EUROPEAN IDENTITY
PART OF WORLD HERITAGE
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EUROPEAN IDENTITY
PART OF WORLD HERITAGE
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Introduction

Under the project “UNESCO Heritage,” Erasmus +, students and teachers from seven countries, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Turkey, worked together for two years, exchanging experiences, sharing knowledge, knowing different realities and especially promoting a collaborative work in the teaching and learning field.

This ebook is the result of our partnership work, under the symposium “European Identity-part of world heritage”, held in Dr. Mário Sacramento School, Aveiro, Portugal on 17th and 18th May 2016. Besides the communications presented at the Symposium, other students and teachers have contributed with their articles to the construction of this project.

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Chapter – Erasmus+: informal learning

Developing competences through a European project. Learning to learn.

by Anna-Maria Tigkiri (Junior High School Student)

My generation is experiencing change. It is not the promise of technological advances and socioeconomic rebalancing anymore that shape our expectation of the future. This future feels much nearer to us than it did for our parents. We are already using technology that we take for granted will constantly develop. We know that the model of laptop, iPad, smartphone we are using will be obsolete next year. We know that it does not matter what academic title you acquire because sooner or later you will need to prove yourself to an employer. We even know that we will never do the same job all our lives and that we need to be ready for three or more trades. (Ahrweiler.n.d) But we are also taught that we can and need to invest in expanding our interests and exercise a critical mind to pursue and persist in learning throughout our lives. My involvement in a European project played a key role in my growing appreciation of the importance of “learning to learn”.

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006/962/EC) defines “Learning to learn” as “the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one’s own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups... learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training”. I first came upon this definition while attending an introductory meeting with my school teachers informing us about the involvement of our school in the “Unesco Heritage” Erasmus+ project and the potential benefits from it. I didn’t take long to be convinced. Like most students, I was growing tired of the “traditional” way of learning that involved so much memorization and assessment of ready-made knowledge. I know I had always felt inclined to find ways to associate what I study in school books to real life in order to make sense of them and so I jumped at the opportunity to apply my preferred learning strategy in a European context. The potential benefits would be multifold as I would learn in collaborative, multicultural, real-life context. Plus, I would be given the opportunity to visit a foreign country and socialize with foreign students. “Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual’s competence”. (2006/962/EC)

Working autonomously and within a team, assuming roles and responsibilities, organizing the task at hand, analyzing information, and preparing presentations of our work was a major part of our initial involvement in the project. It was challenging and it took some effort to persist in it. Especially because it was an extra-curriculum activity and as promising as it might have been, it still competed with exam dates and course material. It was however very useful in that it exercised skills and competences that are not tested or graded in our school achievement scores, like the effort we put in a task, our contribution to a team work., or the ability to monitor our progress and problem solve.

When the time came to visit a foreign country and take part in learning activities, my elation was high. I was so expectant and determined to absorb as much as possible, I
had little time to worry about unfamiliar places and strangers speaking a foreign language. We leant diligence there. In order to understand what was shown or explained to us, we needed to pay close attention. We had to discipline ourselves and listen carefully, ask the right questions and persevere on the task given. Working collaboratively in a heterogeneous group, problem solving, processing information and then sharing it to a multinational audience trying to make yourself understood, was quite an experience. I learned many things from the presentations and workshops I attended during the mobility and the reason I say so is that I still remember them even though this knowledge isn’t in any course book for me to revise. I think that this knowledge has stayed with me because it occurred naturally while paying attention to presentations made by other students, while listening to guides or instructors, or while I was touching, handcrafting or tasting the information. I remember thinking to myself: “All I did was pay attention for about an hour and now I have all this knowledge. Can someone learn this way? Well I just did!”

Our socializing and recreation activities were also learning opportunities. From the very first meeting with the hosting family when there is a lot of question asking and cultural exchange and “Oh! we do that too”, “I didn’t know that”, “No, we don’t have that”, “We call this…..” to spending time between activities and socializing students of different ages and cultures. I know I will never forget Teresa, a girl at my age who came to sit next to me and started a polite conversation, making subtle questions about me and my country. She introduced me to their traditional cuisine and I shared information about ours. We both learned that day, sitting at a dinner table.

Coming back home from the learning activity in a European country, I carried a heavy luggage. Not just with the souvenirs from the visit, but also with the knowledge I acquired about myself, my strengths and my weaknesses. My sense of self achievement for doing a fair job at representing my school and my country and my concern for my self-consciousness and reserve which prevent me from taking risks. My ongoing participation in the Erasmus + project has made me realize that learning means being aware of your needs, reflecting on your weaknesses, building on your strengths and interests and most importantly identifying learning opportunities and making the most of them. Inside and outside school.

Technology is advancing and it is in our disposal. The fundamental basic skills we acquire at school are the ones we will be building upon in our future pursuit of learning. I am convinced that education does not end at graduation. It is a lifelong process and it is the way I want to learn.

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Informal (L)earning through a European Project. My experience.
by Lambropoulou Irida, (Junior High School Student)

As the world changes, educational reform is a constant requisite for policy makers. Formal education is but a stepping stone to the path of lifelong learning and the term “informal learning” turns up in many researches and reports on education. It is an active way of learning, in that the learner looks for alternative, tailored-made ways to knowledge acquisition. It takes place through various activities of self-education and includes both the use of New Technologies and field visits. It is innovative as it can meet its target outside the confines of the classroom and often without the use of the traditional schoolbook. This is a method highly appealing to the students, as it allows for cooperation, dialogue, self-motivation and initiative. The Erasmus + project has successfully implemented such learning activities.

The term “informal learning” refers to learning that results from social, cultural or professional activities outside the structured educational framework. These activities are mostly a means of making the most of your free time and even though learning may not even be intentional, it is certainly a lifelong process and a learned behavior. Informal learning results from all types of self-education resources, such as printed materials, the Internet, computer tools, a variety of educational infrastructure and the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by a person during their professional career. On the other hand “non-formal learning” is the learning occurring in organized educational settings, outside the formal education system and can lead to the acquisition of certificates recognized at national level.

The education system is in need of new training methods to meet the needs of modern society. The outdated traditional training method, which provides for the acquisition of knowledge through books and memorization continues to be in force. At the same time, our education system now recognizes that there are many other ways to knowledge acquisition, more experiential ones, aimed at acquiring more skills than the typical ones. The new possibilities offered by modern technology in education are also utilized. It is now recognized that knowledge directly acquired by the student through experiential activities, have more permanent results for the student than the theoretical knowledge in the school books. Also, the educational system today aims to develop not only the learning skills but also the social skills of the student. The cultivation of solidarity, respect, acceptance of diversity and cooperation is very important for the social integration of the student, which is why school today tends to them. Finally, technology provides us with new tools, enriches the educational process and allows, among other things, for cooperation outside the school environment. All this helps the student to understand knowledge as something pleasant and creative.

The Erasmus + project responds directly to the new conditions of education, providing rich experiences and experiential knowledge in a pleasant manner, enhancing learning and the social skills of the students participating in it, while utilizing the latest technology to bring together students from different European countries. It disseminates knowledge through visits to other European countries, activities that also carry the messages of unity and respect. This project, by facilitating travelling across countries, provides an opportunity for young people to experience a different lifestyle and appreciate it. It attempts to make children interested and seek information on their own, but also offers it in an experiential way. It is a way to get to know young people and exchange.
ideas, knowledge, traditions. Also, visiting a foreign country is a way for the individual to discover or to practice personal skills, share them and enhance them.

So, apart from the formal education received, in the form of historical, cultural and practical information, the participants acquire personal experiences that develop their appreciation for their culture, become interested in their cultural heritage, and acknowledge their place in the collective European culture. On a personal level, the students-participants learn to assume responsibilities, to manage their learning process, to develop their social skills and to respect and appreciate diversity. The Erasmus + project brings young people from different countries together and consolidates the idea of Europe as a large country with different and unique people who respect and support each other.

I also believe that these projects quite effectively dissolve prejudices about different countries. Sometimes, what you think you know about a different culture is not true at all, or at least not altogether true. When you travel abroad and see, hear, taste and feel a foreign culture, you make your own observations and come to your own conclusions. It is more than simply acknowledging diversity. It is about respecting and appreciating it. This learning is supplemented by assuming the role of a host in your own country. In my experience, being a host of a foreign student was equally educative. I viewed my culture from the eyes of my guest and this shed a different light to things I took for granted like the richness of my heritage or even the bright sunlight of my country.

My involvement in the Erasmus + project, the learning that resulted and most importantly the way knowledge was acquired, are invaluable experiences that are not easy to repeat. At least not with the same impact to my present, young self. Apart from the information and knowledge I acquired, I was motivated to assume roles and responsibilities, work with and for a group, organize and present my work and use a foreign language in real life conditions. I became more curious about things and learned to look for knowledge wherever it can be found.

Although fun and good time were always there, I believe that the project was highly educative to all students participating in the project. We gained benefits and experience not every student is given the opportunity to. The informal style of the education provided made the experience unique for all of us individually. It is certainly something that in my opinion, could not have been accomplished during classroom time although I do acknowledge the fact that it was originated at school and I am glad it will be part of my school memories.

Bibliography.
Intercultural education in an Erasmus+ learning activity. My experience.
by Kallisti Bertacha

Abstract

We live in a constantly changing world. People are moving in search for better living conditions, studies, career opportunities or even fleeing from war zones in order to survive. On the one hand, all western societies are characterized by cultural pluralism (population shifting, presence of minorities), and on the other hand we have the simultaneous prevalence of supranational economic systems such as European integration which inevitably leads to international communication practices. These conditions create a context of interdependence among nations that leads to cultural exchange and correlation. It also highlights the need to develop beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that shy away from rigid ethnocentricity and promote the inclusion of others and acceptance of their contribution to the global edifice of civilization as a requisite for cultural development. Such is the framework of the European programme Erasmus + in which the 6th Gymnasium of Heraklion is participating along with schools from the Czech Republic, Romania, Turkey, Italy, Croatia and Portugal.

Part 1: The necessity of intercultural approach and its characteristics.

Coexistence highlights “otherness” (Gotovos, 2002), which of course is a feature of relatively homogeneous societies as well: everyone has a different personality, experiences, level of cognition and motivation, skills, learning pace, so ultimately everybody is “different”.

The monocultural orientation of education - closely tied to the idea of nation states (18th-19th century) is a historical anachronism (dysfunctional factor) in the diversified multicultural framework that is being shaped. Education needs to keep up to date with assimilate trends and social changes, adapt to new circumstances and align itself with social life. Otherwise it traps students into outdated educational systems leaving them unprepared against the demands and circumstances dictated by the multicultural global society and economy. According to Mrs Ioannidou-Koutselini (2013), former member of the expert group of the European Committee for the achievement of the Lisbon objectives (Subject: Training of Teachers and Trainers), the main priority in education programs is their reconstruction focusing on common concerns and the respect for national and ethnic particularities.

Regarding the ideological orientation of education and schooling systems, the goal is to shape students / citizens well equipped with the cultural capital that will help them in effective communication with others through the cultivation of a “communicative national consciousness” (Ioannidou-Koutselini, 2013). Respect for diversity creates new conditions of coexistence and communication between people and frames new conditions of school operation in a non-exclusive environment. By learning to effectively communicate with peers, students can extend this skill in communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds that carry different cultural capital. The school microcosm fosters understanding, cooperation, interaction in the macro level of society (Georgogianni, 1999). Through the education provided at school it is possible to achieve the reformation of society regarding social exclusion, xenophobia, racism. Through schooling, we can pursue and achieve the reformation of society towards the desired directions.
Effective communication is not without conditions: acceptance of diversity, tolerance, empathy, fair comparison, and also the adoption of different cultural elements are deemed necessary.

According to Essinger (in Kesidou, 2004) the principles of intercultural education are:
1. Education for empathy: learn to understand others by putting ourselves in their place,
2. Education for solidarity: collective consciousness, mutual support.
3. Education for intercultural respect: understanding the influences that we have received from other cultures, invitation to participate in our own culture.
4. Education against nationalist thinking: openness towards other peoples, communication, eliminating national stereotypes and prejudices.

Main characteristics of intercultural education is the inclusion of children who are carriers of a different cultural and linguistic capital in the same class, the same group, the same cultural project.

Intercultural expanding of the teaching programs helps reduce xenophobic phenomena. The school curriculum needs to meticulously rid itself of xenophobic stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices, highlight the common elements and set aside differences. (Kapsalis, Bonidis, Sipitanou, 2000). Organizing joint partnership projects involving students from different cultural environments is a step to the right direction. The cultural capital of all students can be exploited through cognitive, emotional, interpersonal interaction. A necessary condition to the success of such cultural exchanges is for the educator to advocate the attitude of acceptance of diversity, multiculturalism (European Union, 2007) openness to new circumstances, which of course requires relevant training and lifelong education (Day 2003). Purely ethnocentric programs will only trap the students into nationalistic behaviors and become a hindrance to their development. As regards teaching approaches, experiential learning, student self-motivation and initiative, group cooperation, the use of new technology, learning in informal learning environments, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach, participation in intercultural activities (Unesco, 2002) are essential practices in accordance with the principles of intercultural education.

My experience

In my country, Greece, there are few opportunities for intercultural education since the majority of school population speaks Greek –their mother tongue- and are Christian Orthodox. The established educational practice is for all schools to follow the same curriculum. Students are taught the same things in the classroom. Opportunities for experiential approaches, lessons in the field, research within learning communities are scarce. My participation to the educational activities of the Erasmus+ project my school was involved in was a welcome change of that scenery.

My first contact with an intercultural educational framework and indeed in an informal setting was my participation in the Learning/Teaching/Training Activities held in Istanbul, Turkey on April 2015. The first taste of intercultural contact and communication was acquired upon my arrival to the house of my hosting family. From the first moment it was clear that my hosts were determined to make me feel comfortable and make my stay there memorable.

On the first day all groups met at the host school, a large school of about 1,400
students. In the assembly hall seven different languages were heard chirping which slowly turned into the English language (the official working language of the project) as we started socializing with the students from the Czech Republic, Romania, Croatia, Portugal, and Turkey. Using a common language to introduce ourselves and communicate helped us feel part of the big transnational community of Erasmus +.

