagine a successful project without this.

### 3.5 France

#### Collège Georges d' Amboise (Gaillon, Academy of Rouen)

*"I think that [the project] enables greater promotion of peer tutoring: the weaker pupils struggle but those who better manage the situation actually want to help them out. It is an advantage that does not necessarily take place in a normal classroom environment."*

## Context

The Georges d'Amboise School is a mixed state-run school with external and day pupils. As an average sized school, it has 474 pupils and 39 teachers along with monitoring staff, educational advisors (CPE), administrative staff and caretaking personnel.

The school has shown satisfactory results in the national school diploma qualification exams: 80% of pupils passed the June 2009 examination with 47% receiving grades in the upper categories. The head of school is extremely satisfied with these results since the school is located in an educational priority area (Zone d'éducation prioritaire - ZEP). In terms of computer equipment, the school has two mobile classrooms: one for more scientific-based classes and another for more literary-based classes. to the room must be booked in advance to use its equipment, which compels teaching staff to be very rigorous and organised in order to evenly distribute available time slots.

Chantal Violet, one of the school's teachers involved in eTwinning, works in this location every Thursday without fail. Convinced by the good work led by Chantal, the school head supports her in her innovative practices with her classes and does not fail to promote her



European projects with new pupils' parents and future first-year pupils during the school's "Open Days" at the end of each year.

### The teacher

It is in this context that Chantal is a teacher of English from the first to final year of lower secondary education, notably in a bilingual classroom environment. She additionally holds other responsibilities within her school as a subject leader, work placement coordinator and, for several years now, the organiser of a school competition named the "Big Challenge". All of this is undertaken in conjunction with eTwinning projects, which she started in 2008, especially with the final two years of lower-secondary school pupils. The 2010-2011 school year will be the final year of her thirty-six year teaching career.

Chantal agreed to become an eTwinning Ambassador very recently and has taken this new task very seriously, convinced that, *"developing an eTwinning project helps pupils become increasingly motivated. [...] eTwinning is a driving force; eTwinning acts as a strong motivator for pupils."* In this respect, she is highly enthusiastic about the idea of sharing experiences with other teachers and consequently will take part in a seminar in Sardinia in the near future.

When asked about aspects relating to training, Chantal clarified that, *"when I heard about the existence of eTwinning, I told myself that it could represent a way of assisting pupils, so I was happy to sign up. I actively looked for schools that could become partners and, since I confronted so many obstacles, I asked to take part in a professional workshop to receive training in eTwinning. Afterwards, I also asked to take part in computer-technology training courses. This was also very difficult to obtain, because there are limits to the number of courses one can take. So, while job training seems to be the thing which works best, it is long, takes a great deal of time and can be quite risky."* She also said that she found out about eTwinning simply because she used to look for a lot of information and documentation online, mainly through institutional websites.

### The project

The seminar succeeded in convincing Chantal about the action and she immediately launched what she calls her *"humble project"* that had objectives that were quite "modest". Since then, she has continued taking her pupils across Europe with various projects each year.

This year, Chantal is leading two distinct projects:

➤ “Knowing me, knowing you” with an Irish partner.

The primary goal of this project is to discover and appreciate cultural differences in daily life, and notably in the school life of the partner institution. By selecting the most suitable educational information and communication technology tools for presentations, each pupil must teach others about various aspects of their own culture. All communication is undertaken in English.

➤ “European club” with three from Belgium and one from France.

The primary objective of this project is to work on the traditions of each partner country and to discuss the main national holidays of each of the countries. All communication is in English.

These projects are undertaken with four small-sized groups, involving a total of thirty-two pupils. Lower-secondary school pupils in their final year work on both projects, while lower-secondary school pupils in their second-last year work on one project each. This means that in total there are four micro projects fitting into two macro projects.

In response to the question regarding possible involvement of other colleagues, she states: *“I have never yet managed to involve other colleagues in the school, so for the moment I work alone with my pupils. Well, when I say alone, it is a manner of speaking as in actual fact I work in conjunction with other schools so I am not alone! I am the only one at this school for the present, though.”*

Chantal expresses regret at a temporally slow-down in each of these projects: one due to a failure to respond by a partner, and another for reasons linked to technical issues that limit the activities she can undertake. These problems have discouraged her on occasions, but she takes it upon herself in the interest of her pupils.

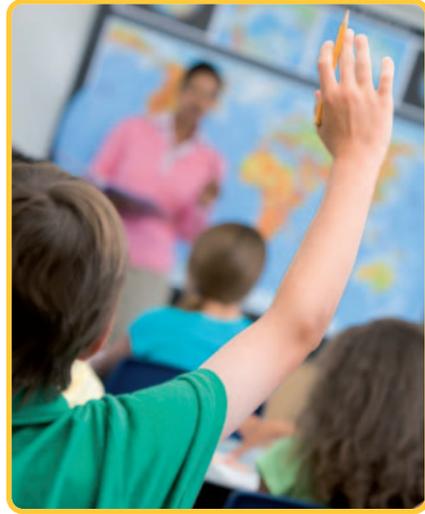
## Pupil participation

What Chantal tries to encourage above all is, *“more exchange between my pupils and pupils of partner schools, rather than an exchange between pupils and me. That certainly motivates most pupils to contribute to the project and pupil-centred activities are a key factor in both pupil motivation and involvement.”*

As regards modern languages, her main subject, Chantal underlines that, *“in the assessment of competences, consideration will continuously be given to speaking but also speaking in an interactive context. An exchange-based project such as this definitely enables a language to be practiced in all its possible forms: writing, asking questions to others, reading answers and chatting.”*



Chantal also highlights other advantages in asking pupils to work on this type of project. First is the positive impact on the self-esteem of the most underperforming pupils: *“we need to re-motivate weaker pupils who are underperforming and are unable to improve, and through such an exchange, they realise that they understand what other pupils are saying and they can reply!”* Second, she finds that such a project leads to greater class cohesion: *“I think that it enables greater promotion of peer tutoring: the weaker pupils struggle but those who better manage the situation actually want to help them out. It is an advantage that does not necessarily take place in a normal classroom environment.”* Third, being a teacher who wonders about the justification of her practices, she states that, *“I would even say that we are right in doing this type of project with pupils because it brings them closer together.”*



Such findings are based on observations rather than on a clearly documented assessment grid or any other means of assessment: *“In my reviews, I consider the behaviour of certain pupils who clearly feel motivated, feel responsible and who have a real sense of achievement, notable in terms of educational information and communication technology. I was able to complete learning criteria from the B2i (computer and internet certification framework) with the pupils involved. Still, I feel the impact can be more easily evaluated in terms of attitude: the pupils who are not motivated are more willing to come to class because of eTwinning.”* Also, the school’s head teacher always writes a few words about eTwinning in his end-of-year report.

