

Daniela Schmeinck, Petr Knecht, Walter Kosack,
Nikos Lambrinos, Martin Musumeci, Suzanne Gatt



Through the Eyes of Children

mbvberlin

The Implementation of a
European Dimension
by Peer Learning in Primary School

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Content

1	What is E-PLIPS?	1
2	The Handbook	5
2.1	The aim of the Handbook	5
2.2	Why is the Handbook usefull for teaching?	7
2.3	How the Handbook is organized	9
2.4	How to use the Handbook	10
3	The E-PLIPS Website	15
3.1	The aim of the E-PLIPS Website	15
3.2	How the E-PLIPS Website is organized	17
3.3	How to access the E-PLIPS Website	19
4	Theoretical background	21
4.1	Peer Learning	21
4.2	European Dimension	24
4.3	The participating countries	29
4.3.1	<i>The School System</i>	30
4.3.2	<i>Computers and IT in Schools</i>	41
4.3.3	<i>Language Competencies (Teachers and Children)</i>	50
4.3.4	<i>The ‘European dimension’ in Schools and in the Curriculum</i>	60
4.3.5	<i>Experience of ‘EU-funded Projects’ in Schools</i>	70

4.3.6	<i>Teaching Materials about ‘Europe’</i>	75
4.3.7	<i>National Initiatives to promote ‘Europe’ and the ‘European Dimension’</i>	80
4.3.8	<i>The ‘European Dimension’ in Teacher Training</i>	88
4.3.9	<i>‘Peer learning’ in Schools</i>	93
5	The Modules	103
5.1	Teacher and pupils’ introduction	123
5.1.1	<i>General information</i>	124
5.1.2	<i>Teacher presentation</i>	125
5.1.3	<i>Pupil presentations</i>	130
5.1.4	<i>Suggested practice</i>	136
5.2	A day in school	137
5.2.1	<i>General information</i>	137
5.2.2	<i>Pupil presentations</i>	138
5.2.3	<i>Suggested practice</i>	143
5.3	A day at home	144
5.3.1	<i>General information</i>	144
5.3.2	<i>Pupil presentations</i>	145
5.3.3	<i>Suggested practice</i>	149
5.4	Our town - events and attractions	151
5.4.1	<i>General information</i>	151
5.4.2	<i>Pupil presentations</i>	152
5.4.3	<i>Suggested practice</i>	156

5.5	The Weather in my Country	158
5.5.1	<i>General information</i>	159
5.5.2	<i>Pupil presentations</i>	160
5.5.3	<i>Suggested practice</i>	167
5.6	Christmas	168
5.6.1	<i>General information</i>	169
5.6.2	<i>Pupil presentations</i>	170
5.6.3	<i>Suggested practice</i>	173
5.7	Language	174
5.7.1	<i>General information</i>	175
5.7.2	<i>Pupil presentations</i>	176
5.7.3	<i>Suggested practice</i>	181
6	Summary of the project	185
6.1	Overview of the project steps	185
6.2	Starting point of teachers and their classes before working with the project materials	187
6.3	General Comments	197
7	Progress and feedback of teacher and pupils after working with the materials	201
7.1	The Evaluation of the E-PLIPS Project	201
7.2	Feedback from teachers	202
7.3	Feedback from pupils	207
7.4	Conclusion of the project	208

References	211
Important websites	223
Contributors	231

1 What is E-PLIPS?

The E-PLIPS Project (The Implementation of a European Dimension by Peer Learning in Primary School) is a 40-month project funded by the European Commission (Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency) under COMENIUS 2.1. It started on October 1st, 2006 and lasted until January 31st, 2010.

Universities from five different European countries have been involved in the project: the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Malta and the United Kingdom. The project has been co-ordinated by Daniela Schmeinck (University of Education Karlsruhe, Germany).



The project partners were: Petr Knecht and Tomáš Janík (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic); Walter Kosack (University of Education Karlsruhe, Germany); Nikos Lambrinos and Evangelia Mitrou-Papadaki (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece); Martin Musumeci and Suzanne Gatt (University of Malta), and; John Halocha (Bishop Grosseteste University College, Lincoln, United Kingdom, project partner until October 2008). The project was externally evaluated by Karl Donert (Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom).



The materials presented in this handbook have been produced with the support of the following teachers and their classes: Dagmar Štěpánová and Hana Přichystalová (ZŠ a MŠ Kotlářská, Brno, Czech Republic); Friedrich Ortius (GHRS

Illingen, Germany); Elisavet Kaltsou (Kardia Primary School, Thessaloniki, Greece); Claire Vassallo (St. Monica School, Gzira, Malta), and; John Noone, (Welton St Mary's School, United Kingdom).

Aims of the E-PLIPS project

Projects under COMENIUS 2.1 aim to improve both teacher training and teacher professional development. The focus of E-PLIPS therefore is on the development of materials that can be used for learning and teaching, as well as on in-service training courses for teachers who want to implement a 'European dimension' into their teaching programme. Thus, the aim of the E-PLIPS project has been to provide an up-to-date contribution to European education. By using innovative methods of intercultural teaching and learning, the group endeavoured to establish efficient pedagogies for teaching about the 'European dimension' for life. The methods of intercultural group learning and peer assessment were used to underpin the co-operative learning environment for both teachers and children. As a result of the project, materials are being developed and presented in order to equip both children and teachers with instruments to improve lifelong learning skills as well as enable them to become active participants in European life.

"E-PLIPS project offered me and my class an outstanding and interesting opportunity to get insight into foreign countries, their cultures, everyday life, language, school system and other aspects. I appreciated the cooperation with the teachers from the other countries as well."

(Friedrich Ortius, teacher from
Germany)

2 The Handbook

In the long term, the theme of ‘European dimension’ in education has a prominent place in school curricula all over Europe. Current discussion about past and future enlargement of the European Union and its institutional organization increases the interest in themes centred around ‘European’ topics in education. This handbook offers new ways and ideas about the implementation of ‘European dimension’ in education, with special attention given to peer-learning. Current educational research findings show that in the process of building knowledge and developing competencies, it is not only the leading role of a teacher that is important but potential also lies also in the pupils who can learn from and with each other (cf. Thurston 2006). This approach in education is most commonly referred to as ‘peer learning’ (cf. Boud, Cohen, Sampson 2001; O’Donnell, King 1999).

2.1 The aim of the Handbook

This handbook attempts to show teachers ways of learning more about colleagues from other European countries, about their professional and personal lives in the places they work and live. This is achieved through the modules (examples) provided, which have been developed by the participating

partners. The modules can be used as they are or they can be used as a starting point for discussion. Alternatively discussion, or alternatively they can be tailored to meet the teacher's needs in any European country.

The aim of the handbook is to help teachers to:

- use the E-PLIPS website
- implement the 'European dimension' in their everyday teaching
- fulfill curriculum requirements (in some cases)
- communicate with other European teachers and academics

Moreover, by using this handbook, the teachers can help their pupils to:

- get a closer feel of the European dimension
- use the E-PLIPS website
- enhance their knowledge and reflect about their own situation
- communicate with other European pupils
- build a personal relationship with other European pupils
- develop and share materials
- reduce misconceptions about people from other countries



- reduce misconceptions about foreign countries
- reduce or eliminate misconceptions about minorities living in their country



2.2 Why is the Handbook useful for teaching?

The ‘European dimension’ in education has become a major component of the school curriculum in the countries of the European Union. Despite this, there are still variations and differences in the depth and the breadth at which the teaching and delivery of this ‘dimension’ is carried out, and

“I was really surprised by pupils’ enthusiasm and interest in the E-PLIPS project. I was continuously ‘under pressure’ of the children and really ‘had’ to be involved in the project based activities. It was a really nice experience to co-operate with the other teachers and classes. I recommend the participation in the E-PLIPS project to everyone.”

(Hana Přichystalová, teacher from the Czech Republic)

the approaches adopted in the various member states. The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into teaching and learning in this area appears to be advancing at different rates in the different countries.

‘Europe’ – seen as a political, cultural, financial and scientific region – is present, in some way or another, in every school curriculum across the continent. In many cases, this presence is focused mainly on physical geography while human geography is underrepresented. So, the children are not aware of what the customs in other countries are – or they might have developed ideas from other sources (like films, television, etc.) which might not be truly representative of the given country.

This handbook provides teachers with ideas on how to motivate their pupils to learn more about the customs and everyday life of children in contrasting European countries. They will find examples of how they can promote the ‘European dimension’. These examples can be found on the interactive DVD as well as on the project website (www.E-PLIPS.eu) and can be used directly as a teaching resource. Moreover, the website also offers comments, guidelines and background information, as well as ideas for the use of the materials in the classroom. By using new media within a context of ‘peer learning’, both teachers and pupils will become able to integrate these innovative methods successfully into the learning and teaching process.

2.3 How the Handbook is organized

The handbook is divided into five units. The first unit, *What is E-PLIPS?*, contains a general description of the aims of the project as well as the partners, the teachers and the schools which have participated in this project.

The second unit, *The Handbook*, consists of detailed information about aims, structure and possible ways of using this handbook. It introduces the E-PLIPS project module based activities as well. Unit three, *The E-PLIPS Website*, describes the related website for everyday teaching practice.



Unit four, *Theoretical background*, gives an outline of the theoretical background regarding ‘peer learning’. The unit also summarizes basic information about the participating countries in the E-PLIPS project with emphasis on the following topics: school system, ICT in education, language competencies of teachers and pupils, ‘European dimension’ in curricula, school experience of European projects, availability

of teaching and learning materials about Europe, national initiatives, ‘European dimension’ in the training of teachers and ‘peer learning’ in educational contexts. The unit provides an outstanding comparative perspective on countries, from a range of different European regions, traditions and cultures.

Unit five, *The Modules*, elaborates more on the context of everyday teaching and learning practice. In this unit, seven thematic modules: Introduction; A day at school; A day at home; Our town – main events; The weather in my country/ town; Christmas, and; Language, are described in detail. Practical examples are also included. Each module presented in this unit has been developed by the project partners in each of the participating countries and has been tested at several primary schools.

Unit six, *Summary of the project*, focuses on the project review. In the beginning of the unit, the project time-line and projected outcomes are presented. The last part of the unit provides the reader with feedback from the teachers involved in the project.

2.4 How to use the Handbook

The handbook is also divided into a number of chapters. The chapters of unit four give general information about schooling

in the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Malta and the United Kingdom and information about the underlying methodology of implementing a 'European dimension' through 'peer learning', (what 'peer learning' is, what the 'European dimension' is, etc.). Unit five suggests approaches to preparing new PowerPoint presentations for use with pupils. The different chapters of this unit deal with suggested practice through examples which have been used in schools in the participating countries.

The purpose of the handbook is to provide a link between theory and practice. Thus, the second, third and fourth unit are mostly theoretical while the fifth unit is more practically oriented.

The main focus of the handbook lies in concrete examples



of activities which could be followed for the sake of the implementation of a ‘European dimension’ in education through ‘peer learning’. All activities are theoretically based on innovative concepts and trends in primary education (European dimension in education, ‘peer learning’) and have been tested at participating schools in five European countries. After feedback, practical examples of activities were developed. Teachers might directly follow the activities offered in each example or else they can use the activities as inspiration and modify them in order to render them suitable for their teaching situations. The handbook can be used simply as a source of theoretical or practical information, too.

Unit five consists of seven chapters, in which different thematic modules are described. Each module deals with a special theme that is interesting for the pupils as well as connected with their everyday life. The modules deal with the following themes and topics: introduction of the teacher and children; a day in school; a day at home; our town – main events; the weather in my country/town; Christmas and language. The chapters provide information about general aspects, settings, tools, materials and previous knowledge, which are necessary for efficient teaching and learning within each of the modules. Whether a teacher decides to participate in the E-PLIPS project or not, the handbook enables the opportunity to get

acquainted with the project. A significant part of the content might be used for more general purposes, e.g. information about ways of promoting 'European dimension' in education. For those teachers who are interested in being involved in the project and actively participating with their classes on project activities, the handbook represents simple but brief guidelines on learning and teaching within each module, with a special accent to teachers' needs. Examples of good practice are included as well.



3 The E-PLIPS Website

The E-PLIPS website (www.E-PLIPS.eu) offers an insight into the project. It includes authentic materials produced by classes involved in the project.

3.1 The aim of the E-PLIPS Website

The main focus is on the importance of ‘peer learning’ within the context of the ‘European dimension’. Consequently, the website integrates tasks which allow all those that are interested to get a better idea of how a ‘peer learning’ approach can be used by primary schools, even those with lower levels of knowledge of ICT or technical equipment.

There are many possible ways for using the website, depending



on interest, motivation and time. The first option is simple to use the website as an information base on the countries involved and on their approaches to European education.

The second option is full participation in the E-PLIPS module following the steps that are clearly described in the handbook.

The second approach is more time consuming, but provides deeper knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards European themes and topics in education. Children create their



own presentations and share them with children from other European countries, discussing and comparing their work and what they have learned.

One of the aims of the E-PLIPS project is to reduce misconceptions about people from other countries. Reaching this aim, at least partly, requires long-term intensive cooperation in the international context. Because full participation in the project in terms of creating new presentations and exchanging them with participating schools from other European countries is demanding on classroom management and organization, teachers have to engage at a deeper, coordinating level. Special attention has to be given to preparation, reflection and evaluation of all module based activities.

3.2 How the E-PLIPS Website is organized

The *Homepage* of the E-PLIPS website project navigates users intuitively through its content. The main menu consists of nine thematic sections. Besides the homepage, the section *About E-PLIPS* gives general information about the project. In the sections *Partners* and *Participating schools* participating partners and schools are listed, as well as the contact information on responsible persons. The sections *Events* and *Project meetings* are focused on concrete scholarly, educational or promotional activities with an explicit connection to the E-PLIPS project (workshops, higher education courses, conferences, radio broadcast etc). Project-related publications

are available in the section *Publications* (papers, articles, presentations, brochures and so forth. Each of the publications is available in pdf file to download.



Figure 1: The E-PLIPS website

The section *Materials* is probably the most important one, especially for teachers. In this section all teachers' and children's

presentations are shown as results of E-PLIPS project related activities. For further information see the chapter five. A contact form is provided in the *Contact* section for providing *feedback* on E-PLIPS materials. Though the website is in English, comments can be made, using the contact form, in other languages as well.

3.3 How to access the E-PLIPS Website

After typing www.E-PLIPS.eu in a web browser the homepage of the E-PLIPS project will be shown (fig. 1). The homepage was created with the aim of helping teachers with the project activities and providing them with interactive support in presenting extended information, more detailed examples and further reading.



4 Theoretical background

In this chapter are basic theoretical starting points, concepts and ideas that underpin the aims, contributions and outcomes of the E-PLIPS project. E-PLIPS is an acronym for ‘The Implementation of a European dimension by peer learning in Primary School’. As the name of the project suggests, the chapter is mainly based on different aspects of ‘peer learning’ and European dimension, which represent the general pillars of the project. In the context of this project, the term ‘implementation’ is seen as meaning that all project-based activities in the handbook have been completed.

4.1 Peer learning

What is ‘peer learning’?

In the context of this project, the concepts of ‘peer learning’, ‘peer learning activities’ and ‘peer tutoring’ refer to the use of teaching and learning strategies in which people (students and teachers) learn with and from each other. The emphasis within this process is on the idea of constructivism. Within this context there are different levels of cognitive development, there are also differences in the areas of experience, knowledge and information resources. Thus the individuals involved are

‘I liked the project very much. It was great fun to learn about schools, children and other things. Thank you!’

(Girl, 10 years, Germany)

considered to be the ‘experts’ concerning their own country and their own culture but learners with respect to other countries and cultures.

Why do ‘peer learning’?

Concerning the effectiveness of communication and interaction between people, it seems undisputable that face-to-face contact, through exchange and/or study visits, has a positive influence on the development of the individuals concerned. However, against a background of increasing globalisation and mobility and additional consequences, to be seen critically at a European or global level. Face-to-face contact might be too expensive for many schools and teachers to consider. Consequently, in the context of the project, an immediate face-to-face contact was not planned for the teachers and children involved. Instead, other ‘technological tools’ were used to initiate and enhance the contact between the different partners, namely, e-mail, video/audio/PowerPoint presentations and video conferencing.

Who is involved in ‘peer learning’?

The process of ‘peer learning’ involves both teachers and children. This E-PLIPS project was based on the idea that the implementation of a ‘European dimension’ in primary schools can be realised in a common ICT learning environment by

‘I liked the project. I learned a lot about and from the children in the other countries. One day I will go to visit these countries.’

(Boy, 9 years, Germany)



‘peer learning’ activities. The group worked in a context of interaction, communication and the open exchange of views and information between teachers and children from other cultures coming from different countries and within their own classrooms as well.

When to do ‘peer learning’?

‘Peer learning’ can be used in every situation and at each level of education. The only condition needed is the existence of a number of willing participants with a common interest and the motivation to solve a specific problem as a starting point. It is most helpful if there is a variety of knowledge, skills and experience among the participants so they can learn from one other.

Where can ‘peer learning’ be done?

‘Peer learning’ can be applied in almost every teaching and learning situation. It is not restricted to the classroom but it is efficient and effective in outdoor activities as well. ‘Peer learning’ can be used to create ideas, to solve problems and to improve competences and skills.

4.2 European Dimension

What is the European Dimension?

The concept ‘European dimension’ embraces the geographical, political, economic, social and cultural aspects of Europe. The presence of a ‘European dimension’ in education means that every school subject and every topic will be enriched by these aspects. In the context of the enlargement of the European Union, the demand for a European education is more pronounced. Everyday life, economy and business in the European Union are not only influenced at the national level, but at the continental level as well and the European Union has become an important body in these fields itself. Standardisation of legislation, minimum social standards, industrial norms and an open market accelerates the shaping of European dimension. Consequently – even through the demands and actions of politicians and society itself – the school of today should prepare for a Europe of tomorrow and thus for a life in an increasingly Europe.

Why include a European Dimension?

There are four different areas of interacting competence relevant to implementing a European dimension: knowledge, attitudes, understanding and skills. A fundamental but flexible

understanding of both interdependences and common factors within Europe is necessary to fully understand ourselves as citizens within a cultural, geographical, historical and political complex society.

Effective participation as a European citizen must be constructed upon clear, positive and constructive – but also critical – attitudes towards European ideas and relationships with other peoples and their cultures. Effective participation is also based upon practical lifelong learning skills like, for example, language, communication and social skills. In the context of formal (school) education, it is essential to effectively promote the following competencies (see fig. 2).



'The project was really cool!'
(Boy, 10 years, Germany)

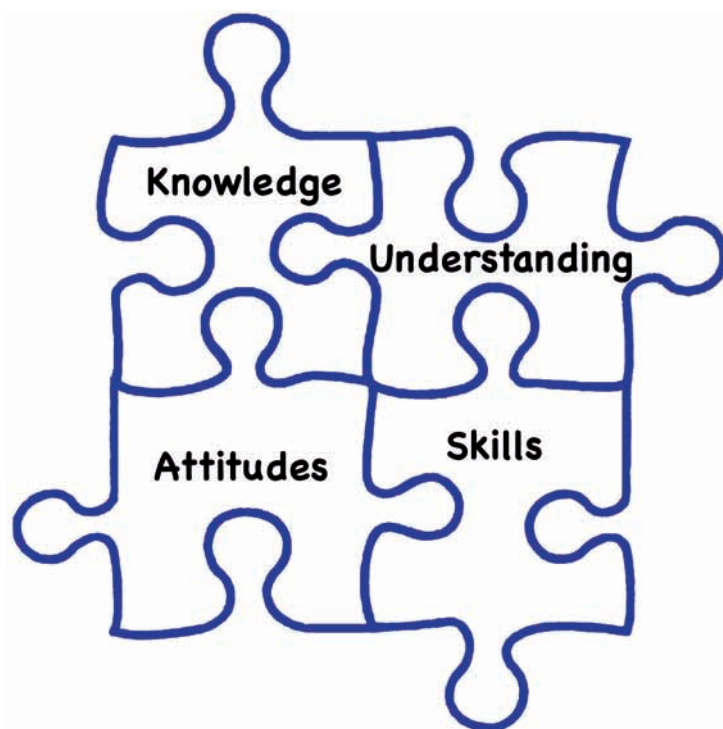


Figure 2: Aims for implementing a 'European dimension' in learning and teaching in primary school

Who is involved in European Dimension?

As a consequence of growing European integration, the 'European dimension' has become part of everyday life. Even children in primary schools encounter the effects of these impacts: for example in labels on food packages, news on TV and other media. Their natural curiosity should be exploited as the starting point towards the development of a clear understanding of their own place and, of the places of other individuals in general within European society. The materials

that are presented in the E-PLIPS Project show that even beginners in using English as a second language were able to cooperate with project partners across a range of countries in Europe.

When to do European Dimension?

Teaching and learning about the ‘European dimension’ can start as soon as children realise the presence of these European impacts on their own life. This project is mainly oriented towards primary school children but it can be adapted for use with older children as well. The ‘European dimension’ has already been implemented in curricula in several. Sometimes these curricula define special European topics and competencies for certain levels of education.

Where can European Dimension be tackled?

The ‘European dimension’ can be experienced in everyday-life situations inside and/or outside school. The underlying concept of a ‘European dimension’ is cross-curricular and, as a



result, a place for it can be found in nearly every school subject (most obviously geography, languages, history, science). Many learning events can be ‘constructed’ in such a way as to include the European dimension, such as ‘a day in our school’, school uniforms, festivals at Christmas or Easter, etc.

This project offers blueprints and materials that help classes to get in contact with children in other European countries. Thus, participants will have the opportunity to prepare and exchange documents, ideas and experiences. These materials can be also used as ‘homework’ if pupils have internet access.



How to teach about European dimension?

The E-PLIPS project suggests the construction of a broader experience by enabling pupils from different European

countries to communicate with one another. This may well support inclusivity and empathy in learning about other peoples and cultures.

Modern technologies provide us with powerful means of communication, such as via e-mail, PowerPoint presentations and video clips. A web site may be a very useful tool to exchange information, ideas and document, as it has the advantage of fast transmission of information between different parties even over large distances. This implies that ICT skills need to be strongly promoted among both teachers and learners. The available materials can be organised at different levels (distinguishing between the participating children and the participating teachers). It can also be developed by individuals, by small groups, or by a whole class. In comparison to the use of passages of text, these tools can be motivational from the perspective of the producers of the materials and that of the users.

4.3 The participating Countries

This Chapter is divided into a number of sections, each depicting a different aspect. Each section is then further divided into sub-sections, each outlining that particular aspect in each of the five countries participating in this project,

namely the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Malta and the United Kingdom. The various aspects that are discussed in the following pages are: the school system, computers and IT in schools, language competencies (of teachers and children), the 'European dimension' in schools and in the curriculum, experience of 'EU-funded projects' in schools, teaching materials about 'Europe', national initiatives, the 'European dimension' in teacher training, and 'peer learning' in schools.

4.3.1 The School System

In this section, a brief outline of the school system in each of the five participating countries is presented. In each case an overview of the various stages/levels and main curricular characteristics is given.

The Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic children aged three to six may attend nursery school. Attendance is not compulsory, but nearly 90% of children in this age group do attend. Compulsory education usually begins at age six and runs for a minimum of nine years, including primary and lower secondary school.

All children begin in a primary school, which includes a first (age 6 to 10) and second (age 11 to 15) stage. Some students move to a gymnasium (grammar school) for the second

stage which can be completed in a six-year or an eight-year programme. Less than 10% of students in this age group move to the gymnasium. The legal class size limit is a maximum of 30 students. For students moving on to upper secondary education there are three options: gymnasium, technical school (SOŠ), or vocational school (SOU). All upper secondary schools require completion of compulsory education. Each school additionally sets entrance requirements, including an entrance exam. The Ministry must approve the curricula, although it grants a great degree of flexibility in this area. The schools then organize their own final examinations.

After completing gymnasium or vocational school, students who wish to attend university

must pass the maturita (school-leaving) exam. An outline of the Czech educational system is shown in figure 3.