During the presentations of the selected cultural monuments of my country, I felt the load of responsibility of doing right by the hard work we had put on its preparation, weighting on my shoulders. I was also quite aware of the fact that we were in some manner representing our school (and our country) in a learning environment set against a multicultural background. As time passed, I started to put together the elements that make up the culture of the hosting country. I was introduced to the art of painting on water, called paper marbling (Ebru). This art form is part of Turkey’s cultural heritage and has recently been added to the United Nation’s world cultural heritage list. With the guidance of an expert, we were able to create imaginative colour patterns by sprinkling and brushing color pigments on a pan of oily water. The floating patterns (much like the patterns on smooth marble) we created were carefully transferred on a white sheet of paper and the ending result gave us a sense of achievement and also the wonderful sensation that we had just partaken in a foreign culture. Art can flawlessly depict the singularities of a culture and constitutes an excellent channel for expressing and experiencing cultural awareness.

The next day began with a cruise on the Bosphorus. We enjoyed the amazing view of the Historic Peninsula, the impressive waterfront residents dating back to the 18th or 19th, we admired landmarks like the imposing Roumeli Hisar Castle, the magnificent Dolmabahce Palace each with its own unique beauty loaded with historical significance. Later, we visited the Spice Bazaar and the Grand bazaar, one of the largest covered markets in the world. If you can tell a lot about people from their cuisine and the way they prepare their food, one could tell that the Turkish people have many “spicy” elements in their temperament and they are certainly extroverted people who do things from the heart. The draped markets with a swarm of little shops with hundreds of stalls packed with all sorts of goods are also part of their culture. The perfumes, jewelry, scarves, linens, soaps, candlesticks, antiques, glassware, Persian works of art, elaborate ornaments, are a feast for the eye and an intoxication to the senses. The Istanbul market reminded me of our smaller scale ones with many impressive products located next to stalls with local cheese and herbs.

To end the wonderful day we continued our walk to the Mosque of Suleiman, a magnificent monument that combines Islamic and Byzantine architecture. It was a unique experience for me as I had never visited a temple of another religion before. I observed people’s behavior: how they washed themselves before entering the mosque, how they prayed kneeling in respectful silence. Inside this grand structure with its subtle decoration and imposing atmosphere, I could feel myself experiencing learning along with students of my age from different cultures, sharing a valuable learning opportunity, absorbing knowledge. The impact was much more effective and lasting than any vague information about architecture and history the textbook might have given me. Experiential learning can bridge ethnic differences, religious differences, differences in socio-economic backgrounds and level of cognition attesting to the “learning by doing” theory of Dewey (1902).

Leaning by playing and interacting is however quite effective as well. A student is never too old to play team games that develop their social and cognitive skills and build
up their self-confidence. Especially when engaging in new experiences in a multicultural environment. Such was the experience we gained from the “Escape” game we found ourselves playing on the third day. It was a highly interactive game where you had to use your skills in problem solving and collaboration and search for clues build around the cultural heritage of Turkey in order to find your way out. It was very entertaining and quite educative. We laughed a lot, felt real anguish but we did manage to achieve the second best time.

The much anticipated visit to Hagia Sophia, a 6th century masterpiece of Byzantine architecture and one of the most significant historic areas of Istanbul, was one of the culminating moment of my intercultural education during the learning activities. The schoolbooks and the internet sources do not really prepare you for the sights, the smells, the wonders that thrust your senses the moment you enter this place of worship. The awe-inspiring columns, the magnificent dome, the marbles and stones, the preserved golden, Christian mosaics, the calligraphic Islamic art, the reflections of the light, the immensity of the place. The monument I had heard so much about lay in front me and I had the opportunity to examine it, identify the elements of the Cristian and the Islamic cultures, verify or discrediting information about it, to photograph it and to make my own observations, to imagine how it must have been. The Hippodrome od Constantine and the Basilica Cistern (remains and reminders of the Byzantine past of Istanbul), the notorious 16th-century Sultan Ahmed Mosque (Blue Mosque), the breathtaking 15th-century Topkapi Palace with its beautiful gardens and the magnificent view of the Golden Horn and the Sea of Marmara were next in line in our tour of the Historic Areas of Istanbul (World Heritage Site). This is a place much suitable for intercultural education, not only because of the “unique integration of architectural masterpieces that reflect the meeting of Europe and Asia” (Unesco, World Heritage Centre) but because of the presence of people from around the world partaking in the study of cultural heritage that is shared with the world. The opportunity we were given to explore further and search beyond the history schoolbook and come to a better understanding of these monuments, their characteristics and their value was cherished—I could tell—by all members of our multinational group.

The presentation of the traditional dances and the traditional food festival completed our five-senses learning experience as we admired the music, tasted many different dishes and we enjoyed our last flavor of Turkish culture.

The time to bid farewell was hard for all of us. There was plenty of tearful hugging and promises to keep in touch and see each other again. Having grown attached to my hosting family, saying goodbye was an emotional time. No difference in origin, religion, cultural background, educational level could prevent the natural instinct for developing relations with and emotions for young people who consciously participate in cultural exchange and intercultural communication. Eventually our individual differences were a bonding element, not a hindrance to our learning from each other.

The best part of this journey and the one I feel is going to have the most lasting effect is that I had the experience of an interactive, pleasant, multicultural learning environment and managed to build historical multicultural knowledge in team learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) whose members interact, cooperate and build their own personal knowledge (Salvaras & Salvara, 2011).

Conclusions

Intercultural education as promoted in European projects is an experiencial
approach where participants learn through their personal involvement and interaction with the materials (Bruner, 1996). This teaching / learning behavior is sometimes defined under specific objectives and targets and sometimes it is a free activity that carries the elements of informal learning (Hirst, 1969). Moreover, some activities have recreational character and assist the development of relations between the members of the team, the development of empathy, of self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 2003), the development of learning incentives and self-guidance (Ames, 1992; Pintrich, 2003), the self-regulated learning (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1988) and in the latter case, learning occurs in an effortless way through communication and participation (Vosniadou, 1991).

All these aims of the European projects are not in alignment with the content-based and goal-oriented (Tyler, 1949) curriculums which usually treat students as copies of the average -in terms of school achievement- student, attempting no differentiation in teaching practices in order to embrace each student (Tomlinson, 2001).

The need for and the effectiveness of an inclusive European project that encourages communication and understanding between students from various European countries, is more pressing than ever. The re-evaluation of the curriculum (Salvaras, 2013) of the European countries is necessary in order for its students to be able to meet the needs of their future national and international context.

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UNFORGETTABLE BISTRITA
By Leoncini Marianna
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Abstract:
one of the Italian students who took part in the mobility to Romania tells about the experience describing the most significant moments: the group activities, the performance on the stage, the visit to a scary place in a cold dark night.

Keywords: group activities, colours, dances, friendship

In February 2015 I had the chance to take part in the UNESCO Heritage Project and I went with my schoolmates to Romania, in the town called Bistrita.
There we visited the most important monuments, got acquainted with the local way of life and traditions, visited the school that hosted us and met a lot of new friends.
We did some interesting group activities like painting earthenware tiles with the images of the Romanian monuments we had seen. One of the teachers explained that this is an ancient tradition for them. They used to paint wooden eggs at Easter, and in general glasses, pottery, vases, little boxes, jugs used to drink ‘palinka’ (a local traditional alcoholic drink), but especially tiles were used to decorate stoves and houses, either inner or outer walls. The predominant colours used for the decoration are: red, brown, blue, white; they are lively and joyful and we had great fun in painting our own ‘work of art’.
In the end, we put the painted tiles all together on a big table and admired the work of each group. We could take these tiles home as a souvenir of our journey.
We were asked to take part in other interesting group activities: we did a puzzle, then made some modelling clay objects representing the local flora and fauna. All the works were finally showed to the other students and teachers.

Everything was new and interesting but one of the most amazing moment of our stay in the Romanian school was the sharing of cultural topics. Each group had to sing a song typical of the country they represented and to dance on the stage wearing folkloristic costumes. It was amazing when the teams entered the room one by one in their colourful dresses: they were all beautiful and I took lots of photographs.

My Italian classmates and I had the pleasure to show our foreign friends some Italian songs and dances wearing folkloristic costumes.

We had chosen at home our traditional dance, the costumes, had rehearsed a lot and we were excited and worried: we had never performed on a stage before in front of an audience! And even if we knew that they were all friends we were deadly scared.

The moments in the backstage were very intense: we had to get our hair done, to wear the make-up, to dress up with the costumes because everything had to be perfect. It was very involving the fact that we were altogether with the students from other countries and everyone wanted to make a good impression.

When everyone was ready one by one each group appeared on the stage and started to dance. First of all a student from the performing group walked in holding the national flag. He or she walked forward and put it on a special support. This simple ceremony was very touching because at the end of the performance all the flags of the seven partner countries were standing on the support as a symbol of our spiritual union and friendship. As for the students, we were all together on the stage holding hands.

I liked very much the traditional dances I saw. I felt that they express the inner world of the country they represented through the movement, the rhythm, the colours of the costumes, the sound of the music. Most senses were involved, the dance spoke to our whole mind. Dance and music are part of the so called ‘intangible’ heritage, and they are so strong!

One evening we visited a very particular place. The building in itself was relatively recent (it was built in the 1970s), but the story that it hid was old and scary. It was a castle.... well, it was the castle....exactly it was Dracula Castle! When we arrived there it was already dark, the building had few red light, the silent was perfect, it was a little windy and it was very cold. The structure was located in the mountains, in the Tihuta Pass in Bargaului Mountains, in Piatra Fontanele, at a 1116 m. altitude. All around we could see majestic mountains. When we entered the castle we discovered, to our great relief, that it was a hotel with restaurant, but on the walls, everywhere strange pictures and photos hang, with ominous figures, animals, landscapes and symbols of the Vampire Count.

We were aware of the fact that it was a reconstruction, but it was scary enough as for the dark atmosphere, the silence, the shades. We were told about the legend of Count Dracula, then the guide led us down stairs, through narrow low corridors until we reached a small room where we saw Count Dracula’s coffin!

I have lived unforgettable moments, and I would like to suggest to my classmates to take the chance to be involved in this project. I had the opportunity to meet new friends whom I got on well with and I got in touch with different cultures.

I would like to thank the teachers who accompanied us and gave us the great opportunity to enjoy such a beautiful experience. I feel grateful to all the people who

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planned and spread this Erasmus plus UNESCO Heritage project because it has opened for me new horizons.

I would like to address also a special thank to my host family who made me feel comfortable during my stay.

FIRST TIMES
by Sara TOSI

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Abstract:

Sara spent a week abroad taking part in the Erasmus plus UNESCO HERITAGE project. She visited some of the most relevant archeological sites in the history of European culture and followed the learning sessions side by side with the students of the other six partner countries. Her eyes met a number of new things that opened her mind and deepened her thirst for knowledge.

Keywords: heritage, curiosity, Erasmus, Zeus

When the teacher called me that early March morning, for the first time in a week of grey rainy days I was incredibly happy: I had been chosen to take part in the next mobility for Erasmus plus project...CRETE...

I have just come back now and I still enjoy Greek atmosphere whenever I tell my schoolmates about my experience. I am 15 years old and my story is a story of first times. It was the first time I went abroad, I got on a plane and landed on an island. I was at the same time worried and curious about everything: the roar of the plane engine when taking off, the coloured crowd at the airport, the number of different languages that struck my ear all around me.

It was the first time that, waking up in the morning, I saw the sea instead of the mountains, and I was surrounded by an environment where the dominant colour is blue instead of the various shades of green that I have around me back home. I could even swim, and lie on the beach in hot weather, in a season when, in my village, you wear anoraks and turn the heating on.

I had to get familiar with the city noises: the traffic with cars, buses, trams, music from pubs, people talking in the street, and the odours, some bad, some pleasant, some strange and unknown, some familiar, reminding me home as if the entire world were as small as a tennis ball.

It was the first amazing time that I thought English is really a language you can use to communicate with people from a lot of different nationalities and not only to mumble strange monosyllables in disco songs.
For the first time in my life I left my world behind me, I was alone in a family who had traditions, language, habits totally different from mine, so experiencing a mixture of fear and curiosity, nostalgia and anxiety every time I faced something new. I liked getting familiar day by day with people who accepted me as their child, feeding me every day as if they had the task to save me from starvation, taking care of me as if I were a rare fragile crystal object to handle with care. I was surprised to discover I loved each of them almost inexplicably. My eyes opened on ancient ruins talking about a past so far that you can hardly conceive, but you feel so near, when you see objects reminding habits, gestures, emotions everyone can share through the eras.

I could figure in some way, for the first time in my life, how the myth is tied to the land and the people I had known, mixing facts, fears, dreams, expectations, stories in the desperate effort to explain the world we live in. This is what I thought while I was in the big cavern getting down the stairs leading to Zeus birth spot, this is what I thought when the guide showed us the tree under which Zeus took Europe so giving birth to new people who settled in a new continent and began a new journey through the world history. And I felt the evidence of all these symbols so deeply that Zeus seemed to be one of my ancestors as when my mother shows me pictures of granddad and grandma and tells stories about them.

Crete is a place where every single stone has something to tell about the history of civilization. I visited two most important archaeological sites and listened to the stories directly told by the monuments, with the help of my eyes running around full of curiosity and the voice of the guide attracting my attention on the most meaningful details.

I saw the ruins of the Minoan Palace of Knossos. I admired there the “Throne Room”, majestic in its simplicity, and the “Queen’s Chamber” so essential but at the same time refined with the wonderful blue dolphins. The palace was built on a hill in a pretty strategic location and I looked with pleasure also at the breath-taking landscape that spreads all around because it reminded me about my mountains.

Then I went to the Minoan Palace of Phaistos, walked among the antique ruins and reached the spot where the famous Phaistos Disk was found. I felt a sort of respect for this place. I took lots of photos of it and, I’m sure, each of us imagined, even just for a sec, to be the one who can decipher the inscription on the Phaistos Disc.

Finally, greatly impressive was the visit to the Heraklion Archaeological Museum because there we were face to face with the original works taken from the sites and brought here to be preserved. I appreciated the “Dolphin fresco”, and I thought, smiling, that in all the times women have always had the need to turn a rough thing into a beautiful, sweet, gentle one. I admired also the “Ladies in blue”, “La Parisienne” and I laughed in front of the “Prince of the Lilies” observing the strange position of his shoulders, so realizing that, in spite of all its beauty, it really seems to be an example of bad reconstruction. I really had a lot of fun, when, in front of the authentic Phaistos Disk I repeated the hypothetical pronunciation of the mysterious words written on it, as the guide taught us.

Taking part in this mobility has given me a great opportunity to grow up. I am grateful to all the people that created, organised and worked in this project. The theme of the Erasmus plus UNESCO heritage project, the activities proposed, the excursion planned have made me feel, even for a week, that the awareness of our European citizenship is not only a dream, that people can share “all the world”, that our world can really be ‘as one’, quoting John Lennon’s song.