### Enablers

As for keys to success, Chantal found it easy to mention the main two for her: the first being partners who regularly respond to exchanges, *“I am more than willing to continue with this but what I like to see are schools motivated 150% by the project”* and the second is *“faultless technology!”* Chantal also mentions some others, such as having a project based on a subject in line with pupils’ interests – such as music, festivals and traditions, daily life, etc. In terms of technology, pupils themselves can support its use: *“Sometimes pupils know more about it than I do; sometimes they get involved saying ‘You know Miss, you just have to do this and it will work’, and it does work!”*

## Obstacles

There are two recurring major difficulties according to Chantal. The primary obstacle is technical in nature: it is important to have a deep understanding of the eTwinning platform, as it is new and a little more complex than the previous version. It is necessary to have the correct equipment at the right moment; although she has a mobile classroom, she needs to share the computers. She recognises that having a deep understanding of ICT, for an English teacher or French teacher, is not easy. The second difficulty raised relates to the difficulties of operating in a partnership: she has “lost” partners on a couple of occasions, and remembers the difficulties such a loss created for the pupils who had already worked a lot until then.

## Conclusions

Chantal concluded the meeting by saying, “*I am happy to have been running eTwinning projects.*” As she soon plans to leave the national education system and take her retirement, she feels rather sad at the prospect of no longer being involved in these projects. Nonetheless, she is certain that she “*will continue to have some contact with eTwinning, in one way or another... it would make me very happy.*”

### 3.6 Denmark

#### Stadil-Vedersø Skole

***“The TwinSpace designers have made the system so that the pupils can get access. I believe that it is only a matter of time before it becomes perfectly normal for pupils to take on responsibilities like that.”***

## Context

Stadil-Vedersø School is a small school with eighty-three pupils, nine teachers, and a school principal. It is situated as far out in the country as you can get in Western Denmark, which, by all means, is quite far. From the schoolyard there is a view to fields and farms with silos, and the school’s closest neighbour is a retirement home. The school district, which borders the North Sea, consists of approximately 20-25 windy square kilometres, including two small fiords.

The pupils, between the ages of 6 and 12 years, are divided into seven classes ranging from preschool to sixth grade. In some classes, there are less than ten pupils. This makes it possible to merge the age groups during lessons where it makes pedagogical sense.

The buildings, of which the oldest dates back to 1952, are shared between the school and a combined kindergarten and youth centre for children between the ages of 3 and 7 years,



called Børnehuset (The Children's House). In 2010, four classrooms and a pedagogical facility centre were added and the remaining buildings were renovated. Today, the school has eight classrooms, several special-subject rooms, a gym, a project workshop and lots of space indoor as well as outdoors.

Several of the teachers have been working at the school for more than ten years, and six of them have been involved in eTwinning projects. They have participated in self-organised projects with schools abroad. Teaming up with a school in Lithuania, the school takes part in a project under the framework programme Nordplus<sup>8</sup> that was founded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

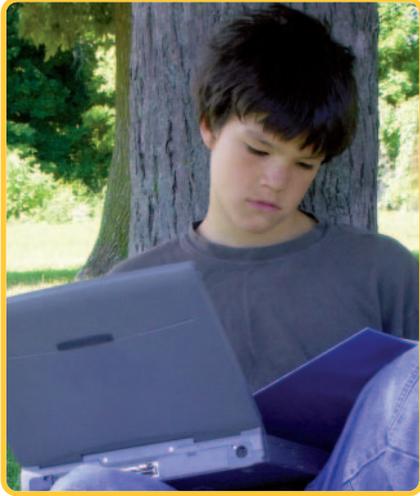
The school has twenty-two laptops and eighteen desktop computers, which are available to the pupils in class and during breaks. In addition, two classrooms have interactive whiteboards installed.

### The teacher

Ole Flemming Nielsen, who has been teaching at the school for thirty-five years, is the school's ICT instructor. He assists teachers and pupils in using Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in education. He is fifty-nine years old and deeply committed to school work, school social life and ICT. He is always willing to lend a helping hand if a colleague or a pupil needs help with computer-related issues and one of his mottos is: *"When people receive help when needed, they are kept motivated to learn."*

So far, Ole Flemming Nielsen has participated in nine eTwinning projects. Earlier on, he has participated in smaller projects as well, with schools in countries such as Iceland and Canada. These projects were mainly carried out by email, where pupils wrote about their own countries, and asked questions to pupils in other countries as part of their geography or foreign language lessons. *"In 2008, I went to Japan to learn how to develop cultural exchanges. I visited a high school but the pupils were not a perfect match for our 7th grade pupils. Also, the project didn't have a platform with a lot of tools. So I went looking for other projects."*

Soon after returning to Denmark, Ole Flemming Nielsen was introduced to eTwinning, and from the very beginning he saw new perspectives: *"When I first logged on to eTwinning and saw the many contact and search possibilities and the many available tools, I was immediately interested. I created a profile and started looking at what other schools did. After a short while, we launched our first project called 'Schoolovision'."*



In terms of support, the distance from idea to action is short at Stadil-Vedersø School. The school principal and teachers all agree that if a teacher or a class wishes to start a new project, they should be able to do so. As long as the necessary resources can be found, the school principal extends support. In short, if someone is willing to go the extra mile, they can count on the school's support. *"It makes it easy to seize new pedagogical opportunities, and we are good at supporting and helping each other in general, so that no teacher is left on his/her own if he/she wants to take on a new project."*

Ole Flemming Nielsen likes eTwinning for several reasons: It is always possible to find a school in a different country that wants to participate in a project. Also, projects can easily be adjusted to age group and abilities. *"Even the youngest pupils who don't speak much English can benefit from eTwinning. The 3rd grade pupils write postcards, the pre-school pupils make drawings that are scanned and uploaded, and the older pupils participate in video conferences."*

## The project

"Schoolovision" is an annual song and video project, where schools from more than thirty countries all across Europe choose, rehearse and upload a song representative of their country on the project blog. All the children in each of the countries involved view and judge the songs and then it is collectively decided who is chosen as the champion. *"It is a big project to take on, however, it is very suitable for a school like ours, because the pupils are easily engaged and because it is possible for different classes in the school to participate. Pupils watch the new video entries on the blog, discuss what they think of them and subsequently mark them. They put a lot of effort into debating whether a video should get a 10 or a 12."*

The participation in "Schoolovision" is carried out simultaneously with the participation in the Nordplus Project "Rain of Folklore". The latter evolves around singing, dancing and folklore, which makes it a good match for "Schoolovision". Running "Rainbow of Folklore" as two parallel projects, partly as eTwinning and partly under Nordplus, enables the participants to benefit from both the multiple technological platforms of eTwinning and from the financial support that Nordplus provides.