Organisation of the education system in the Czech Republic, 2008/09

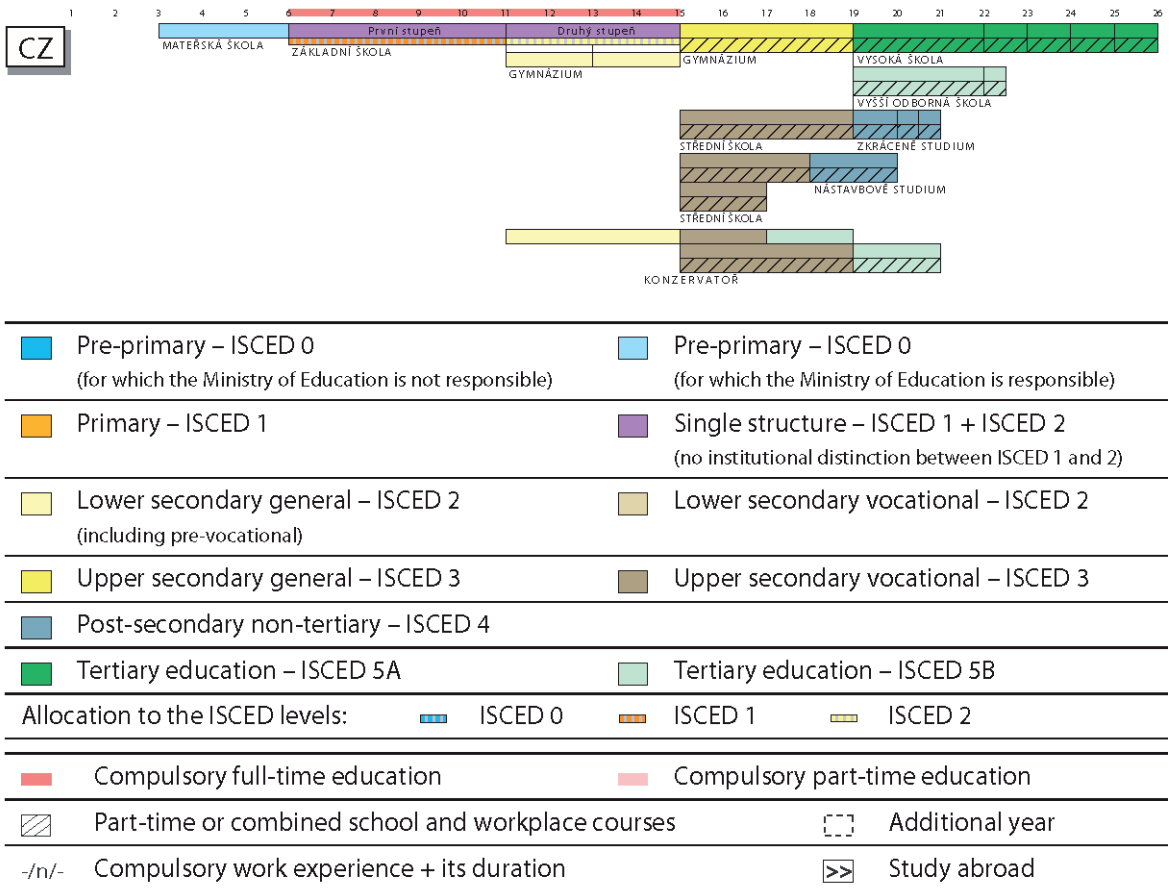


Figure 3: Educational system in the Czech Republic (Source: www.eurydice.org [22.06.2009])

Germany

The educational system in Germany is characterised by its variety because there is no national educational policy or a national curriculum. Each federal state has its own educational system, curriculum and budget. Consequently, here we will focus on the system in Baden-Württemberg, a federal state in the south west of Germany, and the one that contains the



E-PLIPS school.

Kindergarten usually starts at the age of three, but it is not compulsory. Pupils usually start primary school at the age of six. They stay in primary school for four years (6 - 9/10), and then proceed to secondary school education (Hauptschule, Realschule or Gymnasium). Students have nine years of compulsory schooling. A typical school day starts between 7.30 and 8.00 in the morning and ends at lunchtime. Figure 1 gives a general overview of the German school system.

In 2005-06 there were 2495 primary schools in Baden-Württemberg (Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg: Allgemein bildende Schulen in Baden-Württemberg), some of which were combined with lower secondary schools. According to Baden-Württemberg's new curriculum for primary schools, since 2004 geography has not been an independent subject but

a part of Fächerverbund (General Studies) called ‘Mensch, Natur und Kultur’ (People, Nature and Culture). This General Studies curriculum area combines Social Studies, Technology, Sociology, Geography, History, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Political Science, Music and the Arts.

Organisation of the education system in Germany, 2007/08

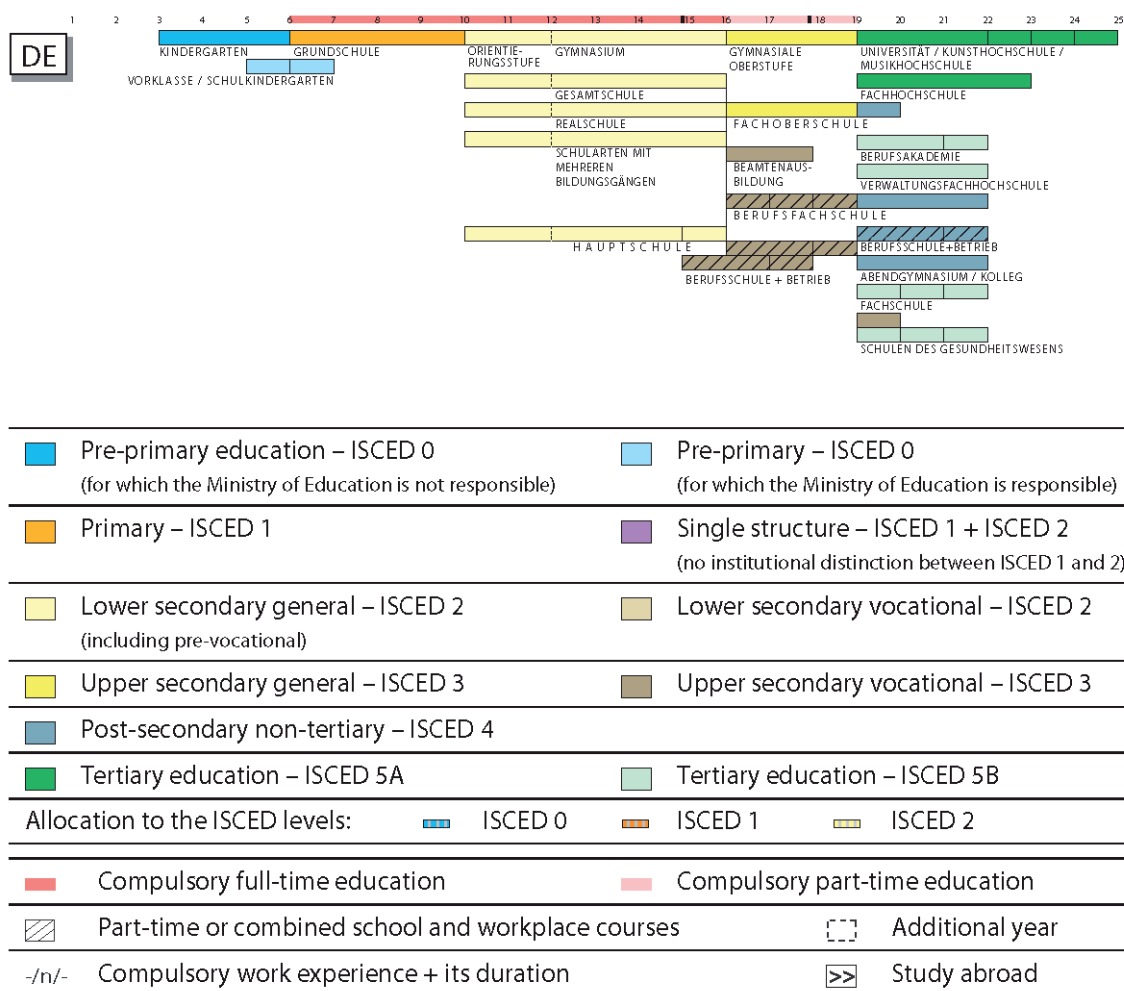


Figure 4: General overview of the German school system (Source: www.eurydice.org [22.06.2009])

Greece

The educational system in Greece is divided into three levels. Primary education includes preschool, which lasts one year and is for children of five years of age, and primary school, lasting six years for children from six to eleven years of age. Secondary education includes lower secondary school (three years duration), general upper secondary school (also lasting three years), vocational lyceum/EPA.L (which lasts three years), technical vocational schools/TEE and vocational educational training schools/EPA.S. There are also alternatives to the mainstream lower secondary and general upper secondary school systems. Higher education includes universities, technological education institutes and the school of fine arts (ASKT).

The upper secondary school is not compulsory and the duration of studies lasts three or four years, depending on the type of school. Although not belonging to any level, but still part of formal education, there is also the training provided by the I.E.K. (vocational training institutes) that falls in the same category as the post-compulsory secondary education system. The number of state schools per level (2003-04 data) was:



preschools, 5623; primary schools, 5632; lower secondary schools, 1891; upper secondary schools, 1264, and; technical vocational schools, 462.

Malta

The Maltese educational system is compulsory for the age range five to sixteen although 85% of children start school at nursery level at the age of 3. Primary education lasts for six years, followed by an additional 5 years at secondary level. The curriculum provided within these years is governed by the National Minimum Curriculum which is compulsory for all schools, state and non-state. Education within the primary years is provided by one main teacher who teaches most of the curriculum. There are, however, a few specialist teachers for areas such as physical education and art. There are three different types of education providers in Malta: the state provides education to 60% of children, church schools for 30%, and the last 10% go to private, independent schools. Primary schools are co-educational whereas secondary schools (church and state) are single sex schools.

The first three years of primary education are not officially assessed, with examinations first introduced at the end of the fourth year in primary. Performance in this exam is used to stream students according to performance for the following

'I know just Malta - the building material. (Malta in Czech = mortar). I have never heard of the Island until now.'

(Girl, 8 years, Czech Republic)

years at primary level. At the end of primary education, children sit an 11+ exam for entry into 'grammar'-type schools. Those who succeed proceed to junior lyceum schools and those who fail attend area secondary schools. In the case of church schools, both primary and secondary students have exams but proceed within the same institution. However, there is also a competitive 11+ exam for entry into church secondary schools, particularly for boys. In the case of independent schools, students progress within the school.



The Maltese system is in the process of being changed. State schools are being grouped into colleges incorporating a number of primary and secondary schools according to catchment area. Differences between junior lyceums and area secondary schools are being phased out. 11+ examinations are also being reconsidered and may be considerably changed or phased out.

United Kingdom

In the UK education is compulsory for the age range five to sixteen, however many children start school between the ages of 4 and 5. The vast majority of children attend nursery

school from the age of 3 years. Primary school education is normally six years in length. At the age of 11 pupils transfer to a secondary school for at least 5 more years. Schools have to teach to a 'National Curriculum' for children aged 5 to 16 in state-maintained schools. The national curriculum sets out:

- the subjects taught
- the knowledge, skills and understanding required in each subject
- standards or attainment targets in each subject, and
- how a child's progress is assessed and reported.

Within the framework of the National Curriculum schools are free to plan and organise teaching and learning in the way that meets the needs of their pupils. The National Curriculum is based on five Key Stages (KSs). Key Stages 1 and 2 are for



primary schools, Key Stages 3 and 4 are for education until 16 years of age (Table 1). ‘A’ and ‘AS’ level qualifications, for those aged 16-19 (sometimes referred to as Key Stage 5), enable entry to university.

At Key Stages 1 and 2 the statutory subjects that all pupils must study are art and design, design and technology, english, geography, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, music, physical education and science. Religious education must also be provided at Key Stages 1 and 2.

Key Stage	Age	Years
Key Stage 1	Ages 5-7	Years 1-2
Key Stage 2	Ages 7-11	Years 3-6
Key Stage 3	Ages 11-14	Years 7-9
Key Stage 4	Ages 14-16	Years 10-11

Table 1: Key Stages in the UK National Curriculum

Primary school teachers tend to teach all subjects to their class, the exception may be where specialist experience is available or is needed, for example music, physical education/sport and art. In September 2010, modern foreign languages will become statutory at Key Stage 2. Assessments are undertaken by teachers at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. National testing in core subjects has been implemented to measure the

progress of pupils.

There is no such thing as a typical school in England. About 90% of children are educated in state-maintained schools, also referred to as mainstream schools. Mainstream schools have a lot in common; they are all funded by local authorities, follow the national curriculum and are regularly inspected by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). The School Standards and Framework Act, 1998 identifies four main categories of state-maintained school: community, foundation, voluntary-controlled and voluntary-aided.

- Community schools – run by the local authority
- Foundation schools – the governing body or a charitable foundation employ the staff and run the school.
- Trust schools – a foundation school supported by a charitable foundation or trust.
- Voluntary-controlled – mainly religious or 'faith' schools, but run by the local authority.
- Voluntary-aided – often religious schools where the governing body, often a religious organisation, runs the school.

There are also independent (private) schools for primary and secondary aged pupils. They are not required to teach the National Curriculum.



4.3.2 Computers and IT in Schools

This sections lays out the situation in each country regarding computers and information technology.

The Czech Republic

The state of Information Technology (IT) facilities in Czech schools is not easy to describe because it is continuously changing and developing. Schools continuously buy new computers and replace older equipment.

The international comparative study SITES (Second Information Technology in Education Study, 2000) was carried out to analyse and compare the extent use of IT and IT equipment at schools in different countries; it involved 26 countries all over the world. The study involved 255 primary

'I would like to know more detail about everyday life in the other countries.'

(Boy, 10 years, Czech Republic)

schools and 235 secondary schools in the Czech Republic. According to the results, the Czech Republic compares well with other European countries with regard the provision of IT equipment in primary and secondary schools. In the year 2000, 41% of pupils in primary schools (ages 6 to 12) have had the opportunity of working with a computer, with 72% of those in the age-group 12 to 15, 90% of students at upper secondary schools and 100% of those at grammar schools having such opportunities. These results were similar to those in countries like Italy.

Since 2008, when a new curriculum came into force, all Czech schools have to guarantee that 100% of their pupils will have the opportunity to work with computers during compulsory education, even at primary school. To facilitate this the Czech government had introduced the Technology Policy in Education (*Vstupujeme...* vol. 1, 2005). The aim of the policy is to improve the quality and extent of IT equipment in Czech schools, to support e-learning and to develop information strategies both for pupils and for all Czech citizens (available, for example, after school lessons finish in the afternoon).

Following this Policy, the average number of computers per 100 pupils in Czech schools increased from 9 in 2001 to 11 in 2004. At present, there is a shift from buying new hardware to purchasing new software products and increasing internet

connection speed.

In the Czech Republic there are two basic approaches to the implementation of IT in schools: either as a separate school subject called 'Informatics', or fully integrated into other school subjects. Normally the latter method is used in primary schools, whereas in secondary schools IT is a separate subject. According to government policy, every primary and secondary school teacher has to undergo IT training and to provide this, the 'school education information webpage' was set up, which follows the Conception eEUROPE, 2005 (Vstupujeme... vol. 2, 2005). The aim of the webpage is to support teachers and help them in IT lifelong learning, to establish a communication platform for teachers, to offer the possibility of exchanging teaching and learning materials and experiences, and to connect the Czech Republic to European information resources networks. There are some barriers to achieving teachers' IT training and lifelong IT learning. There is low motivation, particularly among older teachers who do not use computers in their private life. There are also challenges in encouraging school subject areas to adopt IT-based learning methods. Another big barrier is low English language competency among teachers.



Germany

IT equipment in primary schools is becoming more and more important in Germany. In 2004, as stated in the IT-report from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 98% of all primary schools had computers (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung: IT- Ausstattung, p. 5). The pupil:computer ratio increased from 23:1 in 2002 to 15:1 in 2004. In 2001, 23% of all computers were linked to the internet, while in 2004 the percentage increased to 68%. On average, seven computers are linked to the internet in primary schools, and 18% of primary schools have video projectors (ibid., p. 18-36).

One can be sure that these developments will continue, as shown by statistics for 2005/ 06 from the Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg (Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg). These demonstrate that 99% of all primary schools already had internet access and computer rooms existed in 470 primary schools. Furthermore, 81.6 % of these computers are not in specific computer rooms (Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg: Computer an öffentlichen Schulen), most being located in classrooms, for instance as computer pools (Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft: Computereinsätze in der Grundschule).

Data about other equipment is not readily available. However,

*'Germany has many people
because it is written Germany.'
(Girl; 9 years, Malta)*

in 2004 only 18 % of primary schools in Germany had data projectors and smart boards and it is still quite rare for teaching to take place using this equipment. There are exceptions, as the case of a school in Pforzheim (near Karlsruhe), where the school's first smart board was installed in 2003 (ED Compass: Neueste Fallstudie) or Hamburg where over 60 smart boards were installed in more than 20 schools in August 2005 (Open PR: Hamburger Schulen installieren SMART Board Interactive Whiteboards). Thus, while one can assume that IT equipment in schools improved a lot during these years, the use of these technologies in teaching is not yet widespread as teachers are not yet fully acquainted with them.

Greece

According to the Education Research Centre of Greece (2002) pupil:computer ratios for the country were 47:1 in primary schools, 16:1 in secondary schools and 13:1 in high schools and vocational schools (Koulaidis et al., 2002). Since then the ratio has improved (see tables 2 and 3).



Malta

In Malta four computers are provided in each primary classroom in state schools. One big-screen T.V. is also provided, with each primary teacher having a laptop which can be connected to this T.V. Church schools have either one or two computers in each classroom or they have an IT room. This is the result of the Maltese government's commitment to promoting ICT as a part of children's education. The aim of having computers in each and every classroom is for ICT to become an integral part of the teaching and learning process within primary education. Computers are also used in order to reduce the 'digital divide' between those children who have access to computers at home and those who do not.

A number of schools are also being connected to the internet. However, there are a number of challenges to this policy, for example, the cost of site licences means that most of the computers do not have Microsoft 'Word' or 'Excel' installed



Level of education	Total number of schools	Number and percentage schools per computer item		Total item number	Students per computer	Students
		N	%			
Primary schools	5.468	5.383	98,4	27.153	22,0	597.474
Junior High schools	1.871	1.860	99,4	24.187	13,0	315.501
High schools	1.231	1.097	89,1	19.265	11,4	219.624
Vocational schools	452	451	99,8	8.883	10,7	94.766
Total	9.022	8.791	97,4	79.488	15,4	1.227.365

Table 2: Computer items per level of education (2004-2005)
(Source: The Education Research Centre of Greece, Project: 'Monitoring of the Education System at the Level of the School Unit')

Level of Education	Total number of computer items	Number and Percentage (%)									
		PC up to 386		PC up 386 to 486		PC Pentium		PC Celeron		Other	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Primary schools	27.153	234	0,9	1.004	3,7	23.936	88,2	1.659	6,1	320	1,2
Junior High schools	24.187	76	0,3	664	2,7	21.599	89,3	1.750	7,2	98	0,4
High schools	19.265	7	0,0	249	1,3	17.772	92,3	1.161	6,0	76	0,4
Vocational schools	8.883	2	0,0	270	3,0	7.417	83,5	1.136	12,8	58	0,7
Total	79.488	319	0,4	2.187	2,8	70.724	89,0	5.706	7,2	552	0,7

Table 3: Type of computer items per level of education (2004-05)
(Source: The Education Research Centre of Greece, Project: 'Monitoring of the Education System at the Level of the School Unit')

on them and so children can only use computer notepads. Also, a number of computers have been in classrooms for several years and a good percentage need to be changed or upgraded. Where there is internet connection there can be problems with specific sites or pages being blocked because of stringent firewall systems. Consequently the number of sites accessible becomes limited and difficult for teachers to use.

United Kingdom

The first computers began to appear in English primary schools around 1980. The English government provided a range of funding to enable schools to purchase computers, printers and disc drives, as well as training for teachers. Often, there was only one computer per school. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) provided a range of software and training to support teachers. Much software was of the ‘drill and practice’ type as programmers were limited by the processing power of computers.

During the 1980s some schools became leaders in the use of IT where head teachers ensured staff received effective training and large sums of money were spent on hardware and software. The 1998 National Curriculum saw the introduction of IT as a separate subject. This often led to skills being taught in isolation with little meaning to the pupils. Computers were

often grouped together in suites with timetabling often limiting the creative use of IT to support learning. By 2004 official advice was that IT should not be taught as a separate subject but as a tool to be used across the curriculum. At the same time processing power and developments in new technology provided facilities that teachers could actually use to support the curriculum in creative and relevant ways. Examples of this include the use of ‘Google Earth’ in geography and digital photography for easy personal communication.

Today, the majority of English primary schools have high levels of technology available for learning and teaching. Some schools have retained computer suites where twelve to fifteen PCs are available. In addition, many classrooms have direct access to three or four PCs so that they can be used as and when required across the curriculum. Many schools have purchased sets of wireless laptops that enable pupils and teachers to communicate between each other and into the wider world. The majority of primary classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and data projectors controlled from a laptop. The quality of educational software has improved dramatically. Schools buy some of this from educational suppliers. Also, good quality software is also available on the web and skilful teachers are able to locate and use this in their classroom.

Today, IT in English schools is often referred to as Information

‘Schools in England are not very big but children learn a lot about being polite.’

(Girl; 9 years, Malta)

and Communication Technology (ICT). The original thinking behind this was to ensure teachers saw a wide range of technology as being available for learning and teaching in addition to the standard PC. For example, this would include programmable robots, digital still and video cameras, data loggers, television, GPS systems and mobile phone technology. Teachers are supported by subject associations who provide software and training on the use of ICT to support specific subjects. BECTA (Bringing Educational Creativity To All) is a government funded agency that works at a national level

to support teachers make the most creative and effective use of technology across the curriculum. The E-PLIPS project would be one example of how they envisage technology being used in creative ways to support learning and teaching within a dynamic social context.

4.3.3 Language Competencies (Teachers and Children)

This section examines the level of competency and proficiency in foreign languages of both teachers and school children in the five countries.



The Czech Republic

The low level of language competencies of primary and secondary school teachers is a recognised problem in the Czech Republic, particularly following accession to the European Union. Now schools have more possibilities for international cooperation through European Union projects and opportunities to apply for long or short term study stays or visits abroad.

It is compulsory for all teachers in the Czech Republic to go through five years of university education (mainly in a Faculty of Education). Each graduate has to pass an exam in one foreign language at the C level of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages; the most popular choices by students are English, German and French. Notwithstanding this, many teachers cannot speak English because it is not a compulsory foreign language at Czech universities; many teachers choose German during their university courses. Older teachers in Czech primary and secondary schools are very competent in Russian as a result of the geopolitical orientation of the Czech Republic during the period of the ‘cold war’. Russian was the main foreign language in all schools during that period.

Moreover most Czech teachers either do not use or do not need to use foreign languages during their work. Teachers are

‘I do not understand, why they teach the pupils (in Greece) such strange lettering’

(Girl, 11 years, Czech Republic)



not motivated to participate in international projects, they do not read foreign literature and do not use foreign languages in their everyday lives. This does not help in improving teachers' knowledge of foreign languages. This situation is not enhanced either by the Czech government's policies for lifelong learning of foreign languages, because teachers that are already certificated always repeat the beginner's level of the same foreign language courses. As teachers in the Czech Republic are paid according to seniority, it is difficult to motivate teachers for lifelong learning.

Czech pupils start learning foreign languages at the age of nine in primary school. Foreign language education requirements, as described in the basic curriculum document Framework Educational Programme for Primary and Lower Secondary

Education (FEP PE) are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for language. It is intended that the level of the first foreign language should reach 'A2' level, while the second foreign language should reach 'A1' level. The second foreign language will become compulsory in the academic year 2011-12. At present, the second language is an optional school subject with each school offering the opportunity to learn a second foreign language to all pupils. As from school year 2011-12, the second foreign language should be of a par with the other school subjects. There is ongoing discussion at present because some specialists think that it is not necessary for an average school pupil to learn two foreign languages (e.g. Maňák, 2005).

