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Editor's Note

Dear readers,

we present to you the last issue of HUPEzine for this year. HUPE has gathered articles for months and only the strongest ones among you have found enough strength to cope with writing at the end of the school year. Even though the issue is smaller than usual, we don't doubt you will enjoy excellent examples of good practices from Croatian classrooms. Anita Živković has offered us brilliant research she has done lately in her classroom and it is a piece that is worth reading. Helga Kraljik, Ankica Šarić, Tajana Bundara are also ELT names that guarantee an interesting issue.

If you would like to contribute to the Newsletter or HUPEzine on a more regular basis, please get in touch with us. We would like to have you on board! We are also pleased to announce that HUPE is issuing a call for article submissions for the next HUPEzine. The deadline is January 1st. We invite you to send your stories, comments, or reviews to hupe.news-letter@gmail.com.

Yours,
Anita Žepina, HUPE Publications Editor

Contributions:
The best way to support your association and the HUPEzine is to write to us and send us your contributions. All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.
Write and send your contributions to the HUPEzine editor. Please, be sure to write your name, surname and affiliation / institution and address at the beginning or end of the text

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Sandra Vuk
Osnovna škola Sveta Nedjelja, Područna škola Kerestinec

A recipe for successful adult learning

Terms: project, Webclassroom, education, volunteerism, professional development, webinars, pandemic time, step-by-step learning…

WebClassroom was created as a project in 2019 and its primary goal was to improve the digital knowledge and skills that teachers have. Project authors were Nevena Petrović, Lana Jager and myself, Sandra Vuk. We presented many examples (at that time primarily with primary school teachers) which were examples that all three of us used in our classrooms on a regular basis.

In addition to the digital knowledge and skills that we had, we decided to contact project partners through a webinar. Thus, we were present and taught skills through a step-by-step method that demonstrated a certain way of working with a digital tool.

The first webinars and digital tools that we taught to our project partners were: Wordwall, Canva, eTwinning (multiple webinars), Google presentations, MS Power Point…

Very quickly we had more than 100 partners in the eTwinning platform of the project and could no longer hold webinars on it (we held 24 webinars / events on the eTwinning platform).

https://connect.carnet.hr/webucionica/

1. Virtual room Webučionica platform Adobe Connect

From Carnet[1] in November 2019, I got to use the virtual room of Adobe Connect. The number of participants in our webinars grew and we realized at one point that we had outgrown the target group of primary school teachers.

We noticed the need for systematic management of education and a planned approach to topics. In January 2020 we received an invitation from the Ministry of Science and Education to conduct our training sessions on the EMA[2] platform.

It is important to point out that today in 2022 we are in our virtual room holding webinars at 19:15. As a person of the elderly population, I remember that in my youth at 19:15 there was a cartoon before bed, so I thought that it was the best time for holding webinars. Until then educators have family and household chores to attend to and have time for professional development after that.

We offered education about new digital tools, their application in the classroom, specialized digital skills, the list goes on, and we continue to hold project classes every working day. Today, three years later, we have defined webinar days by the following topics: new / old tools, project teaching, Genially and BookWidget tools, Wakalet and Bookcreator tools, and Google tools.

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1 Carnet Croatian Academic and Research Network https://www.carnet.hr/o-carnet-u/
2 EMA Application for the organization and monitoring of education - EMA is a central place for all users from primary and secondary education to apply for professional development.

1.1 Step-by-step teaching

The success of the webinars in the virtual WebClassroom room is thanks to the method of continuation, which has always been emphasized by the project partners as the most important. Step-by-step teaching is based on guided teaching where the user is guided through the process of acquiring digital skills from easy to difficult with the image and presentation of the webinar leader. Often webinar users work in parallel with a mentor who demonstrates certain actions and thus creates digital content guided and mentored by the mentor.

1.2 Differentiation by working days

Over time, it has become clear that not all partners in the project are interested in the same topics because we are all different. Thus, we differentiated the content by day and arranged the webinars. Each day of the week has its own presenters who independently design content, lead or present webinars, and answer chat questions.

2. Pandemic time (Corona time)

During March 2020 the interest in webinars in the virtual WebClassroom room was huge. Our webinars were attended by a maximum of 768 participants, always approximately 500 participants until June 2020. At that time we decided to ask teachers / professors / educators what digital skills they want to master with our help, what tools they are interested in or need during distance learning. If we did not have adequate knowledge about a particular tool, we sought help by asking experts to come to the WebClassroom to show everyone who was interested. It was here (in the WebClassroom) that a team of experts slowly began to form who were eager to get involved in our webinars and help in that difficult time.
During May / June 2020, after completing training on the OpenLearn[3] platform, I realized that webinars alone are not enough for professional development because sometimes we do not know if users have ever demonstrated or mastered their digital skills anywhere by creating content.
During the 12-week distance learning in 2020, we held 56 webinars (even on the day of the earthquake in Zagreb).

3 OpenLearn https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ professional development platform.

3. Professional training sessions in the WebClassroom[4]

From June 2020 to January 2022, longer professional training sessions were available in the WebClassroom:

3.1. Summer Challenge - two rounds held; 680 users have finished the course so far.

The goal of the Summer Challenge is to create digital content in preparation for the beginning of the school year. The tools that users have in front of them are used to create digital educational content.
In this training, it is important to note that those who approach the course should create content and share it with the educational community and mentors. Mentors evaluate the completed task and provide feedback. Participants receive a certificate of completion of professional training only after completing the minimum number of tasks or creating specific digital content.

3.2. Winter Challenge - two rounds held; 840 users have finished the course so far.

The goal of the Winter Challenge is communication, video lessons, distance learning and content gaming. Content and tools are selected according to these goals. Users of this training are required to have certain digital skills that raise their training to a higher level or practice already acquired knowledge. Mentors evaluate the completed tasks and provide feedback. Participants receive a certificate of completion of professional training only after completing the minimum number of tasks or creating specific digital content. The certificate is for 30 hours of professional training which includes: two webinars, 14 tasks, preparation with step-by-step tutorials, evaluation and sharing with the educational community.

3.3. Basic Challenge - one round held; 698 finished the course so far.

After the Summer Challenge and the Winter Challenge, there was a need to educate those who are insecure or do not have enough skills to try to create digital content. For this purpose, I formed the WebClassroom Team, a group of experts who think in a similar way and had the knowledge needed to teach the Basic Challenge. These are: Lidija Cvetko, Angelina J. Vuk, Marica Brzica, Kristina Cobankovic, Ksenija Lekic, Renata Kolarec, Sladjana Kristek, Drazena Potocki, Lejla Skalnik, Dubravka Namjesnik, Nevena Petrovic, Jasmina Vidakovic, Iva Palcic Strcic, Julijana Kolundzic, and Luka Femec .
The Basic Challenge proved to be something that many educators were looking for: basic tools, short tutorials, Croatian language, simply explained tasks, webinar recordings and task evaluation.

3.4. Collaborative Learning - 4 rounds held, about 500 people finished the course so far.

Collaborative Learning is based on completely different goals than the other courses and as its author I can state that tasks are much harder and to achieve them, users go through very difficult processes.
Collaborative Learning encourages teamwork. It occurs when users work together, in pairs or in small groups. Teaching is important for the quality of interaction between users, leaders, mentors and all participants in the process, program and for the successful implementation of collaborative learning. It is important to structure the environment, tailor it to the participants, apply the process of agreeing and rules and the role of mentor.
Participants who have gone through the cycle of Collaborative Learning are happy to return and participate in new rounds of professional development thanks to the high-quality structure of the course and due to the favorable synergy of different profiles of professional development.

Conclusion:

A project WebClassroom is a place where learning never stops. It is a place with a positive environment where professionals share their knowledge and digital skills with the educational community. We create new improvements every day: different and innovative educational skills and content that in the end, enhances the learning experience of their students. Furthermore, we create a unique bond with other educators because they receive feedback, we valorize their digital content and they have the opportunity to ask for help, be surrounded by like-minded people, and feel positive and accepted. Webinars are still held every working day at 19:15 - visit us, be part of the circle of positive educators who share their knowledge with the educational community.

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4 Webučionica https://webucionica.weebly.com/ a place where you can find all the information about education

Ante Žderić (OŠ Cvjetno naselje, Zagreb)

A Box of Chocolates

LEAD-IN

'Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get'. If familiar with this quote, you can easily guess what the topic of this article is. Movies are a great way of bringing art and life to your classroom. Not only that they teach a foreign language but also explore various topics and ideas that your students can relate to. In this way, English partners with Civic Education, and movies engage your students' critical thinking. It is going beyond your textbook and providing the opportunity to use all language skills. The four movies that I am going to focus on are, to some extent, suitable for advanced upper-primary classes but perfect for secondary (grammar) schools. The topics include human rights, mass media, art, and something we can't go without- love. If your first guess is 'Forrest Gump', I will have to disappoint you. Stay tuned!

This article aims to give the readers the WHYs and HOWs of using movies in English lessons- with example movies that could attract our students in terms of interest and motivation and boost their creativity.

THE FIVE WHYs

1. Students watch movies because they are enjoyable. Teenagers can easily be motivated to explore them as their homework assignments. Moreover, they won't consider it to be a traditional learning experience.
2. Movies provide authentic language on the one hand and authentic or imaginative content on the other hand. Our students can hear real-life conversations and they are exposed to the natural flow of speech.
3. Movies give a visual context which is important as most people are visual learners. Motion pictures enhance comprehension and can be used to promote writing and speaking activities.
4. Movies offer variety and flexibility in teaching and learning. For example, a movie clip can be used to practice all four skills or as a creative impulse for different follow-up activities.
5. Doing movies in class is a great cross-curricular tool. We can correlate English with other school subjects and Civic Education. They can be used to ignite debates on various topics that are relevant to our students.

THE SIX HOWs

1. Analysing official trailers is a great way to start the whole story. Students can make predictions, guess the genre, get introduced to the main characters, and try to guess what the main message is.
2. Making comparisons within genres expands the topic by including other famous movies that have the same or similar themes. That way we can delve into analysing typical features of different genres.
3. Finding weak spots in the plot could bring out the detectives in our students. It will make them watch the movie attentively to figure out what the weaknesses are (and provide other options).
4. Analysing the scenes could be done as a collaborative activity. Each group is assigned an important scene and the classroom is the place where 'all the scenes join together to tell the story'.
5. Providing alternative endings is a creative activity that will make our students watch the movie closely and think about how they could end differently. This could be done as a pair work activity.
6. Discussing key quotes helps us go beyond the language and include higher-order thinking skills. Students can focus on various ideas and concepts that will motivate them to think about the ideas of the movie.