I got home with new interests, new friends, new ambitions, a deeper desire to know
the world around me and to accept challenges, because this experience gave me a new strength.

**Erasmus experience _ Italy**  
by Leonor Carvalho, Sofia Maia, João Mota  
Agrupamento de Escolas Dr. Mário Sacramento  
Aveiro- Portugal

We decided to join this project because we immediately thought that the possibility of getting acquainted with the plurality of European cultures was very interesting, especially since the acknowledgement and understanding of the particularities of other European countries is an important tool towards mutual acceptance and development. On the other hand, the desire to travel, discover new countries, new sights, new gastronomies and different people, realities and ways of thinking and communicating were also great motivators.

On the whole, we agree that the most striking moment of our adventure in Italy was visiting the city of Florence, where we first-handedly experienced the Italian reality that often is conveyed and that we had romanticized. We were given the opportunity to take in all the art that Florence holds and we realized that the city is, in itself, a work of art. We believe that Florence perfectly captures the Italian people and their simultaneously busy and calm cities.

Gazing at the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, one feels small. It is impossible not to feel the weight of History at the sight of centuries of work of all the artists and technicians who dedicated a lifetime to the Cathedral. We clearly understood the importance of signalizing, promoting and preserving the World’s Heritage, because symbols as immense and magnificent as Santa Maria del Fiore, a product of the joint visions and efforts of men, ought to be remembered.

However, besides getting the opportunity to visit some of the greatest Italian touristic attractions, such as the cities of Florence and Bologna, we could also live the reality of the smaller Italian areas. In that sense, this is what really distinguishes the Erasmus experience from all other travelling experiences: in Italy, we did not feel like tourists, as most often happens when we travel. Speaking to other project participants, who visited other countries, we realized that they also had not felt like foreigners, but instead temporary, and yet fully accepted, members of another family, another school, another culture, another nation. It is the possibility of literally living the everyday life of locals that gives us this feeling of belonging, understanding and even familiarization. We rapidly understood that we could have easily been born and raised there; that that life, the Italian life, was not the distant and utopic reality that so often films conveyed. It is a close reality and, in some respects, even similar to our own.

We realized that even though we had expected the inhabitants from certain countries to behave very differently from us, that was not the case at all. We recognized that all young people, regardless of their nationality, think similarly, face the same struggles and share comparable experiences, stories, dreams and visions of the world, despite leading very different lives.

All in all, our experience in Italy was a positive one. Even though we were taken
into an environment that was different and had to live with people about whom we did not know much, we were received with great hospitality. We had the opportunity to get to know several cultures, not only the Italian one. In that sense, we believe that our knowledge regarding other European countries grew, much like our feeling of European belonging. For all that, the prime objective of the project was definitely achieved.

Our Experience: Greece
by Gabriela Gonçalves, Luís Gonzaga, Maria Rocha, Ana Pinho
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The school is a place that provides learning as well as experiences. While students it helps us to acquire and develop knowledge and sensitizes us to the diversity and the value of other cultures and languages. While people it provides new friendships and gives us new unforgettable experiences. The project Erasmus + has performed since the beginning as a chance to expand horizons.

We got into this project with the intention to grow as responsible citizens, to understand and improve the English language and to know the importance and the value of travelling.

To have this possibility to travel, we had to accomplish several tasks that identify us as European cultural heritage. We also accomplish a logotype, a flash mob, quizzes, among others.

So, we got the opportunity to move about in an unmatched country for its extraordinary fame. Setting foot on the Greek soil for the first time, presented itself as the realization of a dream. Reaching the island of Crete and into the house of a family, was the opportunity to experience “in loco” how their habits are similar to those of any European. We have witnessed that, concerning school, there are slight differences that did not hinder to bond.

The locals that marked us most, by its specificity, were, undoubtedly, the cave of Zeus and Knossos because of their historical aspects and mythology of Ancient Greece. Despite all the obstacles overcome, we had a good adaptation to both the cuisine and the weather.

In short, this trip contributed to the awareness and training of each of us to feel as European citizens, building, this way, a better globalization.
My experience in Erasmus+: Turkey
by Francisco Monteiro, Lara Matias, Carolina Rocha, Afonso Maya Seco
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We entered on this project with the objective to expand our general culture, improve the English language, meet people with different cultures and become more autonomous and responsible as European citizens.

To be able to accomplish this trip, we had to do some work involving research on the UNESCO World Heritage Site in particular illustrations of some Portuguese monuments belonging to this. One of the first assignments we did was a logo, based on the countries involved in this project and its Cultural Heritage Tangible and Intangible Assets. Within these last two years we developed many projects that aimed to make grow our European spirit of union and identity. However only after our trip to Istanbul we were able to truly understand this European spirit.

On our trip to Turkey, we made some typical work of this zone, for example the Ebru art, this is done on a special liquid, prepared with natural ingredients, such as the biz (object used to make these paintings). Istanbul is one of the most well-known culture centers in the whole world, with the monuments like Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque, … This first one, particularly, was one of the highlights of the trip. This imposing monument reflects the religious trend in 2000 years after Christ. At first it was an orthodox church but after that was transformed into a Mosque.

This trip had a huge impact on our lives, because since then we were able to visit and know a little more about that particular country, such as its gastronomy, culture and religion. The bonds we have created with the families that gently received us made our experience unique and special, making us realize we weren’t just citizens of Portugal but citizens of the world.

My experience in Erasmus+” - Czech Republic
by Antonio Matias, Mariana Maio, Tiago Pedroso
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Aveiro - Portugal

In the year prior to the start of this project, an exchange program took place in our school and that made us intrigued. The direct contact we had with the Slovakian colleagues that came to our school led us to think in the advantages that a project like this has, in which the exchange of experiences and cultures is facilitated which can be an enriching experience. Therefore, when the opportunity to be a part of this project popped up, we became excited.

Now, we had the possibility to visit new countries and get to know their people, culture, traditions, gastronomy, etc.

This project, in general, and more specifically, our mobilization to the Czech Republic, had a lot of benefits: it helped us gain independence and autonomy since we were in a foreign country without parental control, and it also helped us develop skills of interpersonal socialization and skills of adaptation through the communication with our
peers in the project, which, in optimized circumstances, not only improved our use of the English language, but also, in a different set of circumstances, helped us develop our adaptability because we had to communicate with our host family and other members of the project who had some difficulties with the language. Moreover the mobilization a not only taught us about the history and traditions of the Czech Republic, through the visit to monuments that are part of the UNESCO World Heritage, like the Gardens and Castle at Kroměříž and the Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc, as well as the Michal mines in Ostrava, but also a little bit about the other participating countries through the workshop “Lost Treasures”, which was a good learning experience.

This project also helped us develop a European identity. Through the contact with people from different European countries, we came across with, despite some differences, similar people. The history of each participating country is interpenetrated in a European history, especially modern times, and so we understood that we are part of a European community, that has some differences but has a lot more of similarities than it looks like.

In short, this project helped us develop social adaptability, autonomy and linguistic skills. It also helped us to know other European countries a little bit better and to understand that besides being Portuguese citizen, we are also European citizens.

Our Experience in Erasmus+- Romania
by Tatiana Raposo, Filipa Verdade, Bernardo Amorim, José Balseiro
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The “Erasmus +” allows us to get out of our surrounding environment and become more independent because we have to go to a place that we are not familiar and which presents a culture different from the one we are used to. In addition, a project of this dimension allows us to be left to ourselves, making us totally independent and forcing us to be expeditious.

Additionally, this project gives us the opportunity to be in direct contact with the daily life of a student from the country that welcomes us.

Being part of a project of this dimension enriches our individual experiences. Travelling provides more happiness than all the material possessions that a man is able to acquire. This experience enables us to contact with new and different people, cultures and languages, life experiences, we would never meet in our routine, which makes us beings free and independent, more versatile and receptive to this changing reality.

On the other hand, we have the opportunity to know better not only other countries, but also ours, due to all the research and works that we have done. And these are some of the experiences that will mark each of us whether good or not. And since Agostinho da Silva said: “What matters in life is not to predict the dangers of travel, is to have them done.”

As a group, we think the most important is the challenge, this is, through this project we are able to do activities we would never have the chance to by ourselves and it just shows that we must unite in order to overcome all obstacles and succeed in every work we do.

With this project, we end up learning a lot about our country and also learn about
the country that the remaining members belong to. The main goal of this project is to promote the historical and cultural heritage of the countries involved and encourage the students’ values, attitudes and practices that contribute to the formation of citizens aware and participating in a democratic society.

By doing research, we realize the importance of preserving the heritage of UNESCO since it “tells the story” of this site and it is something which remains in History. This preservation enables the construction of a European citizenship culture and it must be carried out by all so as to remain in its original state.

CRETE THROUGH MY EYES

by Andreea Cifor
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Greece is one of my favorite places when it comes to Holidays. Even if I have been in other countries around the world such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Germany, France, Turkey, Belgium, California and even Hawaii, Greece will always have a special place in my heart and will always remain one of my favorite destinations. The clear blue sea, the bright sun, the happy and friendly people, all make you enter into the calm and peaceful atmosphere specific to Greece.

Crete, the largest and most populous Greek island, has a strategic geopolitical location between Europe, Africa and Western Asia. Nowadays, Crete draws its tourists with her clean and serene beaches, turquoise waters, quaint villages and specific customs. Extremely rich in history, the place where the Minoan civilization started, Crete is the ideal place for the ones who love history. It is the place where many legends were born, for example, the legend of Olympus and especially of Zeus, this island being the birthplace of Zeus and the Minotaur. Crete is the place which Icarus tried to escape from and where we can still find the ruins of the Knossos Palace.

I first arrived on this island in August 2015. I had been in Greece before, in 2011 and 2012, but I visited only the northern part of the country. After three years of visiting other countries, we decided to return to the beautiful and peaceful Greece. This time in Crete we stayed one week in Heraklion that has a provincial rather Mediterranean atmosphere and still keeps the vestiges of the Roman and the Venetian domination. Because of the Venetians, there is a port in Heraklion and a fortress that resisted many attacks of the Turks.

One of the first places I visited in Crete was the Archeology Museum of Heraklion, where the exhibits of the Minoan civilization are found. Built between 1937 and 1940, the Archeology Museum of Heraklion has representative artifacts from the Prehistoric Era of Crete, covering, chronologically speaking, almost 5500 years. Inside the museum there are pottery objects, jewellery, statues and sarcophagi, and also some frescoes, most of them from Knossos. All these are a testimony of the amazing imagination and advanced abilities of the Minoans. Here you can see the Phaistos Disc, of which existence I had not known until the guide told us a few things about it. It is a circular clay disc of 16cm,
imprinted with pictographic symbols that have never been deciphered. With the guide’s help I found out a lot of new things about the Minoan civilization of whose existence I had known extremely little about.

Another place I visited was the Archeological Site of Knossos. The guide told us that this fascinating city was discovered by Sir Arthur Evans, a British archeologist who wanted to find the legendary labyrinth of king Minos. Knossos was the capital of the Minoan Crete and the residence of the king. The palace and the labyrinth were built by king Minos in order to hide the Minotaur, the creature half man half bull. I was amazed to find out that the Minoans were very good at art and science, their civilization being the very first one in the world to use underground clay pipes for sanitation and water supply. The first palace built by king Minos was destroyed around 1700 BC, but it was rebuilt, unfortunately, only to be destroyed again in a fire in 1350 BC. I think the most spectacular structure of the palace is the main stairs, situated in the eastern part of the court, leading to the royal apartments. The rooms were divided by double doors, and the queen’s royal apartment was decorated with a fresco showing a colorful dolphin, which is one of the most admired frescos in the palace.

Another place I wanted to visit was Spinalonga Island. The Venetian city was the home of the leper colony until the middle of the past century. Spinalonga is the only Greek Island that resisted to Barbarossa’s attacks. A fascinating fact for me is that Spinalonga Island was very close to Crete, but because of the strong currents it was impossible to cross the distance to land in Crete if you did not have a ship or a very strong boat. I tried to think what those people had felt when they could see the shore so close, but they were not able to reach it. I found out, from the books I bought there, that in 1715, the Venetians lost the island to the Ottomans. Greece took possession of Spinalonga at the end of the 19th century, and in 1904, by the decision of the Cretan authorities, it was transformed into a leper colony. In those times, the number of the citizens suffering of this disease was very high. At the end of a tunnel made of stone there were houses, cafes and stores, the proof that, after all, the people suffering from leper that had lived on that island had accepted their fate. By the end of the week I returned home happy and thankful for all the new things I learned.

I went back to Crete after exactly one month, in September. Only then did I realize how little I knew about the island. It was time for me to see the island with different eyes, those of an inhabitant. I discovered that the town did not accommodate only tourists but also lovely inhabitants who live there, go to school there and work there. I realized that all the churches and cathedrals I had visited and admired before were places where the local people got married, and all the buildings that I had passed by without a care were their homes. I had never thought about it before. Crete is definitely not exclusively for tourists! So I decided that during my stay I would try to behave like an inhabitant not like a tourist. During that week I found out a lot of new things. Even if I had visited exactly the same places only one month before, I realized how many things I had not noticed about them and how superficial all the information was that I believed I knew.

One of the first places I visited was, of course, the Knossos Palace. There I heard again the things that I had already known: the year when the palace was built, that it was destroyed by an earthquake and then by a fire. But I also learned a lot of new things about the palace, things that I had not been told on my first trip in Crete. I found out that the Minoan civilization was a very peaceful one as there are no pictures showing wars or fights. Also, there are no signs of fortification around the palace. I also found out about
king Minos, the Minotaur and the well-known legend of the labyrinth. King Minos was a demigod, the son of Zeus and Europe. Because he did not want to share the throne with his brothers, Minos asked Poseidon, the god of the sea, to help him. Poseidon gave him a beautiful bull that Minos would have to sacrifice in order to claim the throne. But Minos did not keep his word and sacrificed another bull. Poseidon punished him and made his wife fall in love with the bull. This way a monster was born, the Minotaur, half man and half bull.

The Archeology Museum was another place which I visited during that week. Like the Palace from Knossos, the Archeology Museum had much more to offer than I had thought before. One of the new things I discovered was the well-known Phaistos Disc. This disc, as big as a plate, dated to between the 17th and 14th century BC, is the first ever printed document. The 240 symbols that are on both faces were stamped in soft clay. The disc was never deciphered but it is believed that it shows a religious text. I had the chance to have Gareth Owens as guide, an academician who has dedicated his life to study the Phaistos Disc, and whose contributions to the deciphering the message are very important. I do not think any other guide could have offered us more accurate and detailed information.