During the project, the school uses the eTwinning platform to store its contribution and the blog is used to read comments and view other countries' contributions. So far, there has been no need for a website.

Up to 2011, "Schoolovision" is the eTwinning project that has had the biggest impact on the pupils, according to Ole Flemming Nielsen. They have learned how to play an instrument and they have learned how to film and edit. Several different forms have contributed to the project. In this year's video it is the 5th and 6th grade pupils who play and sing and the pupils of the 4th grade who are in charge of editing. *"One 10 year old girl showed such talent for editing that she finished the video more or less on her own. In the end, all I had to do was to add the English lyrics so that pupils from other countries could sing along."*

### Pupil participation

The pupils' commitment to the project is closely related to the degree to which they influence the overall planning. They have chosen their own song and decided what pictures should be included and whether the song should be in Danish or English. *"We want to sing about children's rights, and it has to be in Danish because it is performed by Danish children."* The decision to participate in "Schoolovision" was made by the teachers though. *"Pupils are not allowed to register as members or to start a project by themselves, and I have not been able to get them to set up targets or to describe the method and the desired result. "You are much better at that' they tell me. What they really want to do is to communicate with children from other countries, set up the camera and play."*

When it comes down to written work and planning ahead, there is a limit to the pupils' interest. Planning is something teachers usually do and the pupils prefer not to have to write English texts that are more than a few sentences long. The school's oldest pupils would have liked to become pupil administrators in the TwinSpace, however teachers in other countries opposed. If the pupils had taken on the role as administrators it would have given them access to create and delete folders. With twenty to thirty participating schools in a project, this was considered as being too risky. *"I understand the argument, but on the other hand, it supports the pupils' self-confidence to take on a responsibility like that. It would be like giving them a pat on the back to show them that kind of confidence. So I was sad that I had to tell the pupils who had been interested in becoming administrators that I wasn't able to give them access. In my opinion, the reasoning of the teachers from the other countries is contrary to the spirit of eTwinning. The TwinSpace designers have made the system so that the pupils can get this kind of access for a reason. I believe that it is only a matter of time before it becomes perfectly normal for pupils to take on responsibilities like that."*

The school's teachers have motivated the pupils to write by letting them comment on the videos from other countries. The comment function is not used a lot but Ole Flemming Nielsen emphasises that the pupils are very keen to get comments themselves. For that reason they



are willing to write short comments about other contributions when they are asked to do so. Writing isn't all that fun, but as long as they are allowed to keep it short, it is okay. *"The many ways of communicating offered by eTwinning sometimes make it hard to motivate the pupils to write. When it comes to making pupils write more, the project is not that successful. In other eTwinning projects, pupils have had to write longer texts about their families and living conditions and it has taken quite an effort from the teachers to make them do so."*

The pupils of Stadil-Vedersø School have been very interested in the technical aspects of the project. While working with projects

they have decided to use Skype on more than one occasion. Ole Flemming Nielsen mentions this as a good example of how eTwinning contributes to pupils' knowledge of communications. *"It isn't possible to communicate via Skype without showing consideration towards your fellow participants. They didn't do that the first couple of times and the sessions ended in complete chaos. Now they have learned how to behave on Skype. If we want to use Skype we have to behave ourselves and refrain from interrupting."*

The pupils have been good at sharing their experiences and developing teamwork and other kinds of cooperation. Mostly, the atmosphere has been amicable; however, Ole Flemming Nielsen recalls a certain episode, which caused a minor conflict. One pupil had a computer that wasn't setup correctly, which led to the disturbance of other pupils and resulted in her being scolded by them. Later, they realised their mistake and apologised. *"The most important transfer of knowledge occurs from one pupil to the other. They are good at asking each other for advice and they pick up skills by observing each other closely. The collective learning process is vital to pupils and they use it constantly. Often they even tell the teacher how to solve technical problems. This enables the teacher to focus on, for instance, the teaching of English while the pupils take care of the technical aspects of communicating with other countries via eTwinning."*

## Enablers

In order for pupils aged 8 to 12 years to become committed to international projects, it is mandatory that they feel involved in the decision-making process, according to Ole Flemming Nielsen. When the first thing pupils are asked to do is to decide what song they want to contribute, they are likely to become engaged in the project from the very beginning.



Once the pupils are committed, the projects can enhance teamwork, cultural exchange, knowledge of other countries, as well as improve pupils' linguistic, technical and other skills. But the projects do not improve their understanding of planning and the organisation of the curriculum. *"Since we joined 'Schoolvision', the music teacher has told me how the pupils have become extremely motivated when it comes to acquiring the skills needed to improve their video performances. The art teacher had a similar experience with the production of set pieces. By watching other pupils perform, some of them in their national costumes, and by Googling the countries, the pupils have gained geographical knowledge. Also, we have had some valuable ICT lessons. When something is to be viewed by pupils from thirty different countries it encourages learning but I don't think the pupils consider it as part of a greater educational context."*

### Conclusions

When it comes to eTwinning, Ole Flemming Nielsen has one wish: he wishes that more countries would join so that the cultural exchange would include the entire European region, and in the long term, the global one. It is technically possible to include more countries and the pupils' need for cultural understanding and knowledge of global challenges knows no bounds.

### 3.7 Finland

#### School of Pääskytiie (Pääskytien koulu, Porvoo)

*"The projects become naturally integrated with other subject domains. For instance, information technology is one subject domain and most project activities relate to that. Food issues belong to domestic science, or themes about being a Finn or a European relate to social studies."*

### Context

The School of Pääskytiie is a lower secondary school at an urban area of the city of Porvoo (<http://www.porvoo.fi/index.php?cid=porvoo&mid=724>). Porvoo is located about 50 km east from Helsinki, the capital of Finland. The city of Porvoo has about 48,000 inhabitants.