Germany

Language competencies (Sekretariat der ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der BRD: Bericht- Fremdsprachen in der Grundschule – Sachstand und Konzeptionen) of pupils are in line with the teachers' level of education and the importance given to the learning of foreign languages in primary school. Although a national curriculum does not exist, the various Ministers of Education agree on common guidelines in ministerial conferences.

Early language learning is considered important and is now

In Germany 'they should be hard working. I don't know if it is true.'

(Girl; 9 years, Malta)



provided by all federal states. However, the age at which pupils start learning a language varies, and therefore their competencies vary greatly as well. In all federal states, the teaching of a foreign language starts – at the latest – in grade 3. In some cases, such as in Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, they even start as early as grade 1. In Baden-Württemberg pupils have a total of eight lessons of foreign language teaching in grades 1 to 4, normally two hours per week each year. Language teaching in primary school is child-centred. Learning materials, like pictures and children’s literature, rhymes, games and songs are used. In some schools there are even bilingual teaching units.

Another reason for varying levels of competence is that, at

present, some who teach a foreign language did not study the language except when they were schoolchildren themselves and during short teacher's in-service courses. However, this will probably not remain the case as more and more teachers are being trained to teach foreign languages in primary school. Thus, the level of proficiency in language very much depends on the teacher and his or her own education.

Greece

Knowledge of a foreign language is often rare in Greece. Greek is not used outside Greece, except in Cyprus, and the knowledge of a foreign language was not held as important for Greek teachers until recently. In general, Greek teachers do not speak foreign languages fluently or their knowledge of a foreign language is poor. This is particularly the case among older teachers with more than 25 years of teaching experience. Most young teachers can at least read a text in a foreign language (mainly English) but are not able to stage a discussion because they have no practice in speaking the language. Things seem to be changing with younger generations increasingly speaking a foreign language and many learning a second one – mainly English or German and less so French.

'I like Germany and I'm going there some day. I believe everything is nice there but German people are unforgivable for World War II.'

(Boy, 10 years, Greece)

Malta

Malta is a bilingual country with two official languages, Maltese, the native language, and English. The National Minimum Curriculum in fact specifies that students should achieve proficiency in both languages by the end of their compulsory education. The range of language proficiency at primary level in Malta varies. One will find a complete spectrum of children coming from backgrounds which are only Maltese speaking with no exposure to the English language, to the other extreme where children are English speaking, with no exposure to the Maltese language. In all schools, both languages are taught from the first year of compulsory education (at age 5). In the case of state schools, where many children come from Maltese speaking backgrounds, the Maltese language is started at the beginning of the year, with English introduced after the Christmas holidays. In the case of private and some church schools where children might typically speak more English, English is started at the beginning of the year and Maltese introduced after Easter. Mathematics textbooks are in English, from the first year of compulsory schooling, and at the age of nine the mathematics exam is also in English. The National Minimum Curriculum encourages primary teachers to use English when teaching English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, with 'code switching' in situations where the

'I don't know many things about Malta. The only thing I know is that Malta is an island so it must be a beautiful country.'

(Girl, 10 years, Greece)

children are not competent enough in the English language. This means that by the age of nine, most children have basic proficiency, with help from a teacher, in communicating in both languages.

United Kingdom

There is almost no tradition of teaching languages other than English in primary schools in England. Some initiatives were developed in a very small number of schools during the 1960s and 1970s but these were largely unsuccessful owing to limited teaching resources and teachers lacking both foreign language expertise and confidence. The local authority (LA) of East Sussex was one example where peripatetic teachers were appointed to visit primary schools to teach foreign



languages in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 2002 the Department for Education and Science (DfES) published a document entitled 'Language for All: A Strategy for England'. This does not make a legal requirement for primary schools to teach a modern foreign language at the present time. However,



the Department is currently supporting a number of initial teacher education establishments in offering courses that will qualify trainee teachers to teach modern foreign languages (MFL) in primary schools: The school of education at the University of Durham is one such example.

Social and cultural expectations in English primary schools are largely responsible for the lack of backing for teaching languages other than English. In addition, the primary curriculum has been tightly controlled by central

government since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1987. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in 1997 resulted in prescriptive and mechanistic

approaches to the teaching of English. Along with the National Numeracy Strategy, about 60% of each school day has been given over to the teaching of English and mathematics. This has left about 40% of the timetable for all other National Curriculum subjects. Teachers, head teachers and school governing bodies have therefore been very reluctant to expect other non-statutory subjects to be added to an already overloaded timetable. A very small number of schools attempt to teach some basic vocabulary of another language integrated into their normal teaching day, such as calling the register in Spanish or labelling objects in the classroom in French.

At the present time, there are few relevant and up-to-date resources for teaching modern foreign languages in English primary schools. There are even fewer teachers who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to use these effectively in the classroom. Those teachers and children who do travel to other countries often meet people who have sufficient levels of English speaking and so they do not perceive it necessary or important to learn another language. This problem is further strengthened by the fact that English is increasingly becoming an international language of communication, especially through electronic and media formats.

4.3.4 The ‘European Dimension’ in Schools and in the Curriculum

This section outlines the presence and the extent of such presence, or otherwise, of the ‘European dimension’ in the teaching programmes of the five countries’ schools and their curricula.

The Czech Republic

Until 1989, European issues were not considered in the Czech Republic, as in all the countries of the former Eastern European bloc. The communist system considered everything connected with Western Europe as capitalist, reactionary and bourgeois – and this is what was reported in geography textbooks of that period. Following the revolution in 1989, the Czech Republic started to include European issues in the primary and secondary school curriculum through different approaches and topics. The importance given to European issues became more evident with the request for accession to the European Union (Walterová 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001; Walterová, Ježková 1999).

Recently the topic ‘Europe’ has been included in a more comprehensive way in the general curriculum documents. In the Framework Educational Programme for Primary and Lower Secondary Education (FEP PE), which all schools have

‘I haven’t been there so I have no idea how they are.’

(Girl, 9 years, Greece)

to follow, the 'European dimension' is acknowledged as a priority in education. Orientation to a common future in Europe is apparent and there has been an evolution from learning 'about Europe' to 'learning from Europe and for Europe' (Walterová, 1998). The FEP PE proposes the integration of this principle across the whole curriculum. The 'European dimension' is integrated in a number of subjects (history, geography, foreign languages, civics). Moreover the topic also extends beyond these subjects and thus seems to be a suitable one for integrating the different subjects of the curriculum.

One can find the following statements concerning the 'European dimension' in the FEP PE:

'A cross-curricular topic Education for Global and European Thinking puts emphasis on education through the European dimension, which promotes global thinking and international understanding ... It develops the awareness of a European identity alongside a national identity ... It enhances traditional



European values in the thinking and the behaviour of pupils, e.g. humanism, free human will, ethics, law enforcement and personal responsibility together with rational, critical thinking and creativity.’ (FEP PE, p. 85-86).

The topics associated with the ‘European dimension’ that are included in the FEP PE are:

‘1. We are interested in Europe and the world – family stories, experience from Europe and the world; places, events and artefacts in the neighbourhood relating to Europe and the world; our neighbours in Europe; the life of children in different countries; folk literature, customs and traditions of European nations.

2. We are discovering Europe and the world – our homeland and Europe; European countries; Europe and the world; International encounters; state and European symbols; the Day of Europe; the life of Europeans and lifestyle in European families; lifestyle and education of young Europeans.

3. We are Europeans – roots and sources of European civilisation; major landmarks of European history; European integration; EU institutions and their functioning; the four liberties and their impact on a life of an individual; what unites and divides Europe; international organisations and their contribution to solving problems of children and youth.’

(FEP PE, p.87)

Germany

As previously mentioned, there are different German curricula across the 16 federal states. As a rule these curricula are based on the Common European Framework of References. The primary school curriculum for Baden-Württemberg, operational since 2004, will be considered here. The ‘European dimension’ is not mentioned at all in this curriculum and instead it is closely related to the homeland of the children



and the region and federal state they are growing up in. Other federal states or the nation as a whole are not considered either. Consequently, Europe and the world beyond Germany have minor consideration.

However, the ‘European dimension’ is not totally excluded from the curriculum. In General Studies ‘Kinder dieser Welt: sich informieren, sich verständigen, sich verstehen’ (Children of the world - inform, communicate and understand each other) (Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden-Württemberg: Bildungsplan Grundschule, p. 98) there is a topic called ‘Menschliches Leben’ (ibid.) (Human Life). In



this topic pupils learn about different cultures to their own. They discuss Europe and the world in the past as well as in the present. In this programme culture is covered according to the interests of children, with examples including food and drink, clothing, lifestyle, sports and music. Furthermore, pupils should become able to identify things that are common and different between cultures. Child-centred learning is seen as important in this.

Greece

Fourlis and Ivridelis (2001) examined 5909 paragraphs of text in Greek elementary school textbooks and found out that Europe is mentioned mainly in history books (4%). In geography textbooks, Europe is mentioned 23 times (0.4%).

Specifically, at primary school level, Europe is included in the 5th grade and in the secondary school it is in the 2nd grade as a main subject. In geography textbooks, there is also information about the European Union (members, organizations, the European parliament, etc). The only teaching materials about Europe are maps of the European Union including the new and possible future members of the Union. In summary, the ‘European dimension’ is not given much importance.

Malta

Malta recognised the need to introduce the ‘European dimension’ in the curriculum before becoming a full member of the European Union. The National Minimum Curriculum (1999), in identifying the challenges for the new millennium, makes reference to both the Euro-Mediterranean dimension as well as being European citizens. This is reflected in the inclusion of aspects of ‘European dimension’ within the social studies syllabus for primary children.

A review of the Social Studies Syllabus shows references to European issues in the following aspects and in the following years:

- Year 4: Children are introduced to the concept of a map, starting off with the map of Malta within the Mediterranean Sea. They also have to become familiar with the countries

that one finds round the Mediterranean Sea, both in Europe and north Africa.



- Year 5: Children look at the weather that one finds in different countries, but with greater emphasis on the Mediterranean, rather than on Europe more widely. They also cover the issue of being part of a group, within their locality, their country and countries further afield. Specific reference to the European Union is made with regard the need to respect environmental standards to ensure a better quality of life.
- Year 6: In a section on the geographical aspect of social studies, students are expected to learn the geographical position of the Mediterranean countries and in a section

on the environment, there is specific reference to the understanding of the European Union as a group of countries working together to environmental rules and regulations at European level.

As a consequence of this curriculum, maps of the Mediterranean and of European countries, as well as maps of the world, are common in primary schools.

At Secondary School level, some years ago, a new subject named 'European Studies' was introduced. It is not a compulsory subject but it can be chosen as an option in Form 3 (the third year in Secondary School). There is an examination of European Studies at Secondary Education Certificate level – the exams taken at the end of Secondary School – on the same level as other subjects taught in school.

United Kingdom

Historically, the 'European dimension' has played a very insignificant part in primary education in English schools. A few schools made links with other European schools using personal contacts while others used European studies to cover parts of the geography national curriculum: an example of this would be schools where a local river was studied alongside another in Europe, such as the Danube or Rhine. In the 1980s and 1990s the Central Bureau offered assistance and

advice for schools seeking to make links with other European schools. This included access to European funding to enable projects to become established. However, very few schools became involved as many head teachers were unaware that such support was available. During the 1990s, advances in information technology enabled schools to expand on what had been mainly paper-based forms of communication and linking. Faxes and video were used to extend the ways in which children and teachers could communicate. The advent of e-mail, digital cameras and mobile phones has enabled schools to communicate with much greater speed and variety of exchange. Even so, a relatively small number of schools actually developed a dynamic ‘European dimension’ within the whole curriculum.

At the present time, the ‘European dimension’ in English primary schools needs to be seen within the broader context of the global dimension in education. This is a concept that is used in the primary education system and interpreted in a variety of ways in schools. It is often connected with concepts such as citizenship, sustainability and development. While there is currently no legal requirement to include the ‘European dimension’ as a separate subject within primary education, the geography part of the statutory National Curriculum does state that pupils should ‘study a range of places and environments in

different parts of the world, including the United Kingdom and the European Union' (DfEE, 1999:20). This leaves teachers much freedom of interpretation: in reality some primary schools make no reference to the 'European dimension' in their whole school planning, while others have highly developed schemes of work which integrate the 'European dimension' across the curriculum. This often includes strong linking schemes with schools in other European countries.

The issues of timetable overload and the domination of English and mathematics in the curriculum have also prevented the implementation of a 'European dimension' in primary schools in England. While it is entirely possible to plan a European perspective



within the current statutory framework, relatively few teachers and head teachers have the experience or motivation to put this into practice. In many schools decisions are dominated by the national league tables of school SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) and emphasis is placed on those subjects and age ranges where tests are situated. However, an Ofsted (Office

for Standards in Education) report in 2002 on thirty one of the best performing primary schools in England noted that a broad and balanced curriculum in which themes such as the ‘European dimension’ were included actually helped to raise overall standards in learning and teaching. The current climate in primary education is to encourage teachers to be more creative and pro-active, but there is still much fear of external evaluation and decision-making – this does not provide a strong foundation on which schools can develop a ‘European dimension’ into their work.

4.3.5 Experience of ‘EU-funded Projects’ in Schools

A summary of the varied experiences of ‘EU-funded projects’ in schools in the five countries involved is outlined here.

The Czech Republic

The number of primary and secondary schools involved in European Union projects such as via the SOCRATES programme, is always increasing. The Czech Ministry of Education and the Czech Ministry of Social Affairs organize information meetings about participation in the various European Union projects for headteachers and teachers (Seebauer, 1996). However, even following the Czech Republic joining the European Union in

2004, most schools still do not have a lot of experience with European Union projects or international school cooperation. The main reason for this is the low level of knowledge of foreign languages and the fact that applications for EU projects are not accepted in Czech. In 2006, 330 Czech schools were successful with their request for funding in the COMENIUS 1 programme (Partnership and cooperation of schools) out of a total of 6000 that requested funding.

Germany

Most primary schools do not have experience with European projects. Very few schools took part in COMENIUS projects or European school partnerships. An example is a project about fairy-tales in Horb (Berthold-Auerbach Grundschule Horb), where five primary schools from different countries worked together. The children got to know about the daily routine of school children from the various countries as well as their home towns. However, the focus was restricted to the fairy-



tales of the different regions. Other primary school projects are e-mail based (Lehrer-online: Europa in der Grundschule. Grenzen überwinden mit E-Mail Partnerschaften), such as, for example, a project from the registered association ‘Schulen ans Netz’ in which schools from several countries participated. The children wrote e-mails to gain information about lifestyles of children in the participating countries.



Furthermore many schools, in particular primary and secondary combined schools, do have school partnerships with schools from different countries, often as part of COMENIUS school partnerships. However, exchange of pupils of primary age rarely takes place as they are considered too young to be far away from their parents and their knowledge of language is not seen as sufficient. As projects involve a lot of extra work and personal commitment for the teacher, many schools probably do not take part in such projects. Furthermore projects do

mean a significant financial burden and school budgets are often restrictive with EU funding not always sufficient to pay expenses and parents typically unprepared to accept additional financial burden themselves.

Greece

The main European project that Greek schools participate in is COMENIUS. Schools participate in exchange projects with schools of in other European countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, Eire, Iceland, Luxemburg, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Finland and the UK: 1995-97 data). The themes that they engage in are: cultural inheritance, European languages, environment, new technologies in teaching, science and technology in everyday life and, mass media. 28% of Greek primary schools and 68% of high schools participate in a COMENIUS project (The Education Research Centre of Greece, 2002).

Malta

Many primary schools are, or have recently been, involved in COMENIUS 1 projects. All these projects need to have a European dimension. They also serve to expose children to different cultures and countries across the European Union. COMENIUS projects are very common and often schools



have boards on display with the work that they have done as part of their COMENIUS project as well as information on the partner countries in their project. It can, therefore, be concluded that the 'European dimension' is very much present in local schools. However, it is often the case that projects are considered as extra-curricular activities rather than as part of the regular curriculum.

United Kingdom

The National Agency for SOCRATES/COMENIUS is the British Council. They are a government agency that seeks to promote UK Education around the world. They administer and promote COMENIUS opportunities as well as other schemes

like the Global Schools Programme (<http://www.britishcouncil.org/globalschools.htm>) and projects like Learnenglish Kids (<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids.htm>). Many primary schools have long-standing exchanges and twinning also takes place through the eTwinning Project.

4.3.6 Teaching Materials about ‘Europe’

This section looks at the type and extent of teaching materials available for topics about Europe in the five participating countries is.

The Czech Republic

For most teachers, the main source for the topics ‘Europe’ and ‘European dimension’ are textbooks and other published materials including teachers’ handbooks. There are teaching materials from several European projects available (cp. Walterová 1997, 2000; Walterová, Ježková 1999) as well as teaching materials published in teachers’ magazines (cp. Walterová 1998, Holz, Janík 2003; Seebauer, Janík 2003) and scholarly journals (cp. Walterová 2001). In contemporary Czech primary history and geography textbooks (history and geography are integrated together and taught as one subject called ‘Vlastivěda’ – Homeland Studies), ‘Europe’ is presented as an economic and political entity located in a

Concerning the Czech Republic ‘It comes to my mind that my aunt went there for vacations and I also think of Rosicky who plays in their National Football Team.’

(Boy, 11 years, Greece)

particular geographic area. In most of these textbooks, there are explanations of such things as integration processes, the functioning of the European Union and exchange rates for the Euro. Škachová (2005) researched all current Czech ‘Vlastivěda’ (Homeland Studies) textbooks and found that the presentation of ‘Europe’ is very diverse. According to her findings, ‘the textbooks do not support the presentation of a united Europe with individual regional differences (e.g. cultural, historical), but place the emphasis on factual knowledge about European countries’ (p. 147).

Germany

Following the introduction of ‘Europa im Unterricht’ (Europe in school) by the KMK (Conference of the Ministers for Education) numerous written and practical materials about the topic ‘Europe’ have been developed and published. An early publication was developed by Köble and Kullen in 1990, called ‘Projekt Europa in der Primarstufe’ (Project Europe in the primary school) (Federmappe.de). This workbook contains worksheets on a number of different topics as well as riddles, stories and pictures. Geographical aspects, like capital cities and rivers are included as well. Rituals and festivals are also mentioned.

Further developments followed with a more recent example

being ‘Europawerkstatt’ (Workshop on Europe) (Verlag an der Ruhr, 2000: Europawerkstatt userfile) by Endrigkeit and Endrigkeit. This book comprises worksheets dealing with different topics, for instance ‘Europe on the Autobahn’, posters about European countries as well as stories. The materials are interdisciplinary and have an emphasis on social and intercultural dimensions. At this level, the geographical dimension itself is not usually considered sufficiently. As many teachers teaching General Studies in the Baden-Württemberg region are not specifically geography teachers, they do not often opt to cover geographical aspects of foreign countries or Europe.



Another problem is that although many publishing companies publish appealing textbooks and other materials that can be used in the classroom, schools often do not purchase them. This is because ‘Europe’ is not considered as an important topic in the curriculum and as teaching materials budgets are low, money is spent on other working materials and textbooks. Although there is a multitude of materials about Europe, schools do not spend their funds on them as ‘Europe’ is a minor topic in the curriculum.

Greece

Geography is taught in the 5th and 6th grades of primary school in Greece with 'Europe' as a part of the geography school curriculum in the 6th grade. In the new geography textbook of the 6th grade, 'Europe' is presented in 28 pages (18% of the book) although 'Europe' has always been presented in Greek geography textbooks. Besides the textbook, there are usually wall maps of Europe (physical and political) in 6th grade classrooms.



In secondary school, 'Europe' is the main subject of the geography school curriculum in the 2nd grade (8th year overall). The textbook is devoted to the presentation of Europe as a continent and European countries from both physical and the human perspectives and wall maps are used with this age group as well.

Malta

The most common teaching materials about 'Europe' are the maps that are hung in many primary classrooms. The Malta Information Centre about the European Union produced educational materials for primary school children about the European Union but these were mainly used as colouring books rather than as serious learning resources. Since the topic of European Studies only forms part of the social studies syllabus in an indirect way and the 'European dimension' is usually tackled through COMENIUS projects, there are very few, if any, teaching materials on how to teach the 'European dimension'.

United Kingdom

As Europe is not significant in the UK National Curriculum for primary schools, the materials available are limited and variable. Many text books have examples in Geography and History that relate to Europe, however European structures and systems are not normally studied in primary schools. Citizenship is a National Curriculum subject and as a result, there are a number of websites that include some information which primary schools can use about Europe, such as Your Future Europe (<http://www.nwerc.hope.ac.uk/YFE/Resources/Primary>). Many schools organize school visits to other parts of

Europe, however there are very few comprehensive resources or materials available for UK primary school teachers to use on the ‘European dimension’.

4.3.7 National Initiatives to promote ‘Europe’ and the ‘European dimension’

This section outlines various national initiatives in the five countries that promote ‘Europe’ and the ‘European dimension’.

The Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the implementation of the ‘European dimension’ in school programmes is an expressed priority. Despite this, there isn’t any systematic support and promotion for the implementation of the ‘European dimension’ in education. There is no institution that deals with the research and development of models on how the ‘European dimension’ might be implemented efficiently in education, and specifically in the school curriculum. There is no reliable research-based information on the actual implementation of the ‘European dimension’ at any of the levels in Czech schools either. There needs to be more research and data on how the ‘European dimension’ in education can be realised, the knowledge and beliefs that the teachers have about ‘Europe’ and the ‘European

dimension' in education, and how they present the 'European dimension' in their teaching.

At present, the 'European dimension' in the Czech Republic is realised through:

- its implementation by the state through school curricula,



and;

- projects based in school and extra-curricular activities, such as the establishment of European centres within schools, the publication of journals and interaction and cooperation with cultural institutions, and;
- the participation in European projects for education and the mobility of educators, such as COMENIUS, ERASMUS and GRUNDTWIG.

The implementation of the 'European dimension' in secondary schools is supported by the Centre of European Studies of the University of Economics in Prague. This Centre was founded in 1996 as part of the Czech Republic's preparation for entry into the European Union and this institution provides information, counselling and coordination of activities related to European issues in education. The Centre of European Studies organises events for teachers and students such as conferences, lectures, discussions and workshops.



Germany

In Germany there are not large amounts of national or regional initiative. Most initiatives are taken by the European Union through its COMENIUS projects, however national support is necessary to support these projects and make them possible.

Important German national initiatives in this regard are the Kultusministerkonferenzen (Conferences of the Ministers for Education). A milestone was a set of decisions taken for 'Europa im Unterricht' (Europe in School) from 1978 and 1990 (Berliner Bildungsserver : Europe in der Schule – Unterricht). Following this, 'Europe' gained importance as a topic in school. An important initiative from this conference was 'Interkulturelle Bildung und Erziehung in Schule' (Intercultural education in education and school) in October 1996 (Sekretariat der ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der BRD: Empfehlung - Interkulturelle Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule). As children are surrounded by many different cultures and mobility of people is increasing, intercultural education is becoming more and more important. However, at present, it seems that the importance given to 'Europe' in primary schools in some federal states is decreasing. This may be due to the minor significance given to 'Europe' within the curriculum, as discussed earlier.

Greece

In the last ten years, the Greek Ministry of Education has made a remarkable effort to improve the status of Geography education in schools (Pramas and Koumaras, 2004, Katsiapi and Klonari, 2000). The effort commenced with the changes

in the national school Geography curriculum in 2003 (Gazette 364/2003) although this work had already been instigated in 1996 (Gazette: 241/1996) and was then more fully recognised by the changes in Geography textbooks (Galani, Katsaros, Katsikis and Tsounakos, 2002).

This effort would not have been successful if it had not been



supported by new Geography-oriented multimedia sources and teaching support materials, as well as workshops and conferences specifically organized for teachers. Some of the main initiatives in this regard are listed below:

- Galani, E., Katsaros, G., Katsikis, A., and Tsounakos, Th., 2002. Geography textbook for the 5th grade, Athens.
- Katsiapi, N., Klonari, A. 2000. The evaluation of the school Geography textbook for the 1st grade of secondary School, Nicosia, 3-5 May 2000.
- Pramas, Ch. and Koumaras, P., 2004. Pisa and DEPPS- Science School Curriculum: convergence or divergence. In the Proceedings of the 2nd Conference of the Association of Science Teachers 'Didactics of Science and Technologies – the challenges of 21st century', Kalamata, 18-20 March, 2004.