RECOMMENDED MOVIES

Some of the activities can be done in class and others at home. This paper will tackle four movies whereas the longer list of great educational movies can be found in the following table:

1. The Giver by Phillip Noyce (2014)	6. Fight Club by David Fincher (1999)
2. The Truman Show by Peter Weir (1998)	7. The Hours by Stephen Daldry (2002)
3. La La Land by Damien Chazelle (2016)	8. Lost in Translation by Sophia Coppola (2003)
4. Dead Poets Society by Peter Weir (1989)	9. Empire of the Sun by Steven Spielberg (1987)
5. Billy Elliot by Stephen Daldry (2000)	10. It's a Wonderful World by Frank Capra (1946)

:Padlet

Ante Žderić • 14 sati

🍿 **Movies That Matter**
You should watch them asap!

Dead Poets Society (by Peter Weir, 1989)

To start with, the title of the movie sounded odd. There are four main characters who are high school students. Neil is popular and Knox very romantic. Charlie is daring while Todd is a shy new student. At the beginning of this movie, they get a new English teacher, Mr. Keating. He inspires them with his fun and unusual ways of teaching. What is more, he urges his students to seize the day or live their lives fully. The movie is packed with great messages and I believe you should give it a chance. I. B. (8.b)

The Truman Show (by Peter Weir, 1998)

I watched a movie entitled 'The Truman Show' a few months ago. The movie is about a man called Truman Burbank who is trapped in a fake world. In time you end up feeling sorry for him. Every moment of his life is filmed and at the same time streamed to a worldwide audience. As we, along with Truman, find out the truth about his life, a lot of great elements of the movie unfold. My favorite one is the creative use of hidden camera angles. There are also a few plot twists that you just have to see. T. P. (8.a)

The Giver (by Phillip Noyce, 2014)

Would you live in a world where all emotions are forbidden? 'The Giver' is a movie about such world, set in a futuristic society. We follow the destiny of Jonas and his family unit. He gets the job of the Receiver of Memory. When the Giver gives him the memories of the past, Jonas comes to realize that his world is just a shadow of the past. Most of all, it lacks freedom of every kind. So, he and the Giver decide to help the world by bringing back all the things that make us human. Do not miss this movie! V. J. (8.b)

La La Land (by Damien Chazelle, 2016)

'La La Land' is a musical. As it is with that genre, some love it while others avoid it. This movie is suitable for every age group. It's about Mia and Sebastian who encounter at the beginning of the film and in time fall in love. At the very start, the viewers are hit with the fast and furious musical across cars seeing the drivers and passengers sing from the top of their lungs. Everybody should watch this film because it's very interesting and it has a different ending than one might expect. P. G. (8.b)

The Movie Project in the 8th Grade

The aims of the project: To introduce movies that are inspirational and have educational value. To build vocabulary. To work on all language skills. To provide more authentic language. To elicit full understanding of the main messages and topics of the movies. To give a visual context to the language. To promote and encourage critical thinking in presenting the topics. To enjoy the seventh art by watching the movies that matter. Carpe diem!

If you need more movie ideas, try one of these:

Empire of the Sun (by Steven Spielberg, 1987)

Billy Elliot (by Stephen Daldry, 2000)

Life of Pi (by Ang Lee, 2012)

It's a Wonderful World (by Frank Capra, 1946)

Assigned and edited by:
Ante Žderić, prof.

THE GIVER

It's a fictional story about a utopian/dystopian futuristic society where all the citizens must follow strict rules. There are no individual freedoms, neither the freedom of choice nor the freedom of expressing any emotions. As one of the characters says: 'People who have freedom of choice, choose wrong every single time'. Jonas is a boy who is different from others and therefore turns into a rebel. I would describe it as '1984 for teenagers'.

Activities:
1. Discussing key facts about the movie.
2. Going through the brief plot overview.
3. Reading the book's last two pages and comparing them to the movie's last scene.

4. Focusing on new vocabulary and the order of events.
5. Comparing the first and the last scene by watching the clips.
6. Doing speaking tasks (answering questions, discussing the topics).
7. Doing writing tasks (answering questions, opinion essays).

THE TRUMAN SHOW

The main character is Truman Burbank who lives in a perfect town that is, in fact, a reality show TV set. He was adopted by a TV company as a child and his whole life is shown 24/7, without him knowing about it. All his family members, co-workers, and friends are actors. When he eventually finds out that his whole life is a lie, he wants to break free. The crew and the cast try to do everything possible to stop him in his endeavour.

Activities:
1. Reading the text about the movie plot.
2. Answering the questions about the text.
3. Discussing the ideas presented in the movie (if they agree or not).
4. Reading the text on ethical issues presented in the story.
5. Answering the questions about the movie.
6. Working on new vocabulary by providing paraphrases.
7. Doing a writing task (a letter of protest).

LA LA LAND

The story takes place in La La Land or Los Angeles where Mia and Sebastian are trying to succeed in show business. She dreams of becoming a famous actress and he wants to start his jazz club. Although they find comfort and love in one another, their personal lives (and careers) go separate ways until they meet again at the end of the movie after a long time. The movie is a romantic musical, but unique in many ways.

Activities:
1. Filling in the missing information in the movie plot (and giving an opinion).
2. Discussing important quotes and answering the questions by providing details.
3. Discussing the lyrics from the official soundtrack.
4. Retelling and discussing the scenes with the focus on the last scene.

DEAD POETS SOCIETY

It's an inspirational movie about a special relationship that an English teacher has with his student in an all-boys school. John Keating is trying to get them interested in poetry by using some unconventional methods. By feeling, rather than studying poetry, he wants his students to stand up for themselves and pursue their dreams and ambitions (or seize the day). Over time, the boys realize how much they've become influenced by their teacher.

Activities:
1. Filling in the fact file and retelling the story.
2. Comparing personality traits of the main characters.
3. Analysing the vocabulary on education and teenage issues.
4. Discussing memorable quotes and the values of John Keating.
5. Matching poets to their verses and analysing cultural elements.
6. Comparing important scenes by watching movie clips.
7. Answering the questions, multiple choice and matching tasks.
8. Doing writing tasks (answering questions, opinion essays).

IN CONCLUSION

Movies have been inspiring EFL teachers for decades and the good old internet offers various teaching activities. There are a lot of educational reasons for exploring motion pictures in our classes. What is more, a whole pack of activities can be used to develop all four skills and beyond, promoting group and pair work activities, as well as individual analysis of movie clips. To take a break from their everyday routine, teachers can organize 'The Movie Week' and leave their textbooks aside. You never know what you are going to get when you open the box.

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COMET for Creativity

by Helga Kraljik and Ankica Šarić

Srednja škola Ban Josip Jelačić, Zaprešić

***Creativity with poetry** is a two-year international eTwinning project aimed at promoting first and foremost multilingualism and then poetry and arts in general.*

Students and foreign language teachers from Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Spain and Turkey learned about European cultural and historical heritage by working on their national and their partners' poetry. Ban Josip Jelačić High School in Zaprešić was represented by language teachers Željka Brezni, Sanja Jelaković Kühner, Helga Kraljik and Ankica Šarić. The quality of the project was recognized by the National Agencies and it was awarded five National and five European Quality Labels as well as National COMET award for the best project of the year 2021 in the category gymnasium (bit.ly/COMET21).

During the project, students translated, wrote, and recited poetry as well as expressed themselves visually, either by using digital tools or by painting and drawing. All the materials that they created were, in the end, used in both national and international online and onsite exhibitions. The exhibitions themselves were also organized by students, from writing multilingual opening ceremony speeches and preparing interactive exhibits to contacting the media. This is an example of an online exhibition organized by SŠ Ban Josip Jelačić: bit.ly/CreativitySŠBJJ . It included the video of an exhibition in the school gallery and online opening ceremony. Our poets in other languages produced an eBook, blackout poetry exhibition, multilingual recitals, various quizzes and puzzles as well as a Linoit wall with visitors' feedback. You can also check our international online opening ceremony: bit.ly/Creativity-International.

While working on the project, students were encouraged to use the foreign languages they learn both in and out of their schools, languages like English, German, Russian, Arabic, Japanese, French, Romanian and Italian along with their mother tongues. One of the first activities in the project, *Our poets in other languages,* was translating national poets into foreign languages as well as poets from partner countries into our mother tongues. All these translations were turned into digital posters, bookmarks and eBooks which were needed for the planned onsite and online exhibitions: bit.ly/OurPoetseBook.

Besides translating poetry, students also wrote their own poems. There were several activities which encouraged students to express themselves in different forms. They wrote multilingual Christmas poems to wish everyone a happy Christmas, haiku was used to write about love for Valentine's Day and acrostic poems were used to express our thanks for Thanksgiving and to honor women who changed history for Women's Day. All these poems were put together either into eBooks (bit.ly/MultilingualChristmas) or online exhibitions (bit.ly/IWDAcrosticPoems).

In addition, students recited poems and sang songs written by national poets in their mother tongues, English, German and Italian as well as inaugural poems for the inauguration of American presidents. As already mentioned, this project combined multilingualism and poetry with art in general. Students expressed themselves by painting and making digital works of art inspired by poets and their poems. They also created blackout poetry which they illustrated and turned into online exhibitions: bit.ly/BlackouteTwinning.

Working on the project, other goals were achieved as well. In addition to developing language skills (the use of languages in authentic situations - translation, international communication), students developed ICT and soft skills. They worked individually translating, reciting, painting, and writing poems. They collaborated in teams and pairs (in their schools and internationally), developing their communication skills while making eBooks, digital exhibitions, and organizing the final online exhibition opening ceremony. Furthermore, students developed their creativity (writing poems; painting; creating blackout poetry; writing narration for the exhibition opening ceremony; editing online exhibitions videos), critical thinking (choosing poems, assessment, online safety), time management (meeting deadlines) and entrepreneurship (organizing exhibitions in schools and online exhibitions; promoting exhibitions).

Although poetry is not the most popular topic among the students, this eTwinning project proved that it can be interesting and challenging on an international level, both to students and teachers. The project raised the participants' self-confidence in cooperation with international partners and made them aware of their belonging to the EU's cultural and historical heritage.

eTwinning – inclusive, common, accessible, sustainable, powerful and content community

The online platform www.eTwinning.net brings together a community of one million educators in 44 countries. It enables them to cooperate, network, exchange experiences and digital tools and collaborate in project implementation. eTwinning provides many tools for innovative and modern methodological approaches to learning and teaching, which proved to be an invaluable source of inspiration for the implementation of distance learning.

eTwinning as the largest European community of educators of preschool institutions and primary and secondary schools has been offering a secure electronic platform on the www.etwinning.net portal since 2005 for employees of educational institutions whose registration has been approved by the national organisation supporting eTwinning. Participants can engage in a number of activities such as project implementation and the exchange of professional content with colleagues from 44 countries, the development of expert networks and participation in various forms of professional development, online education and professional training in the form of seminars and conferences. The eTwinning community is financed under the Erasmus+ programme, the largest EU programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport.

eTwinning schools are excellent examples of how entire schools can benefit from eTwinning. These schools actively promote the values and pedagogical practice of eTwinning, they are a reference point for their local community and represent a model for other schools. For 2021 and 2022, a total of 179 educational institutions from the Republic of Croatia bear the eTwinning School Label. eTwinning is inclusive and innovative. With its characteristics and specificities, this community stands out among all social networks because it is educational, inclusive, common, accessible to all educators, sustainable, powerful, has a rich content and is different. This particularly refers to eTwinning schools, which are committed to inclusiveness at all levels and actively seek ways to create an inclusive environment for learners of all levels of competence and different cultures, as well as their parents and their community. In these schools, teachers work together to provide a wider and richer educational experience for all.