During our trip, we also visited Spinalonga Island. We had a very well informed guide so we had the chance to find out more accurate information. Once we arrived on the island, we passed through the tunnel which offered a very welcoming oasis of coolness, but which represented a century ago the gate to hell, where the lepers passed through without having a chance to return. This was the place where all the lepers from Greece were brought. I saw the ruins of the hospital, strategically placed on the higher grounds of the island, so that the wind could scatter the bad smell more easily. In time, the inhabitants started to accept their fate and to form a new community. They began to build houses with gardens, shops, workshops, schools and churches. They also started to have families and children. According to the documents, 72 children were born on the island of whom 44 died and 9 of them got leprosy. Very frequently, the sick persons tried to escape from the island with their fishing boats, but sadly for them every time they were caught. What impressed me the most was that sometimes perfectly healthy persons moved to the island by their free will. Members of certain families moved to the island to stay together with their loved ones. Healthy mothers and fathers went to the island to stay with their sick children, or children moved there because they did not want to leave their sick parents. Until then I had thought Spinalonga was the last leper colony in Europe, the only place where the lepers lived. However, that day I found out that a place with lepers still existed, at a hospital that is situated in Romania. I had to go to Crete to find out that the last functional leper hospital in Europe is in Romania, a place where people still live and are treated of leper.

That week spent in Crete had a very powerful impact on me. Besides enriching my knowledge about the Minoan civilization and making new friends, I had the chance to see this island from a perspective I have never thought about before: the perspective of an inhabitant. I was able to see Greece with other eyes. Thanks to the people I was surrounded by, for example the family where I stayed for a week, Crete became a second home for me. It was a place of knowledge, where we can always discover new things, a place where I would gladly return at any time. If for some people Greece represents just the ideal place for holidays, for others, including me, Greece means just home.
I remember seeing this film called “L’auberge espagnole” quite some time ago. In short, the movie tells the story of a French student who goes to study abroad in Barcelona through an Erasmus project. Why is it important for me to mention this in relation to my own Erasmus experience? Well because it is a perfect depiction of what Erasmus really is, I think: a bunch of European folks gathering together with an educational purpose, with no intention of neglecting the fun that there is to it!

To begin with, I was always aware of the existence of such a world wide student exchange programme. However when I was chosen to actually take part in one I had no expectations whatsoever so I was taken by surprise by everything that followed. I was told I was going to Greece with three other students from my school: Cristi, Tatiana and Andreea. My first thought was that everything was a big fat coincidence as at the time I was reading Nikos Kazantzakis’s “Zorba the Greek” and really connecting to it. Then, everything came naturally. All the paperwork and preparation were over and done with, so the next thing I remember is meeting my hosts at the airport. I am a talkative person so I really wanted to make some sort of small talk on our way home, therefore I thought it might be a good idea to brag a little about me reading a Greek novel. I regret nothing. Go figure! Heraklion, the city we arrived in, was the death place of Kazantzakis and my host parents were probably his biggest fans alive so I actually got the chance to visit his grave and a museum dedicated to his work. But I am missing the bigger picture and the bigger picture is even better.

The whole purpose of this mobility was with regards to the UNESCO heritage of the participating countries. Not only did we have activities which implied a better understanding of all the cultural differences but we also had many collaborations which proved that as young students we are capable of working in teams and doing extraordinary things together and I am not even exaggerating. People from Portugal, Italy, Croatia and many other countries travelled together only to meet in the place where civilization was born which is such an amazing concept. I always say that people best know each other when they work together, travel together and say, eat together. And we ticked all the above off the list. One particular memory that I am very fond of, is visiting the island of Spinalonga right after we had a traditional Greek lunch near the port. Just a short disclaimer: Greek yogurt form the supermarket is a phony and so is feta cheese. Anyhow, visiting that place was a bit more meaningful than all the other visits we had to various archeological sites and museums because it was full of energy and passion and human suffering. I find it hard to put it in the proper words, to describe my experience so that it comes across accurate, but I can honestly say that Greece has forever changed my life. I left a piece of my heart there and I think all students should look for such experiences. Oh, I almost forgot! I also left most of my clothes behind because my loving host family filled my luggage with olive oil, Cretan honey and feta cheese. I don’t complain. Also I am so looking forward to having my correspondent, Irida, here in Romania. She promised me a visit and I am pretty sure it will happen some time soon.
To sum it up, the mobility was a complete success, probably the best way to end my year. Erasmus has taught me so many valuable lessons and Greece is now a destination I will reconsider. Also, that film I was talking about in the beginning, I now get it and I know I would do all the crazy things those students did for each other for my new international friends. It just works that way. Greece, you do me good!

**THE ERASMUS+ “UNESCO HERITAGE” EXPERIENCE**

by Miruna Vlad  
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Bistrita, Romania

The purpose of the ERASMUS+ “UNESCO HERITAGE” project is to help develop a European curriculum which encourages intercultural learning. This report contains the feedback of the participants in the project who have already been involved in one of the mobilities.

Each participant answered a number of 10 questions based on their personal experience in order to help us evaluate the progress of the project, which is still ongoing. The answers have been helpful in identifying any existing issues and determining possible improvements:

First of all, we were curious to find out about the students’ expectations when they joined the project. It appears that when they agreed to enter this project, the students’ expectations were mainly focused on getting an inside view on foreign culture, history and tradition. They also expressed their interest in observing the student-teacher relationship and comparing Romania’s educational system with the one of the countries they were going to visit. Other expectations were socializing, having the opportunity to practise the use of English and making new friends abroad.

Naturally, we asked them whether the project met their expectations or not. When asked this question, the participants answered that their expectations were not fully met. Although they were delighted to visit many historic sites and get an insight on the daily life of the locals, they were disappointed by the fact that in many cases the hosts were in no knowledge of the English language, therefore communicating was particularly difficult and making friends became almost impossible. There were further complaints about the age gap, too significant in the opinion of the participants. In some cases, host students were not allowed to take part in the activities with their visitors because they were too young and the parents did not allow it, so that bonding with one another was extremely difficult.

Further on, we let the participants know that their opinion mattered to us by requesting their suggestions for improving the project. Their suggestions mainly concerned the knowledge of the English language and the age of the partakers in the project. They proposed introducing a test in order to determine whether a student has the required English language skills and improving the overall selection criteria so that the participants in the project may be chosen more accurately and inconveniences such as the ones stated earlier can be avoided.

We wanted to know if they had found it difficult to adjust to an environment they
were not familiar with. We found out that the participants did not find the adjustment to a new environment difficult at all. The host families made them feel welcome and helped them to accommodate. They quickly got used to the town and the people and were excited about trying out the variety of food they were not used to eating and visiting unknown places. Some of the participants actually said that they felt more “at home” during their visit than they usually do, because they found the lifestyle of their hosts similar to theirs.

Next, we asked them which workshops and activities they enjoyed most. Among the most appreciated workshops was one that involved using olive oil as core material for making scented oil. The participants were given olive oil, some plants and spices of their choice so that they could create their own scented oil. “You add the spices, wait for four days and then your oil should get the taste”. Other workshops that were rather popular with the participants were the ones which taught them something about each partaking country, such as the open discussion that took place in Ostrava, Czech Republic, where the students learnt about tourist attractions, food, tradition, vocabulary, national anthems and other various aspects of each country.

Furthermore, the participants told us more about the new information they were provided with during the project. They admitted that this experience provided them with new useful information about each partaking country and its society. They have gained the basic vocabulary in some foreign languages such as French and Italian and improved their English skills. They also expanded their knowledge about the tangible and intangible heritages both of their own country and the other countries as well. Another outcome reported by a large number of participants was getting to know themselves better by discovering how they react in certain situations they had not been put in before. All in all, the experience had a positive influence on their development as individuals.

We wanted to know if the participants thought that the friendships they made would be long-lasting. Apparently some of the participants still keep in touch with their partners after having formed a strong connection, and are convinced that their friendship will be long-lasting, while others tend to disagree. As mentioned earlier, there were inconvenient situations where participants were unable to communicate in English, therefore could not develop a sustainable friendship. However, the ones who found themselves in such situations admitted to eventually managing to get along well with their hosts and hoped to get in touch with them again someday.

It was important for us to find out whether the students noticed any shifts in their perspective after the experience. Students say they have encountered noticeable shifts in their perspective of their surroundings. First of all, they have learnt to appreciate their country and heritage much more than they used to. They reached the conclusion that one cannot be judged by the stereotypes of his country, and became more tolerant. One of the participants actually confessed that after having some meaningful conversations during his mobility, he decided where he should further carry his studies after high school. The students also noticed a short-term improvement in their perspective; they found themselves much more enthusiastic about school than they were before entering the project. It has given them something to look forward to and dedicate time to.

Additionally, we were curious if the students planned on participating in this kind of projects in the future. Despite having encountered some difficulties along the way, it appears that all the partaking students are keen on further participating in such projects. They have all seen it as an opportunity and each and every participant has learnt something significant. It has taught them how to handle situations by taking them out of their comfort
zone, which they found particularly useful.

Lastly, we asked them to describe their “UNESCO HERITAGE” experience in a few words:
“Inspiring experience and an opportunity to break out of the ordinary”;
“A fresh experience, the start of something new”;
“Precious high school memories”;
“The best way to get to know a foreign country”;
“Definitely an experience worth having”.

On the whole, it would be fair to conclude that the development of the project has almost entirely risen up to the expectations. The participants have spent the time they dedicated to the project in a both productive and entertaining way, expanded their knowledge and improved their personality. The best suggestion for upgrading the project would be following the advice of the participants, as they have already been through the experience and are suitable to decide what works best and what still needs improvement.

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HIDE and SEEK
by Buse ERDOĞAN

Since the beginning of my childhood, I have always loved the idea of exploring new places. It can be a hiding place in hide and seek or exploring a new city. When I heard that my mobility would be to Romania, the first thing I thought was “I have to bring a notebook with me, so I can write everything seems to be worth writing.” And I remember that I was so comfortable with my host when we met, because we had already so long on line.

The first day at school was the presentation day for all the countries. And to be honest. I was very nervous about my presentation. But I did it well. At the end of the day, Mihaela and I walked around the town and talked about other days. Bistrita was a small town but it was really nice.

Second and third day were the days we visited Unesco Heritages. I remember having visited a big church with a beautiful theme in Sighişoara and I saw so many colorful buildings. Viscri was a village, we walked around and I drank a very weird soup. (It was tasty!) Tasting different dishes was a great experience. The only problem I had was the weather because it was freezing. Then we visited Dracula Castle and of course I was so scared. I remember having screamed when the man got up from his grave and scared us. Thank God it was not real. When we went to upstairs, a big feast was waiting for us. Every country prepared its table with its local dishes. I could barely walked after tasting different cuisines. Having Turkish coffee after all those different dishes was just like meeting with an old friend. We couldn’t bring enough food for everyone because of flight regulations but I think everyone still loved it. It was just like Black Friday. The Greek food was my
favourite since we have similar cuisines.

On fourth day’s morning we went to an art gallery. Then they gave us a lapidary that has heritages on it and we drew it and painted. The best thing about fourth day was wearing out traditional clothes. I had so much fun. All countries looked beautiful and interesting. I was looking quite funny though.

Last day, we went to Cluj which isn’t near to where we stayed. And the road was long and tiring. Then something caught my attention; Cluj was a big city and every apartment, every building, every store had Romanian flags on. It was a sightseeing. We went to a big shopping center and bought some souvenirs for our families and friends.

When we came back to Bistrita, it was time to pack my things. It was emotional because it felt a gap in me. But I was excited to go home, there were so many memories to tell everyone.

If I had a chance to go back to Romania someday, I would eat more traditional food because I couldn’t taste enough. And I would like to see Bucharest someday.

When we arrived at the airport, I thought that it was the best adventure ever. I wanted to see my friends right there because I had so many things to tell. And I’m so grateful for this opportunity because when I grow up I’m going to remember the past and I’m going to have something to make me smile really big.

**BASED ON TRUE STORY**

by Buse EYÜBOĞLU

Culture is the basic element that makes up a nation. Our values are carrying us into the future. Knowing our values strengthens our unity and solidarity, and it offers us a brighter future. But this is not enough. Knowledge is endless. Knowledge is like the sky, it has no limit. Discovering a newplace, learning a new language, hearing about a new culture widens our horizon.

The Erasmus+ Project was one of the best experiences I could ever ask for in my life. I had a chance to meet new people and learn new information through this project. Being a part of the Greek mobility we had in September was an honor for me. Meeting with Mr. Gareth Owens, who carried out a six year study of the Phaistos Disc, was one of the most precious moments I had in the project. Besides listening to him about the disc, it made me so proud to take advices about future from him. I learnt a lot in the week that I spent in Heraklion. I met a lot of really amazing people and made lot of great friends.

The Greek mobility was quite active. We discovered a new place in each new day. Our first day in Heraklion started at school. Firstly, we met with students from other partner countries and then we got informed about the school. In our first day, we went to FORTH and had a group tour there. It was very interesting to see the developing technology and its contribution to human life. We went to a traditional Cretan village later. Everyone got amazed by the natural beauty of Arolithos. At the end of our first day, we went out all together for dinner.

In our spare times, discovering the island together was our biggest hobby. We
always tried to learn more about each other and talked about our own cultures. In our second day, we went to the Minoan Palace in Knossos. Our tourist guide informed us about the history of this palace. The Minoan Palace was so huge and historical. There was history in every step we took. The first thing that caught my attention at Minoan Palace was the frescos on walls. These frescos helped me see the importance and value Minoans gave to art and decoration. After finishing our tour at the Minoan Palace, we went to the Center of Environmental Education of Archanes. When we arrived there, they gave us information about this center’s aim. And then we ate our lunch while enjoying a great view. Archanes was a beautiful small town with Byzantine churches and colorful little buildings. It was worth seeing.

The third day was the day that excited me most. Our third day in Heraklion started in Dictaean Andron. According to some Greek mythology, Zeus was reared in that cave. After touring the Dictaean Andron, we went to Elounda for lunch. Elounda’s sea view was dazzling. It was one of my favorite places in Crete. We tasted the traditional Greek food there. When we finished our delicious lunch, we went to Spinalonga Island by ferry. I read a book about the Spinalonga Island four years ago, so visiting the island was like a dream come true. It felt like I was one of the characters in the book. And it was so exciting. We had a wonderful time in Spinalonga. I loved the learning history behind the island. It was a beautiful island with full of history and emotion.