Malta

In Malta national initiatives mainly include the promotion of participation of primary schools in COMENIUS projects. This is a consequence of limited funds which are channelled to areas considered to be more important such as literacy or inclusive education.

United Kingdom

For many years the Central Bureau was the main organisation through which English schools were able to make links with other schools in Europe. The level of support available varied from basic practical information to major funding of link projects, often with three partner schools from various

countries. Some of these projects had a busy three year life and then schools moved on to other initiatives. There are some schools which established these links many years ago and still benefit from their relationship with schools across Europe.

Today the British Council is at the forefront in supporting English schools develop both European and global initiatives. This organisation is part of the government Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Their Global Gateway website contains a wide range of information for teachers wanting to include an international perspective into their classroom or school:

- The 'Find a Partner' section includes information to help teachers find partner schools and the various ways in which this may be achieved.
- The DFID (Department for International Development) has a Global School Partnerships unit which specialises in partnerships between schools in the UK and Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. This is helpful because there can be strengths when more than one European country becomes involved in such projects.
- The 'World links and partnerships' section focuses on the types of partnerships that can be established between schools in China, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Russia, Spain and further afield.

- The ‘European Schools Partnerships’ COMENIUS programme focuses in particular on offering support for schools wanting to develop a range of European partnership activities.
- The ‘eTwinning’ section supports schools who specifically want to maximise the use of ICT in twinning with schools in European countries and worldwide.
- Although the ‘Connecting classroom middle east – UK’ is not specifically European in focus, it does contain very useful information for supporting the professional development of teachers wanting to develop an international dimension to their teaching.

The British Council’s International School Award recognises schools who can demonstrate:

- An international ethos embedded throughout the school
- A majority of pupils within the school impacted by and involved in international work
- Collaborative curriculum-based work with a number of partner schools
- Curriculum-based work across a range of subjects
- Year round international activity
- Involvement of the wider community



- Evaluation from a variety of sources allowing you to improve your activities and your international programme.

4.3.8 The ‘European Dimension’ in Teacher Training

This section summarises the extent, or otherwise, to which the topic ‘European dimension’ appears in teacher training courses in each of the five participating countries.

The Czech Republic

The ‘European dimension’ in teacher training in the Czech Republic is not present or developed in any direct way. For example, all students at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University need to pass the exam in European integration, which is mainly based upon European history, European integration and European life and institutions. However, methodological, didactical and practical content connected to the implementation of the ‘European dimension’ in schools is not tackled in this.

The ‘European dimension’ in education is also considered by student teachers of history, geography (WAHLA, 1998) and civics, because the topic of Europe is directly included in the programme of studies of these school subjects. In these areas

of study, students discuss in detail the main practical aspects of teaching and the possible ways of delivering the content about ‘Europe’ in schools. General information about the ‘European dimension’ in teacher training in the Czech Republic is discussed in the publications of Seebauer & Janík (2003) and Holz & Janík (2003). They note that the ‘European dimension’ in teacher training is mainly present through students’ participation in international student mobility programmes (e.g. SOCRATES Intensive Programmes). The Czech White Book (2001) also claims that it is beneficial for student teachers to stay for a particular time during their studies abroad (e.g. through an ERASMUS programme). This can also be helpful in improving students’ language competencies.

Germany

Teacher training in Germany is divided into two phases. The first phase includes university studies in didactics, methodologies and subject matter. The second phase is carried out in schools and through seminars. A ‘European dimension’ in teacher training



becomes more and more important as bilingual teaching is on the increase. In some federal states, specific courses exist for future bilingual teachers that also include study units on 'European culture'. Intercultural learning and improving pupils' foreign language skills are thereby of particular interest.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, bilingual teachers study a foreign language as well as a bilingual subject. Universities in Wuppertal and Bochum offer additional studies for bilingual teaching in English and French. A period of several weeks of teacher training practice abroad, or being a foreign language assistant for several months, are compulsory. The second phase seminars in Leverkusen and Cologne offer additional qualifications for future bilingual teachers. However, all these additional qualifications are restricted to secondary

school teachers. In Hamburg, a qualification for bilingual teaching in English can be also achieved by attending eleven periods per week alongside their other studies. Furthermore, the student teacher has to spend a period of study of at least one year abroad or has to be a German assistant for one year. In Hamburg bilingual teaching takes place both in primary and in secondary school. The qualifications that can be obtained in both these federal states



include subject matter as well as didactic and methodological studies on bilingual education.

The Baden-Württemberg state develops this further. At the Universities of Education in Karlsruhe and Freiburg, special courses of study called ‘Europalehramt’ are offered. In order to be accepted for these courses, students have to pass a qualifying examination in a foreign language, specifically either French or English. Like in North Rhine-Westphalia and Hamburg, the programme contains studies of the foreign language and subject matter as well as bilingual didactics and methodology. Passing one semester of study abroad is compulsory. Moreover, in one of the teacher training practices during university education, a specific number of bilingual lessons have to be taught. In addition to the bilingual teaching modules, this course of study also contains ‘European Studies’, where European history, geography, politics and culture are taken into account and content about ‘Europe’ is also included in subjects like history, politics, geography and economics. As a result, the ‘European dimension’ in teacher training very much depends on the subjects and the course of study chosen.

Greece

Teacher training courses at universities in Greece have no specific teaching modules which present the ‘European



dimension' at any level although it may be tackled indirectly in a small number of courses. The 'European dimension' is also indirectly discussed when reviewing the local educational system and trends in education across Europe in given courses. Students have ample opportunities to experience other European countries as part of ERASMUS courses.

Malta

In Malta there is no specific element directly tackling the 'European dimension' in Bachelor degree courses for the training of primary school teachers. However, the issue is tackled indirectly in a number of courses. The 'European dimension' and trends in Education across Europe are tackled

in reviewing the local education system. Students also have ample opportunities to experience other European countries as part of ERASMUS courses and intensive courses. There is little, however, about how to teach about the 'European dimension' at primary level.

United Kingdom

Europe is not considered to be an important subject for schools and therefore is not dealt with in teacher training. The ‘European dimension’ is not commonly a theme which is covered in primary teacher education. Place studies are normally covered in Geography studies, but the UK National Curriculum specifies contrasting localities, rather than specific places.

4.3.9 ‘Peer learning’ in Schools

This section examines the use of ‘peer learning’ techniques and strategies in the five participating countries.

The Czech Republic

The concept of ‘peer learning’ is not used much in the Czech Republic, and it is not even considered in the theory of teaching. However, this does not mean that the method of ‘peer learning’ is not used in class. Included in ‘theory of teaching’ courses in the Czech Republic, are topics about cooperative teaching and learning methods, group work and working in pairs (Kasiková 1997, 2004) and these are presently also being discussed as part of curriculum reform. New curriculum documents highlight new teaching and learning methods and suggest that methodologies should be based upon pupil-oriented teaching

and learning.

Forms of cooperative learning are mentioned in older Czech documents: 'It is a fact that it is possible to make the iron sharp only by iron and it is a fact that the best education you get is from and with your fellows' (KODICILUS in the 16th century, in CHLUP & ANGELIS, 1959, pp. 59). Before 1990, cooperative teaching methods were discussed by Mareš & Křivohlavý (1989, s. 50). They delved into cooperative teaching involving cooperation of classmates in pairs or in groups. They pointed out the important role of the teacher who prepares controls and assesses the learning process.

At present, the theory of teaching in the Czech Republic is mainly based on foreign publications (e. g. Klafki, 1992) and includes cooperative teaching and learning methods. Several



authors concerned with reform-oriented pedagogy (Dewey, Claparède, Ferrière, Petersen) are considered. Cooperative teaching and learning is also mentioned in the context of project-based learning methods.

Cooperative teaching and learning methods are also the focus of Czech educational research. Skalková (1999, p. 212) described the positive influence of cooperative methods on the collective social attributes of pupils, for example, the acceptance of other persons, and the tackling of racism and segregation. Some authors point out the negative effects of cooperative learning and teaching methods such as: the suggestion that weak pupils might not participate because of dominance of more able pupils (Badegruber 1992, p. 76); that children might copy from each other; effects on effective assessment of pupils, and; the demand on teachers' time for preparation of lessons and collection of teaching materials.

Germany

Pupils in primary school are not usually used to 'peer learning' (in the sense of 'tutoring'). Group work takes place as early as first grade. Hence pupils are used to group work: they are used to working together, making compromises and presenting their results in pairs or in groups but they are not used to seeing their classmates as persons from whom they can learn.

As ‘peer learning’ is rarely used within the classroom, ‘peer learning’ activity involving different classes and schools does not exist at all. However, cooperative learning and lifelong learning skills are considered important, and ‘peer learning’ activities, in various forms, might help pupils and teachers to achieve this. Therefore a project like E-PLIPS might help in establishing ‘peer learning’ (on a European or international basis) as a method in school.

Greece

‘Peer learning’ is not used in schools, the most frequently used teaching method in geography in Greece being a combination

of ‘closed’ and ‘framed’ methods (Barnes et al., 1987), with ‘closed’ methods being more frequently used. Topics are developed following the curriculum; both resources and content are selected by the teacher who then asks questions relating to the topic and the resources used. In most cases, the lecture method predominates: pupils are required to listen and to pay attention to the lecture since at the end or during the lecture, they are asked to answer questions on content –



an approach that can make pupils anxious. Questions are mainly based on the lecture of the day, which makes evaluation by the teacher easier. Pupils do not have to think critically, instead, they are required to memorise what they have studied or been told; even the tests are based on rote memory and not on critical thinking. Consequently, pupils do not really participate but just follow and this can make lectures boring. We know that 'Learning outcomes are strengthened when classroom instruction is directly linked to practice' (Crump, 2002: 145). The important thing is that pupils learn. If pupils know 'what to do', 'how to do it' and 'when to do it', then good practice can be achieved and pupils can access a deeper level of understanding (Lambrinos and Bibou, 2006).

Malta

Teacher training for primary schools in Malta advocates the use of group work and 'peer learning' as an integral part of the learning experience of children in their first years of schooling and education. This is based on a belief that learning involves the construction of knowledge which often happens within a social context and allows children to learn from each other and to learn together. However, the situation in many schools is quite different, with a lot of time still dedicated to full-class teaching with little group work. The situation is better in the

first three years of primary education due to the absence of examinations at the end of the year. However, from Year 4, where performance in the annual examination influences the student's position in streaming, learning becomes more coaching based. This is reflected in many classrooms with desks arranged in rows, allowing little group work activities at all. Unfortunately, 'peer learning' may be considered a waste of time in preparation for good examination performance. Having said this, one still finds examples of effective practising teachers who use group work, reflecting their belief in its effectiveness in promoting 'peer learning'. The issue of the 11+ exam has been a big debate for some time now and although a proposal to abolish it had been made in 1997, this was greatly opposed, particularly by parents. As discussed earlier, things are likely to change in the near future in this regard.

United Kingdom

It would probably be impossible for a group of English Primary teachers to agree a common definition of 'peer learning'. The nearest definition of 'peer' would probably be anyone with whom someone is working on a joint enquiry, issue or research focus. The benefit of this definition is that it encourages the notion of a community of learning which is not based on grouping people according to any particular criteria such



as age, gender, ability or previous experience. It would also support the notion promoted in England of ‘life-long learning’ in which people of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to take an active and informed interest in their world for as long as possible. It is also valuable for the E-PLIPS project in that children, teachers and the project team take equal roles in an open-ended approach to achieving the goals of the venture.

Since the 1960s, English primary teachers have tried many ways of organising children in their schools and classrooms. In order to understand what we see today in English primary schools, it is necessary to know the background of the repertoire of organisational tools on which teachers draw. Since 1998 the Literacy and Numeracy strategies have encouraged teachers to use whole class teaching methods and then to divide classes into small ability groups for practical work. The teacher would then often focus on teaching one group, with teaching assistants (TAs) monitoring other groups. Unless groups are encouraged to work together, only limited opportunities exist



for ‘peer learning’ to take place - during about 60% of the primary school day. For the remaining 40% of the timetable, teachers adopt a variety of organisational methods. Some teachers promote mixed ability group activity in subjects such as geography and science. This may enable children to develop skills in ‘peer learning’ so long as teachers actively encourage an atmosphere of enquiry, debate and open-mindedness.

In some schools ‘vertical grouping’ is adopted where children from a range of age groups work together. This often

happens in small schools when one teacher has to teach children of different ages because there are insufficient numbers of one age group to form a whole class. It could be argued that this promotes aspects of ‘peer learning’ in that age and varied experiences may be brought to the learning environment in order to solve enquiries.

Some teachers use ‘jigsaw groups’ where groups of children work on one part of a project and then bring their results together to form a final product. Careful grouping of children in this method can create positive learning environments in

which 'peer learning' is encouraged. Another form of grouping is the 'expert group' promoted by Edward de Bono: this method divides the children/peers into six expert groups. They all work on the same enquiry or task but each one approaches the learning from a particular point of view. This method also has the potential to promote 'peer learning' at a number of levels within the whole class. The availability of ICT in classrooms also offers many opportunities for 'peer learning' as children and adults come with a wide range of skills and experience to share.

'Peer learning' is commonly used in higher education, including teacher training, as an approach to encouraging lifelong learning. It is promoted via official websites and commonly related to working online through the use of Information and Communications Technologies and particular via Virtual Learning Environments.



5 The Modules

This part of the handbook includes the eight ‘modules’ that were designed and delivered by teachers in the five participating countries. Most modules are presented in the form of a number of PowerPoint presentations and some include video and audio files. The ‘weather’ module contains a questionnaire, together with its analysis and comments. The PowerPoint presentations were prepared by pupils except for the introduction presentations which were produced by the teachers themselves.

As a starting point for a common, cross-national, European peer learning project, the various participants, from different countries, introduce themselves to one another and provide an initial contribution towards a framework that leads to enhancing the ‘European dimension’. In principle, only a basic, elementary knowledge of the software and the technology is necessary for the preparation of the introduction module. Thus an interesting and effective introduction can be easily prepared by using simple media, for example a PowerPoint presentation. However, some elementary rules should be taken into consideration when preparing the presentations. Generally, the characteristics of presentations should include:

- The presentation should not be too long or detailed.

„This presentation gives in sights for further teaching and learning ideas in class rooms and promotes creative thinking and alternative methodologies as well.“

(Participant of the workshop in Thessaloniki, 26.11.2009)

- Attention should be given to both the design and layout, which should be appealing. Too many animations, for example, can be rather annoying for the viewer.
- As users of the presentation will come from different cultural backgrounds and may have differing levels of language competence, consideration must be given to factors such as the complexity of the language used, phrases and abbreviations and used and the context in which they are used within the presentation. Furthermore, other cultural issues, such as race, religion, gender and ‘body language’ should be given necessary consideration.

Producing presentations entails a relatively high level of technical competence. However, photos, pictures, or even video clips can be relatively easily integrated into them. Moreover, the file size of the final presentation must always be considered so that it allows reasonable download times from the Internet. Additionally, some general, content-related aspects should also be taken into consideration. A very important aspect concerns the question of how much to include and the extent to which more ‘personal’ information should be incorporated in the introduction. As a general rule, only information that the person is comfortable in disclosing to a broad audience should be included. The aim of the exercise is for teachers and pupils to present themselves and, as a result, to get to know

each other and, subsequently, to learn from each other. Each person should set his or her own limits in this area.

Before and during the preparation of the PowerPoint presentations, one has to keep in mind the following:



- All the permissions needed (school authorities/management, parents/guardians)
- Possible tools for presentation and communication (depending on the competencies of the children)
- Personal information and privacy considerations – caution should be adopted regarding exposure of children’s identities and contact information on the internet

- The meaning of the presentation and how easy it is to understand in terms of language and abbreviations used, including cultural considerations (race, religion, gender, body language, etc.) and family situations
- The creation a class e-mail address, rather than using personal e-mails.

The list of possible contents, as in the following chapters, is only by way of suggestion rather than as a prescribed list. Other options and variations that are in line with and satisfy the aims of the exercise should always be considered and such considerations will lead to better presentations and enhanced final products.



How to use PowerPoint for Presentations (in School)

If you want to use PowerPoint or a similar presentation program in your classroom, do not hesitate. Presentation programs like PowerPoint are usually very simple to use. With minimal help, if needed, you will be able to use PowerPoint and explain to your pupils how to use it. It should be noted that the information provided in this guide has been prepared for Microsoft PowerPoint 2003, version SP2. You can check the PowerPoint version that you have by clicking on the 'Help' drop down menu and then 'About Microsoft Office PowerPoint' as shown in figure 5.

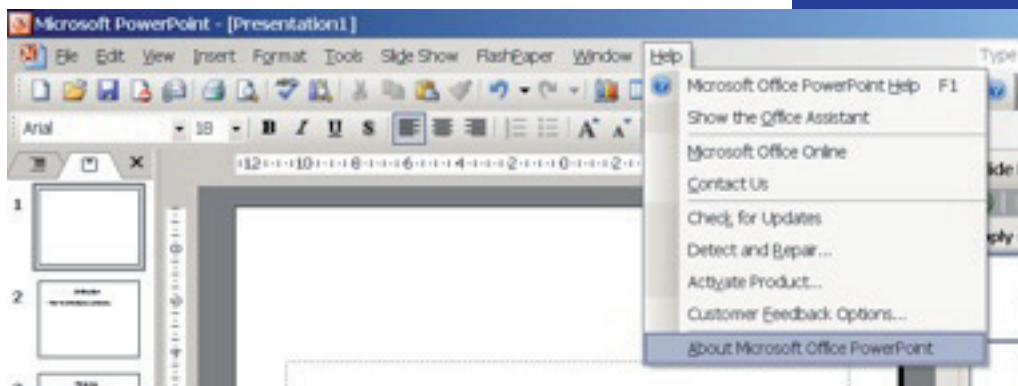


Figure 5: Finding your version of PowerPoint

You should be aware that other versions have slightly different menus and the display screens may look different. However, there is a useful Help Guide in the 'Help' drop down menu shown in figure 6.

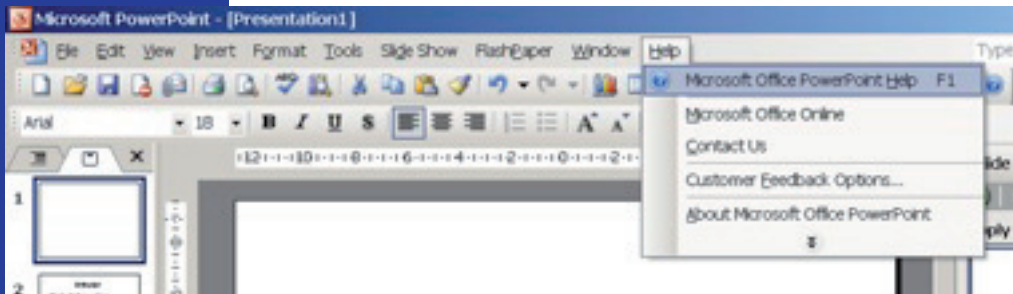


Figure 6: PowerPoint Help

How to open PowerPoint and get it started

In order to open PowerPoint, you have to double click on the icon (shown in figure 7) that is normally found on your desktop or else under 'Start' or 'Programs'.

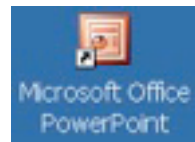


Figure 7: PowerPoint icon

When you open PowerPoint, a blank presentation normally appears. If this does not happen, choose 'Presentation' and pick 'Empty Presentation' to start a new one or choose 'Open Existing Presentation' in order to continue working on an existing one. You can choose the colour and design of your slides by clicking on the 'Format' drop down menu and selecting 'Slide Design' (as in figure 8).





Figure 8: PowerPoint Slide Design

At this point, you can choose the appearance of your presentation by selecting the 'Design Templates' and 'Colour Schemes' (shown in figure 9).

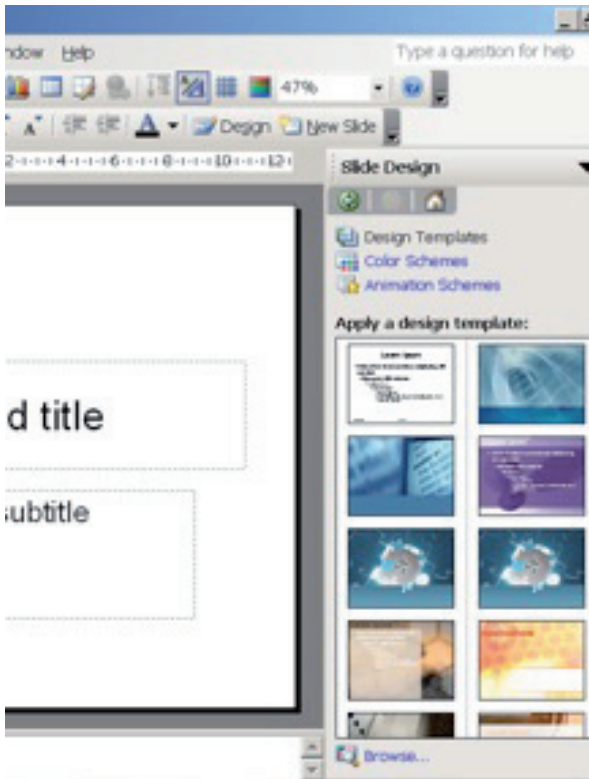


Figure 9: PowerPoint Design Templates

„Very interesting presentation. I wish we could attend more presentations like that in the future.“

*(Participant of the workshop in
Thessaloniki, 26.11.2009)*

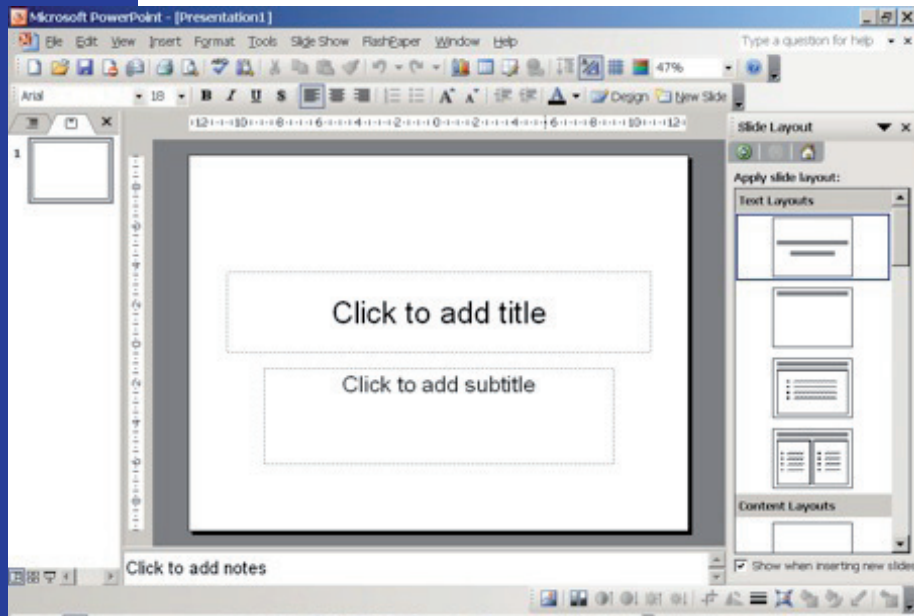


Figure 10: The PowerPoint screen

The PowerPoint screen should look similar to the image in figure 10, but with the particular design you would have chosen.



How to choose the right slide and write on it

In order to select the layout for your slide, click on the 'Format' drop-down menu and select 'Slide Layout' (see figure 11).

For the first slide, you would normally choose a 'Title Slide'. Write a title and, if necessary, add a sub title in the spaces indicated.