The teacher runs a special education class that was previously part of a separate special education school (Kumpulainen koulu). In Kumpulainen school, there were about 60 pupils, including six study groups with six teachers and four assistants. In 2007, the special education school was integrated with the lower secondary school of Pääskytiie, which now



has about seven hundred pupils and seventy teachers or other staff members.

There are grades from 7 to 9 in the conventional classrooms in Pääskytie school and pupils are from 13 to 16 years of age. In special education, there are grades from 1 to 9, pupils are from 7 to 16 year of age, and one study group includes maximum ten pupils. The school premises consist of a big building, which is about thirty years old. On the school's website<sup>9</sup>, the school's business idea is defined in the following way: *"Pääskytie School aims to offer a modern and safe learning environment and promote high quality teaching with a sensitivity to individual differences."*

## The teacher

Pasi Siltakorpi is a special education teacher who teaches almost all subjects in his class. In the last school year he taught a group of ten pupils in the 9th grade (around the age of 16 years) and currently he teaches a group of nine pupils in the 8th grade. He has seventeen years of teaching experience. Pasi has founded or participated in five eTwinning projects with the same partner school where the collaboration has worked well; for instance, making a web-journal with MagazineFactory<sup>10</sup> or having joint meetings using FlashMeeting. He described the first projects in the following way: *"In the first project we wanted to investigate how these ICT systems work with special education pupils and what kind of tools could be used. The expectation was that it would work well; if the programme is good, why wouldn't it. We used various things such as Pedanet portal, Moodle and many others. It is not sensible to use so many things, but we wanted to see how the pupils would adopt them. And they did it well; if the programme was logical, there were no problems."*

Pasi is a national eTwinning ambassador and he has participated in various national and international eTwinning Training occasions. The school is also otherwise active in taking part in international projects; the school has collaboration with Scandinavian and Baltic countries as well as with Russia, but Pasi has participated in international collaboration only through eTwinning.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.peda.net/veraja/porvoo/paaskytenkoulu/english>.

<sup>10</sup> MagazineFactory is an online magazine tool available for free to eTwinning projects.



When Pasi started running eTwinning projects in the school 2005, he was the only one doing it with his class. Now, there are at least three other teachers participating in eTwinning projects. Although he had not actively tried to persuade other teachers to join eTwinning, especially as there are so many projects going on in school all the time, he does think that perhaps he has become an example of some kind for the other teachers.

### The project

The example project “Digital Diary Dialogues” was Pasi’s latest project with his pupils in the previous year. The project was started with 9<sup>th</sup> grade pupils in the previous spring and continued with 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the autumn. Usually some weeks were to a greater extent devoted for the project activities but the schedule was flexible. The project connected pupils from Finland, Scotland and England (as well as from Afghanistan, although their role was minor). The project was chosen as the best national eTwinning project in Finland in 2009.

In the project, pupils received one mobile phone per class (sponsored by Nokia) through which they sent text messages to each other as well as shared pictures and videos comparing their daily activities, feelings and studying. The original idea was to share all material, such as photos, only through the mobile phones but because it turned out that it was not possible to send pictures outside Scandinavia, the Web was also used for sending material. Pictures were collected on a private web portal (a closed OVI portal provided by Nokia).

One aim of the project was to test how mobile phones could be used in teaching in international collaboration. Concerning subject areas, the central aims were to improve pupils’ English language skills: for British pupils to use proper English and for Finnish pupils to learn vocabulary and be confident to use English language in authentic communication and to get pupils concretely acquainted with other cultures and continents to improve their geographical knowledge. Pasi explained that in order to improve both language and geographical knowledge, he did not try to be too strict on either one. For example, if language was understandable although grammatically incorrect, in some cases he would not correct the pupils in order to avoid hampering their enthusiasm.

### Pupil participation

According to the teacher, a very important feature in this project, as well as in all eTwinning projects, is that they are very motivating for the pupils and they also affect other aspects of schoolwork. Projects create a sense of collectivism and community spirit and they increase pupils’ self esteem when they succeed in doing things and when they notice that other pupils outside their own classroom read their productions.

As examples, pupils did the following activities in the project:

- Everyone took pictures at the same time of day and told the group what they were doing and where they were. The activities and time differences were then compared.
- Pupils took turns in having a mobile phone in their possession a day or two during which they sent text messages partner pupils in other countries on their own times. The pupils put their names in the text messages and shared their pictures through the portal so that they knew with whom they were communicating.
- Pupils made videos collaboratively in their own class about their life and country and then shared them with their partners in other countries. In this activity, mobile phones were used only for taking photos. Videos were then shared through YouTube.



One interesting observation from the project was related to the responsibility that the pupils were given regarding the mobile phones used: *"There was no misuse although I thought in the first year that as the mobile phones were worth 600 Euros, they would be lost... but then there is this aspect of taking responsibility. For the pupils last spring, it was a demonstration of trust to show that one was able to take care of such a valuable device."*

The teacher has been using active and collaborative practices as well as computers in his special education teaching throughout his career depending on the situation. According to him, group work should be carefully guided so that it is not only one who does the work and others watch. He thinks that in the Finnish school system, the curriculum gives teacher a lot of freedom to choose appropriate working methods.

Pupils did not particularly participate in the overall design of the "Digital Diary Dialogues" project but they were asked what they would like to know about the pupils in the other countries. Pupils were interested in the project from the beginning but some pupils did not want to take the mobile phone on as their responsibility. Concerning pupils' involvement, for instance, in making videos with the class, there are usually so many tasks to be done, like



scene setup, sound recording or shooting, that there is something for everyone to do.

The teacher does not have any special methods to evaluate pupils' active involvement but he tries to design the project assignments so that each pupil can do something that he or she is motivated to do. The teacher thought that it was quite easy to integrate eTwinning projects in the curriculum: *"The projects become naturally integrated with other subject domains. For instance, information technology is one subject domain and most project activities relate to that. Food issues belong to domestic science or themes about being a Finn or a European relate to social studies. When I create a project, I do not particularly think of which subject it refers to; it grows and goes by itself. Because I have taught these lower secondary school grades for several years already, I automatically remember the curriculum and can consider whether the project is in that direction or totally outside. There is a feeling that we are doing the right thing."*

In the project, the pupils also did some activities during their leisure time; for instance, one task was to report about their home environment and risk factors in their school route. Parents were not involved in the project but they were aware of it. During the school's international day, the "Digital Diary Dialogues" project was presented to other classes and teachers.