Our future: beautiful, sustainable, together

Schools and the New European Bauhaus:
Imagining a creative learning environment
in green and inclusive schools.

Our future: beautiful, sustainable, together – Schools and the New European Bauhaus

eTwinning theme of the year 2022 is "**Our future: beautiful, sustainable, together – Schools and the New European Bauhaus**". This year, eTwinning invites teachers and students to reimagine their schools and reflect upon the elements that make their learning environment beautiful and sustainable. The COVID-19 pandemic presented us with many challenges which sometimes turned into inspiring opportunities. Many sectors – work, culture, sport, to mention a few – were forced to reinvent themselves and the ways they function. Education, due to school closures, was among the sectors that suffered the most. For this reason, teachers of eTwinning are invited to reflect with their students about their school in the "new normal" where blended learning will play a major role. Blended learning describes situations when a school, teacher or student takes more than one approach to the learning process, which includes but is not limited to physical space, formats and means: on-site, online, classroom, outdoors, etc.

The vision of a "dream school" will be built on the values of inclusion, beauty and sustainability. Teachers and students are invited to find beauty in their learning environment, at every level or capacity and elevate it to its highest potential. Beautiful and inclusive schools are designed to engage students from every culture, from disadvantaged backgrounds, with different sexual orientation and gender identity, or with disabilities. Sustainable schools are functional and accessible, embody eco-friendly practices and create the conditions to raise environmentally aware citizens.

Media literacy and fight against disinformation

As part of the **annual theme** "**Media Literacy and Disinformation**", in 2021 eTwinning focused on two sides of the same coin: Media literacy, on one side, and how to tackle the phenomenon of disinformation and fake news, on the other. It was made clear during 2020, the year of the corona pandemic, that the exposure of citizens to disinformation is a major challenge not only for adults but also for students. eTwinning has been promoting Media Literacy since its birth by focusing on the integration of digital tools in the everyday life of teachers and students. Special emphasis has been given to digital citizenship, with the aim of fostering students' awareness and responsibility in using digital tools. Areas covered by eTwinning include: digital literacy, digital and intellectual rights and responsibilities, digital security and data protection, digital law and etiquette, digital accessibility and digital communication. eTwinning strongly promotes media literacy and tackles disinformation via many activities: from professional development opportunities to online events and conferences, from communication campaigns and publications to featured articles on the portal.

How to be smart online? How to deal with fake news, disinformation, negative content… these are just some of the questions that were addressed by many experienced eTwinners, as well as new members of the community, during **the eTwinning spring campaign**, officially opened by Mariya Gabriel, the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth held between 1 March and 5 April 2021. The eTwinning central support service,

in cooperation with the Croatian eTwinning national support organisation, organised an online professional development workshop called "Critical Digital Literacy with eTwinning" from 26 to 28 May 2021. More than 150 educators from preschool institutions and primary and secondary schools participated in the event. Nine workshops were held during this three-day online seminar where participants had the opportunity to learn more about different themes and to try the methods and tools presented at this event. Fake news, disinformation, discrimination, stereotypes, critical thinking, eSafety are not easy topics to tackle and the purpose of this seminar was to offer tools, tips and knowledge to work with students and colleagues in schools.

During the autumn campaign from 1 September to 28 October 2021, a support programme was organised to encourage eTwinners to create new quality projects on the annual theme of media literacy and disinformation. The trainers' work with campaign participants started on 20 September, with a total of 70 projects involving more than 500 eTwinners registered until 28 October.

At the two-day **annual eTwinning conference "eTwinning and Media Literacy: Inclusive Community and Innovative ICT Tools"** held on 4 and 5 November 2021, more than 300 participants participated in a virtual setting organised by the eTwinning National Support Organisation operating within the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (AMEUP). At the conference, the COMET awards for best eTwinning projects in the school year 2020/2021. were awarded and the awarded projects were presented.

At the end of 2021, the eTwinning.net portal reached 1 million registered users, with more than 19,000 educators from the Republic of Croatia.

eTwinning Croatia

The eTwinning National Support Organisation was established within the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes in order to support educators during registration on the eTwinning portal, project implementation and professional training organisation. More information is available on the official website of the www.etwinning.hr and via e-mail etwinning@ampeu.hr.

This publication was made with the financial support of the European Commission. It expresses only the views of its authors and the Commission cannot be held responsible when using the information contained therein.

Dolores Malić has been a teacher of English and German in a primary school since 2007. She prefers working with older children and teenagers. She likes learning and searching for new methods and ways to improve her teaching all the time. This time, she is focusing on recognizing fake news and how to teach students about it.

To trust or not to trust?

A small group of members of IATEFL Slovenia have just come back from a symposium on media literacy. According to the website medialit.org, the term "media literacy" covers the following: "Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy." (Oxford University Press, n. d., Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n. d.)

I believe we all already talk to students about being careful online, with their personal data, trusting people they talk to on the Internet etc. However, the ways of teaching our students about fake vs. real news were new to me and I find them incredibly useful as well as important. This is also the reason I decided to share it with HUPEzine readers.

The online version of Oxford Learner's Dictionaries tells us "fake news" means "false reports of events, written and read on websites". (Oxford University Press, n. d., Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n. d.)

It is not always easy to decide whether a piece of news is real or fake and we want our students to gain some knowledge and methods on how to check whether a website can be trusted or not.

It is important to take a look at the whole bit of the news, not only at its headline. Headlines are often written in a sensational way in order to attract as many readers as possible, i.e. to clickbait. Sometimes, the title does not even match the content of an article, so pay attention to this as well.

Another important thing to be aware of is the source of the news itself – is it a website of a well-known newspaper, TV station or press agency, e.g. The Associated Press, BBC or Reuters? If not, try to find the same news in trustworthy, unbiased sources.

We all know students (regardless of their age) are very fond of different social media. The younger they are, the more difficult it usually is to show them what fake news is and how much harm it can do. Many influencers are paid by someone to promote products. Unfortunately, not all of them are honest enough to make this transparent by putting some sort of a disclaimer to their post. Do not forget to talk to your students about fake comments on social media. Especially younger children have not learnt to think critically yet, so they have to be taught how to approach news and other information they come across on the Internet and social media.

In order to teach children about fake news, you can play a game called "Bad news" or "Bad news junior" – depending on the age and language level of your students. However, before you use the game in your classroom, make sure to read its info sheet for education and/or try the game out yourself. This way, you can decide whether the language is not too advanced for your students or if there are any reasons why you should not use the game in your class. In case you decide to use it, it might be good to consider notifying the parents of your students in advance, explaining the aim of playing this game (i.e. to show children how fake news is created, what is the aim of fake news etc.). For older kids, between the age of 15 and up, there is a game called "Harmony Square". This one is available in different languages already, but Croatian is not among them (yet). Again, check the game out before using it.

We should also consider the language that is used in an article or any other piece of information we find online. Language used should be objective, but this is one of the factors that is not always easy to determine. Perhaps the best way to give students an idea about the language is to talk to them about critical thinking: What is the author's view on the subject? Is the author at least trying to come across as unbiased or is it clear they have a strong opinion regarding only one side of the story? I think teaching children to think critically is also a critical part of our job, since it is sometimes difficult to find the pros and cons of a certain topic. However, we should at least try.

If you come across a photo that seems (a bit) unreal to you, you can use the website "TinEye" to check the authenticity of a photo. Another similar tool is Google reverse image search. The presenter showed us a photo of children in Ukraine

celebrating Hitler's birthday. Most of us immediately saw the swastika sign in the picture because we also had a title of the article, "A photo shows students in Lviv celebrating Adolf Hitler's birthday". After we used the previously mentioned online tools, we discovered a great example of fake news – the photo was not taken in April 2022 to celebrate Hitler's birthday, there was no swastika, the children formed a number 55 in order to celebrate Yuri Gagarin's 55th anniversary of going to space. It was also not taken in Ukraine, as claimed, but in Russia.

One of the presenters was also the chief editor of Slovene's online newspaper for children, Ms Merljak Zdovc. The newspaper is called "Časoris" and is available at https://casoris.si/. The website offers articles in English as well, so you might want to check it out. The news is written by professional journalist who take their work and their audience, i.e. children, very seriously. The news they publish is certainly not fake and is a very reliable source of information.

To wrap up, it is getting more and more important to teach students to think critically and to use this approach when following any piece of news as well as when simply surfing the Internet. Teachers have a crucial role in making students aware of all the dangers that using the Internet and social media brings. Unfortunately, not all parents are aware of these dangers and should/ought to be taught about them as well.

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A writer in me, teacher me!

Taking every aspect of our everyday professional life into consideration, it is obvious that it is a complex one, one requiring that delicate teacher's sense, that sense which cannot be categorized by any means and not many people need to have it at their working places. It is the one where we anticipate some troubles coming out of nowhere or see cheating from a distance like a hawk-eyed detective, and I am not trying to trivialize anything here. Those "superpower" skills are developed to their finest by long, rich, teaching experience, but also by "living" this profession. As well we, consciously or not, use our general knowledge to make our classes more interesting. We usually leave that slight trace of personalization in our classes, meaning that we apply our wider knowledge and skills in order to help our students be more expressive and linguistically efficient and mature. We add that value that is well and truly needed to make our students more skillful at expressing their thoughts.

I did not use to give so much thought to how much I use my personal general knowledge, possible talents, or "superpower" skills to develop my teaching process until one moment, few years ago, when I caught myself thinking hard, but creatively about how to give a proper example of an introduction to my students while practising writing a short, structured text. There, at that point, I found that writing a good introduction was an equal challenge in teaching our students the basics of being skilled at writing and upgrading their writing skills. My love for writing has motivated me, as a teacher, to embrace all the struggles that I have faced in teaching writing, and I need to admit that my writing attempts from the past and an awe-inspiring respect for literacy have helped me a lot to improve my methods in teaching writing.

Writing greatly leans on inborn talents and it is normal to hear the following questions: How can you teach someone writing? Is it possible to teach a person with not so developed expressive potentials how to convey feelings and thoughts in a literate manner? A constant, sometimes even unconscious self-reflection about my teaching brought me to the revelation that teaching writing is the most demanding teaching task I was dealing with.

There are many points we need to refer to when we teach writing, but the essence lies in these three.