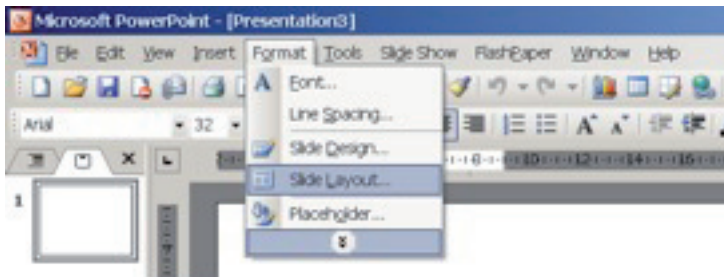


Figure 11: The Slide Layout option

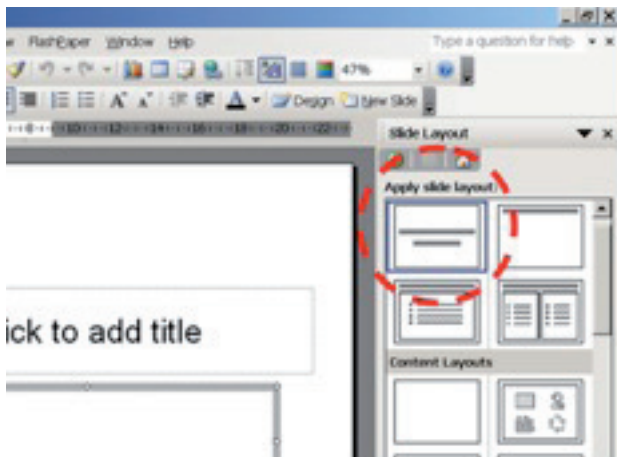


Figure 12: Selecting a Title Slide layout

When you have completed the Title Slide and you need to create a new slide, you should click on the margin on the left side of your screen with your right mouse button and then choose 'New Slide' (illustrated in figure 13). New slides can also be added by using the 'Insert' drop down menu.

You will want to choose a layout for the new slide but before doing this, you should consider what you want to write/show on the slide, whether you want to include text, diagrams, pictures, or a combination of them. Once decided, you can

select the layout by clicking on it. This procedure is repeated for successive slides until all the information is included in the presentation.

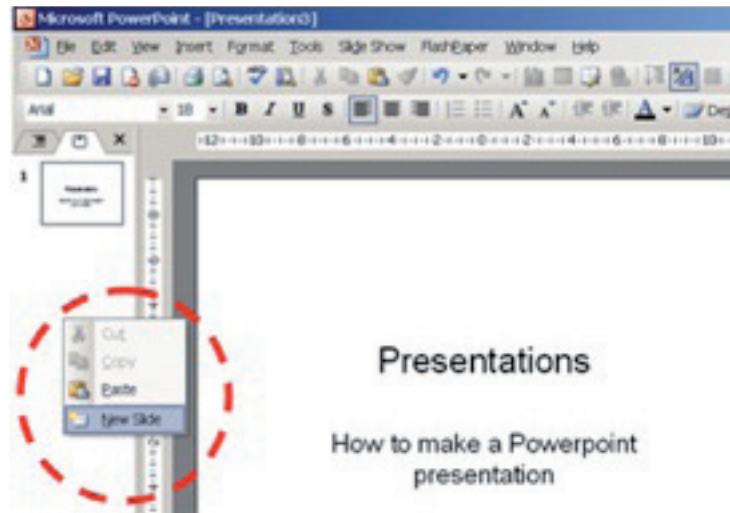


Figure 13: Selecting a title slide layout

There should not be too much information on one slide. A total of three to four short sentences per slide will be enough. If you put too much information on one slide, it will be difficult for the viewers to read all the information and they might be easily distracted.

How to animate your presentation and present it to others

After including all the information (text, diagrams, pictures, etc.) in the presentation, you can also animate your slides. This allows for a choice of animation mode and the order in which the words/phrases/sentences/images will appear on the slide.

These animations make your presentation more lively and ‘entertaining’ to look at. Pupils are especially fond of animating the information they write in a presentation. To animate your slides, you have to click on the ‘Slide Show’ drop down menu and select ‘Custom Animation’ (illustrated in figure 14).

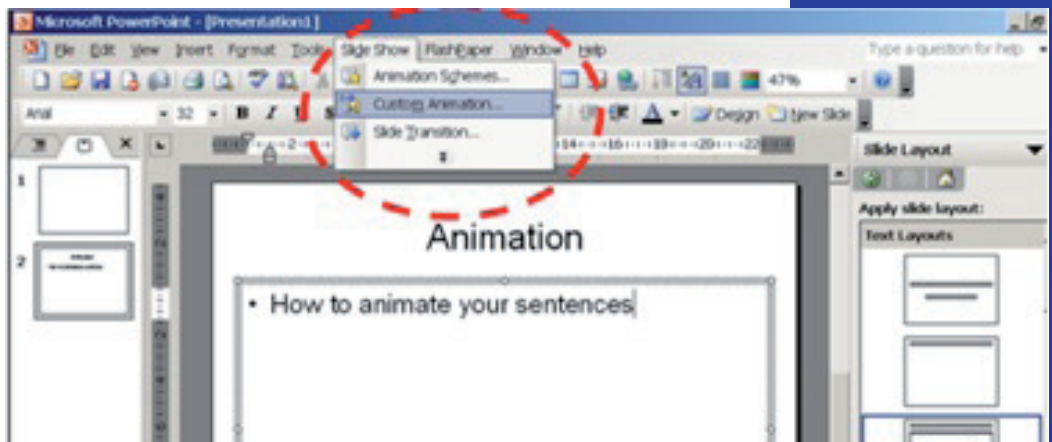


Figure 14: Customising the slide animation

If you click on ‘Custom Animation’, the right side of the screen will look as shown in figure 15 where you can add and customise animation effects.

You should then select the part of the slide you want to animate (such as the title or the text) and successively choose from the different kinds of animation. This can be done by clicking on the ‘Add Effect’ button (shown in figure 16).

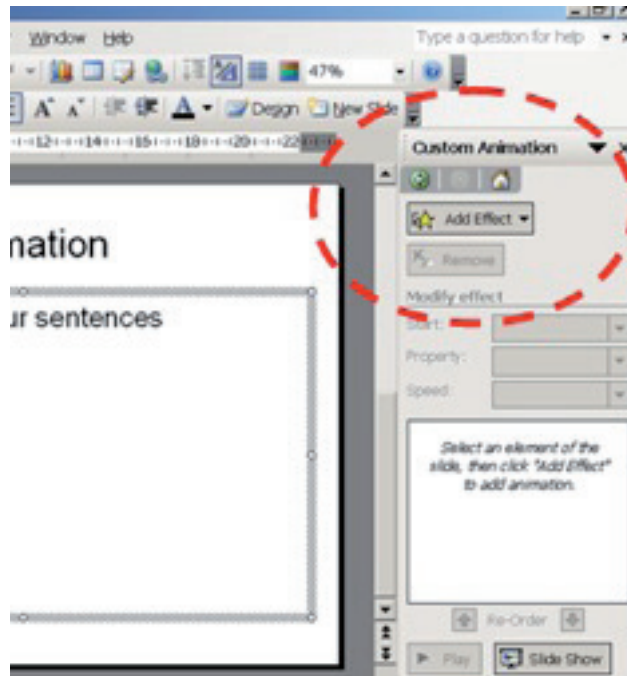


Figure 15: Slide animation effects



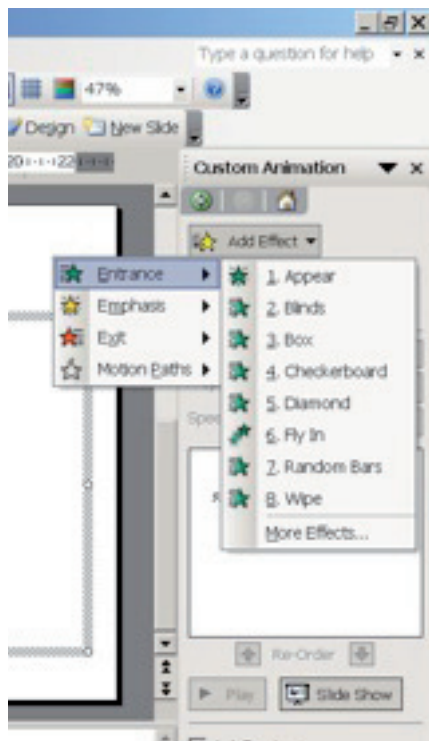


Figure 16: Slide animation effects

In order to decide from the choice of animations available, and how your choice fits your presentation, it is best to actually try it out. Once the type of animation is chosen, mark the sentences you want to animate and click on the 'Add' button. You should start with the first sentence of your slide.

Once the presentation is finished – and you want to see it or show it to others – you have to click the 'Slide Show' button. This button can be found at the bottom of the PowerPoint screen (illustrated in figure 17).

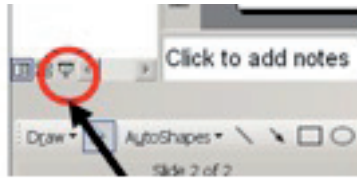


Figure 17: Playing your PowerPoint presentation

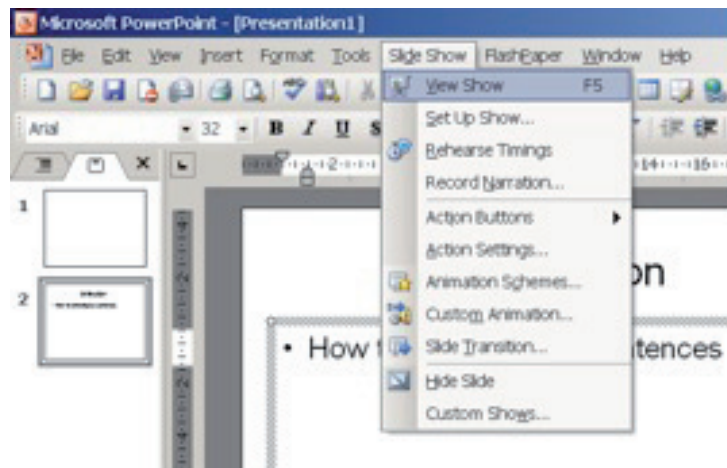


Figure 18: Playing your PowerPoint presentation

Otherwise you can select the 'Slide Show' drop down menu and then click on 'View Show' (shown in figure 18).

During the slideshow, if you want to show a new sentence, picture or slide you press the 'Enter' button or the spacebar and to go backwards you have to press either the 'Delete' or 'Backspace' buttons on your keyboard.

How to include pictures in your presentation

Choose the layout with the icon representing the little picture on it, double click on the icon and upload the picture you want to include in your presentation. You can use pictures in the

following formats: *.gif; *.jpg; *.png; *.tif or *.bmp. (See figure 19)

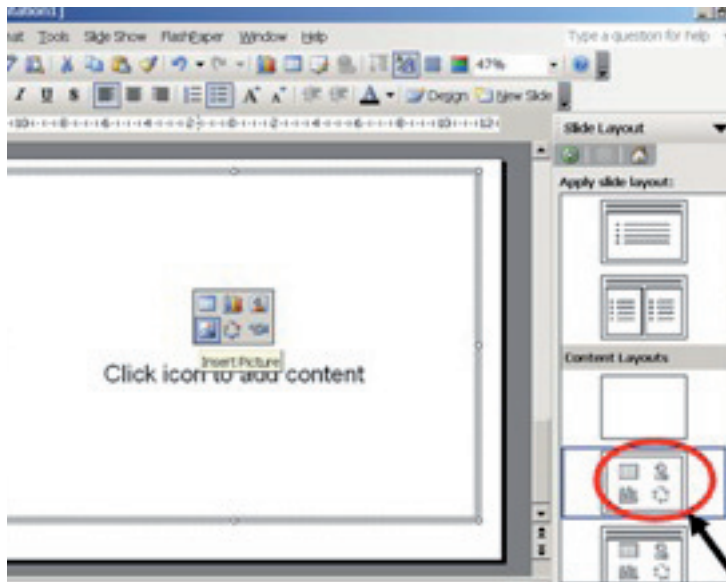


Figure 19: Adding a picture to your presentation



An alternative way of doing this operation is to go to the slide where you want to add the picture, click the 'Insert' drop down menu and then 'Picture' (figure 20) and locate the picture from your available files.

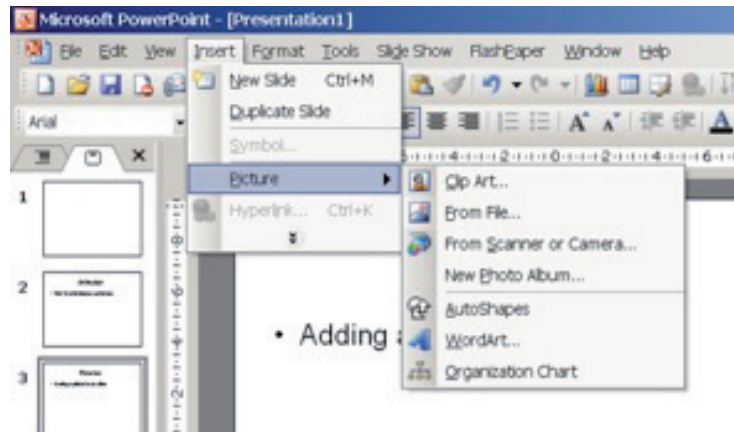


Figure 20: Adding a 'Picture' using the 'Insert' drop down menu



How to include videos or audio sequences in your presentation

Select the 'Insert' drop down menu and then 'Movies and Sounds' (figure 21). Choose the location where you saved your video or audio file and insert it. PowerPoint will usually accept video clips that have been saved in several different video formats, including: *.avi, *.mpeg, *.mpg, *.mpe, *.m1v, *.mp2, *.wmv, *.vwx, *.asf, *.asx, *.wpl, *.wm, *.wmx and *.wmd. For audio sequences PowerPoint will accept formats such as *.mp3 or *.wav files.

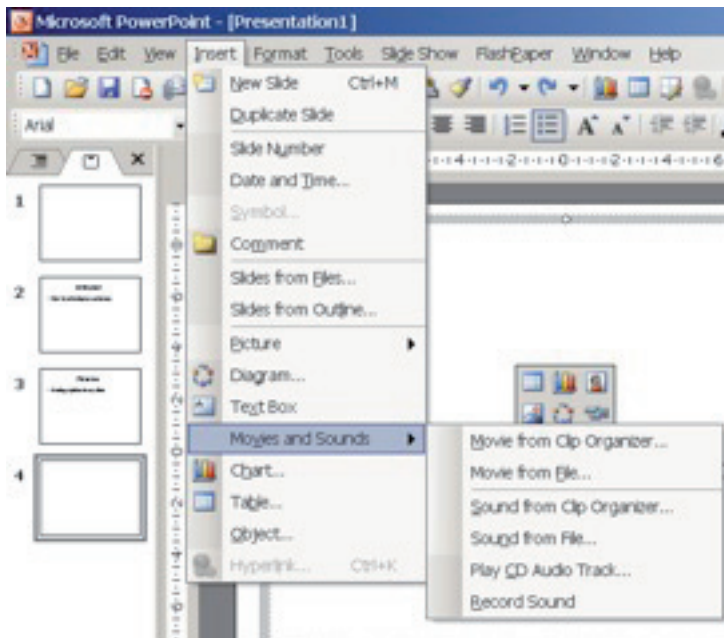


Figure 21: Inserting media to your PowerPoint

Alternatively you can choose the layout where you can add objects onto your slide, double click on the object, choose the

location where you saved your video and insert it (figure 22).

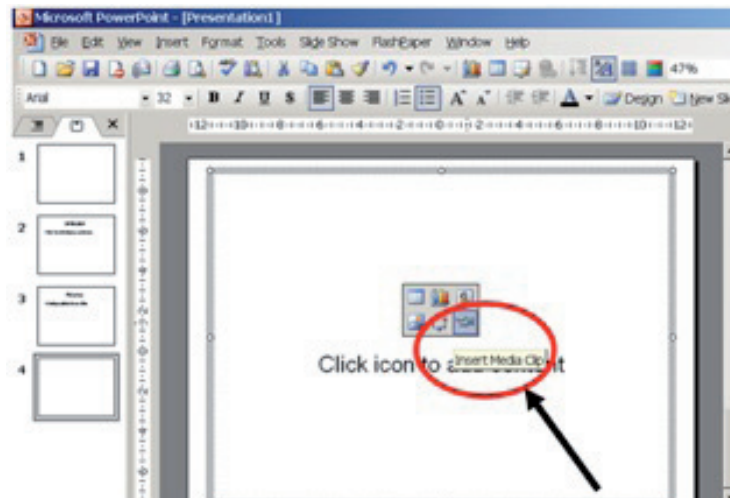


Figure 22: Inserting media

How to decrease the file size of a PowerPoint presentation

If your presentation includes a large number of pictures and/or video or audio sequences, it will need a lot of memory space when it is saved. So if, for example, you need to upload your presentation onto the Internet, you might have to decrease its size. Open PowerPoint and then open an existing presentation or make a new presentation. Before you save your file click 'View', then 'Toolbars' and then 'Customise'.

Click on the 'Commands' banner and then click on 'Drawing'. This gives a 'Compress Pictures' option (figure 23). Click, drag and drop the 'Compress Pictures' icon into one of your normal toolbars (figure 24). To compress a photo, select the



photo you want to compress and then click on the ‘Compress Pictures’ icon (figure 25).

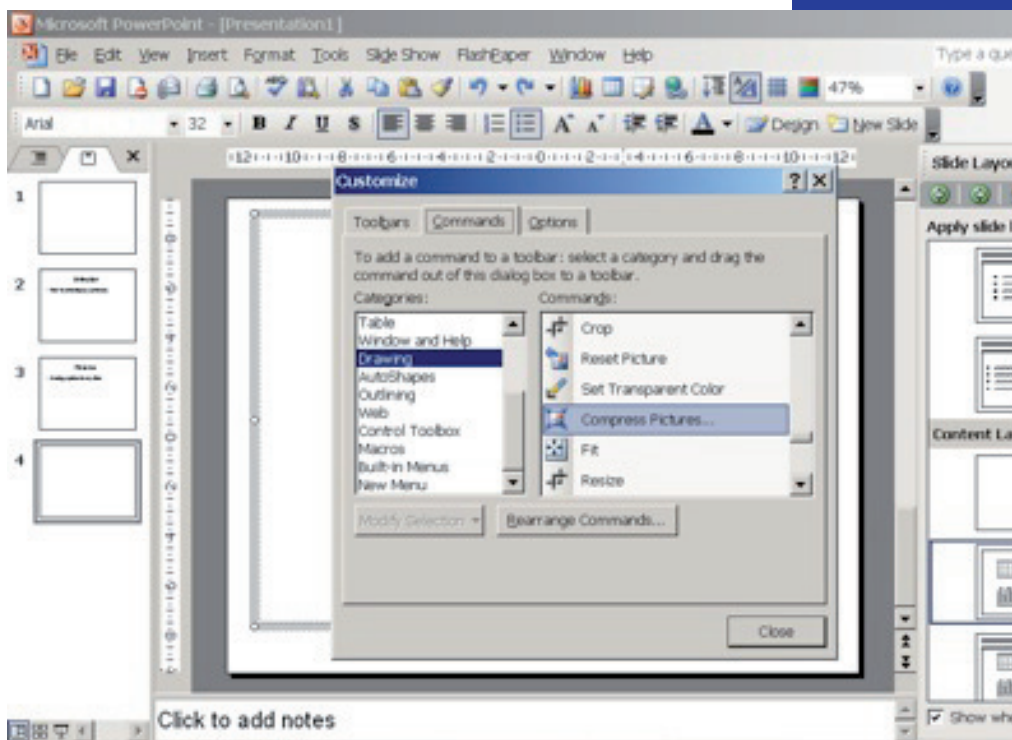


Figure 23: Compressing pictures

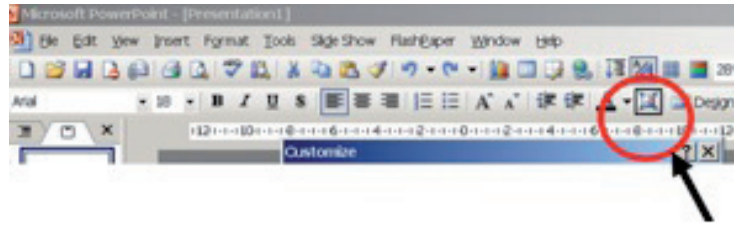


Figure 24: The 'Compress Picture' icon

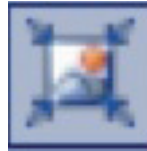


Figure 25: The 'Compress Picture' icon

Following this choose the option 'Web/Screen' or 'Print' and press OK (figure 26). Note that you can compress all your pictures at the same time.

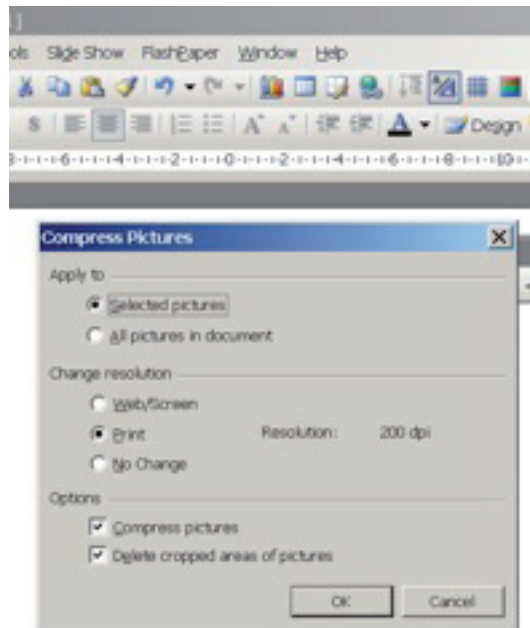


Figure 26: Compressing pictures

When you save your document, the PowerPoint file size should be much smaller than before, although the quality of the presentations should still be of a good standard. If you want to keep the original high quality files, then you should save it with a different name.

At this stage, close all the windows and make sure that you save the presentation. You can also select the effects and the speed of your slides. ‘Effect’ means the way your slides will appear and disappear during the presentation (figure 27).

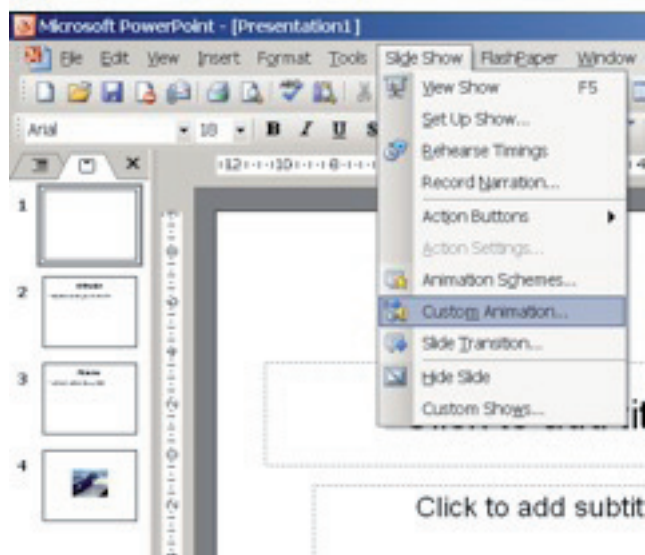


Figure 27: Customising slide animations

5.1 Teacher and pupils' introduction

In this chapter, the various procedural steps are described. Once you have found one or more schools that are willing to

participate, it is suggested that teachers and students exchange some general information about themselves. The teachers and students from the schools participating in the exchange should produce a PowerPoint presentation to introduce themselves to the other classes. Some aspects of producing such a presentation are described below and examples are discussed that illustrate these ideas.

5.1.1 General information

We suggest the preparation of two separate presentations for teachers and pupils, although it is also possible to integrate the two presentations into one. A reason for separating the two presentations is that teachers can give information about their professional background that might not be very relevant to pupils. Furthermore, some teachers are not willing to share personal information with children. Also, teachers can have different perspectives on education and teaching and might decide to include pedagogic and methodological principles.

The main aim of the introduction is to provide some basic information and to stimulate further communication between teachers and pupils about similarities and differences in European countries. At the end of the module, every teacher and pupil will receive an introduction from all participating

teachers and pupils. This part of the project is crucial because the teachers and children will have this information from these introductory presentations available and at their disposal as any project develops.

5.1.2 Teacher presentations

In this introductory module teachers are asked to produce a general introduction about them self, which will then be shown to pupils from the other countries involved in the project.