We started our fourth day with the city tour. We bought gifts for our family and friends. After going back to school and having lunch there, we went to the Heraklion Museum. There were many impressive works on Greek history at the museum. I enjoyed wandering the museum with Mr. Gareth Owens. When we finished our tour at the Heraklion Museum, we went back to school with Mr. Gareth Owens to ask him some questions. We talked about the Phaistos Disc, he was so wise and kind. At the end of our day, we joined a new event. We decorated our olive oil bottles, and it was fun.

Our fifth day was last day we had in Heraklion, everyone was so sad to leave. We made great friendships in a really short time and Greek people made us feel like we were at home. They were so friendly and nice to all of us. We attended the farewell party after completing the last day in our mobility.

As a result, with the Erasmus+ Project, I made friends from different parts of the world. I had a chance to learn more about different cultures. I discovered my abilities, and I decided to focus on my interests. This project helped me to improve myself. It changed my career goals. I became aware of my own identity. I believe that after being a part of the Erasmus+ Project, I have developed my creativity. I think this project is a new source of inspiration for students. I’m so happy to be a part of the Erasmus+ Project and I would like to thank my teachers first for giving us this chance.
TASTE HUNTER
by Ennr Erdogan

To continue my university education in a foreign country is my dream. When I heard about this project was so excited and thought that I should be in this project due to future ambitions.

I study food&bevendedepartment at scool and I am now at 11th grade. Italian cuisine is one of the most important and popular cuisines in the world. Especially, pizza and pasta. During this visit, besides having improved my English, I had a chance to know their traditional cuisine and kitchen culture.

We went to Castelnovva town which was the forth mobility of the Project. First of all my expectations were to visit other cities and explore new cultures. I was worried about how the food as a future chef, all I thought about was the food ! But I was thrilled by the food, different tastes. It was for the first time in my life to be hosted by a foreign and I loved it. We got on well each other.

Thanks to our teachers, we have made our dreams come true .Before I went to Italy I could create a contact with them. During my stay I had only one problem with a distance to school, it was the only thing i would have changed.

First day we accomplished a very successful presentation. After presantation we had lunch with our teachers, which Italian teachers and students had cooked for us. The biggest problem we had was that lunch times for students and teachers were different. We waited for teachers to eat their lunches for an extra hour when the students were already done. On the same day we had excursion in Parma, and I was astonished by the beauty of this historical city, its streets,churches and of course traditional Italian food. We didn’t have any problems with the food as Italy is famous with pizza and pasta.Yet, we did have problems with gaining weight!!! Italian breakfast was a complete different experience for me, as Turkish people have breakfast just like a feast. But Italian people just grab a croissant and cup of coffee. To sum up that day my biggest disappointment was that the tour guides could not give us enough and sufficient information.

On the second day we really woke up early. Because there was a trip that took us hours to get to Florance. Florance is famous for its history,a centre of medieval European art. The city is noted for its culture,Renaissance at architecture and monuments. That day we literally travelled to the Renaissance time. However, we couldn’t visit some historical places such as Uffizi Gallery, Santa Croce Cathedral. And unfortunately, Italian teachers didn’t arrange a licensed English speaking guide. He explained the history of Florence and the monuments in his own language,Italian. When I heard him, I was shocked.

Next day we had a chance to visit Parma and Bologna, where we discovered all details about how the electricity works, which was unforgettable. We realized how important it is to use water and electricity in more economical way and how to protect the environment. After that, we had a picnic in a very big picnic area. We played volleyball together. It was a good to communicate with other students. We obseved different kinds of plants, trees, leaves and butterflies. A man who is expert in ‘Parmesan’ presented something about how to make cheese.

On the fourth day we participated in a workshop at school which was about
protecting the environment. What I realized was that Italy was a country which cares about the environment. Also, we didn’t see any traffic there which is a big problem in my country.

On our fifth day we went to Canossa Castel and Castello Di Rosenna Castel. I saw different kinds of castles for the first time and learned about their mysterious history. For instance the castle was built around 940 by Adalberto Atto, son of Sigifredo of Lucca, a Lombard prince, on the summit of a rocky hill. Apart from Adalberto’s residence, it included a convent with 12 Benedictine monks and the church of Sant’Apollonio. It was protected by a triple line of walls; between the two lower lines were the barracks and the residence of the servants. It made me excited. At the end of the day, they threw a party for the students at the Rossena Castel.

On our last day we wandered near the school as we had time to enjoy our free time. That night we had goodbye dinner with all the students. Next day we met at school early in the morning.

Lastly, if I had the chance to change something, I would have wanted to change my host family because the girl didn’t even come to drop me to school on the last day.

It was too sad to leave however on the other side I was very happy to experience this mobility. I think that I have improved my English and I have made new friends. And also as a future chef, I have tasted so many different cuisines, and have learned various cooking methods.

I think that Erasmus+ is something that everyone needs to experience at least for once in their lives.

All paths lead to Italy
by Anja Bućan, Marija Radoš, Nikola Guerieri, Marija Stojak

A long time has passed since our journey to Italy, to the town of Castelnovo ne’Monti. Thinking of just a concept for this essay, we were unable to resist the outburst of memories taking us back to the moments we shared with each other and the new friends we made in this beautiful Italian town, which we shall cherish forever.

When we found out that we had been chosen to go to Italy, we were very excited! We were also a bit worried, too. We were wondering what will our host family be like and how would we fit in, what would we eat and how are we going to communicate. But the excitement of anticipation was much bigger than all our worries. This experience will enable us to meet new people, see exciting new places, learn about their culture, customs and tradition, and to participate in their daily routines, even if it is for just a couple of days. The tingle of travel excitement days before the journey was almost unbearable.

When we came to Castelnovo ne’Monti, we were a bit nervous because everything was new around us and we didn’t know what to expect. First day was somewhat strange and tense as we were still getting acquainted with everyone. The next day though, we met our colleagues, students who were very communicative, interesting and kind so the friendship was born. From that day on we were hanging out together, learning new things and having fun.

During our stay in this small beautiful village, and visiting all the major cities around
it, teeming with different nationalities and interesting characters, we were most impressed by Florence. Good time we had walking the streets of Florence with our hosts brought us close together in a way we could never imagine. Florence is a very inspiring city but all the other cities we had visited are beautiful as well.

School in Castelnovo ne’ Monti is very different from ours. First of all, because of its appearance and second of all, because of a different school system, but we really liked it. We also don’t want to forget the teachers who were very friendly and helpful to all of us all the time. If we needed something or if we had some questions, they were always available for us and we really appreciate it.

We made friends with our hosts and that is why the last day was so difficult to us all. On the other side, these intense feelings ranging from euphoria to deep sadness are all part of a great trip. The more intense the feelings, the deeper the memories.

We are very satisfied with this project because we learnt many new things, about cities that we have visited, their cultures, traditions, food and so many interesting details. We would like to emphasize that projects such as Erasmus are very educational, interesting and accessible to students, and it is a pity that there aren’t many more such projects because a trip like this gives you life experience and wonderful memories the way you could never get it in the classroom. Finally, we would like to recommend you to visit this beautiful country because we think you would not regret it.

In the end, Croatian team hopes that you will have fun here in Croatia, hopefully even come back again sometime because we are going to do everything to make you feel good and meet all your expectations and desires. We know that you will not regret coming to visit us.

ISTANBUL - Where Europe meets Asia
by Martina Juričić

Turističko-ugostiteljska škola from Split, as a member of the Erasmus+ project has participated in the journey to Istanbul. The main goal of Erasmus+ is to get acquainted with cultural heritage, customs and languages of other nations. Istanbul is one of the prime tourist destinations if you want to experience the point where Asian and European continent melt into one. All of the Turkish families were excellent hosts. We were greeted very friendly and kindly. The school was well equipped and the leader of the Turkish mobility has organised entertaining and educational workshops which taught us something about our own and other countries’ heritage. The first workshop was teaching us to create an interactive map where we had to show where our cultural sights are located and present them to the others - talk about historical facts in the background of every monument. The second workshop was Ebru - an old Turkish traditional art of painting on water. It was very interesting to try something like that. Some of us succeeded in making a beautiful art work while some of us didn’t do a very good job. At least we have learnt something new and had a great time doing it. That is the most important thing isn’t it? The last, the funniest and most exciting workshop was the Escape Game. Suddenly, in a matter of minutes, ordinary boys and girls turned into real little detectives searching for clues to escape from the completely dark and scary classroom. All of us did a great job, we found clues and
managed to escape. To be honest it wasn't really that easy to escape but in the end we escaped almost at the same time and were all winners. The second day of our mobility we went on a trip to Bosporus. Standing on the boat right in the middle between two continents, one hand waving at Europe and the other one at Asia, was the best feeling ever. We felt like we were standing in the centre of the world. The centre where the West and the East are merging. After we admired the beauties of Istanbul we had lunch and then the real entertainment started. Our tourist guide turned up the speakers and we were singing and dancing all together to the beautiful sounds of Turkish music. Turkish music is something everybody should experience - the rhythm, the sound and the beat of the music drives you crazy in a positive way and makes you want to dance. After that we visited the Grand and the Spice Bazaar - heaven for all shoppingholics. We bought plenty of souvenirs and clothes for a very good price because on the Grand Bazar its usual to haggle but you must be persistent because Turkish people are very good merchants. The third day we visited Miniaturk - a miniature park which is one of the worlds largest containing structures and historical buildings of the Turkish history and the Ottoman Empire. Seeing all these perfectly built structures in a miniature size was impressive and stunning. Our fourth day began with visiting important Turkish monuments on the european side on the Hippodrome. We visited the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Suleymaniye Mosque, Hagia Sophia and the Topkapi Palace. To see all these enormous and unbelievably wonderful mosques of the Turkish culture is simply a must-do-thing for everyone who visits Istanbul. Istanbul is a top destination I would highly recommend to everyone. It just has to be visited to realise all the values the city and the culture offer. After collecting all these impressions on the Hippodrome we thought it couldn't get any better than that and then we were proven wrong. The last day we came in front of the school in the morning where all students, teachers and Turkish families expected us. They organised a traditional food & dance festival where we tried so many different dishes and specialities while watching fantastic traditional dances. Do you guys even know how delicious Turkish food is? Its like heaven for the stomach. After presenting us the dances we all daced together and it couldn't have been more fun. It was so extremly amazing to experience all the good atmosphere Turkish music and dances were spreading. The festival was just limitless fun and it was the perfect way to complete our mobility. The time we spent in Turkey was the best in our lives. Getting to know different cultures, being introduced to Turkish traditions, their school system and their way of living was amazing. While talking to other students and teachers, presenting to others our own culture and being exposed to different presentations at the Turkish Hasan Sadoglu Lisesi school we have improved and developed our knowledge of English as well. Just imagine - seven different countries, seven different cultures and seven different languages being together and getting to know each other, all in the course of one week, isn't that wonderful? This multicultural mobility has shown us that we might live in other countries, other cities, speak different languages and have different customs but deep down in our hearts we are all humans who want to experience everything this world has to offer. All the new people we met during this project and of course the project itself was surely the best way to understand the magnificence of this multicultural world. We made new friends and Istanbul will always be the place which will remind us of the incredibly good time we had. We are extremly thankful for being given this opportunity of participating in this project and being hosted so kindly. It almost felt like real home. While flying back home and leaving Istanbul we all made a decision to return again to Turkey.
one day. But we didn’t leave empty-handed, we all took a little peace of Istanbul with us home as a reminder of that special time filled with friendship and joy.

**Erasmus, opportunity for meeting new countries and new friends**

by Petar Dobrić, Zvone Uvodić,
Nikolina Vukušić, Željana Zebić

Portugal is a country with rich maritime history of overseas exploration, discovering and mapping the coasts of Africa, Canada, Asia and Brasil, but also the country of wine, food and beautiful people. Everybody likes something about this country whether it is football, music, wine or food. This country has a lot of interesting attractions, places and events and we can’t wait to see them all.

As teenagers we hope to have a good time there, meeting new people and of course eating a lot of good food. This is a country that has the oldest borders in Europe, has a large variety of different scenery covering a rather small surface area, a lot of leisure activities and a unique cultural heritage, where tradition and modernity blend together in perfect harmony. Its excellent cuisine, fine wines and hospitable people make this tourist paradise the highest quality holiday destination. We also hope and have an intention of making new friends from all the countries involved in this amazing project and staying in touch with them after the project ends.

We plan to learn more about culture of this beautiful country. Travelling is the best way of gaining new perspective, a new point of view about your own life. Travelling can be great for facing your fears and realizing hidden potentials. It is the best way of breaking our routine. We will discover new things and meet great new people from different cultures, we will witness another way of life. It maybe strange compared to ours but might precisely for that reason be fascinating and memorable. We are curious about the flavours of new cuisine as well, which is also a great advantage if you ask us.

We would definately like to see how Portugese school system works and if it is a better system than ours, we might just stay there for more than one week. But in the end we just want to have good time, make new friends and learn about Portugal in this unique oportunity of having an international experience thanks to UNESCO HERITAGE.

And after this amazing project is over, we are sure that we will be returning home with a bunch of memories. Those do not need to be precious items from gift shops, just something to remind us of that place. When we come home, overwhelmed and exhausted we will be nurtured by those great memories.

“The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page” is a quote from St Augustine that caught our eye, and ever since we are trying to travel the world exploring new cultures and meeting new people. For us Portugal is the perfect next page. And now when the trip is getting closer it is time to say...

Portugal here we come!
Erasmus, a journey to remember
by Frane Letica, Rafaela Brahović
and Joško Radošević

Our experience in project UNESCO Heritage is priceless. Having participated in this project, we met different cultures, languages and customs. We came into contact with everyone from the whole of Europe.

Travelling to various countries of Europe, we met many interesting countries and their people. Despite different languages, however, we have communicated in one common language - English. Therefore, we have improved the vocabulary and the grammar of the language.

Unfortunately, not everyone was good at it but we were nevertheless in a good mood and we were laughing. The families made us feel “at home” and we were received warmly and kindly. We have gained friends for life thanks to this project. Cities where we stayed were more and more interesting day by day. Local residents were open and we felt like we were part of their community. Our hosts made sure we experience their daily routine. We have seen what school they go, to where they go out and where they spend their free time. We felt safe thanks to them and their teachers and parents. Their traditional dishes to us, frankly, were good, but some of them weren’t. We liked the Romanian cuisine. Unfortunately, we didn’t like the Czech “knedlíčki” but their desserts repaired the impression. Nature, lakes, rivers, mountains and attractions were things to keep in our memory. Of course all of these moments were captured by a number of photographs.