1 Organization of thoughts

We need to teach our students to respect the importance of the text structure. They must realize that it is the basis of every successfully written composition, and that without properly laying its foundations, their text will be literately inadequate no matter how fine the expressions are that our students use. We start a spark for being punctual, correct, and neat in sorting out their ideas, choosing the right words, and finding synonyms if they are lacking vocabulary abundance or are just inexperienced to handle expression gaps. How do you explain to a thirteen-year-old student to calm their thoughts, clear the rest and organize them in a structured way? The fact is that we cannot leave our students without leading clues and expect some literate results. The task should be precisely and clearly written with a short model, even better if goes along with the text points. This is a usual phase when we ask ourselves if we are competent enough to set that kind of task. Yes, we are, but it is time demanding to think deeply about the flow of thoughts in some given topic, and we usually need to prepare the task the same way as if we were going to write it by ourselves. Once we prepare ourselves for tough task structuring, we are completely ready to let ourselves go in this teaching adventure. How to set the writing points? Is the order right? Does the first writing point refer to the introduction? Which writing point leads to the conclusion? These questions are needed to help our students weave the track of the story.

2 Structure

Let your student practise a simple, three-part structure: introduction, body, conclusion. Let them begin with an argumentative essay with questions which are not so complex or difficult and where this structure is expected. These is an ideal piece to practise the structure. It is also possible to achieve the structural "talking" in narrative essays, which is the most common form, along with descriptive ones in higher classes at elementary school. Then, we need to teach our students how to start their text, with a maximum of two sentences, because if they cross that line of introducing the topic, then they are already entering the body. In the introductory part students need to give only an interesting hint to attract a reader's attention or announce the topic, but carefully avoiding being open and clearly discovering the point. Here, teachers' writing

skills and knowledge of creative writing are manifested and they are again needed to lead our students to the higher levels of their writing proficiency.

Although the body seems to be the easiest part of the text, we should also pay attention to how to lead our students to write it properly, depending on what th write-up is. The second difficult step to take is to write that third sentence that the body opens with. That sentence needs to continue the opening to the development, and it needs to be connected to the introduction. Here, I usually tell my students to imagine writing as making something using blocks and building it layer by layer. There we need to know how to make our students get the story to its peak and how to build their story to its end. If we see that we do not make any progress with our students' comprehension of what we want them to do, then we can easily relate to speaking and making presentations, since that form needs to be structured as well. Students know that transitions among slides should be smooth without sudden breaks or jumps. If they are able to picturize the creation of the text, they can easily transfer their thoughts from one part to another, without losing the thread.

Closing the text is also a tough nut to crack, and what refers to connecting the introduction to the body, the same goes for the body and conclusion. That transitional sentence needs to be well-considered, because it cannot be conclusive but leads to the final thought.

The same golden formula for our young writers is to keep it short and not to repeat the idea in the conclusion. It should be put in a way that nobody can continue the text after that concluding thought. Visualising helps here again. Let your student "see" an envelope with the firm, wax-seal that nobody is allowed to open, or a solid lock that keeps the door safely closed. I often tell my students that their conclusion needs to be so good that it makes me silent, without any comments. Then their sighs very often follow, like it is an impossible mission!

3 Assessment

Assessment is an inevitable part in your students' writing improvement. It does not matter if it is formative or summative and its importance is equally present in both forms. Our students, by being assessed using a rubric, can easily self-reflect on their writing skills and be aware of their improvement. The reason why the rubric helps them to get to a higher writing level is that they are also led by the assessing elements in the writing process, in other words, if students precisely know what they are expected to follow and at what extent apply the demanded knowledge in their writing, then we help them again to organize their thoughts, think about applied grammar structures and spelling rules.

Motivation can be a tricky part that we need to deal with when it comes to practising writing. It is important not to forget that our students, just like us, need to be in the mood to write creatively and successfully. There are many ways to motivate students to write including gamification. One of the most favourite writing tasks in my class is team writing. I give my students an introduction and they need to build the story by adding their sentences one by one but also, they need to ensure that the story makes sense, has a logical flow and given language structures are used in the context. If you add the component of drawing the story cover, an advertising poster which announces publishing the story or illustrating different parts of the story, then your students will feel more encouraged to express themselves and enjoy that process at the same time.

The cover 1
Grade: 8

The cover 2
Grade: 8

Example: You can use these sketches and tell your students to write stories fitting the suggested covers, done by 8th graders. It would be really interesting to exchange their stories afterwards!

I do not know if that little writer in our teacher-selves is our "superpower" and makes our students super literate, but surely there is an unbreakable bond.

DO NOT SIT DOWN, PLEASE!

Katarina Kalin
Osnovna šola XIV. divizije Senovo

INTRODUCTION

During my English studies at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana I pictured myself teaching older pupils, expanding their vocabulary, discussing grammar with them and improving their reading and writing skills. My career as an English teacher actually commenced this way. I taught eighth and ninth grade pupils and dealt with the methods I had acquired and was familiar with. But in 2014 English became one of the subjects taught in the first, second and third grades of primary school, according to the Slovenian curriculum for primary schools. Consequently, I converted into the teacher of young learners. The beginnings were truly tough, no grammar, basic vocabulary, no discussion, no course book to lean on. Hours and hours of preparation did not pay off in the classroom. I was not able to get the pupils' attention, they were loud, restless and constantly moving. I kept asking myself. What am I doing wrong? Why are they not paying attention? Why can't they calm down and listen? And then, one day, it hit me. This is how they act. They are children, and children have a constant need for physical activity. If I wanted to build a good relationship with them and teach them some English at the same time, I must not neglect bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, therefore I have to incorporate as many physical activities as possible into my English lessons.

After the realization of what may boost my pupils' engagement, I began the research the classroom physical activities suitable for my lessons. Many ideas were found browsing the internet, but the best ideas emerged during lessons and came from the pupils themselves.

SONGS AND DANCING

Songs provide enjoyment and positively influence vocabulary acquisition and encourage pupils to dance and sing. Luckily for me (as singing is not my cup of tea), the internet offers numerous possibilities for teaching and learning songs in English. YouTube is a platform that shares many high-quality videos. The number of channels offering videos for young learners of English is countless. The one that my pupils like best is *Super Simple Learning*. *Super Simple Learning* covers traditional songs, such as "The Wheels on the Bus", "The Itsy Bitsy Spider", "If You Are Happy and You Know It", etc. The videos provide the moves and the cho-

reography for pupils to follow. There are also some videos that enable learners to think of their own choreography, which boosts their creativity.

In addition, *Mother Goose Club* is another channel that deserves some attention. Again, the videos of the traditional songs and nursery rhymes are presented in a way that is appealing to young learners. It presents videos that encourage children to be active while learning the lyrics of the songs.

Furthermore, the channel that I also use quite often is *Debbie Doo*'s channel. The videos motivate moving and dancing, they offer many different easy choreographies that are exceptional icebreakers at the beginning of the lessons.

FLASHCARDS

Flashcards are an essential tool when it comes to young learners of English. English is the language I mostly use during my lessons and flashcards are "my little helpers" since they help pupils understand the spoken words. Besides using flashcards for introducing new vocabulary I frequently use them for revising vocabulary. There are numerous flashcard games that promote bodily-kinesthetic learning. One of them is called "go to". I place flashcards around the classroom and shout a word. Pupils go to the appropriate flashcard. To make the game more interesting, pupils get in groups and each group gets a set of flashcards. One of the students is the leader who places their flashcards around the classroom and then shouts one word. The others are looking for the flashcard. Occasionally these activities take place outdoors, in the playground, where pupils can run faster and shout louder.

Additionally, pupils like competitions while learning. I place flashcards on a desk, choose two pupils, shout a word and the two pupils have to take the correct flashcards and paste them on the blackboard. Again, the completion is intensified when students do it in groups.

Moreover, one of the most compelling flashcards tasks is a game where I simply hand the flashcards to pupils and inform them that they have to figure out by themselves what the aim of the activity is. An excellent example of such activity is learning the days of the week in the third grade. I give each pupil a flashcard with a day of the week

written on it and they need to get in line according to the sequence of the days.

In addition, copying from the blackboard is usually quite monotonous and dull. But writing vocabulary items into notebooks does not need to be a sedentary activity. I place the flashcards with vocabulary items that need to be copied around the classroom, pupils search for the flashcards, copy a word written on the flashcard into their notebooks and return the flashcard. So they need to stand up and walk around the classroom for every vocabulary item.

THE CUT WORKSHEETS

Another activity that traditionally lacks moving activities is doing worksheets. After quite a long consideration I came to the realization that simply cutting up a worksheet could do the trick. Except for handing each pupil a worksheet, I cut the worksheets into multiple pieces and place the pieces around the classroom. Pupils need to find the appropriate segment of the worksheet, do the exercise and paste it into their notebook. Once more, the activity forces pupils to stand up.

CLASSIC CLASSROOM GAMES

Furthermore, there are many classic classroom games that provoke bodily movement and can easily be applied to English classes. My students like playing games, such as *Simon Says, Charades, Cops and Robbers, I Spy, Mr. Crocodile, Mr. Wolf*. My task is simply to provide for enough language input.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Teaching young learners during Covid-19 lockdown was a great challenge. Including some activities involving physical response was even greater. Yet I managed to come up with some tasks that I found appropriate for distance teaching of young learners, mainly for vocabulary revision. For example, during a Zoom meeting I encouraged them to revise colours by running around their house and bringing items of different colours to the camera. Some other tasks included dancing or making moves according to my instructions. Each activity provoking moving was extremely valuable at that time.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, teaching young learners is a challenge. It requires different approaches and methods, activities that spark interest in pupils who are full of energy and refuse to sit still during lessons. The best way to deal with their restlessness is to prepare activities that will enable them to move constantly while being engaged in the learning process. Throughout the years I have learnt that by singing, dancing, using flashcards in various ways, modifying worksheets and playing games I can provide a positive learning environment for young learners that is full of action and also pass on some knowledge of English.

Strategies of speaking skills assessment for English language learners in secondary schools

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Since assessing speaking is highly complex and demanding, both for students and teachers, this research has been conducted with the aim of improving strategies of speaking skills assessment for English language learners. 909 secondary school students (548 girls and 361 boys), from four Croatian counties, were asked to answer 21 close-ended questions. When it comes to the grade the students are attending, the numbers are equally distributed among the first, third and the fourth grade with a slightly higher number of second graders (32.1%). The questionnaire was completely anonymous.

The aim of the research was to find out which skill assessment is the most stressful for students of English in secondary schools and which strategies of speaking skills assessment can help students in achieving better results. As might have been expected, students have defined productive language skills, which include speaking and writing, as more stressful than the assessment of the receptive skills, which according to the traditional approach include listening and reading. The new assessment element, language mediation (jezično posredovanje), introduced through the Curriculum Reform, has not been included in this research.

We cannot help but reflect on the fact that 80% of respondents are going to have an A (excellent) or a B (very good) in English at the end of this school year. Thanks to modern technologies and the Internet today's students have unlimited exposure to the authentic English language from the early age. It is what we, teachers with 20-year experience, could have only dreamt of. Such English immersion has resulted in an amazing level of competencies which students possess, many of them being on the proficient level as they leave secondary school. Therefore, outsiders might think it has become easier and less demanding to teach English nowadays. On the contrary, nothing could be further from the truth. The teaching process has become more challenging and demanding for teachers, since they are expected to enable their, already over-achieving and competent students, the ability to become even more proficient, while taking care of the weaker students and their needs, too. The teaching process should not and cannot be tailored only to the needs of excellent students but also to the needs of students with English language learning difficulties.