The purpose is to facilitate the various components from the different countries to get to know each other and to stimulate further exchange about working conditions, teaching methods, pedagogic principles and mutual interests. It is important to keep in mind that an interesting and exciting presentation can motivate other teachers to cooperate more deeply and may lead to further exchanges.

Important aspects

Typically, teachers give their names (first name and family name or the family name), city and country of residence and they describe the type of teacher they are (for example, what subjects he/she teaches). A photograph and some personal information should be given. It is a good idea





to add hobbies or professional interests as well.

Besides this personal information, the teacher's presentation should provide information about the school (location/map, picture, type of school, number of teaching staff, classes and pupils). If there are special features, for example if the school is rather old or new, this should also be given here.

The following examples show approaches teachers have taken.

We suggest focusing on the following topics:

Residence: When we start a communication with a person from abroad, the conversation usually starts by asking where he/she lives. We suggest that this information is included in the presentation so that the other participating teachers know a little of where you live in Europe, and where your school is located.

Teacher training, professional development: We also suggest that information about your professional career and teacher specialization is included.

General information about the school and the class: There are some sets of characteristics that will be common to participants and so are easy to compare. They will provide information

about the everyday environment in which the person concerned works. You can add photographs of the school building, the contact details, the web site of the class/school and artefacts produced by your pupils.

Private information about the teacher: Although the project is primarily concerned with education and your profession as a teacher, we suggest that some basic personal information is included in the presentation, such as your name, hobbies, personal interests, pets, likes and dislikes or possible expectations from the project. It can help the other participating teachers to know a little about you.

Examples

Example 1: Residence

Information about place of residence can be presented in various ways. Some teachers just give the name of the place, as in the presentations of Greece, Germany and the United Kingdom. The Maltese and one of the Czech presentations add a map to show the location of residence (see teacher presentations 'Introduction' on the interactive CD). More information about the location of the school is given in the pupils' presentations 'Class Introduction' and 'Our Town'.

„The presentation met my needs and satisfied me as a teacher.“

(Participant of the workshop in
Thessaloniki, 26.11.2009)

Example 2: Academic and professional career

While the German presentation includes much information, the information included in the presentation of the United Kingdom (see teacher presentations ‘Introduction’ on the interactive CD) is rather briefer. The other presentations are somewhere in between those two examples. Keep in mind that this might be a starting point for further communication and discussion between teachers about different ways to become a teacher, different working conditions and career opportunities.

Example 3: School activities

Some teachers’ presentations, such as the Greek presentation mention some school activities and educational events, while the Czech presentation also adds many different activities like keeping pets and about a recent field trip (see teacher presentations ‘Introduction’ on the interactive CD). This aspect can also be included in children’s presentations and their own introduction.

Example 4: Professional interests

Some teachers add detail on many aspects of their professional life. For example, in the Maltese presentation, the teacher includes information about her motivation to join the project, her teaching principles and some other aspects. Similar interests are presented by the teacher from Greece. Some

teachers write down their expectations about the results of the project, as in the case of both Czech presentations (see teacher presentations ‘Introduction’ on the interactive CD).

Example 5: Special features

Schools can have specific and peculiar characteristics. The Maltese presentation displays the school’s motto and the teacher adds an ‘ice breaker’ activity suggestion, while one of the Czech presentations includes detail

about an award for children’s books (see teacher presentations ‘Introduction’ on the interactive CD).

Example 6: Photographs and Pictures

Every teacher added a photo with some pictures also including the teacher’s family. In some presentations we see the school building, the school yard or the surroundings of the school. The latter is also highly relevant for the pupil presentations (see teacher presentations ‘Introduction’ on the interactive CD).



We provide two Czech presentations that are rather different in size. Ms. Řezníková's presentation is filled with a lot of facts and has a large variety of aspects, while Ms. Přichystalová's presentation is short (see teacher 1 - intro - CZ & teacher 2 - intro CZ on the interactive CD). The other presentations fall somewhere between these two in length and detail.

5.1.3 Pupil presentations

In this introductory module, the pupils are asked to produce general introductions about themselves. These are then presented to children from the other countries involved in the project. The aim of this module is to promote pupils' general awareness of similarities and diversity in Europe. Outcomes from this module can, in more ways than one,



affect the success of further project activities. An interesting and exciting presentation from the pupils' perspective can motivate the pupils themselves and those from other countries and lead to deeper and more intensive cooperation. While working on this module, pupils will come to know better those they are cooperating with. This module provides an wonderful opportunity for communication with children from the other countries. Moreover, for some children it will provide their first opportunity to communicate in English, outside their English language classes. Pupils can realise that some aspects of everyday life which they take for granted can vary even in neighbouring countries.

Important aspects

This module is the first module that requires a properly defined outcome from the pupils. It is important to familiarize the children with the purpose and aims of the module. Although its purpose seems to be clear, it can be one of the more demanding modules for the children. If they are just told to make an introductory presentation for children from other countries, they can be incapable of proceeding because they might not be aware of what aspects they should focus on. It is suggested that the pupils are guided on the information that they are expected to include, the aspects to point out, and what

they want to know about the pupils from the other countries. Although this module is somewhat general, it enables pupils to build and create a first overall impression of the children, the schools and the culture in different European countries, especially through pictures - if included in the presentations. It is important to keep in mind that this module should be on a general level. There will be opportunities through further modules, for considering topics such as ‘school’, ‘the city/village’ and their private life. We suggest focusing on the following topics:

General information about the country: When the children start to communicate to foreign colleagues they are always interested in the detail of the other countries. We suggest the inclusion of some interesting facts about your country (for example, location in Europe, map of the country, national flag.).

General information about the city/village: The characteristics of location of schools can be very different. Participating schools can be located in villages, towns or cities. You can detail the location of your school in your country, especially if you live in a big country.

General information about the school: The topic ‘school’ is one of most common themes in children’s conversations. Children will be interested in what foreign schools look like. Within this

module, basic information about the school (location, name, a photograph of the school building, basic contact details, web site of the school/class, etc.) can be provided. More detailed information about each participating school will be presented within a special module.

General information about the class: Pupils appreciate description of the participating classes. They like pictures of the children in their own classrooms or other places within the school environment, group pictures, and pictures of their teacher or artefacts they themselves have made. We suggest that information about the age of the children is given. The

name of the class (e.g. 2.A) can be confusing due to differences between school systems in Europe.

Private information about the children: Personal information about children's everyday life really enhances pupils' interest. Children can compare and discuss whether their hobbies,





interests, after-school-activities, pets, likes and dislike are similar or not. This is one of the ways that European dimension can be promoted within schools.

Some classes worked out one presentation together, while other classes divided the task and created several presentations. This was particularly the case with the Czech and Maltese presentations.

Examples

Example 1: Location

The presentations from Germany, Greece and the United

Kingdom display geographical information about the schools' locations, as maps. In addition the German presentation adds an aerial view of the school. The Maltese presentation gives information about the name of the participating school and mentions that there are schools in the United Kingdom with the same name, but a map of Malta is missing. One can find this island as a tiny spot on the map in another Maltese presentation (see children presentations 'Introduction' on the interactive CD).

Example 2: Village

The name of the town/village where the school is should be included as part of the necessary, basic information. Additional information about the location, sights, local customs and products are especially highlighted in the presentation of the United Kingdom (see presentation 'children - intro - UK' on the interactive CD).

Example 3: Personal information about the pupils

In the Czech presentation pupils focused more on some personal aspects of their lives. They gave information about their hobbies, pets, likes and dislikes; some of the children did this very convincingly (see presentation 'children - intro - CZ' on the interactive CD).

Example 4: Artefacts produced by the children

The children are especially proud of artefacts, pictures and models, that they have produced on their own. The photographs of the pupils' creative work are shown in the Maltese presentation (see presentation 'children - intro - MT' on the interactive CD). This provides an opportunity to discover the type of creative activities that children in the other countries are engaged in.

Example 5: Hobbies

The activities that pupils do in their private lives are one of most interesting and discussed topics, because each pupil is different. In the Czech presentation (see presentation 'children - intro - CZ' on the interactive CD), every pupil mentions his/her hobbies, and in the Maltese presentation (see presentation 'children - intro - MT' on the interactive CD) the hobbies of all the children in the class are presented on one slide. This provides a general overview of this aspect in each class.

5.1.4 Suggested practice

Teacher's and pupil's presentations have a special purpose: they are meant primarily as an introduction of the teachers and pupils to one another. As a rule of thumb, they should present the information which the teachers and the pupils would

like to get from other pupils and teachers. It is important to accept that a teacher, and in some cases, a pupil might be more reserved and less keen to pass on certain personal information. The main aim of the activity is to initiate contact with a hope of subsequent further exchange of information.

5.2 A day in school

Within the module ‘A day in school’ pupils introduce their class/school life to the pupils from the other countries. Pupils can discuss and compare different aspects of their schools. The presentations show general attributes of the schools as well as detailed descriptions of classroom learning in representative school subjects. Some presentations include many visual elements like photographs of the classroom and lessons at school. Other presentations focus on a description of a typical day at school, including all activities undertaken during lessons.



5.2.1 General information

Pupils will recognize that the work done in classes and schools is similar within Europe although some particular aspects differ. The aim of the module is that pupils become aware

of both common and different ways through which goals in European education are reached. School is a place where pupils spend a significant amount of time. Within the context of their primary school, pupils can focus on a range of aspects and they should decide about what they think their colleagues from partner schools might want to be informed about. The module supports independent thinking as well as the ability to point out all aspects that could be important about their own class/school. The module provides many topics that can be used as initiators for group work or further discussion.

5.2.2 Pupil presentations

In this module pupils have to produce a presentation focused on various aspects of class/school life. Before designing the

presentation pupils discuss what particular aspects they might portray and the form of the presentation. The pupils will consider verbal descriptions as well as visual elements like photographs, schemes, timetables and charts and combine them in their presentation. Pupils should



remember that the children from the other countries might not be native speakers of English.

Presentations from this module provide an opportunity for presenting unique topics that are the result of group discussion.

The presentations from the other countries can give rise to individual or group ideas and may also introduce new and exciting topics of discussion.

Important aspects

The topics should reflect what pupils' consider to be the most important aspects of their lives in class/school (such as time table, school playground, school building,) alongside other aspects such as their textbooks, other learning media and interesting learning activities. Consequently, it should be possible for pupils from other countries to identify similarities and differences.

We suggest focusing on the following topics:

General information about the school: School location, name of school, how to reach the school, number of pupils in the school, a photograph of the school building, aerial view of the school, school schedules (timetable, duration of the lessons), school uniforms (if any).

Special school events: School assembly, school ceremonies, celebrations, sport events, fieldtrips (outdoor activities, visiting

In The Czech Republic 'they have a big public and have lots of money because they send lots of checks and love checking their homework.'

(Girl; 9 years, Malta)

a museum or a library, fieldwork).

Interesting places at school: Classrooms, school gym, school garden, school yard.

Teaching tools and media: Special school equipment (e.g. bee hive, aquarium), computers, textbooks, black/white boards.

Learning and instruction activities in general or in different school subjects: Classroom rules, lesson structure, interesting learning activities, projects, homework.

People: Teachers, school principal, school custodian.

After-school activities: Afternoon activities, school clubs.

Examples

Example 1: Uniform

This topic could be a starting point for classroom discussion and can be a controversial subject. The presentation of the United Kingdom (see presentation ‘children - day at home - UK’ on the interactive CD) shows the school’s uniform. This is a good example of a theme that demonstrates significant differences among European countries.

Example 2: Timetable

Most schools will work to some sort of timetable and therefore this is a useful theme for comparison. Timetables are different between countries and even, in certain cases, within the same

school, or even class. Some examples are provided in the Maltese (see presentation ‘children - day at home - MT’ on the interactive CD) and German presentations (see presentation ‘children - day at home - DE’ on the interactive CD).

Example 3: School Assembly

School assemblies are not always held in schools across Europe. The existence of a school assembly could raise questions about its purpose. In the Maltese (see presentation ‘children - day at home - MT’ on the interactive CD) and the United Kingdom (see presentation ‘children - day at home - UK’ on the interactive CD) presentations school assemblies are mentioned.



Example 4: Teachers

In some European countries primary school children are taught by only one teacher. In other European countries pupils are taught by more than one teacher, each specialized in teaching particular school subjects. The photographs of three teachers are shown in the German presentation (see presentation ‘children - day at home - DE’ on the interactive CD). Through this example, pupils can discuss the pros and cons of both systems.

Example 5: Textbooks

Textbooks are used in almost every European classroom. In the German presentation (see presentation ‘children - day at home - DE’ on the interactive CD) several textbooks are presented. Approaches to using them are also shown.



Example 6: The School Building

The school is a place where pupils spend a large part of their time. Consequently students are interested in what school buildings look like in the other countries – both from the outside as well as on the inside. In the Czech (see presentation ‘children - day at home - CZ’ on the interactive CD), German (see presentation ‘children - day at home - DE’ on the interactive CD) and the United Kingdom (see presentation ‘children - day at home - UK’ on the interactive CD) presentations, photographs of the school buildings are included.

Example 7: A Typical School day

A detailed description of a typical day at school helps pupils’ understand about school life in other countries. A typical school day is presented in several presentations. It includes, among other things, details about the teaching and learning in particular school subjects.

5.2.3 Suggested practice

The presentations are focused on different aspects as determined by the schools themselves. While the Czech, German and United Kingdom presentations (see children presentations ‘Day at home’ on the interactive CD) are more general (information about the school, photographs of the classrooms and other places in the school, teaching aids and school equipment), the Maltese and Greek presentations provide details about teaching and learning in particular schools (actual activities, tasks, weekly timetable, etc.).

Below are some key questions to consider with children in your class, when considering a presentation from a school in another country:

- What did the children like immediately?
- Did they understand everything? Is there anything that must be clarified by discussing in class, through consultation with the teacher, by looking at the literature or the internet or even by asking the other class?
- Does the foreign school in differ in a significant way? What is similar, and what is different?
- Which schools, people, activities and places do they prefer? Why?
- Is there anything special in each presentation that the

“Normally they (the children in the UK) learn to write with capital letters first, then in the third class they learn to write with small letters.”

(Boy, 9 years, Greece)

children would like to carry out as part of their class/school work? How will this be possible?

5.3 A day at home

In this module pupils learn that patterns of daily life may be similar or may vary in different European countries. The pupils' presentations show a day at home in the participating countries. Some presentations display a usual day including going to school, while others chose a day without school (such as a weekend). The presentations vary and some have been very effectively supported by the teacher.

5.3.1 General information

It is important that in an open society – as in the countries of the European Union – people have the opportunity to live their private lives as they want. In these presentations students can see that the different ways that one can live his/her day at home do not actually depend on the country they live in. The aspects that structure daily life are more likely to depend on the values people have, especially the parents of the students, than on the institutional framework that is set by the administration of a country or the geographical situation.

Besides time spent at school, children can have a lot of free

time to spend with their parents and families. Most of the activities during their free time, such as doing homework, are similar in all countries, but it seems likely that the duration of such activities and the time when children do these activities varies both within and between countries. Thus understanding that Europeans can have important similarities in their everyday lives is reinforced. The aim of this module is to develop such understanding.



Activities during free time provide good opportunities to find topics to start off the conversation among children from other countries with similar hobbies.

5.3.2 Pupil presentations

The pupils' presentations can be prepared in groups and the most important aspects that are eventually presented should be the result of a group discussion between pupils.

Attention should be paid to keeping children's privacy and that of their families as secure as possible.

Important aspects

Doing homework: This takes up a lot of time in the life of children in all countries.



Hobbies: This is practically a synonym for free time activities. Although hobbies depend on the facilities available, there are many similarities in the way children spend their free time from country to country.

Music: Playing an instrument may be done during school-time or else music can be a hobby followed at home. Besides the fact that some actively play an instrument, nearly all primary school children listen to music at home.

TV – computer: Watching TV and using computers is an activity most pupils do regularly. Children like playing computer games, watching movies and talking about their idols. It can be interesting if children have mutual idols in different countries.

Spending time with friends: It would be interesting to know where, when and how much time children spend with their friends and what they do together (chatting, doing sport, playing games, shopping, etc.).

Family life: This comprises activities that usually children do with their parents and/or their siblings (e.g. preparing and eating meals, visiting relatives, going on family trips, etc.).

Pets: Pets play an important part in children's free time. By analysing pupils' presentations, it is clear that children have similar types of pets all over Europe.

Examples

Example 1: Timetable or not?

Very important consideration should be given to the activities that children do, the place where and the time when they do it.

A group preparing such a presentation should decide whether or not to present the activities within the framework of a timetable or else just mention them without further information.

In the German presentation (see presentation 'children - day at home - DE' on the interactive CD), they present a schedule for a 'normal' day while in the presentation of the United Kingdom (see presentation 'children - day at home - UK' on the interactive CD) the activities are only listed.

Example 2: Text and pictures

The following three examples illustrate the variety of ways that text and pictures can be combined. The Greek presentation (see presentation 'children - day at home - GR' on the

interactive CD) is practically a plain-text version, the German one (see presentation ‘children - day at home - DE’ on the interactive CD) contains a mixture of text and pictures while the presentation from the United Kingdom (see presentation ‘children - day at home - UK’ on the interactive CD) consists of a minimum of text and has many instances where slides contain many pictures with only a single word or a short sentence.

Example 3: Considering a single person’s activities or a summary of possible activities

In the Maltese presentation (see presentation ‘children - day at home - MT’ on the interactive CD) eight children give a very personal view of their day at home whereas in the United Kingdom presentation (see presentation ‘children - day at home - UK’ on the interactive CD) children produce statistical data about the activities they pursue in their free time.

Example 4: Level of language

English is the mother tongue for English pupils and very close to a ‘native language’ for the Maltese pupils. In spite of this, the presentations from the two countries vary in language level. The Maltese presentation requires a high level of language comprehension while the English one is suitable for children with low English language skills. It is obvious that the British

pupils knew that they were addressing non-native speakers. In the Maltese presentation, pieces of creative writing are presented. The text might be considered too difficult for some children in the other countries. As a result, we recommend that, in similar cases, teachers should put some considerable effort into supporting their pupils in translating the presentation (see presentation ‘children - day at home - MT and UK’ on the interactive CD).

5.3.3 Suggested practice

Because free time activities are similar in most countries, this is a module where European pupils can find a common, mutual cultural background. Therefore we suggest that rather than considering individual activities, it is better to present a



summary of what is typical, popular and important as regards free time activities. Children can be asked if they do the same activity as children in the other country or if they have friends who do. In this way, pupils become aware that these free time activities are often similar across Europe.

This topic can be considered in conjunction with the module ‘A day in school’ because in certain countries the school day is longer and there is less time for hobbies and family activities. Do not forget that the pupils in the other countries might not be native speakers of English. It can be appropriate to use photos, pictures or sketches as much as possible.



To give an overview of the hobbies of the children in the class can be a challenging task, especially if presented in a statistical way through a table or graph as the pupils from the

United Kingdom show in their presentation (see presentation ‘children - day at home - UK’ on the interactive CD).

5.4 Our town – events and attractions

By working within this module, children can become more aware of different places. They can compare their own town and its attributes with other towns presented by children from the other countries. The presentations evidence that the pupils across Europe come from a range different places: from big cities to villages. All children found interesting aspects of their place to present. The presentations themselves offer several approaches to working with the topic of places. Some presentations were prepared by the children themselves (and these deal with the children’s everyday experiences), while some others were done by the children and their teachers together (these tend to be more content-oriented and can be used as background material for teaching in several school subjects).

5.4.1 General information

Pupils will describe their hometown through its events, buildings, landscape and people they may have known since their early childhood. The aim of this module is to make

In Greece ‘I think there are many nice trees and flowers.’

(Girl; 9 years, Malta)

children aware of what aspects make a town/city attractive for them and for others, and to share this information with pupils of partner schools. The module supports the independent thinking of pupils as well as the need for awareness in respecting perspectives such as similarity and difference and subjective preferences and dislikes.

5.4.2 Pupil presentations

The presentations in this module provide the opportunity for cross-cultural exchanges of personal experiences and responses to different places even starting from the context of individual school classes. The school class represents a place where pupils spend a significant amount of time. To satisfy the aims of the module, pupils create a presentation which introduces their classroom to the other participating classrooms. They can use different media and techniques (such as taking pictures, composing short texts, collecting leaflets, postcards or maps) and combine these into a single presentation. When designing the presentation, pupils have to discuss the topic and ask a number of questions, as the ones that follow, in order to decide which material will ultimately be included:

- What should we display?
- What is typical of our town?



Thus differences can be discussed, especially on the basis of children's own experiences.

Important aspects

The topics should reflect the pupils' perceptions of the most important aspects of the place under consideration (playground, sweet shop, public swimming pool, etc.) and other aspects of a general nature too.

We suggest focusing on the following topics:

General information about the place: Location on the map of Europe (consider the Greek presentation), location on the map of the particular region, population (number of inhabitants, religion, language, economic structure), aerial view of the place, public transport.



Events: Cultural events (festivals, local myths and fairytales, legends), sport events (consider the Czech presentation), entertainment events (circus, concerts, fun parks).

Interesting places: Buildings (churches, town hall), squares, monuments, statues, shops, picturesque countryside places (beaches, rivers, mountains, parks), historical sites.

People: Celebrities, famous people.

Examples

Example 1: Location

To develop a spatial perception of the geographical situation of Europe you can use several cut-outs of maps as shown in the Greek presentation (see presentation ‘children - out town - GR’ on the interactive CD). With the use of additional maps, children can identify the locations of the other classes too.

Example 2: Scales

Understanding different scales is supported by using several scales, as is shown in the German example (see presentation ‘children - out town - DE’ on the interactive CD) using electronic maps. You can see an aerial map displaying the town and the school (source: Google maps). The children are supposed to work with a larger scale aerial map. Working on both examples can lead to contributing to the concept of scale development.

Example 3: Sports events

If there are sports events, this can be very motivating for pupils and result in them taking a closer look at the other school’s location. The Czech presentation (see presentation ‘children - out town - CZ’ on the interactive CD) shows a motorcycle race: a race in the motorcycling world championship takes place in Brno every year, which is one of the most important events in the city.

Example 4: Entertainment events

Every city will have a number of special places for entertainment. These may include sports grounds, playgrounds, public swimming pools, or the location of annual cultural events like contests, festivals or the circus. In the Czech presentation (see presentation ‘children - out town - CZ’ on the interactive CD),

pictures of the circus are displayed.

Example 5: Picturesque nature spots

In some cases, nature spots near the city may be added, for example the cave that is shown in the Maltese presentation (see presentation ‘children - out town - MT’ on the interactive CD).

Example 6: Public transport

This is one of the aspects where differences between the various countries are most highlighted. Pupils often first hand and direct experience of public transport because they travel to school by bus, tram or train. In the Czech presentation (see presentation ‘children - out town - CZ’ on the interactive CD), there are photographs of the various kinds of public transport.

5.4.3 Suggested practice

This module could be introduced by showing all the different presentations to the pupils. They can thus point out interesting aspects and discuss them in groups, asking questions such as:

- What did the children like immediately?
- Did they understand everything?
- Is there anything that must be clarified by discussing in class, through consultation with the teacher, through

the literature or the internet or even by asking the other class?

- What is similar, and what is different?
- Which of the places presented do they prefer? Why?
- Is there something special in each presentation that the children would like to transfer to their city/village? Would it be possible – and if so, would it be easy or difficult – to transfer particular events/attractions? What is possible? What is not?
- What do the children think is attractive from each place? What would you advertise as a main tourist attraction?
- Do the pupils recognize any differences between geographical regions (nature, social, economical, political, religious disparities)?



5.5 The Weather in my Country

‘What is Weather?’

Weather relates to a given climate but there are frequent misconceptions about the two concepts. This chapter deals with children’s perceptions and experiences of the weather of their town and not how they distinguish between the concepts of weather and climate. Nevertheless, for the sake of the teachers, it is useful to start by defining the terms climate and weather in as simple a way as possible.



Climate is considered as the average weather condition at a specific place over a given lengthy period of time (Whittow, 1986). It is usually seen as the synthesis of weather.