That’s why this project will forever hold a special place in our memory and heart. Our experience has certainly contributed to the good times that accompanied us in every corner of the country. Here and there something would interrupt our positive images, but we quickly chased those feelings away by being cheerful and trying to have fun. In Romania, we were particularly charmed with beautiful salt mine, and in the Czechia with the Museum of modern science. Because of the fun atmosphere our days of the project were quickly by. But this is not surprising because everything that is pretty, lasts shortly.

If it weren’t for this project, we would not know what it’s like to be an exchange student and we certainly opened our horizons. Thanks to this we started thinking about studying abroad where we would apply their ways of learning and studying.
Viva la UNESCO Heritage!
Erasmus – once in a lifetime experience
by Kate Violić, Klara Mandić, Nevena Koprčina

Erasmus is an experience that I would recommend to everyone. Last year I visited Czech Republic along with my school friends and professors. We spent six days in Ostrava, learning about Czech culture and heritage.

I have explored new places, met new people and the way they live. I was amazed how different the people are, how their food tastes differently and how different architecture is. I never really thought about how different it could be until I saw it myself. In many ways Croatia is different than Czechia but we still managed to find something in common with others, something that we could talk about – something that made us become friends.

I had such an amazing time in my host family. They were so hospitable and made me feel comfortable and accepted. They always offered to help, to explain me something I didn’t understand. They even tried to teach me a few words in Czech.

I look forward to seeing them to come to Croatia and to being their hosts. I have already made a plan of what to do with my new friends and what to show them in my country. I need to show them the landscape, the natural beauty and the historical remains of Ancient cities. I will introduce them to Croatian cuisine and they will try some traditional food, even if they don’t like it at first – I didn’t like what their food looked like because it was so different than ours, but once I tried it, I liked it. I love how some simple things that look the same actually couldn’t be more different. It shows us how even if we all look alike, we are all so different, the way we speak or dress, how we eat and walk differently. It’s all because we were raised like that, but we still share the same interests – we all think alike. It is a great experience to be an exchange student because it broadens your horizons. You feel more comfortable meeting new people, introducing yourself and talking about the things you both like. You learn how to speak up for yourself or how to work as a team. The good thing is that your English will improve being the basic language of communication. You will expand your English vocabulary and even learn some new words in Czech, Romanian, Turkish, Greek, Italian or Portuguese.

In conclusion, I would like to say the words of praise for this project because opportunities such as these don’t come around often. If you are ever offered to participate in a project like this I suggest you take it and experience what I did. It will improve not only your success at school but your communication skills and most importantly, you will make friends with people you never would’ve met if you haven’t taken the opportunity I honestly believe that there isn’t anything like Erasmus where you can meet so many different people who are so unique. You share amazing memories and have a great time.
Although in France there are a wealth of monuments from prehistory to the present, which are worth seeing with one's own eyes, there is one that extremely impressed me with its beauty and monumentality. It’s the Palace of Versailles with its gardens, ornate statues, ponds, fountains and geometric terraces. It is truly a beautiful place.

Versailles is 25 km away from Paris. The former royal seat became famous through the already mentioned palace with gardens, and another two palace buildings - Big and Petit Trianon. In 1979, the palace and gardens were inscribed on the World Heritage List.

During the reign of Louis XIII in the 17th century a feudal manor and a village stood on a hillock, surrounded by marshes and forests full of game, where Louis XIII and his entourage enjoyed to go hunting. He often stayed in the manor overnight, and therefore in 1631 he decided to build a royal seat there. After the death of Louis XIII his son Louis XIV continued in the construction and from the original hunting manor he had a palace built, which is still one of the greatest Baroque monuments in the world. The construction of the buildings was entrusted to the architect Le Vau and the landscape architecture to Le Notre. In 1678, work on the further expansion of the palace was undertaken by the architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart, who stayed there until his death. At that time the Big Trianon was created. In the years 1661 - 1690 Le Brun was appointed the head of painters, sculptors, decorator, founders and other artists. The work took more than 50 years and most of the time it was overseen by Louis XIV himself. The Sun King, as he was called, liked to be surrounded by many courtiers, as the large court made him shine. Nobles and other visitors therefore descended on the court, eager to be in the king’s favor and pleasantly enjoy the luxurious residence free of charge. At the time when Madame de Maintenon lived at Versailles, from 1684, feasts, hunts and other festivities were rampant. However, the situation changed after the death of Louis XIV in 1715. His successor was still a child, for whom the regent Philippe of Orléans ruled, and the glory of the castle began to decline. The Regent and the court moved to Paris and the city of Versailles lost its livelihood and its meaning, so half the population emigrated. In 1722, King Louis XV returned to the Palace of Versailles, and the city began to be revived again. During the reign of Louis XV there were other significant building achievements. The most important was the construction of the Petit Trianon. In 1783, the days of Versailles, the royal city, were numbered. Louis XIV did not have large construction ambitions and his wife, Marie Antoinette was fully satisfied with the Petit Trianon. She had a park, village and other building attractions built there. No other large buildings were constructed. After the outbreak of the French Revolution in the autumn of 1789 the royal family moved to Paris and no other French king resided in the palace. After the execution of King Louis XVI. - 21 January 1793 - the furniture and equipment of the palace was sold off and the royal collections were transferred to the Louvre. During the reign of Napoleon I and later Louis XVIII the abandoned palace was increasingly dilapidated, so its demolition was already being considered. It was rescued by Louis Philippe, who turned it into a museum dedicated to “All the glory of France.” The restoration and overall improvement of Versailles did not occur until after World War II thanks to the American benefactor, J.D.
Rockfeller. The extensive reconstruction activities took place in 1950 when, for example, electric heating was introduced at the palace. The most famous and most beautiful space in the castle interior is the 73 meter long Hall of Mirrors finished in 1684. It comes to the palace through the Place d’Armes, separating the former royal stables, built by the architect Hardouin-Mansart. Today it houses the archive. The entrance gate leads visitors into the courtyard of Ministers (Cour des Ministres), which is flanked on two sides by buildings in which ministry officials lived under the monarchy. The royal courtyard (Cour de Royale) follows with an equestrian statue of Louis XIV erected in 1837.

Versailles gardens

I would also like to mention the Versailles gardens, that complete the impressive appearance of the entire palace complex. The area of the garden is about 100 hectares and the length of the promenade from the palace to the westernmost edge is 950 m. The gardens are an example of typical French garden aesthetics, effectively dissected by many terraces and fountains, decorated with a number of sculptures. An interesting sight for visitors is offered by the so-called Water games, which represents a whole artillery of fountains that display their beauty to the rhythm of historic Baroque music.

The gardens are much bigger than I ever imagined. Currently there are about 1200 trees, with many originating from the last century.

Overall, I was thrilled by my visit to the palace and the garden tours. I would definitely like to return again sometime and I’d sincerely recommend everyone to visit, because I believe that it’s the experience of a lifetime.

Vatican
by Izabela Balážová

The Vatican City, one of the most sacred places in Christendom, attests to a great history and a formidable spiritual venture. A unique collection of artistic and architectural masterpieces lie within the boundaries of this small state. For its uniqueness was in 1984 inscribed on the UNESCO Heritage List.

It is a landlocked country with an area of approximately 44 hectares and fewer than a thousand inhabitants, it is the smallest internationally recognized state in the world. Its territory is largely surrounded by historic walls and consists mainly gardens and churches and other buildings.

Vatican State was established in 1929 under the Lateran treaties signed by Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, on behalf of the Holy See.

The Vatican is a church state or spiritually monarchic, where reigns for life elected Bishop of Rome - the Pope. The highest government officials are all Catholic clergymen of various national origin. It is the sovereign territory of the Holy See and the place of residence of the Pope, based in the Apostolic Palace.

Vatican documents are issued in Italian, which is the communication language of the Vatican, but it is not an official language, unlike the Holy See, which uses Latin in everyday communication.
Swiss Guard is one of the symbols of the Vatican, which is a Vatican army. It is the smallest, oldest, most colorful and most photographed official army in the world. Currently it works mainly as a representative of the guard and the guard of the pope.

Vatican includes ST. Peter’s Basilica, Raphael Hall and St. Peter’s Square with the Apostolic palace. In this area there are significant cultural monuments like the Sistine Chapel, Vatican museums and Vatican Library.

St. Peter’s Basilica stands in a holy place where was crucified and buried the Apostle Peter. It is the work of many famous architects such as Rafael, Bramante of Peruzzi. In the 1st century AD located there Nero’s Circus, where according to legend was martyred Apostle Peter and pagan burial ground. His tomb began visiting pilgrims, because the Emperor Constantine in 324 decided to build over the grave of the basilica. The basilica was consecrated in 329.

St. Peter’s Square is one of the finest works of world architecture, it is the greatest work of Bernini. The square is framed by the oval and colonnade, whose arms symbolize open arms, welcoming the faithful. Colonnade consists of 284 Doric columns. Square was built in 1656-1667 in the middle of the square rises 30 meters tall obelisk that was brought to Rome from Egypt. On the square there are two fountains which are the work of Bernini. On the square is possible to gather 400 000 believers.

Raphael Hall is a complex of four rooms, which in 1508 had reconstructed by Pope Julius II., because he did not like the style of his predecessor. The first room is called Sala di Constatntino an it is the largest of all the rooms. Constantine hall is dedicated to the victory of christianity over paganism.

The second room is called the Stanza di Eliodoro probably served as an audience room and we can find there the theme of the frescoes of Christ’s heavenly protection of the Church.

The third room Stanza della signatura was the first room decorated with frescoes by Raphael. This room was formerly intended as study room and library. The theme of the frescoes is secular and spiritual wisdom and harmony that Renaissance humanists perceived as Christian doctrine and Greek philosophy. In this room you will found four frescoes on the theme of goodness, beauty and truth. And finally, the fourth room called Stanza di Borgo dell’incendio Hall served the session of the supreme court of the Holy See.

The Sistine Chapel is one of the most important cultural treasures of the Vatican, it is part of the Vatican Museums. The Sistine Chapel is worldwide known not only for its beautiful frescoes of Michaelangelo, but it is also a place where they held conclave and papal coronation.

The Vatican Museums are one of the largest complexes art collections in the world that have accumulated over the centuries popes. The complex consists of 10 000 rooms and 300 staircases. Vatican museum boasts the largest collection of classical statues, an extensive collection of Etruscan art, Egyptian exhibition including Egyptian mummies, medieval and Renaissance art and especially the beautiful Sistine Chapel. To the Vatican Museums are included in the museum Chiaramonti, which include collections are placed in a large archway 100 meters long and consists of thousands of statues, paintings of deities, portraits of emperors, friezes and reliefs of the sarcophagus, Etruscan Museum, Egyptian Museum, Gregory’s secular Christian Museum.

Vatican Library is located in t vatican and is one of the oldest libraries in the world. The year 1475 is considered the year of establishment, because in this year Pope Nicholas
appointed the first librarian who wrote the first book list that contained more than 3,500 items. Collections of books were divided into rooms: Greek Library, Latin library, a secret library and library pontificate.

Vatican Gardens occupy half of the area around the Vatican. The Gardens are bordered by a stone wall. Gardens hug the north and west side of the Vatican. The gardens are abundant artistic treasures and variety of plants.

Vatican Palace is a complex of buildings that includes over a thousand rooms. The entire complex was built between the 11th and 18th centuries and officially became the seat of popes in 1981. In addition to Vatican includes territories with special legal status including the Papal Basilica of St. John in Teteran, Basilica of Saint Lawrence outside the Wall and St. Mary’s Basilica Snow. St. Mary’s Basilica Snow is one of the most important churches. It is near the Vatican train station, which is called Termini. It was built in 440 and even though it was over the centuries, further embellished and rebuilt, preserved in its original form as an example of an ancient Roman Basilica.

The Vatican also has its station, which serves to transport costs and rarely for personal transportation. The city serves independent modern telephone system, the Vatican pharmacy and post office.

The Vatican is located in the temperate Mediterranean climate. Winters are mild and rainy and lasts from September to mid-May. Summers are hot and dry season lasts from the second half September.

This state is not a member of the European Union or the European monetary coins. Also not a member of the United Nations and has not signed the convention on the rights of disabled persons.

I chose this state because I fond of antique gardens, historic churches and I like big exotic city. Personally I would like to visit this magic place. When I look at pictures of this state, I say wow. It is one of my biggest dream to see all the Vatican’s monuments on my own eyes.
Tower of London
by Kateřina Slírová

This article is about the Tower of London. It’s a UNESCO monument which is located in England in London.

I had the opportunity to see this monument during our school trip recently and I was totally fascinated by London and especially by Tower of London. So I decided write about this monument.

Tower of London symbolizes the power of monarch more then 900 years. It is a fortified building which was build starting in 1079 years at the instigation of William the Conqueror. In his age Tower served like palace, prison, the treasure chest, the armory and as a Zoo. It was a building of many faces. The tower had to serve as a fortress, which protects the city. Gradually it became also quite a dreaded prison, where people paid for their purported and real sins. The prisoners were also well known historical personalities, like the English king Henry VI. Here he found his death. Also Guy Fawkes convicted of planning the assassination of the British King James I. or the Nazi leader Rudolf Hess.

At the heart of the Tower of London is the White Tower. It is the oldest part of the Tower, built to strike fear and submission into the unruly citizens of London. You can visit all four floors of the White Tower and explore Norman architecture and the Royal Armouries Collections. To the North of the tower is the Church of St. Peter and the location where it is placed the plate with the names of the executed.

Most visitors are curious about the treasures of the Jewel House, where they are kept British crown jewels of incalculable value. The jewels are placed there from 13th century. The Jewel House is, of course, the most precious and also one of most guarded place in London. A glance at the jewels of the British Empire will become truly unforgettable. In glass display cases is the Royal Crown, including the world’s largest diamond Koh-i-Noor, which was put in the crown made in 1937 for Queen Mum. Long-time residents of the Tower guards are the Yeoman Warders, popularly Beefeaters, whose task is to ensure the operation of the Castle including all relevant ceremonies and accompany the tourists. At present, there are altogether 36 members of Yeoman Warders and you can meet them around the Tower of London-thanks to the characteristic black and red uniforms they are hard to overlook. To become one of the Beefeaters is a great honor for which it is necessary to fulfill several conditions. Yeoman Warders are required to have served in the armed forces with an honourable record for at least 22 years. The current contingent of warders have experienced serving in Northern Ireland, the Falklands War, Bosnia, the first and second Gulf conflicts and in Afghanistan. They are happy to answer your questions about the Tower and are some of the most photographed guards in London!

