



Global Junior Challenge

Projects to share the future

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Project Location

Country:

Italy

City:

Colle di Val d'Elsa, Toscana

Organization

Organization Name:

Arnolfo di Cambio

Organization Type:

School

Specify:

non sono necessari finanziamenti: il progetto è svolto in orario curriculare

Website

<http://secondagineuropa.blogspot.it/>

Privacy Law

Consenso al trattamento dei dati personali

Do you authorize the FMD to the treatment of your personal data?:

I do authorize the FMD to the use of my personal data.

Project Type

Education up to 15 years

Project Description

Description Frase (max. 500 characters):

European students to the world via food and ICT: are we really what we eat?

Project Summary (max. 2000 characters):

Students from Italy, Greece and Hungary explore their own and each other's countries, and then the whole world, as seen through the food that is eaten in the different places. Their journey is a virtual one, but the exchange of experiences is real, with regular meetings via Skype, and a blog <http://secondagineuropa.blogspot.it/> ^[1] a TwinSpace <http://twinspace.etwinning.net/1291/home> ^[2] and the EXPO2015 community <http://www.togetherinexpo2015.it/> ^[3] as meeting points. In their journey through the world, students find out that the food of a country can tell us a lot about its natural environment, history, economy and even religion. The project, which was born out of the urge to find an alternative to the traditional book in Geography teaching, soon developed into something more: Geography learned not by reading a book or watching a documentary, but by meeting and making friends with peers from abroad. Geography not as a list of data about a country but as something alive, told by those who live in those countries. The partners in the project were three, but the EXPO2015 website gave us the opportunity to meet students from all over the world. The blog SecondaGiNeuropa got more than 11.000 visits in a bunch of months, and the students published around 400 articles. We tried out some simple exercises of flipped classroom: students had to work in groups to present an aspect of a chosen country via food, choosing an ICT tool from a list given by the teacher: the tool-testing had to be performed at home, the realization of the product and the publishing in the blog or TwinSpace at school, in a given time. All of the teams (first national, then international teams) managed to complete the tasks, boosting their creativity (thus their learning) in the process. The involved classes registered a dramatic increase in basic competences in Geography (in attachment, the graphics). It was a very successful project in terms of development of students' competences via the use of ICT.

How long has your project been running?

2014-08-30 22:00:00

Objectives and Innovative Aspects

At first, our objective as teachers was to find an alternative to the use of the text book in the teaching of Geography. We wanted to prove that Geography can stop being felt by students as boring (having to learn by heart the names of mountains, lakes, rivers, capitals etc.) and it can be transformed in a subject perceived for what it is: a picture of real places, inhabited by real people, with their stories, culture, ideas. Later on through the project we started working on the idea of the EU as a union of different countries, that yet have something in common and support each other (a very important topic at the moment!). Of course, we had all the objectives connected with the subject of Geography: correct use of the specific language of the subject, understanding the anthropic and natural elements in a territory, respect of natural resources, understanding European common roots, understanding the relationship between natural environment ? economy ? history of a country. We also had objectives linked to the use of ICT: understanding the correct use of a tool, being able to respect copyrights, understanding the opportunities and risks of the web. The means used to reach those goals are ICT tools, peer learning, team working (in national and international teams), simple

experiences in flipped classroom. The use of ICT tools was kept as free as possible in order to boost creativity. This trick turned the tasks into fun and soon the blog became addictive for the students! Eventually, all of the objectives were attained, at different levels, by all the students.

Results

Describe the results achieved by your project How do you measure (parameters) these. (max. 2000 characters):

The most important result is obviously the students learning: in my school we have standardized tests at the beginning, middle term and end of the school year. The Italian involved classes improved dramatically from the starting level to the end of the school year in Geography. And the comparison between involved/not involved classes is striking: this is an evidence that a methodology based on real interaction of students with peers of different countries + creative use of ICT + use of different means of expression (to care for the different intelligences, also visual or kinesthetic, etc? not only linguistic) is successful as more motivating, and definitely beats the chalk and talk. I consider another great result the fact that the students chose to spend their free time at home interacting with their partners in the TwinSpace, posting in the blog, completing team missions in the EXPO2015 community, instead of being on facebook or other uncontrolled (i.e. unsafe) socials. This expanded their school-time with a positive rebound on their learning. The criteria used to evaluate the results, as well as those established by the Literature/History/Geography department for the standardized tests, are the comparison between classes involved in the project versus classes not involved + number of classes involved in the first year versus number of classes willing to join in the project for the second year. We have evidence that the involved classes perform significantly better even in the standardized (more traditional) tests. And while this year in Italy we had two involved classes, we have another six willing to join in for the next year (plus, around 10 European school as potential partners).