The teacher is willing to participate in eTwinning projects also in the future because he thinks that they are very motivating for the pupils. Concerning pupils' active participation in the project, there could have been even more assignments for pupils in the current spring, because they are always very keen on doing project activities. A foreign language was not a barrier for the pupils. The teacher thought that perhaps the web technology could have been used more actively as pupils' communication channel but then again, one central aim of the project was to test how mobile phones could be used for international collaboration in schools. In the current spring, there has been a plan to start using micro blogging (e.g., Twitter) for sending short diary entries, which was previously done by mobile phones, but the teacher had not yet learned how to use it. In the beginning of the project, micro blogging was not yet well known.

eTwinning tools like the TwinSpace were not used as collaboration environments in the project because they were under construction during the whole year and were not fully available. Separate partners had different environments where they put their own materials and other partners had access to them. The teacher felt that as the TwinSpace was still under development and not very easy to use, that it might be more sensible to use existing tools available online than to put resources for developing catered tools for eTwinning.

## Enablers

According to the teacher, one issue making it easy to run projects successively is the pedagogical freedom to choose working methods flexibly. Also, the support from school leaders to do various things is essential. Of course, one basic prerequisite is to have the required technology. The original idea of using mobile phones in a project emerged in a conference during discussions with a Scottish partner. Pasi then contacted Nokia who first gave three and later more mobile phones to the project. Beyond this, the company has not intervened in the activities of the project.

## Obstacles

The biggest problem in the “Digital Diary Dialogues” project had been that the mobile phones did not work as well as they should have. Especially sending and uploading pictures directly through the phones as it was not a possible function. Another challenge was the participation of four schools in the project, compared to previous projects where there had been only two collaborating schools. Pasi realised that it can be much more difficult to come to an agreement between several partners, regardless of various available tools. There is also the issue of time difference and that the school year is scheduled somewhat differently in each country. In addition, partner teachers were often very active and busy with various activities.

## Conclusions

Considering the factors that have especially promoted pupils’ active involvement in the project, Pasi found that the key elements of success were for the pupils to take responsibility for some activities, to have an influence on decisions about them, to have the freedom to choose what to do, and to have direct contact with foreign pupils using mobile phones.

### 3.8 Czech Republic

#### Gymnázium Boskovice

*“If the pupils felt that they had to improve the functionality of the group in some proper way, they invited a new member, for example somebody who was good in English, in using ICT, etc.”*

## Context

Gymnázium Boskovice is a secondary school in a small city in the north of Moravia, about an hour of driving from Brno. It provides secondary and upper secondary education for children aged 11 to 19 years. It is a mix of compulsory and non-compulsory education<sup>11</sup> and is

11 In the Czech Republic, compulsory education ends at the age of 15 after finishing lower secondary school.



academically oriented to prepare pupils for future study at university.

The school was established in 1900 and since that time has been located in the same building, although the building has been fully reconstructed and modernised. It now has an impressive mix of old architecture and modern equipment. There are special labs for teaching science, multimedia labs for languages and ICT. There is a wireless Internet connection throughout the building and pupils can use the Internet for free. Specially equipped classrooms are used for teaching arts and music. There are two indoor gyms, one outdoor sports ground, and the Baroque style assembly hall is where most whole school activities take place. A new elevator allows disabled pupils to participate in all school activities. There are about five hundred pupils and forty-two teachers - eight of them involved in eTwinning. The school is led by the head teacher who is responsible to the regional authorities with two deputy head teachers and educational and career advisers.



### The teacher

Eva is the deputy head teacher at her school, responsible for the lower secondary education section and environmental education. She is a very experienced teacher of biology and chemistry. Project work is not a new activity in this school, especially for teachers of non-science subjects who are very keen on such activities. Foreign language, history and social science projects are quite common in the school; however, an international online project in science was quite new. In the beginning, not many of Eva's colleagues believed in the success of such a project, but at the end they started to support her.

### The project

The project is called "We teach together" and the title explains everything. The teacher from the Czech Republic and the teacher from Portugal decided to teach photosynthesis together. The main aim was to learn about photosynthesis in an unusual way in order to motivate the pupils. Chemistry and biology are not very popular among pupils in the Czech school while the Portugal school specialises in science.

The first stage of the project was a preparatory stage, where the teachers worked on the content, prepared worksheets, etc. This stage took about five months from September to January. The second stage of project work started in February. Pupils in both Czech and Portuguese classes were divided into groups and started to introduce themselves, their school, city and country. They used tools such as email and Skype. The next stage was connected with photosynthesis; each group was given a worksheet that they had to fill in by task. To do this, they had to make observations, experiments, find the necessary information on the Web, etc. Portuguese pupils were more familiar with the topic because they had more lessons to study it; however, the Czech pupils were more capable in using ICT. In this way, they worked as equal partners. They used videoconferencing while doing experiments, emailing and Skyping. Pupils in each group also prepared questions for the other groups using PowerPoint.

The most difficult part of the project was organising the videoconferences while doing experiments. Sometimes they had difficulties with the Internet connection and thus missed the time of the call. For this reason, both partners planned the lessons for the eTwinning project in a timetable to make their communication easier.

Several levels of real teaching and learning together emerged. First, both teachers learned from one another; after finding the topic corresponding with the curriculum of both schools, the pre-project work of both teachers began. From September to February they worked hard on setting the purpose, plan and content of the project. They both created worksheets used later on by pupils in the project. In addition to a new friendship between the teachers, they enriched their learning methods by finding new tasks for pupils, as well as new experiments and new ways of explaining the topics.

Secondly, the impact on teacher-to-pupil relationships was significant. Czech pupils were taught by the Portuguese teacher for some parts of the project and vice versa. For this, the teachers had to improve their language skills to be at least able to explain the topic properly in English.

Third, the relationship between pupils and their partner peers evolved; the mixed groups of pupils from both countries had to work on tasks together to find the answers to the questions in their worksheets. Very often, Portuguese pupils were in the teachers' seat for their Czech peers due to their specialisation in sciences since they had eight lessons a week dedicated to the subject while Czech pupils had only two lessons of chemistry and two lessons of biology per week.

Finally, was the relationship of pupil-to-teacher: *"Portuguese pupils used to send me the questions for my pupils in advance and, from time to time, they came up with new aspects of the topic and we struggled with the different way of teaching in both schools. This definitely led to innovative thinking about the teaching process."*

## Pupil participation

The pupils in this school are very familiar with various kinds of projects. Since the early beginning of their studies they participate in various kinds of projects from social science, history, geography, foreign language, etc. Whole school projects are also quite common in this school. Each year, one class is responsible for organising informal activities and week-long workshops where they have to prepare weekly activities for all pupils in the school. Both actions are fully organised by pupils, which means they have to take care of the content, organisation, promotion and moderation of the activity. This is very important for the development of inter-personal relations in the classroom.