One of the Yeoman duties to be performed each night is the ritual of locking the Tower called the Ceremony of the keys. An important Beefeater is called Ravenmaster, who has the task of taking care of the welfare of the eight Ravens kept in the fortress. According to legend these Ravens may not leave the Tower, otherwise the British monarchy lapses. Today, there are seven ravens (ie the required six and one spare extra). Ravens receive 170 grams of raw meat a day, and to special granules soaked with blood.

The tower is located on the premises is the Bloody Tower. Here a young Edward V. was allegedly murdered with his brother. There was also infidelity to her husband beheaded Anne Boleyn, wife of King Henry VIII. Executions of nobles were conducted in the fortress of monarchs, supposedly to be spared the shame of public execution on
Tower Hill.

The Tower is located on the eastern border of the financial Circuit City and near the River Thames and Tower Bridge. Between the Tower and the river is the Tower Wharf freely accessible walkway with spectacular views of the River, the Tower Bridge, HMS Belfast, and City Hall on the opposite bank of the river.

Tower Bridge is a bascule bridge over the River Thames. They began to build on 28 September 1892 and it was inaugurated in year 1894.

For their originality castle complex was inscribed in 1988 on UNESCO list.

I am grateful for the opportunity to see this monument and I like it very much. I most liked the rich history of the Norman Conquest and Jewel House. I wish everyone could visit to Tower of London which is associated with a bloody history, gloom, and at the same time fascinating experiences.

Feels Like Home
by Salmah Kibar

There are a lot of things to see and do in South Africa that represent the integrity of its people and culture. From food to festivals to landmarks, South Africa is known worldwide.

In Cape Town, South Africa, you can find one of the world’s most beautiful landmarks, Table Mountain, elevating 1 085 m from the ground. Its flat top is what gives it its name. There are tales and myths that surround the mother-city’s landmark, including ghosts, devils and monsters of the sea, these are tales that have been passed on for many generations.

Another thing that has been passed on for generations is recipes. South Africans love food as it’s something that brings friends and family together. Nothing beats a home-made bobotie or a get-together braai (barbeque) as South Africans love meat. They love it so much that they even have dried meat, biltong, the word deriving from the Dutch language.

One more thing derived from the Dutch is bobotie which is a dish made with spiced, minced meat with an egg-based topping. This dish, as mentioned above, belongs to the Dutch but was later adopted by the Cape-Malays. Another one of South Africa’s popular foods is a gatsby. A gatsby is a submarine sandwich generally filled with french-fries and assorted meats, usually steak, chicken or calamari, topped with lettuce and sauce. The gatsby originated in Cape Town and is found at most local fast-food restaurants around the city and amongst the Cape Flats.

Another popular item on the Cape-Malay menu is the koeksister, the word derived from the Dutch word koekje, meaning “cookie”, which is a sort of doughnut. There are two versions to this syrup-coated doughnut: an Afrikaner version which is a twisted or braided shape and a Cape Malay version which is a spicy treat finished off with a sprinkling of coconut.

Cape-Malays, also referred to as coloureds, take a big part of Cape Town’s heritage and indigienity. Coloureds have a custom that they have preserved for many generations called the Cape Coons, otherwise known as the Cape Minstrels. This is a festival which is celebrated annually on the 2nd of January, also known as Tweede Nuwe Jaar, meaning
“Second New Year”.

As much as South Africans love eating and celebrating, they love drinking too. South Africa is famous for its wines, liqueur and herbal teas such as Amarula and Rooibos tea.

Rooibos, translated into English means “Redbush”, is a herbal tea made from the fynbos plant which is a natural shrubland or healthland vegetation that grows in the Western Cape of South Africa. Amarula, a caramel liqueur made from the fruit of the marula tree, indigenous to the miombo woodlands of Southern Africa, gives the liqueur its spicy flavour. Amarula has become popular in many other countries other than South Africa as well.

As mentioned above, South Africans love celebrating and dancing. Initially used as expression of resistance against apartheid government, the Pantsula dance originated in black townships. Today the Pantsula is a nationally-known dance that is popular mostly amongst the black.

The black are also popular for their traditional food and side-dishes such as chakalaka, which is a vegetable relish usually served with stews and curries. Chakalaka is thought to have originated in Johannesburg.

South Africa is a rainbow nation, a nation of different races and religions that all unite as one. Especially at football matches where people of all races and cultures blow their vuvuzelas, a symbol of South African football. A vuvuzela is a long, plastic horn, about 65 cm in length, originally made from a kudu horn, which was used to gather distant villagers to community gatherings.

South Africa is very important to me, it’s the country that taught me that life and love has no gender, race or religion. It has taught me that people are able to live in peace and that humanity still exists. The beauty of its landmarks and beaches also remind me that there is a higher power, a creator, and that we should be thankful for everything we have.
Stories behind: domes
by Leonor Carvalho
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Keywords: domes, symbolism, heaven, Brunelleschi’s Dome, Hagia Sophia, Dome of The Rock, Taj Mahal

Abstract: The belief that architectural domes represent either Heaven itself or the communion of man with Heaven is widespread. This was the starting point that piqued the interest to determine whether or not this assumption can be verified through the analysis of the story behind some of the world’s most famous domes. In that sense, this article will focus on the history and symbolism behind the four following universally acclaimed domes: Santa Maria del Fiore’s Dome and Hagia Sophia’s Dome, belonging to Christian cathedrals, and Dome of the Rock and Taj Mahal’s dome, belonging to Islamic constructions. Hopefully, this restrict study will somehow point towards convictions shared by both Christians and Muslims.

Article

When visiting Italy, the city of Florence is a mandatory attraction. Few are those who, gazing upon the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, remain impassive. There is something about the way that the enormous dome surfaces amidst a sea of narrow streets and small traditional houses that really leaves one wondering how can such a magnificent creation be the product of mankind. One wonders whether there is a meaning to it all: every little architectural shape or detail that makes up this work of art. Predominantly, one wonders about the significance and story behind Brunelleschi’s Duomo; or any other dome for that matter. Having the privilege of witnessing such an architectural masterpiece piques curiosity: what are domes? What is the symbolism behind domes? What are the stories behind some of the world’s most famous domes?

Domes are curved architectural structures that have always raised great interest and enigma. The fact that these “roofs” enclose an enormous amount of space without the aid of columns has always created an aura of mystery around them. However, although deceptively thin, domes are incredibly strong structures. From an architectural and engineering perspective, they are very interesting structures indeed. However, this paper will look past the physical mysteries of domes and focus on the underlying mystical and symbolic implications of these structures.

In that sense, one question remains: what do domes stand for?

“In the Paradiso, Dante’s (1265–1321) soaring journey up through the nine heavenly circles leads to his ultimate vision of beauty and light: the Empyrean heaven. At this highest point of transcendence the poet finally apprehends the mysteries of time and space, for in this still center all space is here and all time is now. In the mystical language of architecture this heavenly sphere is symbolized by the dome, and the point of infinity beyond by the oculus—the void ringed by the central aperture of the dome. Though Dante’s vision of heaven is medieval, its circular imagery is a timeless metaphor for the marriage of geometry and the sacred in the form of the dome. Since its beginnings the dome has been used for religious purposes, becoming architecture’s universal expression of heaven.”
“An examination of the structural designs and decorative schemes of the various domes points to a common cultural heritage and cultural exchange in both directions. Such examination additionally highlights both Christians and Muslims’ historic interest in geometry on a sacred as well as scientific level, particularly through use of the circle as a symbol of heaven, the square as a symbol of earth, and the octagon as a link between the two. Their decorative schemes reinforce that the domes were visual metaphors for the spiritual journey and communion between human and divine realms that the architectural spaces were themselves intended to encourage. The domes therefore testify not only to Christians and Muslims’ shared cultural history, but to their common spiritual goal.” (Stephenson, 2005)

Can these supposed shared spiritual goals or beliefs be verified through the examination of the stories behind some of the most famous Christian and Islamic domes? Do the following stories actually point to shared customs and beliefs?

Brunelleschi’s Dome is part of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, located on the Historic Centre of Florence. The construction of the Church began in 1296. The aim was to showcase the status of Florence as a European economic and cultural capital, by building the most beautiful and powerful church ever built, crowned by the largest cupola on earth. However, no one quite knew how to build such and enormous dome. Years later, in 1418, the Florentine fathers announced a public contest for the design of the dome. In 1420, the project was trusted on to Filippo Brunelleschi, a goldsmith, by many considered to be a genius, and whose artistic and mechanical knowledge piqued everyone's imagination. Over the next years, the construction of the dome became the city’s most exciting drama. In 1446 Brunelleschi died and was buried in the crypt of the cathedral. These were high honors, especially because before the time of Brunelleschi architects were considered simple craftsmen. And yet, through his genius and dedication, Filippo Brunelleschi established a new pattern: the rise of “true artists to the rank of sublime creators, worthy of eternal praise in the company of the saints, an image that would dominate the Renaissance.” The rounded profile of the dome, unlike the angular lines of the Gothic, symbolized Florence’s freedom from Milan and, indirectly, the liberation of man from the darkness of the Middle Ages. To this day, Santa Maria del Fiore is still believed to be the birth place of the Renaissance. Through his work, Filippo became “god like”, his dome being the perfect metaphor for his and every man’s “spiritual journey and communion between human and divine realms”. Brunelleschi’s Duomo embodied the endless journey of the human spirit and its “divinization” through one’s work, which would become a Renaissance motto.

Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey, is located in one of the historic areas of Istanbul. The first Church, originally called Megale Ekklesia (Great Church) was dedicated in 360 by Emperor Constantius and it served as the cathedra, or bishop’s seat, of the city. The name “Hagia Sophia” came into use around 430, literally meaning “Holy Wisdom”. The first church was destroyed during riots in 404 and the second church was the second church was built and dedicated in 415 by Emperor Theodosius II, being burned down during the Nika revolt in 532. The third church was inaugurated on December 27, 537. “The central dome was often interpreted by contemporary commentators as the dome of heaven itself.”, “The feature that distinguishes Hagia Sophia from equally lavish Roman buildings such as the Pantheon is the special mystical quality of the light that floods the interior. The soaring canopy-like dome that dominates the inside as well as the outside of
the church rides on a halo of light from windows in the dome's base. (...) The 40 windows at the base of the dome create the illusion that the dome is resting on the light that pours through them. Procopius, who wrote at the emperor's request a treatise on his ambitious building program, observed that the dome looked as if it were suspended by "a golden chain from Heaven". (...) Light seems to dissolve material substance and transform it into an abstract spiritual vision. Pseudo-Dionysus, perhaps the most influential mystic philosopher of the age, wrote in The Divine Names: "Light comes from the Good and... light is the visual image of God." (Kleiner, 2010)

The Dome of the Rock is a Muslim shrine and one of the first achievements of Islamic architecture, completed in 691 AD. It was built on Temple Mount, over a sacred stone, which in Jewish tradition is the location (the highest part of Mount Moriah) where Abraham was prepared to offer his son Isaac. On the other hand, The Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, is traditionally believed to have ascended into heaven, where he witnesses Paradise and Hell and sees "God enthroned and circumambulated by angels", from this exact site. In that sense, this location is sacred both to Muslims and Jews. There is great divergence regarding the symbolism of this particular Dome. However, it is commonly believed that the Dome (as well as the Rock located under it) celebrates Muhammad's ascension into Heaven during his Night Journey, despite the fact the "Dome's construction appears to predate the emergence of traditions identifying Jerusalem as the site of the Mi'raj." "Other scholars have posited an eschatological motive for the Dome's builders, arguing that the Dome's placement, architecture, and decorative motifs correspond to images associated with Islamic and Byzantine beliefs about Judgment Day and heaven."

Taj Mahal, Agra, India is enlisted on the World Heritage List and is also considered to be one of the Seven Wonders of the World, not only for its architectural magnificence but also due to the heart-warming love story behind it. Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan fell in love with Mumtaz Mahal, a Persian princess, at the age of fourteen. In 1612, they got married. Mumtaz Mahal died in 1631, while giving birth to their 14th child. In the memory of his beloved wife, Shah Jahan ordered the edification of a glorious monument as a tribute to her, the "Taj Mahal". The construction of the Taj Mahal, built entirely out of white marble, started in 1631 and was completed in 1653, having made use of the services of thousands of laborers and artists. Shah Jahan lies entombed along with his wife in the Taj Mahal. This love continues to attract people from around the world. The most spectacular feature is the dome that surmounts the tomb. Considering that the Taj Mahal was conceived as “a replica on earth of the house of the departed in paradise” ("May the abode of Mumtaz Mahal be paradise"), verse by the poet Bibadal Khan), one could easily assume that the magnificent dome represents, in fact, Heaven, or Shah Jahan's attempt to be spiritually bound to Heaven and his deceased wife. In that sense, “one of the most famous buildings in the Muslim tradition is a monument to love.”

Naturally, the examination of the story and symbolism behind these four domed architectural masterpieces could not possibly draw certain conclusions regarding Christians and Muslims' shared beliefs and spiritual goals. However, traditionally, whether in Christian or Islamic architecture, the dome represents either heaven itself or the communion of man with Heaven, Paradise or God. In that sense, it is safe to say that the confidence in some sort of greater existence and in the possibility of somehow reaching for that existence is common to most men, regardless of their religion.
MYTHICAL CRETE: TREADING BETWEEN DREAMS AND REALITY
by Grgo Vuletić
Karla Perković

This UNESCO project gave us the opportunity to visit the largest Greek island - Crete. Among the tourist attractions of Crete are the archeological sites at Knossos, Phaistos and many other places. Crete is the cradle of Western civilization. The island has a wealth of attractions and it is considered a true pearl of the Mediterranean. Homer tells us that the island once flourished with more than 90 settlements. One of them was the powerful kingdom of Knossos, where, more than 4000 years ago, a magnificent Minoan civilization, which is regarded as the earliest recorded European civilization, began to develop. Today, its remains are one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world. The island of Crete is wrapped up in an eternal myth evoked by the historical sights and adorned by charming diversity of its natural beauty: beautiful beaches, crystal clear waters, olive groves, hills, gorges and caves. Crete is the island of contrasts that we should all visit and enjoy its distinguished tradition and history. We had a wonderful experience in Greece. This was our first school trip and it was amazing. Greece is a unique country with a very famous history. During our stay on Crete, we had an opportunity to hear about historical sights and see them too. Crete has a lot of tourist attractions such as Ancient Konososs, an island of Spinalonga and the city of Heraclion. Our host families were also very nice. The thing we liked most was food. I tried Gyros several times and it was very delicious. I would recommend everyone to visit Crete.