No matter how successful students are, being assessed is always related to stress. Even though it could have been predicted that the assessment of one of the productive skills would be defined as the most stressful one, it could not have been anticipated whether the students would choose the assessment of speaking or writing. This research has shown that for 37.2% of students the assessment of speaking is the most stressful, while for 28.5% it is writing. The findings of the research are not surprising as speaking is a complex skill which involves many factors such as the ability to express and convey one's thoughts within a short space of time, fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, etc. Due to all these factors, the assessment of speaking skills presents a big challenge both for students and teachers. What is common to both groups is the fact that the time for thinking and reconsidering is really limited, and repetitive check-up of mistakes is not an option.

It is a given fact that teacher-student relationships have drastically changed over the course of the last decade. If we take a moment to reflect only the last two years, which have been largely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, we cannot help but notice that our relationship with students has improved. Teachers should be friendly with students because it promotes a positive learning environment, yet it does not mean teachers and students should be friends. Emotions, which are always present on both sides, have a huge effect on the anxiety students feel during oral exams. A very high percentage of respondents (92.6%) think that the speaking skill assessment conducted in a friendly relaxed environment, by a teacher with a positive body language, does affect the efficiency and the oral production of the student. Talking down, rolling eyes, repeating out loud mistakes that the student has made, is going to affect the student's production in a negative way.

To help students perform to the best of their ability a teacher should consider the respondents' answers related to the place/position of the student during the speaking skills assessment. If they could, 40.7% of students would

choose to be positioned near the teacher, while 33% would choose to remain sitting at their desk. 54.7% of students would like for the rest of the class to be engaged in pair or group work during their speaking skills assessment which is understandable since they tend to feel added pressure if the whole class is focused on them and their oral production. 40.4% of students say that it is of no importance whether the remaining students are listening to them or doing other activities. When it comes to testing speaking in pairs or individually students' preferences are equally divided.

Organizing mock exams may be beneficial for students as 63.9% of the sampled students see this as a good idea. Conducting mock exams for first graders to introduce them to the process and strategies of speaking skills assessment is highly advisable.

At the beginning of the assessment the teacher should ask a few informal, icebreaker questions, such as: "How are you today?" or "What has your last week in school been like?", since two thirds of students have stated that such questions do help them feel more relaxed at the beginning of the assessment.

When it comes to questions concerning the private life of students, 41.5% of students claim that they do not mind answering such questions while 46.3 % of them state that their willingness to share information about their private life depends on the question. 12.2% do not feel comfortable answering personal questions. For this research and article, a few student books by different publishers have been analysed and it is interesting to notice that in all of them the units covering family life topics include stereotypical questions: describe your family, name the members of your nuclear and extended family, who are you close to? who do you live with? It is no surprise that the students from functional families will be more than willing to share stories from their private life (e.g., having arguments with their siblings when it comes to house choirs, borrowing clothes, etc.). Still the question is, what about the students who come from dysfunctional or unconventional families? Are such questions appropriate if there is even a slight possibility students might feel uncomfortable or even ashamed answering them? Knowing that the purpose of such questions is not teachers' curiosity or an urge to find out more about the private lives of the student, but the need to check and evaluate student's ability to use the target vocabulary and grammar, maybe the solution could be found in adapting the questions. Instead of asking them to describe their own family, a photo or a short story about a fictional family could be offered.

On the other hand, students have shown a higher willingness to answer questions about their opinions and standpoints related to controversial and socially sensitive topics. Almost 60% of students would like to discuss such topics, while for 33.6% of the students their willingness to discuss depends on the topic. A very small percentage, 7.5%, would not like to express their standpoints related to controversial and socially sensitive topics. A teacher should be careful when choosing a topic, and while discussing one, should put oneself in the position of an active listener, asking student to offer arguments and support for their opinions without imposing one's thoughts and beliefs upon them. A significant number of students, 67.8%, will express their own opinion, but almost 26% of respondents state that expressing their opinion depends on the teacher. The remaining students will state an opinion they believe the teacher would like to hear.

If they have not completely understood the question 90% of students will ask the teacher to repeat the question which speaks about the positive teacher-student relationship, the one in which students feel comfortable and relaxed enough to ask questions even during the oral exam. Only 100 students (11%) will choose to answer the question they have not understood as they are afraid that admitting to not having understood the question would have a negative effect on their mark.

The approach to correcting mistakes is significant in the process of assessment. When asked about the frequency of correcting mistakes and the way it affects their self-confidence and motivation, 55% of respondents have stated that they feel demotivated if corrected frequently. If a teacher corrects every, or almost every mistake a student makes during the assessment, it could result in disturbing the flow of communication.

Making notes in e-Register Book or on a piece of paper about student's achievements is the essential part of the summative speaking skills assessment and 65% of students involved in the research say it does not affect their productivity during the oral exams. Still, we should take into consideration that 35% of them say taking notes as they speak negatively affects their concentration. It is indicative that the same number of respondents, 35% of them, think that taking notes by the teacher means they have made a mistake.

Even though grades are defined as an objective and reliable indicator of the acquisition of learning outcomes, for the summative evaluation of productive skills, unfortunately, there are no assessment criteria which could guarantee absolute objectivity. Still, the Curriculum Reform has introduced assessment criteria tables which help teachers achieve a high level of objectivity. It is of importance to present the criteria in detail, with all bands and descriptors, to students before the process of assessment starts. The results of this research show that, despite the complexity and the demands of the speaking skills assessment and evaluation, marks given by teachers are in accordance with students' expectations. A high percentage

of respondents, 80% of them, would give themselves the same mark in majority of such situations.

After the teacher gives a mark, it is very important to address the reasons for the grade, especially for low grades and help students understand it. It is important to give feedback which assists the student to reflect on their learning and learning strategies. Its purpose is to improve the student's performance and it is very important not only to the student and parents, but also to the teacher. A teacher needs to point out all the positive and negative comments, starting with the positive ones. It is interesting to notice that 52% of our students always get the feedback, 36% sometimes and 12% never. It is obvious that there is some room for improvement when it comes to giving feedback. According to the Assessment Methods and Guidelines a teacher is not obliged to inform students in advance when the speaking skills assessment will take place. Still, a high percentage of students, 92% of them, think that they would achieve better results during the oral exams if they knew in advance when the assessment would take place.

The results of this research have confirmed the hypothesis that of all the skills assessments it is the speaking skills assessment that causes the highest level of anxiety among students. An encouraging and positive attitude of a teacher, appropriate questions related to their private lives and standpoints, moderate correction of mistakes, assessment criteria being presented and explained in detail, together with informative comments and notes are the right path to choose when it comes to creating a stress-free and comfortable environment during oral exams. The students who have participated in the survey have been given a chance to become their teachers' partners in creating strategies of speaking skills assessment with the aim of reducing stress levels and achieving better results during an oral exam.

Tailor-made e-learning

Tajana Bundara
Ksenija Rumora

'The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.' -William A. Ward

Teachers are role models influencing students' lives, always striving to reach their full potential. Sometimes, an urge arises to create tailor-made materials that perfectly fit students' needs and contemporary e-teaching context. Video lessons can be such a tailor-made option that can help students reach their full potential.

This activity requires a 3D-visualisation, i.e., one must picture students on the other side of the screen, sense their needs and even catch their dreams. It seems like a challenge, but all teachers are equipped with this 3D sensory visualization or at least they should be.

What are the advantages of video lessons?

Video lessons offer full-time availability to learners. Their asynchronous character respects the learner's pace and creates a more engaging sensory experience opening the possibility of blended learning or flipped classroom learning. Students can learn from any device, at any time and at their own pace. If students are absent, they can always keep up with the learning process via the link to a video lesson. Videos engage students instantly, make distance learning fun and increase students'/teachers' digital literacy. Video lessons should be 100% student-centered.

Following the curriculum planning cycle

This is a representation of a circular flow of ideas teachers should keep in mind before designing a video lesson.
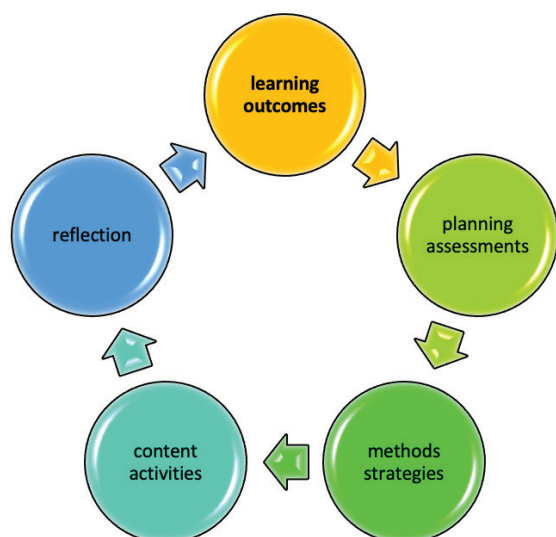
Setting the learning outcomes

Before starting with the design of a video lesson, the first question should be: What do I want my students to be able to learn? In other words, the teacher sets the learning outcomes.

The learning outcomes should combine knowledge, skills, and values that students should gain by the end of a video lesson. They should be clear and measurable, i.e., it should be possible to test if the student has achieved the learning outcome by the end of the lesson. In case he/she has failed to achieve the learning outcome, the video lesson can always be rewound and watched as many times as the student needs in order to achieve the set learning outcome. So, the learning outcomes focus on what the student should know by the end of the lesson.

The next crucial point is choosing the appropriate assessment method to test the accomplishment of the learning outcomes. Practical options include rubrics, checklists, questions/answers, online quizzes, exit cards, worksheets, and games that offer instant feedback.