The main stress in the project was put on the work of the pupils as they worked in their international groups. At the beginning, the groups were created according to the relationships between pupils, but later on they often changed. *“If the pupils felt that they had to improve the functioning of the group in some proper way, they invited a new member, for example somebody who was good in English, in using ICT, etc.”*

The language of the project was English. Pupils had to first translate the task, then work on it and prepare the presentation – all in English. It was problematic for the Czech pupils at the beginning, so they asked their English teacher to support them. They also studied the worksheets at home to understand the content, but the majority of the work was done during biology and chemistry lessons.

## Enablers

The pupils were asked about their opinions of this kind of project. The most interesting answers were:

- *“We had been a good team before starting the project, but since then it’s even better. I know on whom I can rely, who is ready to help, who must be persuaded to do something, etc.”*
- *“What I loved most about the project was that everybody participated; those who were not good in chemistry or biology helped with the translations, PPT presentations, or just stayed in contact and were chatting with the Portuguese.”*
- *“We started to be more self confident in English and more independent in our work. On the other hand our responsibility for the result was increased. I now feel more motivated for my future studies.”*

The last question was about the relationship between the head teacher and the projects running in the school. From the teacher’s point of view, the head teacher has

enough information about the projects and tries to support the teachers in project work by giving bonus incentives, praising teachers and showing project outcomes to others.

The same question answered by the pupils, however, was not so ideal. From their point of view, the head teacher didn't know much about the project while it was running and didn't believe in the success of the project. However, when the project won second place in the national eTwinning competition and the pupils were very proud of their work, the head teacher congratulated them and said that he appreciated their work a lot because it was the school's first successful science project.

## Obstacles

For the teacher, it was not common to run a project based on science as more typical projects are in social sciences or languages in secondary school. The main reason is that the curriculum doesn't allow teachers to spend time on projects and it is more demanding for teachers to organise project work. Another problem can be caused by parents' expectations; they expect this type of school to prepare their children for entrance exams to university and college. This is why the teachers of both sides decided to write a pre-project test of knowledge with a similar test at the end of the project to show its impact. The project concluded with a meeting of partners in Portugal when Czech pupils stayed in the families of their Portuguese friends for a week. New friendships started and many of the pupils continue to stay in contact.

## Conclusions

Pupils, teachers and their partners ended the project knowing that it wouldn't be their last project together. For next school year, they are preparing a new project based on the involvement of the pupils. They have asked to have their lessons take place at the same time during the new school year in order to remove the one obstacle of time they came across during their first partnership. And, of course, they want to apply for the European eTwinning Prize.

### 3.9 Greece

#### 1<sup>st</sup> EPAL YMITTOU Athens

*“The thing that has made a difference for me and my everyday school life is the enthusiasm of the pupils, to see them studying better, to see them learning different disciplines and to show an interest in Europe. It is the first time that pupils have said to me ‘Teacher, we are happy to do translations and to cooperate with you and our partners.’ The change in their attitude, and the change in pupils who begin to like school more, makes our school more active and dynamic.”*

#### Context

The “1<sup>st</sup> EPAL YMITTOU” is a secondary technical and professional school in Athens. The school is situated near the centre of Athens and very close to Ymittos, a small mountain.

The school building dates back to 1929 and is located in a very beautiful and peaceful area. It is a small school with approximately 180 pupils from across the city, equally divided between boys and girls. Pupils are between the ages of 15 and 20. Despite the fact that education in Greece is not compulsory past the age of 15 years, 1<sup>st</sup> EPAL YMITTOU is specifically targeted at young people who are not particularly academically oriented but are instead interested in entering the world of work as soon as they are able to. The school specialises in training for: mechanical engineers, electricians, business administrators, medical laboratories assistants and data-processing administrators. They are interested in environment issues, recycling materials, consumerism, local music, teenage life, communication and travel. The ICT provision in the school is excellent with three dedicated networked computer rooms and a computer in all classrooms.



The head teacher of the school is very supportive of the work within eTwinning. Eleftheria Politaki remarked that, “the head teacher is a proponent of any idea that will enhance the educational environment and is one of my primary supporters in this endeavour.”



## The teacher

The teacher running the project is Eleftheria Politaki. She is a medical laboratories technician teaching subjects related to medical work in laboratories, such as anatomy, haematology and microbiology. She has been teaching for many years. Her involvement in European collaboration projects started in 2007 when, together with a colleague from Italy, they decided to start collaborating between their two schools and registered a project.

*“Our three first projects were about the environment. Entitled ‘Recycle,*

*way of living 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>’ and ‘Saving energy’, the projects helped children become more aware of climate change by informing the community about programmes to save energy and prevent environmental problems. It is not so difficult to see what is there in a project proposal; in the beginning you have to make a productive discussion with your pupils and your partner school, then it is easier to feel safe with your partner and to organise the common activity plan.”*

Eleftheria now feels that finding a suitable partner is not so difficult if you know from the beginning what you need. *“We wanted only a similar school, with similar interests and pupils of the same age level. The Italian school was the ideal choice. Thus, during the last three years we have been working with the same partners from Italy. We know them very well and a few months ago they came to see us in Athens.”*

## The project

Eleftheria has been involved in four eTwinning projects so far, and with her Italian project partner she recently started a new project entitled “My studies, my future” dealing with the choices pupils need to make for their future. *“As a technical and professional school, our main aim in this programme is to study the choices of pupils and their directions of studies but also their future development as professionals.”* The inspiration for the theme of the project “My studies, my future” came from a need: *Eleftheria and her pupils had had two previous collaborations with the same school on environmental themes and needed something new to study. “My pupils started to feel bored. We discussed it with our partners and we planned something new. The objectives of this new programme were: 1. To explore the system of professional education in each country. 2. To compare and analyse these programmes. 3. To seek the motivation for choosing to attend professional lyceum and faculties. 4. To produce*



special reports on the specialities in each school as well as in their curriculum. 5. To conduct research on the job market for graduates at local, national and European levels.”

### Pupil participation

Eleftheria described the current level involvement of pupils in eTwinning, where she has three projects officially involving twenty pupils. She spoke about her primary objectives as being, “to inspire enthusiasm in my pupils in order to speak to pupils of the same age from all over Europe and discuss the things that interest them – and encourage them to use the Internet and email. Also, when a medical teacher from the UK announced that she wanted to visit our school, the team became larger and more enthusiastic.”