Weather is defined as the presence of meteorological phenomena (such as temperature, rainfall, humidity, surface wind) over a place at a given period of time. These phenomena change every day and also during a day. These changes are identified by the children and can be an issue of discussion.

Discussion and analysis can lead to the identification of the seasons. Even if a certain place does not have four distinguishable seasons, differences can still be found

throughout a year. These differences are sensed by the children and thus everyday experience becomes important in showing key similarities and differences between places.

Weather, climate and the seasons can combine to unify people once similarities or differences are identified.

5.5.1 General information

It would be interesting for the children to find out that other places in Europe have similar weather during certain periods of the year (the seasons) and other places have different weather during the same period. What is similar and what is different is very effectively left to the children to explore through their personal experience.

Children living in Northern Europe might have a different impression of how the weather is during summer than, for example, those living in the South of Europe.

By having examples from different places in Europe, the teacher can show how close these impressions are to reality or to what the children of different countries perceive as reality.

Snow might be a characteristic of a typical winter for children in Northern Europe but for the children in the South of Europe, this would be the sign of a heavy winter which does not occur every year. The same can be said for high temperatures during

summer, but with the opposite experience. So, it is not the presence of the weather characteristics only, but their frequency and degree of occurrence.

This project tried to approach these challenges such that children of different countries might learn from each other having as examples every day experiences like weather. For this purpose, a questionnaire containing four open questions was given to the children of the four participating countries. Progressing from this, pupils can prepare a presentation which contains information about the seasons of their country. The presentation may contain pictures portraying each season in the places where they live and information regarding temperature, wind, rain, snow, etc.

5.5.2 Pupil presentations

The pupils' presentations can be prepared in groups (e.g. the different of the seasons) and the most important aspects that are eventually presented should be the result of a group discussion between pupils.

Important aspects

Considering that children like to show what the weather in their own place is like, we opted to use an open questionnaire instead of a closed one with weather being quite an abstract

'The first thing that comes to my mind is that in Germany it snows often and I've never felt snow.'

(Girl; 9 years, Malta)



concept despite it being measurable by its attributes.

The first question ‘What is weather?’ is content oriented. Its purpose is to find out if children can express themselves about something they experience every day and if they can distinguish between a number of criteria and which, out of the various options, is the main criterion. Moreover, it is interesting to know their level of knowledge about weather because there are a lot of misconceptions.

Comparisons among the answers to the questionnaires:

A total of 77 questionnaires were received: 23 from Germany, 13 from Greece, 24 from Malta and 16 from the Czech Republic. The children that took part in the survey were 8 to 10 years old. The younger ones (8 years old) were the ones from Greece while there was one child from Germany who was 11 years old. In order to evaluate the answers we had to define the term ‘weather’. We recommend this to the teacher

because he/she will soon realize that most of the children have the wrong idea about what weather is.

An explanation of what weather is, or rather ‘what weather consists of’, is found in the following link:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/whatisweather/aboutweather/flash_menu.shtml.



Weather consists of temperature, moisture, wind velocity, and barometric pressure. Barometric pressure is a term that cannot be experienced by the children through their senses while all the other parameters can. The Oxford Dictionary

defines weather as ‘the condition of the atmosphere at a certain place and time, with reference to the presence or absence of sunshine, rain, wind, etc.’

Taking these definitions as the answer to our question, the conclusions are presented below:

Regarding the first question ‘What is weather?’, it was found that:

- 12 children did not reply (7 from Germany and 5 from the Czech Republic), which is 15.6%. The percentage is high. All Greek and Maltese children responded. This may be due to the school geography curriculum.
- 10 children gave the correct answer, 22 children gave an almost correct answer (because ‘wind’ is missing from their answer), 2 children mixed up weather and climate and 30 children gave a wrong answer. That means 41.6% of the children knew what weather is and 58.4 % did not know or had wrong ideas about the subject. Again, an analysis of the various schools curricula might give some answers.

The second question ‘What is the weather like in your place during winter ... autumn?’ is more concrete and focuses on the place where they live and their direct experience. It is a question that can let the children express themselves in two ways:

- they can show what they think about each of the seasons in the place where they live by using photographs or video,
- they can write down what are the characteristics of each of the seasons (e.g. temperature).

The third question ‘What kind of weather do you prefer?’ shows a preference or even a wish. It shows what the child would like to have in his/her everyday life. Preference for a certain type of weather is usually connected to the typical weather that prevails at his/her holiday places or places where he/she experienced pleasant memories.

The children in Germany prefer sun and snow (except one boy that prefers rain and snow) as their best choice for weather. All the Greek children prefer hot weather. The pupils from the Czech Republic prefer summer, which means that hot weather is their choice too. The children in Malta prefer sunny and hot weather but there are four children that prefer cold weather with snow.

The last question ‘Which season would you recommend for your place as a holiday destination and why?’ shows two things:

- the favourite season in the place where they live,
- the season during which they prefer to have holidays.

In actual fact, the responses show that the children replied by saying which season they prefer to have holidays in the place

where they live. The children explain why at the end of the response. The explanation has to be very similar to the answer to the third question. Thus, the ‘why’ part works as a checking/control question.

German pupils would recommend their country as a summer holiday destination (15 out of 23, three did not answer). All Greek students recommend their place for holidays in summer. Czech students do not present a clear decision: it seems that they are pleased with all the seasons, and so they recommend their country as ‘an all- year round’ destination for holidays. The majority of Maltese children recommend summer as the best season for having holidays in Malta although, there are some who recommend spring or autumn because, as they say, summer is very hot.

The presentation consists of a number of slides devoted to each season. The slides contain pictures showing various places in the pupils’ country of origin in different seasons.



Examples

There are four presentations given, namely those by the Czech Republic, Germany, Malta and Greece. In all the four cases, the children talk about the four seasons.



Example 1: Seasons

The presentation may consist of only a few slides (e.g. one for each season) as the one from the Czech Republic. The slides consist of pictures and a minimum of text. The pictures show different places in the country in each season but not the same place throughout the year. The presentation may also consist of many slides, as is the case of the German presentation (see presentation ‘children - weather - DE’ on the interactive CD). In this case, the slides have more text than pictures. In fact there is only one big photo that represents the season and a lot of information on the conditions that prevail in each season. The presentation can have

slides with information on certain seasons, as in the case of Maltese presentation (see presentation ‘children - weather - MT’ on the interactive CD) , where the children gave more

information on summer and winter. This may indicate the fact that there are only two main seasons in Malta although Maltese children know that there are four seasons. The Greek presentation (see presentation 'children - weather - GR' on the interactive CD) has more than eight slides, some of which contain a number of pictures. The text is short, giving more space to pictures. The pictures are from different parts of the country and do not show the same place throughout the year. It is recommended that the children could take their own pictures of their school throughout the year. In this way, they can compare the pictures and see the differences between the seasons (or their impact) in the place where they live.

5.5.3 Suggested practice

A good starting point can be the production of a presentation. The teacher can either form four groups of children, one for each season, or he/she can ask all the pupils to participate in collecting pictures and information for all the four seasons.

Once the presentation is ready, children can talk about it and discuss it and then watch the presentations from the other countries. In this way the children can compare the information and the pictures from their presentation with those from the other countries. They should discuss how each season is

presented in each country. They might also realize that two or more countries have similar weather conditions during the same periods of the year (which can lead to discussions about climate). Although it seems that answers from neighbouring countries do not add new knowledge to the children of either country, it is useful to show the similarities. Information expressed through photos or video is more attractive and can be read and interpreted by very young children, even pre-school children.

A question about which season pupils like most in their country and which season they would recommend as holiday season may trigger a debate among the pupils of different countries. For example, Greek pupils are used to spending their summer holidays near the sea. It is very difficult to think about summer holidays without swimming. But this is not always the case for children living in other countries.

5.6 Christmas

Christmas is celebrated in many places all over the world. Children love it: the cookies, the tree, the dinner and – of course – the presents. But the way people celebrate Christmas is different in every country. Children should become aware of how Christmas is celebrated in their own country as well

as in foreign countries. The pupils should be able to compare the different traditions and find similarities and differences.

5.6.1 General information

Christmas nowadays is celebrated in almost all families. Christians celebrate Christ's birth, while people from other religions living in traditionally Christian countries may have started celebrating Christmas as well. This especially takes place in families with children, who tend to do so because their friends get presents and they would want to receive some as well.

It is important that the children realise why Christians celebrate Christmas. As a result, to enhance intercultural competence and understanding, the presentations must contain information about the habits and traditions in the different countries. Nevertheless, the presentation of the background and the different traditions of Christmas could also lead to a discussion about what similar events are celebrated in other religious communities or cultural groups (e.g. 'Sugar fest'). Information about these traditions can be collected from other children in the class, parents, neighbours, friends or the various media available.





5.6.2 Pupil presentations

Prior to preparing their presentation on Christmas, including Christmas traditions and habits, the children should first of all discuss the situations and the traditions that are present in their class. By doing so, they may become aware that traditions and habits are not the same for all children and families in their own class. Following this discussion pupils decide on the important and/or unique aspects they want to display to the children in the other countries and how they want to present this information, e.g. by PowerPoint, through video clips, songs, pictures, etc. Based on the presentations from the other countries, foreign traditions and habits can be discussed or even experienced.

Important aspects

General information about the topic Christmas: the dates, the reasons behind the celebration.

Events: e.g. church service, dinner with the family, trimming the tree, singing carols, getting presents.

Interesting habits: e.g. having a goose on December 26th, the advent calendar, the advent wreath, decoration of a boat and/or a Christmas tree.

Examples

Example 1: The general information is the same in every country

We celebrate Christmas because Jesus was born in the stable about 2000 years ago. Mary and Joseph were the parents of God's son, who came down on earth to save people from their sins (see children presentations 'Christmas' on the interactive CD).

Example 2: The special events differ from country to country

A short overview of the most important differences and similarities is important. Thus, for example, in Germany, the Czech Republic and Malta the Christmas period starts at the beginning of Advent which is the fourth Sunday before

Christmas. During Advent, people buy presents, bake cookies and start decorating their houses. Additionally, in Germany and in the Czech Republic, people light a candle from the Advent wreath every Sunday. Children in these countries usually have an Advent calendar and they open a little ‘door’ on it on each day of December.

Christmas Eve is on December 24th. In Malta Christmas eve starts with a procession. The procession with baby Jesus passes through the streets and people sing Christmas carols. People also visit the many cribs that are displayed. Late on the eve of Christmas, at around 10 p.m., people attend the church service where, amongst other events, there will be children who deliver the Christmas sermon or act out a Christmas play. This is similar to what German children do, with the difference that in Germany the service usually starts earlier, at 5 or 6 p.m. After the service the families have a small dinner before they unwrap the presents.

The situation is very different in Greece. On Christmas Eve people go to the religious service at midnight and light a fire. On the 25th, they visit each other and eat delicious food. The presents are given on the 25th of December and on the 1st of January (see children presentations ‘Christmas’ on the interactive CD).

Example 3: Interesting habits

In Greece, Malta and the United Kingdom children go from house to house to sing Christmas carols to people. In the Czech Republic people cut an apple diagonally up to the stalk and if you can see a star then you will have good luck during the following year (see children presentations ‘Christmas’ on the interactive CD).



5.6.3 Suggested practice

This topic is to be introduced in the period around Christmas. It is not very practical to speak about Christmas during summertime as children need to be somehow involved in the topic. As a result, it can be introduced during Advent or

just after the Christmas holidays. Just after Christmas, they will remember what they did during the Christmas period but interest may have waned a little.

We suggest that the children start with a discussion about Christmas in their own country. When they are aware of their own traditions, they can have a close look at traditions and habits in other countries. One can show the presentations in class and let the pupils take notes on similarities, differences and aspects of Christmas that they consider special.

For preparation, the pupils should ask their parents for photographs, about family traditions. They can write a list of what the family traditionally eats on the 24th, the 25th and the 26th of December, what they do, where they go and all the things that are considered special for their family. The class as a whole can discuss the contents of the presentation: What is important for us? What do we want others to know?

5.7 Language

Language is one of aspect where European countries vary significantly. Language can be a unique attribute of a particular country. When children from different countries meet, they are usually interested in exchanging some words or phrases in their own languages. Within this module, children may be

motivated to learn a foreign language, which is one of the recent priorities in education in Europe. In this module, pupils also become aware that there are similar everyday situations in different countries where certain phrases need to be used. The pupil presentations will show words and phrases that are necessary for communication between people from different countries.

We provide presentations from the partner countries that include the colours, the numbers, and everyday phrases. Furthermore each country presents other specific topics.

5.7.1 General information

By getting to know common everyday words and phrases children will recognise that the knowledge of languages is a challenge for fighting language barriers that are considered, especially lately, as an important problem in

Europe. The aim of this module is to provide a set of common phrases in the various mother languages to the children from the other countries and to make them aware of similarities and differences between languages in Europe. The module also helps in enhancing the children's communicative competences,





mostly by using the translation in a second language in the presentations of the children from the other classes.

5.7.2 Pupil presentations

This module is demanding in terms of teacher and pupil creativity. The words should be

presented clearly so that it will be possible for the children from the other countries to imitate and pronounce the words. The presentation of words in written form only is not very useful in this case and the correct pronunciation should therefore be provided too. The use of different media, such as audio and video clips, is suggested.

The presentations in this module provide the opportunity to recognize similarities and differences between languages in Europe.

Important aspects

The phrases should be presented in a typical situation or accompanied by special gestures. Small video clips are best for this task. Children should speak clearly and slowly, but still in a natural way. The spelling of the words can be presented on

a card or directly added as text in the clip. It is easier to learn these phrases if they are repeated by two or three children and if the presentation asks the listeners to repeat the phrases.

We suggest focusing on the writing and pronunciation of the following words and phrases:

Phrases used in everyday conversation: e.g. ‘Hello’, ‘Good morning’, ‘Goodbye’, ‘Have a nice day’, ‘Please’, ‘Thank you’, ‘You are welcome’

Introductory phrases that are important in starting a simple conversation: e.g. ‘My name is Petr’, ‘How are you?’, ‘Nice to meet you’, ‘I am 10 years old’, ‘I am a pupil in the fourth class’, ‘I like to listen to music’

Numbers: children consider it interesting and challenging to compare how to say the numbers from one to ten in several languages.

The common colours: e.g. red, green, blue, yellow

Miscellaneous: it is also possible to include some other phrases from everyday life and conversation, e.g. the seasons, shopping.

Examples

All examples combine the spoken language with either written text or a short role play. Pronunciation by the schoolchildren and the recording of the videos can be supported by inputs

by the teacher. Attention should be drawn to letters that the children are not accustomed to, e.g. the Greek alphabet. These should be written on the board and pronounced by the teacher. There are different ways to present the words/phrases to the partner schools. This depends upon the particular language skill that is being considered: reading, listening, speaking, or writing.

In the Maltese presentation a single child shows cards with the words. It can be noted that in the Greek presentation, the card is first shown to the viewer and then to the whole class and the children repeat the words/phrases together. In the German presentation a situation is role-played. The Czech children presented the theme in front of an electronic board and while the written words and phrases were displayed the children simultaneously provided the correct pronunciation. The quality of some files is poor. Due to this, the Czech presentation is accompanied by a slide-presentation which includes the material presented in the video clips (see children presentations 'Language' on the interactive CD).

Example 1: Everyday Phrases

There are clips about a large number of everyday phrases from the Czech Republic, Malta, Germany and Greece. The children focused on particular aspects from their everyday

lives: greetings, polite phrases, 'where is' phrases, etc. (see children presentations 'Language' on the interactive CD).

Example 2: Introduction

A situation when children meet and say good-bye is shown in the video clip from Germany (see presentation 'language DE - welcome' & 'language DE - dismissal' on the interactive CD). The Maltese video clips show a single child presenting the phrases and the Greek presentation (see presentation 'language GR - simple exp' on the interactive CD) includes phrases from everyday life. The Czech children introduce themselves at the beginning of each video clip.

Example 3: The Numbers

The numbers from 'zero' to 'ten' are shown in the German video clip (see presentation 'language DE - numbers' on the interactive CD) with a short announcement in English. In the Greek presentation (see presentation 'language GR - numbers' on the interactive CD) numbers from 'one' to 'ten' are given in chorus by the whole class, while in the Maltese (see presentation 'language MT - numbers' on the interactive



CD) and in the Czech presentations (see presentation ‘language CZ - numbers 1& 2’ on the interactive CD) the numbers are given in English and then in the respective mother language.

Example 4: The Colours

In the Maltese presentation (see presentation ‘language MT - colours’ on the interactive CD) , a number of colours are given in English and Maltese, and while the words are displayed on a card the colours are not shown. The Czech presentation is similar to the Maltese one, with the words written in different colours. The Greek presentation shows the name of the colour in English and Greek language on a sheet of paper with the named colour. In the German presentation, the names of the colours are given only in German. The sheets of paper where the names are written show an area in the named colour. As a result of reflections, these colours are not easily seen in the presentation (see children presentations ‘language - colours on the interactive CD).

Example 5: Miscellaneous

There are several different phrases from every country in additional clips. The German presentation (see presentation ‘language DE - How are you’ on the interactive CD) provides a role play by the title ‘Ask somebody how he feels’. The Greek presentation (see presentation ‘language GR - everyday exp’

on the interactive CD) shows further everyday expressions – such as ‘good morning’ – in English and Greek. The Maltese presentations (see presentation ‘language MT -seasons’ on the interactive CD) show the seasons in both English and Maltese. In the Czech presentation (see presentation ‘language CZ - shopping’ on the interactive CD) phrases which are used while shopping are presented as well as Czech spelling for the names of pets.



5.7.3 Suggested practice

Usually children are interested to know some words and phrases in a foreign language. This is more so if they have



the opportunity to communicate with one another, as in the E-PLIPS project. This module could be introduced through a classroom discussion about the importance of learning foreign languages. You could conduct a simple classroom survey and discover which language the pupils would like to learn and why. This can be followed by presenting the children with the slide- and video presentations; there are many

possibilities how this can be done. You can let the children discuss in groups about the general sensations that they have after hearing, reading and listening to the children from the other countries or whether there aspects to be clarified by asking or consulting the teacher, children in the other classes, or other sources. Another relevant question may be whether the children found any funny or strange words in the presentations of the other classes?

While working with the video clips, children can repeat or rewrite any foreign words or phrases (e.g. the numbers), pronounce them together as a class at the same time that they are displayed (e.g. the colours), or represented in a simple role play (e.g. people meet and introduce one another). You can also ask the children to consider and compare foreign words

and phrases and their equivalent in their own language (e.g. the word 'morning' in English and its translation in German 'morgen'). As regards Greek presentation (see presentation 'children - language GR' on the interactive CD) you can let the children try to read the words in Greek and find out which Greek characters are equivalent to the Latin characters. You can also focus on the pronunciation of the letter 'r' in different languages. The students can also try to find other differences and similarities on their own.

6 Summary of the project

The general aim of the COMENIUS 2.1 project ‘Implementation of a European Dimension by Peer Learning in Primary School’ (E-PLIPS) was to provide an up-to-date contribution to European education. This unit provides an overview of the different steps in the project and shows both: the results of the long term project evaluation that has accompanied the whole process of development of the materials, and; the results following the final evaluation against the project outcomes.

6.1 Overview of the project steps

During the 40 months of the project, the work was subdivided into seven stages (see figure 28). These seven phases were not separate and independent of each other but were developed and intertwined in such a way as to affect each other over the whole period of the project.



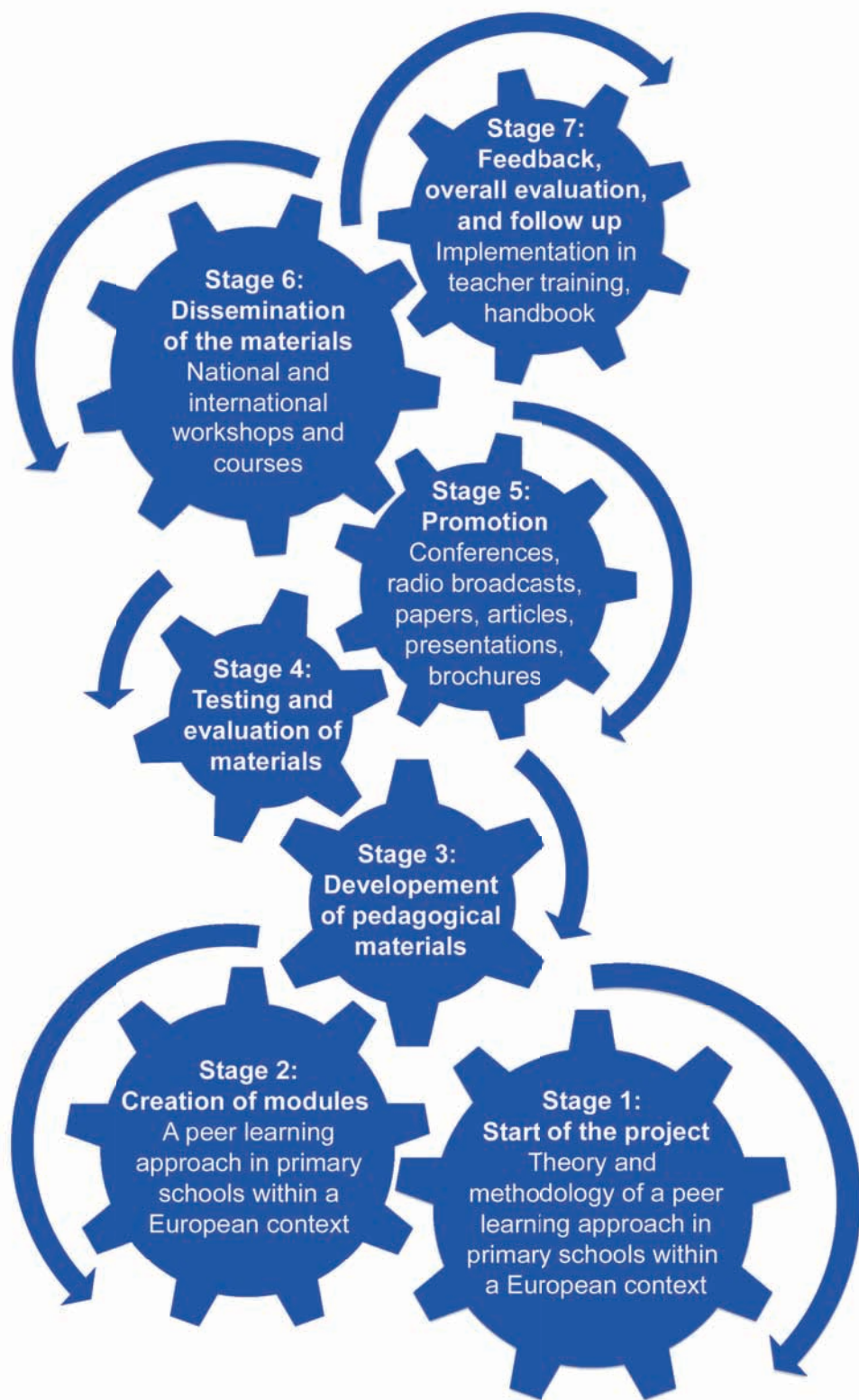


Figure 28: An outline of the seven stages of the E-PLIPS project

6.2 Starting point of teachers and their classes before working with the project materials

A pre-test was done in order to get a general idea as regards the knowledge, the attitudes, and the understanding of 'Europe' by children in different European countries. This was carried out through a questionnaire that was given to one class of pupils in each of the five partner countries, namely the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece Malta and the United Kingdom. The children that participated in this exercise were mostly nine and ten year olds, with some eight and eleven year old children too. The number of boys and girls involved in the test was roughly the same.

The questionnaire asked for the following responses:

1. What words come to your mind when you think of (name of country)?
2. Children in name of country are _____
People in name of country are _____
Schools in name of country are _____

Responses were collected for each of the five partner countries. The pupils in a given country responded for the other four countries in the project and did not go through the same exercise concerning their own country.

Following the administration of the above, pupils were asked

for three more open and general responses. These were:

3. What do you like to know about these countries?
4. Other comments
5. Choose one of these countries and draw a picture.

Below is an outline summary of the responses that were presented by the pupils. The results forwarded by each class are presented, country by country. In each case, the most frequent responses are indicated.