Designing engaging video lessons includes thinking about methods and strategies to be employed. It is essential to keep in mind our students' proficiency level and age. Methods and strategies should play with all the students' senses, awakening their curiosity, prior knowledge, fascination, imagination, and fostering their creativity, critical thinking and, if possible, collaboration and communication.
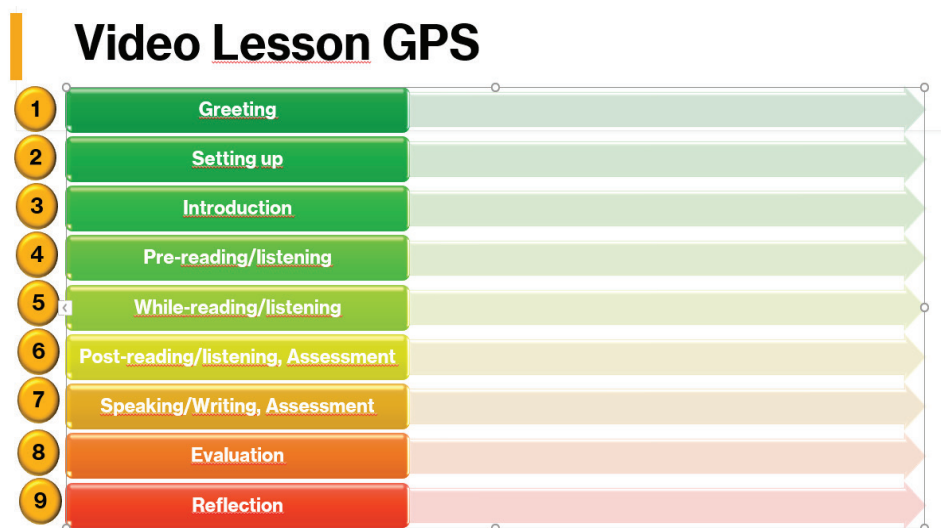
Content and activities focus on specific skills and serve the purpose of scaffolding and assessing the students' knowledge. IT tools in the video lesson intended for the students should be easily approachable, practical, and alluring. Finding a good video for the video lesson might be challenging, but it provides the students with real-life situations and makes online learning more enjoyable. Authenticity is the key to learning foreign languages. The chosen videos can be adopted by using different tools (Reclipped, Flipgrid, Edpuzzle). It is imperative to mind the copyright of the materials the teacher wishes to use in the video lesson.

Another possibility is writing authentic texts. In this case, it is essential to keep in mind the number of words, grammar, and language patterns employed. A text can

be a powerful steppingstone for conveying grammar and language patterns and a specific eye-opener for thought-provoking ideas resting on different topics like civic citizenship, mental health, entrepreneurship.

In the end, students should reflect on what they have learned through several types of exit tickets, checklists, emojis, reflection tasks. Reflection is the last stage of a video lesson, and it helps students make sense of what they have learned and should help them grow from their learning experience.

Video Lesson GPS

#	Stage
1	Greeting
2	Setting up
3	Introduction
4	Pre-reading/listening
5	While-reading/listening
6	Post-reading/listening, Assessment
7	Speaking/Writing, Assessment
8	Evaluation
9	Reflection

The anatomy of a video lesson

Greeting/Explaining the learning outcome

As in the classroom situation, the teacher greets the students and explains the video lesson's learning outcome(s). However, it is essential to emphasize that the teacher's tone and facial expressions are the hooks that catch students' attention and focus. Talking heads throughout the entire video lesson are an option, or one can use only the microphone option.

Setting up

In the next step, the teacher helps students set up for the video lesson. Students are asked to prepare everything they will need for the specific video lesson, i.e., a PC, a laptop, a tablet, or a mobile phone, a notebook, a pencil, and a QR code scanner. QR codes help deliver students different web pages, texts, videos, online games and other teaching materials and resources. It is vital to lead students step-by-step throughout the video lesson to keep their focus, attention and motivation level high.

Introduction

To nurture the students' intrinsic motivation, the teacher uses various techniques and warm-up activities, from brainstorming, predicting to using some elements of games. A gaming element in online teaching is always more than welcome since it makes teaching and learning more exciting and compelling. The communication method the teacher uses should be practical and engaging. The narration should be clear, concise, and coupled with imagery aids to build a relationship with students. A *sticky* video lesson must make the audience agree/disagree, believe, care, learn, assess/evaluate, reflect. Possible introduction methods would be to use quotes, questions, music/sound, pictures, puzzles, vocabulary or 3D animation.

An integrated approach to language learning

Teachers should combine skills in a single activity to create situations like those students encounter in real-life situations. The usual combinations include receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Through various and numerous activities such as choral repetition, using flashcards, pairs matching, synonyms, antonyms, and challenging interactive games, all four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) are being drilled. The tendency is also to foster soft skills and the sense of belonging to a community to break down isolation.

Reading & listening require these steps: pre-reading/listening, while-reading/listening, post-reading/listening. If we wish to ensure the success of our readers, it is important to undertake steps before we start with the reading task. So, it is important to activate their prior knowledge, build word and background knowledge. Relating the text to their lives is always motivating and helps them understand the text better, and of course, vocabulary should always be pre-taught. The focus should not only be on the reading itself but the feeling of joy while reading, ex-

citement and using that knowledge, if possible, in other areas of their lives. Pre-reading strategies aim to support students in their reading.

Pre-reading/listening tasks are very beneficial for understanding the text. This preparation work helps students connect the new information to what they already know. To increase students' comprehension, possible strategies would be – vocabulary tasks, predictions, visualizations, prioritizing, asking questions, and, if possible, combining all these strategies.

In pre-reading/listening tasks, students are encouraged to find the keywords in a Wordcloud (synonyms/antonyms), answer questions related to their lives or connect the key vocabulary with definitions/pictures. Another option would be showing students text extracts and triggering their imagination, using a KWL chart (triggering prior knowledge), pre-teaching concepts, discussing questions, assigning them to read the first/last paragraph/sentence or playing a sound.

While-reading/listening activities help learners become more effective readers/listeners. So, in this stage, they confirm their predictions or skim/scan the text for specific information, find answers to previously asked questions, read/listen for gist, match paragraphs with headings, sum up a story in four sentences, fill in the gaps, answer open-ended questions or multiple-choice questions. AI text-to-speech tools, videos or people willing to lend their voices are possible options when creating a listening task.

Post-reading/listening tasks would be placing pictures/paragraphs in the correct order, deciding on T/F sentences, creating/playing a quiz, finishing sentences, correcting sentences, gap filling or finding appropriate quotes.

Speaking/Writing activities we employ are call/contact your classmate and ask him something, answer the questions by recording your voice, debate: explain pros and cons in a video and send it to your teachers, create a video story by recording your voice, give your opinion by making a recording or create a quiz and post it in your virtual classroom. It is always advisable to give examples of the assigned tasks to make instructions more clear.

Assessment is always formative, and alternatives are numerous: online tools like Wordwall offer instant feedback, PowerPoint with its animation and shapes options or rubrics. Since the point is to build a growth mindset, negative or competitive labels are better avoided, and praising the invisible students after specific tasks is always welcome.

Evaluation and Reflection

In the end, students should reflect on what they have learned through several types of exit tickets, checklists, emojis or reflection tasks. Reflection is the last stage of a video lesson, and it helps students make sense of what they have learned and grow from their learning experience. Self-check helps learners determine what they have mastered or need improvement in. They provide feedback to learners and teachers. Self-checklists also provide students with a feeling of satisfaction about the knowledge gained. Self-evaluation is implemented through *Can-do* statements, rubrics, *I know how* rubrics and self-evaluation checklists.

Digital tools

These are the IT tools that have proved to assist successfully in executing learning outcomes: Microsoft Office 365/PowerPoint, Wordcloud, Wordwall, Learningapps, Adobe Spark, Rubistar4teachers, Edpuzzle, etc. Flipgrid, PowerPoint, Reclipped and QR code Monkey. We use Microsoft Office 365/PowerPoint to create video lessons.

Soft skills

Today's working environment has become more competent and complex. Therefore, it is imperative to integrate soft skills in our teaching context. Most employers seek dependable, resourceful, ethical individuals who have practical communication skills, are willing to work and learn, and have a positive attitude. In addition to knowledge and know-how, soft skills play/should play an essential role in the business market. We all like to work with individuals who possess these skills, hopefully.

Conclusion

Creating video lessons has proven an emotional and professional stimulus and challenge. It has enriched us both personally and professionally, providing us with the opportunity to create something completely different from our previous teaching experience. The whole process can be challenging and exhausting since the video lessons need to be educational, student-centered, content-based, engaging, methodologically well planned, and at the same time intriguing, fun, and engaging. Nevertheless, the whole process invites tailor-made learning opportunities. It opens the gate of our imagination as teachers, allowing our teaching beliefs and values to touch and approach students' minds and souls – a genuine feeling of teaching.

'Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.'

William Butler Yeats

eTwinning project

Our well-being

Tajana Bundara
Lidija Šaravanja

"The key to a healthy life is having a healthy mind. "

Richard Davidson, Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the Founder and Director of the Center for Healthy Minds

"Your talent determines what you can do. Your motivation determines how much you're willing to do. Your attitude determines how well you do it."

Lou Holtz, American Football Player

Our primary agenda was to work on the mental health of our pupils since, in these hard coronavirus times, it is a vital element we need to provide for our pupils. We were all launched into the space of distance learning, and not all coped with it well. So, we decided to show our pupils how to use IT tools to energize, develop, and nourish well-being in this new hybrid educational situation.

The authors of the eTwinning project Our Well-being are Tajana Bundara and her Italian colleague Natalia Caracci, an English and French teacher from ICS 'E. Armaforte' di Altofonte Palermo, Sicily. Project partners are Lidija Šaravanja, an English and German teacher from Vladimir Nazor Elementary School in Čepin, Marina Kopilović, an English teacher from Stevan Sremac Elementary School in Belgrade, Tijana Nesić-Ristić, an English teacher from Savremena Primary and Secondary School in Belgrade, Katarina Mladenović, a psychologist from Savremena Primary and Secondary School in Belgrade, Ivana Vlastelica, a Biology and Chemistry teacher from Manuš Elementary School in Split and Mirjana Janković, a PE teacher from Manuš Elementary School in Split. We all wanted to entwine the humane and digital component of our new teaching contexts (hybrid, blended, online) and spotlight the mental health and well-being of the future citizens of the world, our pupils. The focus was on our students to be able to recognize the state of their well-being and the state of the well-being of their close ones.

The highlight was on gearing them with skills and knowledge to choose specific activities to improve their well-being and well-being of close ones, explain the meaning and importance of the well-being, recognize and choose healthy habits, use gained knowledge in their lives, use new IT tools, implement skills for preserving a positive mindset and attitude and develop an attitude to give a helping hand to those who need it.

The topics our students researched were things that make them happy, the influence of sleep, sports, hobbies, pets, colours, food, sun and vitamin D on our well-being, how to have fun during the lockdown and why friendship is important. All project partners had complete freedom in the choice of strategies regarding the implementation of the topics respecting the project steps and chronology.

Apropos the chronology of the project activities, first we had a kick-off conference, where pupils got to know each other. One of the project partners presented the topics we covered. In the first part of the project, pupils researched these topics and created videos, presentations, and posters. They displayed their products at the next videoconference entitled *International Exhibition of Happiness*. Pupils watched their peers' works; some got inspired, while others got admired and voted for the best work. We used the Zoom platform to execute videoconferences. Evaluation was executed during the videoconference by using Mentimeter. Students embarked on another research adventure in the second part of the project. The best work was chosen during the last videoconference based on peer evaluation done on Mentimeter.

Tajana created unique worksheets for each project question. The worksheets contained research pages approachable via QR codes and exact instructions for pupils on what their work should have. Pupils worked in pairs, presented their work in front of the class and, in the end, made a quiz for the audience where they checked their gained knowledge; pupils used mostly Wordwall to create quizzes and PowerPoint for presentations.