In response to whether or not something else existed in the school before eTwinning to involve pupils in this way and put them in touch with European counterparts, Eleftheria responded, “I am the only one doing anything about Europe in my school. I was also the only one doing innovative projects about health and environment before. Nothing similar, nothing equals eTwinning, nothing at all.” Moving onto the topic of involving pupils, the question about pupils having a central role from the very beginning in planning the direction and focus of a project was raised. “Nowadays, our pupils are gradually becoming great organisers and they can manage complicated situations very well. As a matter of fact, it is a pupils' project and the teacher should be only available to help them plan the activities.”

When asked to further explain how she kept pupil involvement in mind while planning the objectives of the project, she said, “I informed them about the new idea and asked if they liked it. It won the applause of my pupils so I asked what they would prefer to do. They chose roles and duties and also made timelines.” She described how the relationship between her pupils and the pupils in the partner school developed during the project. “They started by working on the project. Then they exchanged telephone numbers and email addresses and began discussing the things that interest young people. They spent a lot of time chatting or having videoconferences.” Eleftheria then went on to discuss about the parts of the project the pupils are the most involved in: “They like to show off their organisational abilities and their capacity to communicate and to cooperate with other pupils. Even though they do not have a great command of English, they find the words (or body language) to communicate. That I find fantastic.”

Although Eleftheria is a teacher of medical disciplines in laboratories, she has also involved some of her colleagues who teach languages. “In preparation for the projects, I have asked some of my school language colleagues to offer extra translation help because my English wasn't good enough to support our project's activities.” Eleftheria then moved on to discuss how the pupils demonstrated their interest in the project and the topic of contact with the parents, to see if pupil involvement went beyond the school walls. She was, however, somewhat disappointed by the parents' reactions. “When

*I announced the start of the project, they were very excited and wanted to start immediately. Every day they asked me when they could start, however only a few of the parents asked to be informed about what the pupils had done in the project. We made some meetings to inform them. Unfortunately most of the parents were not interested. [...]. A minority of parents were very pleased that their children took part, went abroad, participated in the project and expressed their satisfaction and thanks. They were very pleased that I did activities that made their children like school; the pupils also covered many subjects in a different way. They learned a lot of things.”*



## Obstacles

When asked to describe some of the obstacles to her work in eTwinning projects, Eleftheria replied that the main obstacle was the lack of support from colleagues: *“The obstacles are not in the project; the obstacles are in the school! This is because my colleagues perhaps do not appreciate the value of European projects or the project approach. So I have a lot of difficulties to help them understand that it is a benefit because the school ought to be more international. However, I have noticed that my colleagues are becoming more interested and curious little by little!”* She then went on to say, *“I would love it if there was some collaboration among my colleagues for the benefit of my pupils.”* When asked if she thought it was possible for her other colleagues in the same subject to become

involved, she replied, *“in this school we mostly work separately, we have departments, etc, In reality although we all follow the same programme, we are not well mixed. The Greek system forces us, to a degree, to focus on preparing our pupils for the national entrance examination. Our pupils are very anxious about their future. Therefore I tend to work on my own. I hope to achieve change but it takes time.”*

On the subject of technical problems, Eleftheria remarked that the three computer laboratory facilities are very good: *“I have all I need but I am alone without help. My missing tool is the cooperation of my colleagues.”*



### Enablers

Elfetheria also spoke about the positive aspects of the project in the school and how all these helped her mature as a teacher. *“The thing that has made a difference for me and my everyday school life is the enthusiasm of the pupils; to see them studying better, to see them learning different disciplines to show an interest for Europe. It is the first time that pupils have said to me ‘Teacher, we are happy to do translations and to cooperate with you and our partners.’ The change in their attitude and the change in pupils who begin to like school more, makes our school more active and dynamic.”*

Elfetheria makes the point that the relationship with her pupils changed. They became more trustful of her and did not hesitate to ask for help when needed. *“With the computers, they like to create and mostly to learn by doing. Also it helps that I am experienced in ICT and they feel safe all the time. They look and know how to use a PC and mostly they know that I am always there for them and their eTwinning friends, too. I have noticed that my pupils have a totally changed outlook towards school. They ask me if they can spend more time to work on eTwinning although they don't have free time at all because of their national exams to enter university. It is a huge change and a relaxing opportunity for them before stressful examination periods.”*

### Conclusions

Elfetheria speaks about her hopes for the future, one of which is that eTwinning would be embedded in the curriculum. She feels this would help her position at school. *“For me it is important to make eTwinning an official weekly lesson. My suggestion is to have at least one hour per week for our activities. Also it could be very helpful if NSS members or our local ambassador came as visitors to our school. My pupils feel very proud of their work and they need to know that other important people care about it. They need emotional incentives to keep going. I need them, too. This would be very important.”*

# Final remarks

## Section 4

These case studies provide a real insight into the positive and negative aspects attached to working collaboratively with pupils in eTwinning. However, apart from the increased motivation and sense of achievement by the pupils coupled with an increase of professional satisfaction in the teachers, several other factors emerged from the case studies that were to a degree, unexpected. In the following discussion, the opinions are from teachers in case studies not represented in this publication<sup>12</sup>.



The first of these is the use of eTwinning to support a **programme of inclusion** in mainstream education. **Anneke van Vliet of the Willem de Zwijger school in the Netherlands** had this to say on the topic: *“A number of pupils have learning difficulties and were told in the past of everything that they couldn't do. With eTwinning, everyone is able to participate and they actually receive compliments for what they can do. They see for themselves that they can do things well and that they can create something interesting.”*

This sentiment was echoed by **Chantal Mertens from the école fondamentale Lorentzweiler in Luxembourg** who also teaches an inclusion class where one of her pupils, named Lynn, has Down syndrome. “Since eTwinning is an ideal tool for differentiating lessons, it also supports inclusion. For example in our Berlin/Lorentzweiler project, Lynn worked together with one of our best pupils. In another eTwinning project on nature and animals, Lynn took photos together with the help of her teacher while some of the non-handicapped children wrote texts. Being fully integrated in our class work and having her own partners and communicating with them, Lynn feels appreciated and accepted and this is very motivating to her.” The school also has

<sup>12</sup> As has been previously stated, the full set of case studies is available on the eTwinning Portal: [www.etwinning.net](http://www.etwinning.net)



a partner school in the Netherlands that has only handicapped children in their classes. The teachers of this school think that it is not possible to include a child with Down syndrome. “We know that it is possible and we will show them how it works,” said Chantal Mertens.