The Responses from Malta

For the question ‘What words come to your mind when you think of Great Britain?’, the main responses of the Maltese children were: football, the queen, big country. Some pupils were mixed up by the word ‘great’ in the name of the country as the response they gave was simply great.

Regarding the item regarding children, the most frequent

responses by the Maltese pupils were: blonde, sweet, and white. A number of pupils used opposites, e.g., ugly/nice or tall/short. This, most probably, is evidence of some level of confusion because the children did not actually understand what was being requested or else they did not have any idea of what to give as a response. For the item concerned with people, the main responses were: nice/kind, big, white/pale and blonde. Regarding schools in Great Britain, the responses were: big and nice/lovely.

As regards the question ‘What do you like to know about these countries?’, various responses were given and each was somewhat different from the rest. In the ‘Other comments’ section, very few inputs were presented. In the last item, namely ‘Choose one of these countries and draw a picture’, a total of 17 pupils out of 26 drew a flag of one of the other four countries.

The children from Malta also gave the responses for the Czech Republic, Germany and Greece. The main type of responses presented for the other countries – the Czech Republic, Germany and Greece – are summarised below. The results obtained from the other four countries are also presented in the same format below.

The most frequent responses for the Czech Republic were:

People in Germany are 'the same as us, except for different language.'

(Girl; 9 years, Malta)



1. Words: football, big
2. Children: no real pattern emerging, ‘disjointed’ answers, including also some disparaging remarks as ‘unkind’, ‘nasty’ and ‘dangerous’

People: very ‘sporadic’ and ‘disjointed’ answers with no real pattern emerging

Schools: clean/nice/sweet, small, dirty/old, big

The most frequent responses for Germany were:

1. Words: football, big, snow/rain/fog, many people
2. Children: friendly/nice, blonde/red hair, skin colour, nervous/ not gentle

People: nice/intelligent, skin colour, angry/nervous, hair colour, tall

Schools: small, big, clean/well organised, nice/beautiful,
strict

The most frequent responses for Greece were:

1. Words: huge place/big/many persons, Eurovision song
contest, Olympics
2. Children: no real pattern detected - general, disjointed remarks
People: no real pattern detected - general, disjointed remarks
Schools: big, not well organised/ugly, small/medium

The Responses from the Czech Republic

The most frequent responses for Germany were:

1. Words: the queen (all except two pupils in the class),
Halloween
2. Children: white/black, different
People: very 'sporadic' and no real pattern emerging
Schools: no real pattern emerging

The most frequent responses for Great Britain were:

1. Words: German language, neighbouring country
2. Children: kind, white
People: as in the case of 'Children' above, but no real
pattern emerging
Schools: different

The most frequent responses for Greece were:

1. Words: holiday, sea, sun

2. Children: kind

People: no real pattern detected in the responses

Schools: different

The most frequent responses for Malta were:

1. Words: don't know, three children thought it was 'malta' in Czech which means mortar

2. Children: not much found in the responses

People: practically no responses

Schools: practically no responses

What do you like to know about these countries?: many want to know about Malta and Greece

Other comments: all empty

Drawing: flag, map

The Responses from Germany

The most frequent responses for the Czech Republic were:

1. Words: beautiful, no real pattern in the responses, in most cases left blank

2. Children: nice, happy, no real pattern detected

People: no real pattern detected, in most cases left blank

Schools: no real pattern detected, in most cases left blank

The most frequent responses for Great Britain were:

1. Words: no real pattern detected in the responses

2. Children: no real pattern detected

'The children in the other countries are just like us.'
(Girl, 10 years, Germany)

People: no real pattern detected, in most cases left blank

Schools: no real pattern detected, in most cases left blank

The most frequent responses for Greece were:

1. Words: no real pattern detected, significant number of blanks

2. Children: Greek, many blanks

People: Greek, in most cases left blank

Schools: bad, in most cases left blank

The most frequent responses for Malta were:

1. Words: very small country, in most cases left blank

2. Children: no real pattern in most cases left blank

People: in most cases left blank

Schools: in most cases left blank

What do you like to know about these countries?: in most cases left blank

Other comments: practically all empty

Drawing: flag



The Responses from Great Britain

The most frequent responses for the Czech Republic were:

1. Words: football/names of specific football players, good/
nice place
2. Children: kind, helpful, nice
People: kind, helpful, nice
Schools: big, good

The most frequent responses for Germany were:

1. Words: sausages/food, football, nice place, nice people
2. Children: friendly/nice, like us but speak a different
language
People: friendly/nice, helpful, polite
Schools: good, good teachers



The most frequent responses for Greece were:

1. Words: sandy beaches/sea/hot weather, myths and legends
2. Children: tanned, good, helpful
People: tanned, good, helpful, kind
Schools: good

The most frequent responses for Malta were:

1. Words: beaches/sea/hot weather, Maltese sausages, Maltesers
2. Children: tanned, good, helpful
People: tanned, good, helpful
Schools: educational, good

What do you like to know about these countries?: they want to know things in general about the various countries

Other comments: one commented that her mother is Maltese and another girl's mother's friend is of Maltese origin

The Responses from Greece

The most frequent responses for the Czech Republic were:

1. Words: cold/winter, football, poverty
2. Children: no real pattern emerging, 'disjointed' answers
People: 'disjointed' answers with no real pattern emerging
Schools: big

'They are like us.'

(Girl, 10 years, Germany)

The most frequent responses for Germany were:

1. Words: Hitler, sport, brutality
2. Children: blonde, fat

People: no real pattern in the responses given

Schools: big

The most frequent responses for Great Britain were:

1. Words: Big Ben
2. Children: black

People: businessmen, rich

Schools: big

The most frequent responses for Malta were:

1. Words: tourism, soccer
2. Children: poor, thirsty, different

People: no real pattern detected

Schools: small

What do you like to know about these countries?: in most cases the Greek pupils were interested about knowing things about Great Britain (in general, or specifically seeing the Big Ben), other general comments (not specific to a country) regarding culture, sights, schools

Other comments, Drawing: practically no responses

6.3 General Comments

In many responses opposite adjectives have been given as responses, such as, for example tall/short, big/small or ugly/nice in the same response. There was a very frequent use of very generic attributes like kind, clear, clever, helpful, angry, nervous, unhappy, intelligent, quiet. This most probably demonstrates that the children did not have a clear idea, or perhaps no clear idea, about the subject, but instead of leaving the response space blank, they wrote any answer which somehow seemed appropriate.

In certain cases, it was clear that the children responding to the questionnaire did not understand the question well or completely misunderstood the question or the prompt. Here are some concrete examples:

- Maltese pupil about the Czech Republic: ‘they have a big public and have lots of money because they send lots of checks and love checking their homework’.
- Maltese pupil about Germany: ‘Germany has many people





because there is written Germany’.

- Maltese pupils about Greece: ‘grey suits’, ‘grey socks’, ‘grey weather’. This may seem very strange in the first instance, but it can be understood if one considers that the word ‘Greece’ and the word for grey in Maltese (griz) are pronounced in the same way.
- Pupils from the Czech Republic about Malta: in more than one instance, they interpreted the name as referring to ‘mortar’ that is used as a building material, because the word ‘malta’ in Czech means mortar.
- Czech pupils about Great Britain: regarding schools ‘Normally they (the children in the UK) learn to write with capital letters first, then in the third class they learn to

write with small letters.’

It was also noticed that there can be misconceptions about many things, as the three examples reported below from the responses of the Greek children.

- Children in England are black
- Children in Germany are very fat
- Children in Malta are poor

There can be peculiar things that the children may be very familiar with and so feature with higher frequency in the responses given. These things can be more highlighted due to special events that may be taking place at the time or that would have happened recently such as football and other sporting events, important international song festivals, etc. Concrete examples were: football/sports, the Eurovision song contest, tourist destinations, the Queen of England.

It is also noted that there were many cases where there were quite a significant number of blanks. This blatantly shows that the pupils involved in the questionnaire did not have any idea in these cases. In many other cases, as was pointed out earlier, one also gets the sensation that children wrote a (very generic) word or two so as to not to leave a blank space.

In general, the overall perception that one gets is that the situation regarding knowledge of, attitudes about and understanding of ‘Europe’, or having at least some form of

‘European Dimension’ were, to say the least hazy, and did not present a very encouraging situation. This suggests and clearly enhances the need for a proper programme to secure a ‘European dimension’ in European children within their school programmes.



7 Progress and feedback of teachers and pupils after working with the materials

This chapter focuses on review of the project. At the start of the chapter, the project time-line and projected outcomes are summarized. After that, some important aspects of the project outcomes are presented. The outcomes of the project are interesting in both theoretical and practical ways. From the theoretical point of view it is concluded that peer learning can be used as an efficient approach for promoting a European dimension in education in primary schools. The last part of the chapter reports feedback from the teachers who were involved in the project.

7.1 The Evaluation of the E-PLIPS Project

The evaluation of the E-PLIPS project was conducted at a number of schools in Europe, partly in schools in countries that didn't participate in the project. E-PLIPS project materials have been tested and evaluated in primary schools in the following European countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Malta, Poland and the United Kingdom. Pupils of each participating class, after they had undertaken E-PLIPS project activities, were asked to complete a questionnaire. The aim of

the questionnaire was to capture the changes between pupils' perceptions and knowledge about foreign European countries before and after working with E-PLIPS project materials. In addition to this, pupils from participating classes, as well as teachers, were interviewed and asked for deeper feedback on the project.

7.2 Feedback from teachers

The feedback given by the teachers that have been involved has shown a prevailing positive evaluation of the project.

Teachers appreciated:

- Appropriateness of themes and topics – the themes enabled each pupil to be involved in E-PLIPS project related activities, according to her/his level of learning skills and knowledge.
- Fostering communicative competencies – participating teachers liked the idea of communication, which they found very innovative compared to their everyday teaching and learning experiences. International communication on a basis of exchanging information about certain topics fostered communication among pupils of each class as well – they had to agree on ideas, possible variants, managing activities etc.

'I am very eager to discover what local students will be taught and what foreign children know about Malta.'

(Claire Vassallo, teacher from Malta)



- Support of teaching and learning processes in the classroom – while working on the project modules, pupils had to find out different ways how to creatively approach each theme or topic, to point out the most important aspects and to discuss how to present it to foreign pupils and teachers.
- Developing ICT skills – in the beginning of the project, pupils required teachers' assistance while working with computer presentations, however in the later phases of E-PLIPS project, assistance of a teacher wasn't necessary at all, pupils created project presentations on their own.
- Working with resources – the ability to work with different resources was necessary for each of the E-PLIPS project module based activities. Pupils had to prepare information to be presented in advance, with the use of resources such as encyclopedias, textbooks, web based resources, work sheets given by the teacher, gathering information from parents or teachers etc.
- Fostering independent learning – teachers' role in the E-PLIPS module based teaching and learning is more as a

facilitator than as an instructor. Project materials provide many opportunities for independent learning.

- Cultivation of thinking and attitudes towards foreign countries and people – pupils were acquainted with basic knowledge about different European countries which offered an ideal opportunity for changing stereotypes about foreign countries and people. Thus the E-PLIPS project promoted tolerance, respect and ability to understand different cultures. According to teachers' feedback, the E-PLIPS project promoted fighting against stereotypes within the classes as well.
- Positive feedback from the pupils – according to the teacher feedback, pupils enjoyed the project and liked most of the E-PLIPS activities. Attractive working materials and website related to E-PLIPS project provided motivation for learning and raised interest in project related activities

Some weaknesses were mentioned by participating teachers as well:



- Language difficulties – the common E-PLIPS project communication language was English. Teachers from non English speaking countries mentioned low language levels

of their pupils, which complicated the teaching and learning processes. Working on some modules took in some of participating classes three or four days.

- Time demands – it was sometimes difficult for teachers to work in a strict time line and coordinate the steps with the partner schools within a longer time period. The rhythm of each school is different (e.g. holidays), teachers can be placed in other classes, pupils can leave the school etc.
- Classroom management – working on project modules was demanding on classroom management, organization of teaching and learning processes in the classroom as well as pupils discipline.

General positive impressions after working with the project materials are demonstrated by comments from participating teachers:

‘I was really surprised by pupils’ enthusiasm and interest in the E-PLIPS project. I was continuously ‘under pressure’ of the children and really ‘had’ to be involved in the project based activities. It was a really nice experience to cooperate with the other teachers and classes. I liked the E-PLIPS project module based teaching and learning activities and the project provided me a nice opportunity to develop my pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills. I recommend the participation

‘I’m looking forward to getting to know interesting people and places and getting experiences in cooperative learning with classes from other countries.’

(Claire Vassallo, teacher from Malta)

in the E-PLIPS project to everyone. It is my wish that also someone else will continue in our work and will develop and create new presentations and modules in the future.'

(Hana Přichystalová, a teacher from the Czech Republic)

'E-PLIPS project brought me and my class an outstanding and interesting opportunity to get insights in foreign countries and their cultures, everyday life, language, school system and other aspects. I appreciated the cooperation with the teachers from the other countries as well. The project provided more positive contribution to the pupils' knowledge and thinking than the other forms of international cooperation (e.g. school partnership) I have been involved in so far.'

(Friedrich Ortius, a teacher from Germany)

The E-PLIPS project has been disseminated at workshops held in different European countries, e.g. Belgium, Germany and Greece. The workshop aimed at in-service teachers as well as student-teachers. It was rated very positively by all participants, who found the workshops useful, relevant and well prepared. Their comments highlighted the usefulness of the project materials and appreciated the contribution of the workshops to their teaching attitudes and knowledge.

‘Because of the ,family‘ atmosphere of the workshop, we were essentially informed and we got a meaningful understanding of both the theme and the aims of the E-PLIPS project.’

‘This presentation gives insights for further teaching and learning ideas in classrooms and promotes creative thinking and alternative methodologies as well.’

‘The presentation met my needs and satisfied me as a teacher.’

(Participants‘ statements gathered after the E-PLIPS project workshop in Thessaloniki, Greece)

7.3 Feedback from pupils

The evaluation of pupils‘ questionnaires as well as interviews revealed interesting results, especially in the increase of pupils‘ knowledge and understanding of European topics in education as well as in pupils‘ positive attitudes towards other European countries and the people who live in them. Moreover the results of the questionnaires showed improvement in acquired knowledge as well as raising awareness



of tolerance, respect and more positive attitudes towards other European countries. Pupils became aware of common European values and ideas as well as differences between cultures. According to the questionnaires we can conclude that children had more positive attitudes and perceptions toward foreign countries than they had before participating in the project. In each classroom positive attitudes towards foreign countries, people and schools prevailed.

7.4 Conclusion of the project

European educational co-operation projects, such as the SOCRATES COMENIUS 2.1 projects, are aimed to improve the levels of staff training in schools and educational environments, or of other staff involved in education, by developing

teaching methodologies and pedagogical strategies, creating, testing and delivering training courses for initial teacher training as well as by producing good practice guides, materials and products. In this respect, the E-PLIPS project – Implementation of a European Dimension by Peer Learning in Primary School – proposed a clear objective: to provide an up-to-date contribution to European education, and specifically



at primary school level, which meets the training needs of a defined group of staff involved in education. The project led to the development of materials in order to equip both children and teachers with instruments to improve lifelong learning skills as well as enable them to become active and cooperative participants in European life.

By using innovative methods of intercultural teaching and learning, the working group endeavoured to establish efficient pedagogies for promoting the 'European dimension' for life. The thematic focus of the project thereby comprises broad aspects of 'European dimension' in education.

To prove the effectiveness of the developed materials all project-based outcomes and activities were longitudinally and simultaneously tested in the participating European countries. An additional post-evaluation of the final products supplemented the evaluation results which indicated that by using the proposed materials and following the guidelines of the handbook children gain knowledge and understanding about similarities and differences concerning themselves, their own and other European countries. They change their attitudes into clear, positive and constructive – but also critical – ones towards European countries, ideas and relationships with other peoples and their cultures. Last but not least, they improve practical lifelong learning skills such as communication and

social skills.’

Thus the E-PLIPS project and its outcomes provide a practical background for a successful implementation of the ‘European dimension’ by peer learning in primary school, although we are aware that the implementation of the ideas presented is a long-term process which exceeds the duration of the project. In terms of implementation, we can only speak about success after the suggested practice is implemented and accepted in the target environment.

Nevertheless, the results of the project can be perceived as a starting point for developing efficient educational policy in Europe. We believe that through this the implementation of a ‘European dimension’ by peer learning in primary school can and will be reached in the near future.



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Important websites

General

Speak out on European Citizenship

<http://citizen.org.uk/speakout/about.html>

The World Bank Group

<http://www.worldbank.org/education>

Czech Republic

Czech Institute for Information on Education

<http://www.uiv.cz>

Czech School Inspectorate

<http://www.csicr.cz/>

Eurybase. The Information Database on Education Systems

in Europe. The Educational System in the Czech
Republic 2005/2006.

[http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/Eurydice/pdf/
eurybase/2006_DNCZ_EN.pdf](http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/Eurydice/pdf/eurybase/2006_DNCZ_EN.pdf)

Eurydice - The information network. The Czech Republic.

[http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/
showPresentation?pubid=030EN](http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/showPresentation?pubid=030EN)

Framework Educational Programme for Primary and Lower

Secondary Schools in the Czech Republic

<http://www.vuppraha.cz/index>.



[php?op=sections&sid=367](http://www.vuppraha.cz/index.php?op=sections&sid=367)

<http://www.vuppraha.cz/index.php?op>

[=sections&sid=180&lang=en](http://www.vuppraha.cz/index.php?op=sections&sid=180&lang=en)

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of
the Czech Republic

<http://www.msmt.cz>

Research Institute for Education

<http://www.vuppraha.cz>

<http://www.vuppraha.cz/index.php?lang=en>

Germany

Bergische Universitaet Wuppertal:

Zusatzstudium Bilingualer

Sachfachunterricht

<http://www2.uni-wuppertal.de/fba/>

[bilingu/biliweb2.html](http://www2.uni-wuppertal.de/fba/bilingu/biliweb2.html)

Berliner Bildungsserver : Europe in der

Schule – Unterricht

<http://bebis.cidsnet.de/faecher/feld/europa/unterricht.>

[htm](http://bebis.cidsnet.de/faecher/feld/europa/unterricht.htm)

Berthold-Auerbach Grundschule Horb

<http://www.gs-horb-nor.fds.bw.schule.de/>

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung: IT-

Ausstattung der allgemein bildenden und

berufsbildenden Schulen in Deutschland.

Bestandsaufnahme 2004 und Entwicklung 2001 bis
2004

http://www.bmbf.de/pub/it-ausstattung_der_schulen_2004.pdf

Curriculum Baden-Württemberg (in German): Ministerium
für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden- Württemberg:
Bildungsplan Grundschule

http://www.bildung-staerkt-menschen.de/service/downloads/Bildungsplaene/Grundschule/Grundschule_Bildungsplan_Gesamt.pdf

Deutscher Bildungsserver

<http://www.bildungsserver.de/zeigen.html?seite=2027>

ED Compass: Neueste Fallstudie

<http://www.edcompass.de/ec/de-DE/Case+Studies/Latest+Case+Study/default.htm>

Federmappe.de

http://www.federmappe.de/php/frm_az_sg_lernmat.php3?id=70&prozedur=&step=2

Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft:

Computereinsätze in der Grundschule Nov. 2004

<http://www.gew.de/Binaries/Binary9631/Synopse-Computereinsatz-11-04.pdf>

Lehrer-online: Europa in der Grundschule. Grenzen

überwinden mit E-Mail Partnerschaften

<http://www.lehrer-online.de/dyn/9.asp?url=543788.htm>

Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes

Nordrhein-Westfalen: Bilinguales Lernen

<http://www.bildungsportal.nrw.de/BP/Unterricht/>

Faecher/Fremdsprachen/BilingualesLernen/index.html

Open PR: Hamburger Schulen installieren SMART Board

Interactive Whiteboards

<http://openpr.de/news/57070/Hamburger-Schulen-installieren-SMART-Board-Interactive-Whiteboards.html>

Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg. Europalehramt an

Grund- und Hauptschulen. Studienplan GHS

<http://www.ph-freiburg.de/europa/>

Downloadunterlagen/Po2003/Neue%20Euladocs/
Studienplan%20EULA%20GH_07_04_05.pdf

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[ph-freiburg.de/europa/Downloadunterlagen/Po2003/
Neue%20Euladocs/Studienplan%20EULA%20
R_09_01_05.pdf](http://www.ph-freiburg.de/europa/Downloadunterlagen/Po2003/Neue%20Euladocs/Studienplan%20EULA%20R_09_01_05.pdf)

Ruhr-Universität Bochum: Zusatzstudiengang 'Bilinguales

Lehren und Lernen an Schulen und Institutionen mit
bilingualen Bildungsangeboten'

http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/studienbuero/kinfo/z_bilin.htm

Sekretariat der ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der BRD: Bericht-Fremdsprachen in der Grundschule – Sachstand und Konzeptionen
http://www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/fremdsprachen_in_der_grundschule.pdf

Sekretariat der ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der BRD: Empfehlung - Interkulturelle Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule
http://www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/671-1_Interkulturelle%20Bildung.pdf

Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg: Computer an öffentlichen Schulen im Schuljahr 2005/06
<http://www.statistik..de/BildungKultur/Landesdaten/computerausstattung.asp> Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden- Württemberg: Bildungsplan Grundschule





http://www.bildung-staerkt-menschen.de/service/downloads/Bildungsplaene/Grundschule/Grundschule_Bildungsplan_Gesamt.pdf

Universität Hamburg: Arbeitskreis Bilingualer Unterricht

<http://www.erzwiss.uni-hamburg.de/bilunt/>

Verlag an der Ruhr: Europawerkstatt userfile

<http://www.verlagruhr.de/userfiles/pdf/2473.pdf>

Greece

Hellenic Pedagogical Institute. A Cross Thematic Curriculum Framework

http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/depps/index_eng.php

Hellenic Ministry of Culture

<http://www.culture.gr>

Library and Information Center of the Technical University of Crete

<http://www.library.tuc.gr/portal/dt>

Library Information Services of Panteion University of Athens

<http://www.panteion.gr/gr/library>

Library Information Services of Patras University (in Greek,
English version under construction)

<http://www.lis.upatras.gr/>

Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, Greece

<http://www.ypepth.gr/>

Malta

http://www.curriculum.gov.mt/docs/nmc_english.pdf.

<http://www.curriculum.gov.mt/pages/main.asp?sec=3>

<http://www.curriculum.gov.mt/pages/main.asp?psec=4&sec=85>

<http://www.curriculum.gov.mt/pages/main.asp?psec=35&sec=41>

<http://www.educ.um.edu.mt>

<http://www.education.gov.mt/>

http://www.education.gov.mt/edu/eu_prog.htm

<http://www.fes.org.mt/>

<http://www.mqc.gov.mt/>

<http://www.um.edu.mt/>

http://home.um.edu.mt/edrc/useful_links_resources.html

United Kingdom

Becta

www.becta.org.uk/

British Council

www.britishcouncil.org/

Department for Children, Schools and Families

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/>

Department for International Development

www.dfid.gov.uk/

DfES Language for all: a strategy for England

www.dfes.gov.uk/languagesstrategy/

Edward de Bono thinking hats

www.sixhats.co.uk

Local 4 Global – London and the South East England

Regions

www.local4global.org.uk/

Ofsted report on successful English primary schools

[http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/Primary/
curriculum.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/Primary/curriculum.html)

The Geographical Association

<http://www.geography.org.uk/>

The National Curriculum for England

www.curriculumonline.gov.uk/

Contributors

Daniela Schmeinck

University of Education Karlsruhe

Institute of Sciences

Daniela.Schmeinck@ph-karlsruhe.de

Martin Musumeci

University of Malta

Faculty of Education

martin.musumeci@um.edu.mt

Nikos Lambrinos

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Department of Primary Education

labrinos@eled.auth.gr

Petr Knecht

Masaryk University Brno

Faculty of Education

knecht@ped.muni.cz



Suzanne Gatt

University of Malta

Faculty of Education

suzanne.gatt@um.edu.mt

Walter Kosack

University of Education Karlsruhe

Institute of Sciences

Walter.Kosack@ph-karlsruhe.de