Nature and our well-being

How does nature benefit our well-being?

Do the research.

10-reasons-why-being-in-nature-is-good-for-you

zasto-je-toliko-vazno-boraviti-u-prirodi

how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing

List of adjectives

Online rječnik

Prepare a video, poster, flyer, pamphlet answering the question –

How does nature benefit our well-being?

Use IT-tools (Word doc, powerpoint, Postermywall, Canva...any tool you feel comfortbale with).

Prepare a speech to present your product.

Your speech should last 1,5 – 2 min.

The outline of your work

Title

Facts

Advice
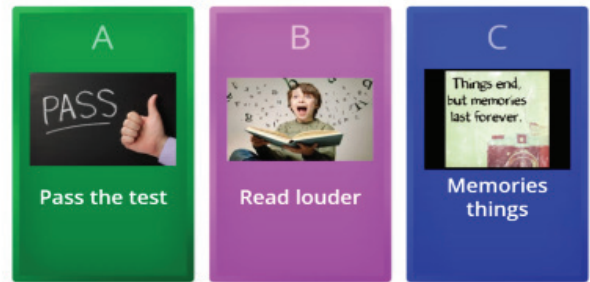
Conclusion

Prepare an online quiz for the audience.

Instructions:

- Follow the rubric criteria
- Use IT-tools
- Use short and clear sentences
- Use 4-6 images
- Write your speech, practice it and make sure it lasts 1,5 – 2 min.

Taking a ... helps you calm down

A - big breath

B - a present

C - popcorns

Studying while walking in the forest helps us...

A - Pass the test

B - Read louder

C - Memories things

Based on this rubric, Tajana conducted summative assessment of their work.

Oral Presentation Rubric : eTwinning - Our well-being

Teacher Name: **Mrs. Bundara**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Speaks Clearly	Speaks clearly all (100-95%) the time, and mispronounces no words.	Speaks clearly all (100-95%) the time, but mispronounces one word.	Speaks clearly most (94-85%) of the time. Mispronounces one - two words.	Often mumbles or can not be understood OR mispronounces more than one word.
Enthusiasm	Facial expressions and body language show a strong interest and enthusiasm.	Facial expressions and body language sometimes show a strong interest and enthusiasm.	Facial expressions and body language are used to try to show enthusiasm.	Very little use of facial expressions or body language.
Posture and Eye Contact	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.	Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.
Listens to Other Presentations	Listens intently. Does not make distracting noises or movements.	Listens intently but has one distracting noise or movement.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening but is not distracting.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening and has distracting noises or movements.
Content	Shows a full understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of parts of the topic.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well.
Product	The product is original, creative, interesting and 95-100% correct (grammar and punctuation).	The product is interesting and almost correct (1-2 grammar and punctuation mistakes).	The product has more than 2 grammar and punctuation mistakes and/or looks only ok.	The product is not correct. It looks messy.

The primary educational objective focuses on efficiently promoting students learning with all pedagogical approaches. We implemented a student-centered methodology enabling 4 Cs (creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking) to foster 21st-century skills. Pupils played an active role in the learning process. They used prior knowledge and new experiences to acquire something new.. We, the teachers, were facilitators and moderators creating and structuring the conditions for learning. Pupils explored the topics, developed deeper understanding of the ideas. They collaborated, coordinated, integrated, and exchanged ideas and perspectives. We encouraged teamwork and pupils enjoyed it; they were filled with pleasure and content, which led to wonderful products and a positive learning environment. Observing our students, we can say this effective pedagogy serves as an excellent path to academic achievement, social and emotional development, achievement of 21st-century skills and general ability to contribute to society. The pedagogical approaches and teaching methodologies we implemented were: working in small groups, pair work, collaborative learning, positive attitude towards pupils and belief in their capacity to learn, peer evaluation, independent research by pupils, analysis and research of different materials, project-based learning, task-based learning, peer-to-peer learning, crossover learning (learning in informal settings), context-based learning, the usage of ICT accompanied all the project tasks, active listening and videoconferencing.

Many things that our students presented during the project show either their talents or skills, sometimes instant pleasures and sometimes the result of hard work and discipline. Very often in life, we discover that the harder we reach something, the greater pleasure that comes out of it. It proved to be true with people we invited as guests into our classrooms. One of them is a very successful football player from Čepin. His name is Borna Barišić and he plays for Glasgow Rangers. Borna is one of the people invited to talk to Čepin eighth-graders about his job. It was a series of successful people who love their jobs and who work hard for great results. Borna turned out to be a great interlocutor and inspiration. He talked about his sports beginnings and his injury, after which he had to work harder than any of his co-players. He said that he went through a typical teenage phase and then had to catch up, that talent is dominant at early stages, and after that, hard work is what distinguishes good from excellent players. He also said that it is good to have role models, but you can choose more than one, each for some characteristics you admire. And the thing that he said, and every English teacher can easily relate to is 'Learn English! Learn it at school, take a course, watch videos, seize every chance to become better because whatever you do, if you want to be successful, you will definitely need it.'


Another activity we would like to emphasize was meeting Iaido sensei/teacher Petar Ursić Glavanović and introducing a different hobby to our pupils. The aim was to show them that there is a hobby for everyone; it does not have to be only the standard sports pupils usually choose. The message conveyed to pupils was that being different means being unique, and that makes our lives rich and fun. Due to the pandemic, sensei Petar was not allowed to come to school, so they watched short videos about Iaido during homeschool and prepared questions for sensei Petar. The meeting with sensei Petar was implemented online, and the face-to-face Iaido demonstration this school year as soon as the epidemiological measures allowed it. Pupils were excited and thrilled about trying out a new hobby. Well-being achieved through a hobby!

When it comes to project results, we can divide them into tangible and intangible results. The former are students' works on given topics in the form of videos, presentations, posters, e-collection/e-books on how to be happy, students' publications on schools' webpages and local newspaper, and there is also an educational trail in a recreational park in Čepin named Slavonian Forests made by pupils in the project. The latter include improving English language skills, ICT competences, social and emotional competences, intercultural communicative competences, strengthening introspective skills, taking responsibility for personal well-being, cultivating and nourishing empathy and sympathy, developing creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative skills.

At the end of the project, we were really pleased with everything we did, and we wanted to get feedback from our students. So, we made an evaluation form to ask about students' experience and the impact project activities have had on them. In a way, this evaluation showed what has changed in their minds regarding the way they think about themselves and about people close to them. The answers show that they have learned how to use digital tools to express their happiness, they have learned how to recognize its presence or absence, how to give advice on how to be happy and how to enhance their own happiness. Some of the comments on what they liked the most about the project are: the positive attitude students from other schools have, the fact that we all have something in common and videos about sports and pets. Things students said they have learned are: there are always things that can make us happy, how to use digital tools better, you can be happy in many ways, why it is important to be happy, etc.
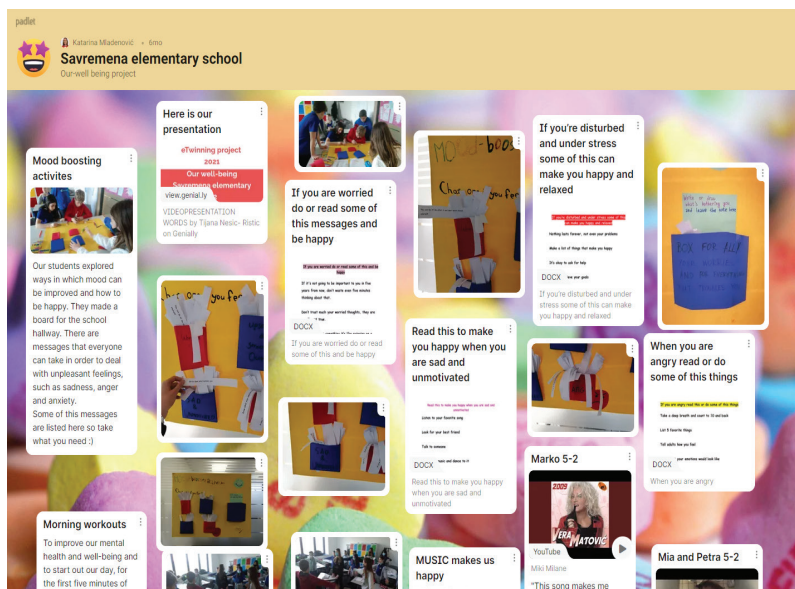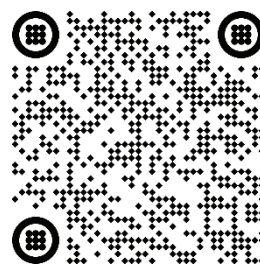

Padlet as a collaborative tool

This padlet has a lot of content conserning emotions and how to deal them. It was a valuable part of our activities.
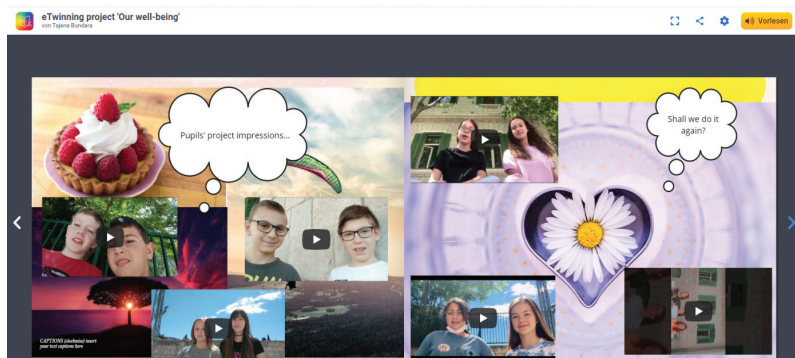
Reflection – Book Creator

The project was awarded eTwinning Quality Label in October 2021.

Everything considered, it is our duty as educators to empower our students with awareness, knowledge on mental health, to raise the curtain on self-care and responsibility for one's own mental health and well-being. Mental health education should be imperative at schools as it impacts the lives of our children, the future citizens of the world.

'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.'

Nelson Mandela

Three schools, one goal! - ECOoperation

Martina Grgac, Gimnazija Fran Galović, Koprivnica
**Maja Labaš Horvat, Srednja škola Prelog**

Project based learning has been an important part of the teaching and learning process for a long time and it is a transformative learning experience designed to engage language learners with real-world issues and meaningful target language use through the construction of products that have an authentic purpose and that are shared with an audience that extends beyond the instructional setting. What are its benefits and where have we found room for improvement? How can we engage students and motivate them to participate actively in order to become more independent learners? We've tried to answer these questions while working together on the following project.

INTERREG project „ECOoperation" is the result of a successful cooperation of three secondary schools from the Croatia - Hungary cross-border region. Two Croatian secondary schools and a Hungarian one formed a partnership and carried out numerous project activities. The Hungarian school Csokonai Vitéz Mihály Református Gimnázium Általános Iskola és Kollégium from Csurgó was the lead beneficiary and partner schools were Gimnazija „Fran Galović" Koprivnica (B1) and Srednja škola Prelog (B2). Logistic support was provided by development agencies REDEA and PORA. The duration of the project was 18 months (July 2020 to December 2021) and the total value of the project was 241 870,93 euro.