Technical issues have been mentioned as sometimes being a real barrier to be overcome, but the actual way in which **computers are placed** in a school also seem to be of major significance. Computer rooms are sometimes there but underused for various reasons as outlined by **Isabel Béreau-Baumann from Ile de la Reunion, France**; “*there is a computer room but no one to maintain it and no one to teach computer classes, so the equipment does not work very well and the pupils are often unaccustomed to using them.*” **Sari Auramo from Finland** experiences the opposite situation: “*Of course the issue that we are in this home classroom and have computers here available makes it much easier. It is not at all a typical situation that I can make pupils do things any time. If you have only a computer lab in use, you have to plan much more carefully when you do these activities.*”

**Eric Vayssié from Toulouse in France** runs his eTwinning activities after school, because of the demands of the school programme: “*With all of the demands placed on teachers, they have little spare time to run an eTwinning project: the time needed to find partners, plan the project together and get the project up and running.*” He maintains that, “*of course, teachers at the school recognise the value of computers and ICT in education, but as with eTwinning, these new tools and methods need to become the new way of doing things, a way of doing things differently, not just additions to an already overcrowded schedule.*”

Another interesting concept emerging is the part that **emotional involvement** plays in willingness of pupils to engage in learning. This point is made by **Theodoras Tsampatzidis, from Thessaloniki in Greece**, in relation to the engagement of pupils in eTwinning activities. He asserts that, “*if teachers believe that they should transmit ‘pure discipline knowledge’, and accordingly their educational aims are entirely focused on transmitting that knowledge, then it is very difficult for ‘genuine communication’ between teachers and pupils to occur. Conversely, when teachers believe that knowledge can have several forms, such as ‘social knowledge and emotional knowledge’, then it is easier to establish ‘a strong bond’ with their pupils.*” He further indicates that this kind of communication with pupils is a unique way to motivate them to get involved in a project.

This emotional dimension is also discussed by **Urša Bajda from Slovenia** who is the school librarian and coordinator of international projects in her school. She asserts that project work by its nature provides a different background to learning for pupils, one that they personally identify with and which lies in provoking their interest. “*From the*



*teacher's viewpoint the project work with pupils is completely different when compared to a regular lesson and/or classic school lessons, during which pupils pursue specific knowledge standards and/or learning objectives. These standards, which are included in the prescribed curriculum, must be attained and the entire process tends to be based on the constraint of pupils, whereas pupils' interests and wishes are somehow ignored. On the other hand, project work does not force its objective onto pupils. Pupils instead express their wish and motivation to familiarise themselves with a specific topic. Project study work is therefore far more motivating and active. There is no competition among pupils, since they work in groups and in order to acquire their own life experience. Accordingly, the climate is much more relaxed, informal and friendly, since pupils decide on their own whether they will participate in the project or not. Project work is important especially due to the individual's motivation and his/her field of interest."*

Finally, **Cornelia Esterl from Austria** describes how this emotional dimension in learning operates in an eTwinning projects involving language learning; *"The main learning/teaching situations involve individual support or peer support. When reading foreign language texts on the platform, pupils try to deduce the meaning of unknown words from the context provided. Moreover, they are more emotionally involved in reading the texts, because it is not an anonymous text in the workbook but a text written by a pupil of their partner school who is of the same age."*



The final point emerging has to do with the level of both social and cultural learning experienced by the pupils. **Leif Bergholtz from Sweden** found that when working within an eTwinning project, the interaction between the pupils was on a different level: *“The conversation is somewhat different. It gets closer to the pupils everyday life. All these questions relate to the pupils themselves, already from the presentation of themselves, their family, what kind of music they are listening to and what clothes they wear. A lot of discussions regarding values and how you relate to different things are being conducted and pupils relate to their school life as well to their life outside school. Through these projects I have got a very good insight into young peoples’ lives. Likewise, Zoltán Tasi from Hungary found that her pupils have “learned to accept their peers’ abilities and the teachers’ attitude.”*

**Kolbrún Svala Hjaltadóttir** reports a striking example of the increase in social and personal awareness in pupils **from Iceland**. She says that, *“one of the most positive aspects of pupil participation is that the project has brought out pupils that are otherwise less forthcoming. Thus, there are examples of such pupils organising their own numbers, and even performing solo. This has given them more self-esteem, and a chance to make their talents known to their peers. In this way, the project has crossed divides among the pupils and thus helped counter exclusion and bullying.”*

**Conor Kelly from Dublin in Ireland**, reports how his normally non-forthcoming class of 15 year olds grew in terms of self worth and personal responsibility. He said in relation to his project “Filming the poem” that, *“anyone who wanted a role had a role. I didn’t tell them what to do. They told me what they wanted to do and in that way it worked better. The pupils actively participated. It wasn’t something that was imposed. They told me what they wanted to do and if it was feasible we did it.”* An important point in this regard is made **by Signe Sloth from Denmark**. She talks about how pupils have to learn that there are different ways of doing things in different countries, and that sometimes it can even inhibit progress. *“The culture of communication varies from country to country. This is a learning experience for the pupils but at times the differences can be so big that they reduce their commitment. All in all, it has been extremely rewarding to cooperate with the other countries. It has given the pupils knowledge of how global networks operate. This is a key quality of the project. The future at hand regarding education and work for these pupils will be all about communicating and networking and creating new ideas with people from other countries.”*

Some of these emerging comments obviously beg the question of further investigation. eTwinning however should not be regarded as a universal panacea for educational malaise, and it can be argued that it attracts active and daring teachers. While this may be true, the pedagogical approaches it supports as used by these teachers can point the way to significant developments in approaching new ways of delivering traditional curriculum to their more traditional colleagues. This in turn may encourage the

curriculum makers to more seriously consider the role of such alternate approaches in traditional curricula and indeed inspire traditional teacher training bodies to include some training on the pedagogical use of initiatives such as eTwinning.

The final word goes to **Anne Daniels, a head teacher from the United Kingdom** about the relevance of collaboration and peer to peer learning found in eTwinning; *“The immediacy of collaboration through ICT and the close peer-to-peer connection gives learning relevance and meaning. The flexibility of eTwinning allows teachers to do what they can, when they can so that people can grow into it.”*



# Pupils in eTwinning



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