How many users interact with your project monthly and what are the preferred forms of interaction? (max. 500 characters):

We have 2 Italian classes + 2 teachers, 1 Hungarian class + 2 teachers, 1 Greek class + 2 teachers: about 100 students + 6 teachers. The families show a good participation, take part in all of the dissemination events, and so do the different Municipalities of the involved schools. The blog has a good amount of monthly visitors, both from our schools (students of non-involved classes browsing the blog for their studies) and from all over the world, presumably thank to the EXPO2015 activities (see the chart on the top right of the blog homepage to see the different nationalities of visitors).

Sustainability

What is the full duration of your project (from beginning to end)?:

From 1 to 3 years

What is the approximate total budget for your project (in Euro)?:

Less than 10.000 Euro

What is the source of funding for your project?:

Other

Specify:

Scuola Secondaria di Primo Grado

Is your project economically self sufficient now?:

Yes

Since when?:

2014-08-30 22:00:00

Transferability

Has your project been replicated/adapted elsewhere?:

No

What lessons can others learn from your project? (max. 1500 characters):

They can reuse our working plan for the teaching of Geography, as other classes will in our school for the next school year. They can see that we cannot teach Geography as they did in 1900. Today, Geography is both more complex and more exciting, as there's the whole world of knowledge in it (from Science to Technology, from Economics to History, from Natural Sciences to Biology). We want our students to taste a little bit of each. So we have to introduce the subject in a way that it is felt as alive: cooperating with partners from different nationalities, learning by doing and exchanging, working in teams, preferably international teams, getting first-hand information from those who live in a different country, feeling free to explore the countries and the ICT tools to get to know first, and then present them. We chose food as the leading image in our journey, but other themes can be chosen of course. It is the journey that matters. Other schools and teachers can see that, even if we don't use traditional means (test book, individual study, traditional essays, etc.), our students get more involved, so they perform better even in traditional tests.

Are you available to help others to start or work on similar projects?:

Yes

Background Information

Barriers and Solutions (max. 1000 characters):

There are no obstacles to this kind of methodology. It's just very time-consuming, so teachers have to know that if their students get involved and write down 400 articles, they'll have to give their feedback to 400 articles (not the 25 essays you have to correct twice a semester in a traditional teaching). Plus, the team activities should be well planned in advance, to avoid having one student doing all the work and the others play (the teacher has to think about different roles for the students to choose in the group). Planning the project and the dissemination with partners is time consuming as well. And you have to know lots of ICT tools to keep the students motivated and entertained (a playful atmosphere is of great help!). But everything can be easily overcome with collaboration (also teachers have their share of peer learning!). There are neither extra costs nor extra hours needed. Everything can be done in normal school time, inside the curriculum.

Future plans and wish list (max. 750 characters):

We are planning to widen the project next year, opening it to new partners from different countries and more classes in our school. We expect a huge participation as a consequence of this year's brilliant results (families are pushing for their kids to be involved in the project). We will create a new blog and open a new eTwinning project as a follow up. Everything will be kept, as for this year, in the curriculum and in the normal school-time. We do not need any funding or anything special, as it's an innovative kind of teaching that just needs a pc room and some tablets, plus motivated teachers, not an expensive plan of buying any complicated or futuristic technology. In the long run, we want to introduce an innovative, evidence-

supported methodology, for the teaching of Geography, widening it to institutes in our net, both in Italy and in Europe.

[teamwork](#) [4] [peerlearning](#) [5] [ICT](#) [6] [Geography](#) [7] [flipped classroom](#) [8] [EXPO2015](#) [9] [eTwinning](#) [10] [environmental sustainability](#) [11] [cooperative learning](#) [12]

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Links

[1] <http://secondagineuropa.blogspot.it/>

[2] <http://twinspace.etwinning.net/1291/home>

[3] <http://www.togetherinexpo2015.it/>

[4] <http://2017.gjc.it/en/category/keywords-separate-with-commas/teamwork>

[5] <http://2017.gjc.it/en/category/keywords-separate-with-commas/peerlearning>

[6] <http://2017.gjc.it/en/category/parole-chiave-separate-da-virgole/ict>

[7] <http://2017.gjc.it/en/category/keywords-separate-with-commas/geography>

[8] <http://2017.gjc.it/en/category/keywords-separate-with-commas/flipped-classroom>

[9] <http://2017.gjc.it/en/category/keywords-separate-with-commas/expo2015>

[10] <http://2017.gjc.it/en/category/parole-chiave-separate-da-virgole/etwinning>

[11] <http://2017.gjc.it/en/category/keywords-separate-with-commas/environmental-sustainability>

[12] <http://2017.gjc.it/en/category/parole-chiave-separate-da-virgole/cooperative-learning>