The three above mentioned project partners implemented the ECOoperation project tasks in their respective combined categories: micro-climate research / cycling, soil research / camping and water research / kayaking. It was also a multilingual project – the participants used English, Hungarian and Croatian as working languages.

The project started in July 2020 after the partners had held initial preparatory meetings. The opening conference was organised by Srednja škola Prelog and it was an opportunity for teachers and students of all three schools to present their future project tasks.
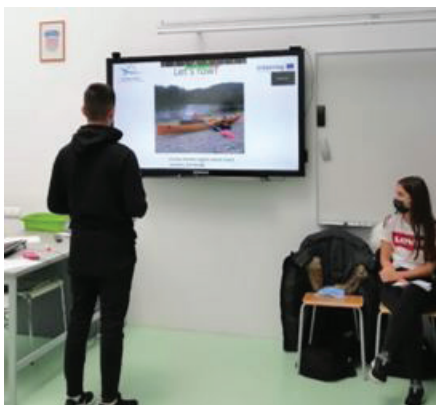
The next activity for the teachers and students of each partner school team was to do field research in their subject and present it to the other two teams during online lectures. The teachers taught teachers while the students taught and learned from their peers from other schools. The final outcomes of this part of the project were three exhibitions organised by the project partners.

Another set of project tasks - parallel with the preparation for presentations - focused on the procurement of specialised equipment for water, soil and micro-climate research as well as for cycling, camping and kayaking activities. In addition, teachers and students were taught by external associate experts on how to use the equipment. Then the teams taught each other how to create quizzes and answered questions based on the research presentations by the other two partner schools.

As a result, all the members acquired new skills which they could apply during the next project phase – outdoor lessons. Before the actual implementation of this part, each school team of teachers had created a final product – an elaborate field trip scenario with a map.
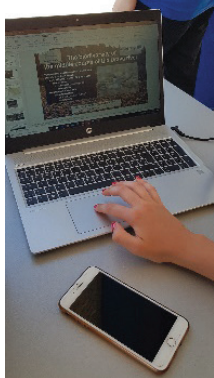
The final phase of the project was organised by Csokonai Vitéz Mihály Református Gimnázium Általános Iskola és Kollégium from Csurgó. They hosted a joint field trip for all three schools at the Gyekenyes Kotró lake and the closing conference at their school in Csurgó. This was an opportunity for all the students and teachers to finally work together live. They applied and shared the acquired knowledge and skills, adding value to the project through educational and amusing experiences.

Due to the epidemiological situation, most of the project activities when all three schools had to be involved were carried out through virtual meetings and cooperation on the Zoom platform.

ECOoperation project included more than a hundred students and twenty teachers from the three partner schools.

Project activities have been presented in the media – school paper, online local news and television – and project details can be found on school websites and social networks.

The students and teachers involved in the project learned about the environment and biodiversity of the Croatia – Hungary cross-border region using innovative and active methods of teaching and learning. Besides doing research and learning interesting facts, they worked on developing multicultural understanding, linguistic and presentation skills as well as organisational and teamwork skills during field work. The teams taught each other about their respective fields of research while acquiring soft skills and improving their communication competences through friendly interaction, which added more value to this project.

The sustainability of ECOoperation project will be ensured by the school principals and teachers who will keep encouraging students and promoting project-based learning through field work methods. Croatian and Hungarian schools also plan to continue working together on common goals - enhancing the teaching and learning quality in their schools, developing students' communication skills as well as positive attitudes towards the environment and making a positive impact on their mental and physical health.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTRUCTIONS

by Dolores Malić, teacher of English and German language at Fran Roš Primary School Celje, Slovenia

According to the online version of Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic English, the noun "instructions" is defined as "detailed information on how to do or use something" or "something that somebody tells you to do" or "the act of teaching something to somebody". I believe the notion of instructions in teaching includes all three definitions, depending on the stage of the classroom process.

All my tips are based on my own experience and the problems I have faced with giving instructions in my teaching career. They are meant to give you an idea, see something differently, or simply refresh your knowledge; I hope you find them useful for your classroom, too.

Common problem teachers face is the instructions are not clear and concise. When I started teaching, my instructions were unclear and too long. Consequently, students were not able to carry them out. The first thing I learned was instructions have to be short(er). I started dividing them into smaller steps students were able to understand and follow. Each sentence contains one step of the task only. Students follow the instructions better, even those who have less motivation and/or less knowledge.

The next important thing that can improve your teaching and students' learning is writing the instructions down. Not only for yourself but your students as well. I know this piece of advice can seem a bit odd to some readers, but it helps teachers protect their voices and the annoyance that comes from too many repetitions of the same thing. At the same time, students do not disturb their peers by asking for repetition. Some instructions can become a part of a classroom wall if you make a poster – students can make a poster themselves if you have some artists in your class.

I am sure we have all discovered various tools that can help us with this second tip during the Covid-19 period when we had to deal with distant teaching. These tools can be used in face-to-face classrooms, as well, they also make things more interesting and motivating for our students. The website I like for having some basic classroom rules and instructions is Classroomscreen. The only disadvantage of this website is your screens can be saved in the payable version.

Another important change I have made in my teaching practice is making sure everyone in the class understands what I want them to do. To ensure this, I often ask a student to repeat the instructions I just gave – they usually do it in their mother tongue, i.e. Slovene. At the beginning of every year, during our first lesson, I explain to my students that this will be a standard part of our classes. I also tell them I will call on different students because I want and need everyone to understand the instructions. I tell them they should not feel bad if they do not understand what I want them to do – we are here to learn and to get better every day. My shier and less capable students understand there is no problem if they ask for clarification. Those students who are good at English, learn to be more patient and practice their ability to accept their peers without making anyone feel bad (they all have to learn (well, some of them only need to practice) not to mock anyone).

The next problem I faced at the beginning was the fact some grammatical points are covered earlier in English classes than they are in Slovene. My instructions must therefore not contain too many grammatical terms. After all, my students are from 10 to 15 years old. The little ones are only learning what a noun, an adjective, etc. is in Slovene. The language we use when explaining the tasks should therefore be as precise as possible, the proficiency level has to be adjusted to our students.

What is also important is to get students' attention. To achieve this, some teachers use only their voice, some ring a bell or use other accessories. I sometimes use some relaxing music or any other sounds that the class is not familiar with. I know routines are welcome, but so is diversity, in my opinion. My choice also depends on the task that follows – if the task requires lots of concentration, I try to calm them with music.

Students also work more efficiently, if they know what the goal of their work is. Do not forget to include this information when giving your instructions: you already know the aims, now choose more user-friendly words and share them with your students.

Always, especially when you want students to do something they have never done in your class before, provide an example – or more of them, if needed. What I often do because it is most effective, is I give the first example and then I ask a student to try and make another. This also shows me how the instructions were understood and if there is something that needs to be repeated or additionally explained.

Do not forget to ask students if they have any questions. In my classes, they mostly said they did not have any questions and then they slowly learned there is nothing wrong to ask if there is a need for it.

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Oxford University Press. *Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic English. (2022, April 20)*. taken from https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/academic/instruction?q=instructions

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Dolores Malić graduated from the University of Maribor, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia. She has been a teacher of English and German in a primary school since 2007. She prefers working with older children and teenagers. She likes learning and searching for new methods and ways to improve her teaching all the time. She takes everyday classroom situations (even when things do not go as planned) as a challenge and tries to help her students learn in various ways. She is aware of the importance of giving clear instructions which have to be adjusted to different needs the students have.

Beautiful Iceland

Gorana Babić

Primary school Brela

Here are some short impressions from the course on the Icelandic education system where I stayed in Iceland on October 10-16 2021.

The provider is a Spanish company English Matters. This course is organized every year in March and/or October (as when). The participants came from 19 European countries.

This structured course is designed for **teachers, head teachers, principals, and other school staff** who would like to learn about the **Icelandic education system**, which is considered one of the most interesting ones in Europe.

After introductory theoretical lectures on the culture, history, and education system of Iceland, we visited several schools. As part of the Context 4 Content field trip, we visited the Golden Circle, Reynisfjara Beach, the town of Vik and Skogafoss Waterfall, as well as the National Museum in Reykjavik. All these elements helped us better understand the education, the culture, the extreme natural environment, and the wonderful people of this amazing country of ice and fire on the outskirts of Europe.

It has been a very interesting experience. Icelandic culture is completely different from ours and undoubtedly affects their education system.

The Icelandic Ministry of Education has the basic principles that all their schools work on: sustainability, healthy living, literacy, democracy, equality, respect for human rights, and creativity. All schools incorporate these principles into their school curricula, but schools can decide autonomously how to apply these principles. Believe it or not, students eat only healthy food for brunch. Snacks and sweets are strictly prohibited. I am amazed at the subject called Housekeeping(?) It consists of 3 modules: cooking, sewing, and woodworking and it is being taught from the 1st grade.

English is taught from the 4th grade, and Danish from the 7th grade- Danish is taken at the graduation exam. There is a good reason for that- Iceland was under the rule of the Danish king.

Almost every school has a pool for teaching Sports. If the school does not have a swimming pool, it has a subscription to the city swimming pool because the number of swimming hours per year that needs to be done is prescribed.

Civic education is a part of every subject.

In the first three grades, the grades are descriptive, while in the 4th-grade students are graded only in some subjects. Grading in all subjects begins in 5th grade. When assessing, special attention is paid to the student's attitude towards work and the student's cooperation with other students.

Textbooks and workbooks usually stay in school, except when students have homework. Homework is done once a week - most often given on Wednesday or Monday. The task is related to reading. Icelanders pay special attention to reading, which thrilled me immensely.

Namely, in all schools in Iceland, the first lesson begins with a reading that lasts from 15 to 30 minutes in all classes. After reading, teachers check the comprehension, each time with several students. Icelandic teachers point out that reading comprehension skill is extremely important and that it is the basis of the personal development of each individual since reading is applied in all subjects. Also, Icelandic teachers think that reading at the beginning of the working day allows students to calm down, relax and prepare for the working day at school. The Icelandic education system is student-centered and everything is subordinated to their personal development. Teachers only occasionally direct the work of students - they are moderators of pupils' activities. Students in the same class often do different subjects during one lesson according to the situation. The emphasis in the work is on the project and teamwork. All students have free textbooks as well as all the materials needed to work at the school. All groceries needed for cooking, sewing materials, and wood for processing are procured by the school. Pupils call the teachers by their names, but there is a high level of respect towards teachers.

One word- paradise.

Since I teach Croatian, I intend to implement discussion methods more than before. Then I am going to implement additional activities related to encouraging reading comprehension and continuing the already started focusing pupils' attention on local legends (inspired by the example of their sagas). An inspiring culture of living and an inspiring education system. I highly recommend all colleagues to visit Iceland and Icelandic schools.