As mentioned before, our host families were very kind and well behaved. We were actually really relaxed because our host families were so nice to us that they made us feel like a part of their family. I really enjoyed myself to the fullest even though we didn’t have enough free time, if you ask me, but other than that I’m more than satisfied.

We visited so many great places such as Spinalonga which is an island where the British brought the first generator so it was the first island in this part of the world to have electricity. We also visited Phaistos, a municipality in the south central Crete. Ancient
Phaistos was located about 5.6 km (3.5 mi) east of the Mediterranean sea. The name, Phaistos, survives from ancient Greek references to a city in Crete of that name, shown to be, in fact, at or near the current ruins.

Greece truly left a huge impression on us and we’re glad we got the chance to visit it. We truly hope we’ll get the chance to go there again someday because it is really beautiful. We are grateful for this opportunity for many reasons. First of all, there were a lot of students involved in this project and we’re glad they chose us for this trip because we really got to learn a lot about the Greek culture. We think this project really helped us all with a lot of things. Meeting other cultures and seeing the cultural differences between each of our countries, this project also taught us not to have any prejudices about different cultures, because at the end of the day we are all people and we can all have fun no matter where we come from even though we were raised differently. We hope we will get another opportunity to do these fun, but also educational activities through some future projects.
Chapter - Intangible Heritage

LAD’S DANCES IN ROMANIA

New entry Romanian UNESCO intangible heritage

by Oana Oltean
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Lad’s dances are a genre of Romanian folk dance, performed by men, mostly the young. It has been part of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2015. This genre of dance is remarkable especially for its unique moves – the spectacular hits with the palms on the boots and calves, the lively hand clapping, the finger snapping and the vigorous heel hits.

Although the lad’s dances are considered to be very old, we do not know exactly when they were first performed. It is very likely that the origins of Romanian lad’s dances date back to the Thracian culture, when the dances had a cultic function, being part of the religious life. There is an old Romanian saying about the lad’s dance – the higher a lad jumps during the dance, the wealthier his family’s harvest will be. This saying proves that, in Romanian culture, dancing still preserves prehistoric influences, such as the belief in its magic power upon agriculture.

The first written documents that describe this genre of Romanian dance date from the period of Austro-Hungarian domination in Transylvania. When young men were recruited into the army, there was a ceremonial: each of the Empire’s peoples would make a demonstration of their folk dance. The Romanians chose an impressive and spectacular dance in order to express their physical strength, but also the sorrow they felt at the idea of going to war at such a young age. This dance was „Bărbuncul”, one of the most famous lad’s dances, and its name comes from the verb „bewerbung”, in German, which means to recruit. Nowadays, „Bărbuncul” is still performed in central Transylvania.

The military origins of the lad’s dances are also visible in the complex choreography. In one of the dances, called „Haidăul”, the performers use a one meter long stick on which they lean on during their jumps, but the stick obviously symbolises the weapons used during the war.

The most important in a lad’s dance is the perfect harmony between music and the moves, and the dancers’ vigorous hits always have to synchronize with the rhythm. In „Bărbuncul”, the dance starts in a lively tempo and the men form a semicircle or, in some dances, a whole circle. Then, the rhythm becomes faster and faster and the choreography consists in high jumps, palms hitting the knees, boots and calves. Since the dance is an extremely energetic one, it also includes moments of break, when the music slows down and the moves are soft. The end of the dance is always the most dynamic and, usually it ends sudden, suggesting, probably, the way soldiers were given unexpected orders.

In the past, folk dances used to be performed only at festive occasions. Romanian peasants were very religious so, during abstinence periods (such as before Easter
or Christmas), weddings or any kind of joyful celebrations were strictly excluded. On Sundays or at Holidays the tradition in every village was to take a break from work, to put on their best traditional costumes and gather together at the richest man's house. Two or three boys, called „chezeşi”, were the ones who used to hire the musicians and the whole community was invited to dance. The traditional orchestra that played the music required at least three instruments: a violin, for the melodic line, a contrabass and a „braci”(similar to a small violin) for the rhythm.

For teenagers, dancing was the perfect occasion to socialise and meet their possible future partners, while their parents were watching them carefully. When a girl was first introduced in dance, this was the sign that she was ready for marriage. Also, for boys, lad’s dancing had a very important initiation role, which meant that they were considered real men.

At these festive occasions, lad’s dances became an opportunity for young men to show their talent, their physical strength and their position in society. Many lad’s dances such as „Tropotita” in Maramureş or „Haidăul” were, actually a competition, of course, in a playful manner, between the men who join it. At the beginning, the dancers form a semicircle, they first synchronise their moves but, suddenly, one of them jumps in front and starts doing some different, spectacular hops, hits and stretches with his legs, similar to a ballet performer. His gestures symbolise that he is daring the other men to prove the best among them. After the „rebel” goes back to his place, another one jumps in front and so the dance goes on. The best dancer was always very appreciated by the whole community, especially by the girls, so his chances to make a very good marriage were increasing. In contrast, the least talented dancer usually had to pay the drinks for the other lads in order to restore his reputation.

In order to emphasise the competition and to arouse the public’s interest – the adults and the girls sitting aside – the Romanian lad’s dance has another unique feature: the „strigături”, which means „shouts”. These are short and rhythmic lines improvised during dancing and intoned out loud. They are always joyful and, usually, ironic and humorous. Sometimes, the most daring boys would even make a love declaration to the girl who watches them and whom they want to impress, for example. Those „strigături” are most probably, other Thracian influences preserved during centuries.

Young men and girls had many pair dances or group mixed dances, but when the lad’s dance started the girls had to sit aside and watch them, so it was exclusively a men dance. An exception is the girl’s dance from Crihalma, which is quite similar to the lad’s dances, but girls cannot do such ample moves, because their clothing (the large skirts) does not allow them.

The traditional costume was very important for young people because it showed their social status. Although costumes from the same geographic area look similar, each village has its particular traditional model which distinguishes it. Women and girls were the ones who were sewing manually the traditional costumes and embroidering the collars and the sleeves with traditional models. It was an incredibly hard work, but the result was the one that proved their dedication and diligence. Young men in Transylvania have unique costumes – their hats are decorated with beautiful peacock feathers. Their role is to symbolise the physical strength of youth and they wore them during the dances. After marriage, men kept their peacock feathers for their sons and women covered their hair with a kerchief.

Nowadays, the folk dances don’t have the same context – the society is mostly
urban, its way of life has changed irreversibly, and traditional dances are being performed in front of a large public, with artistic and entertaining roles. Especially the lad’s dances mostly have very difficult choreographies, so they are performed by a ballet group, with a large orchestra. Only unmarried men used to join the dance but nowadays, in order to carry on the tradition of the dance, old men are also performers.

It is enough to watch them once in order to realise why those dances were included in the international intangible heritage. Dancing is one of the oldest art forms of mankind, and the lad’s dances have preserved even prehistoric features from generation to generation, since the Thracian culture, and they are still spectacular. The lad’s dances are unique in the world and they have been bringing joy and the sense of freedom for centuries now. Although they are now being performed in a much more formal context, people are still fascinated to watch them and whenever you visit a Romanian village you can easily find an old cheerful peasant ready to show what a real lad’s dance looks like.

Sources:
- an interview with ethnologist Smaranda Patricia Mureșan, specialty reviewer on traditional culture, Cultural Centre Bistrița Năsăud;
Chapter - Natural Heritage

Man and natural environment. A multifold interaction

by Christina Sofoulaki (Junior High School Student)

Abstract
Humans begin their lives in a natural environment which they share with animal and plant species, and throughout their history they have been interacting with it, responding to geological, ecological and climatic conditions, adapting their behavior and their environment to meet their needs. This interaction is generative and it is the reason behind the historical and cultural evolution of humanity but it is not without consequences. Nature is showing us its finite limitations and the need for the conservation of natural environment is linked to the restoration of our cultural, physical and spiritual health.

An interaction that generates history
Even since they walked the earth, humans have been adapting their surroundings to meet their needs. “Every human footprint on the environment, is a point for studying and clarification.” (Karali L. 2008). From the formation of the first civilizations to modern day countries, natural environment and human development has engaged in a never-ending process of mutual adjustment and change. In the Paleolithic era people depended entirely on the environment to survive; food, shelter and tools were all taken directly from nature. With the rise of agriculture in the Neolithic era, the first city-states appeared and the environment was more intensely exploited with the methods of farming and herding. During the Bronze and the Iron ages, large cities emerged mainly in areas near the sea or rivers or in vast plains and hills, security and facilitation of communication of people and goods being a determining factor for the selection of a suitable location. The natural environment completely defined the occupations of people; for example, people who live in a flat area mainly engaged in farming and agriculture, and in coastal areas, people were mainly fishermen. Accordingly, in a forest area people were engaged to forestry. The larger the populations became, the more heavily they came to depend on the resources of the area which came to suffer. Heavy deforestation for example, led to soil erosion and dams were built to control the rising level of the rivers. Man had to become creative in order to control the environment. During the 18th century, the great advancement of industry and the deterioration of life in the rural areas led to people flocking the cities or established trade networks. The natural environment was again directly affected since man processed the products he found in nature and the energy used for the processing of natural materials and for transportation was again drawn from nature. Depending on the energy sources that existed in an environment, man built factories that work with these energies. Human exploitation of the environment intensified as populations grew and as people migrated into new regions. New cities were created near coal factories or hydro power stations, oil deposits, rivers and ports. In recent centuries, human effects on the environment and the ability to master and exploit it increased with the development of more sophisticated technologies and the exploitation of new energy sources.
Human activity has consequences on the environment. But the environment also influences human activities. Environmental factors such as rainfall patterns, climate, and available flora and fauna shaped the methods of exploitation used in different regions. Natural phenomena like storms, earthquakes forced people to react. These natural phenomena can either be directly or not primarily caused by human actions but they influenced human behaviour as people had to respond to the new situation in an ongoing process of coadaptation and coevolution.

**An interaction that generates culture.**

Depending on the climate, living conditions, soil, and even the ecosystem in which a region belongs, the people who live there develop some habits. This has given birth to various civilizations (apparent in the physical development of man-made environment) and the set of values and behaviors that have come to constitute their culture. The land around which a civilization grew acquired landmarks of human intervention and creativity in the form of “cultural landscapes”. According to the definition of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2015), cultural landscapes are “cultural properties that represent the combined works of nature and of man... they are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal”. The very existence and necessity of institutions such as the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the referred World Heritage Convention acknowledges the responsibility of humanity to protect the offspring of its well-meant interaction with the environment (monuments, groups of buildings, sites,) as irreplaceable assets that constitute our cultural heritage. In the same framework, natural features and natural sites which are delineated as possessing “Outstanding Universal Value”, from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty, are defined as natural heritage worthy of special protection against the dangers which increasingly threatens it. So, World Heritage is considered both cultural and natural and the need for environmental conservation and sustainable development has been recognized and highlighted as a universal responsibility.

Conserving World Heritage natural sites can make a valuable contribution to the protection of the environment and its cultural and natural diversity. According to McNeeley. J (1992), cultural diversity and biological diversity need to be conserved together if either is to prosper. The long-seated knowledge of the local cultures and their behavior towards their immediate environment has a lot to teach us about conserving it and should be used as a resource for all humanity. In addition, the conservation of World Heritage Sites is strongly tied to the international effort for ecologically sustainable development since the protected area status is aligned with local community needs for resource use and economic survival. Equally important is the contribution of World Heritage conservation to dealing with the problem of the general deterioration of the environment as it addresses key issues such as polluted air, water and soil, global warming, depletion of natural sources, extinction of species and decline in biodiversity. (World Heritage in Young Hands. UNESCO 2002).

**An interaction that generates wellbeing.**

The influence of natural environment on human development is a subject not only of geological, geographical and historical interest but also for the discipline of psychology
and the study of human behavior. The beneficial impact of nature in our wellbeing has been noted and researched and findings suggest that what we are seeing, hearing, experiencing at any moment we are close to nature is changing not only our mood, but how our nervous, endocrine, and immune systems are working. According to an article on nature’s impact on our wellbeing published by the University of Minnesota, the stress of an unpleasant environment can cause feelings of anxiety, sadness, or helplessness. This in turn elevates the blood pressure, heart rate, and muscle tension and suppresses the immune system. A pleasing environment reverses that. Nature makes people happier, healthier, more energetic: “Nature is the fuel of the soul…a certain path to a better health might be spending more time in a natural environment” (Ryan et al. 2010). It increases creativity: “Four days of immersion in nature, and the corresponding disconnection from multi-media and technology, increases performance on a creativity, problem-solving task by a full 50% in a group of naive hikers” (Atchey et al., 2012). Has restorative effects on cognitive functioning (Berman, Jonides & Kaplan, 2008), improves mood and self-esteem (Barton & Pretty, 2010).

An interaction not to be taken for granted.

People’s manipulation of the natural environment is at the latter’s expense. Progress, in the form of full urbanization of cities and countryside, consumerism, competitiveness and dramatic technical and scientific achievements, come with consequences. Many scientists and environmental groups believe that the most significant environmental issues today result from burning fossil fuels for energy, leading to land and water pollution, ecosystem damage and most importantly, climate change. (Cochran, n.d), People have been inadvertently or deliberately burning forests, polluting seas and rivers, contaminating the soil and exhausting natural resources. In many cases, they seem to have turned their backs on the historical, cultural and social values that emanate from the natural scenery, taking too many things for granted.

On the positive side, scientists, academics, ecological movements, leading organisations in wildlife conservation, non-governmental environmental organisations, environmental activists, “green” political parties and international conventions have introduced (since the 60’s) terms such as “recycling”, “effects of global warming”, “protected species”, “national parks”, “environmental engineering”, “sustainable development” and “natural heritage conservation” in an effort to raise awareness to the damage “progress” has caused and the need to protect and work with the natural world instead of exploiting it.

Conclusion

People draw all aspects of their life from the environment. They turn to nature for their survival, progress, cultural development, physical and mental health. Even if it is not possible anymore to bring back the old, lost havens of our popular cultures, that people nowadays are becoming reminiscent about, we need to retrace our footsteps in the earth’s history and copy the best practices, learn from our cultural and natural heritage and cherish it as something priceless and irreplaceable. For all our technological and scientific advantage and the accumulation of wealth, allowing for our heritage to deteriorate or disappear, would impoverish all humanity.

References


Chapter - Education

Improvement of the Writing skills

USING UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract
Writing is a complex task that involves the use of many cognitive processes. The purpose of this article is to show that writing can be made meaningful and approachable by using the vast resources that the UNESCO World Heritage offers to us. If teaching is done properly and the students are active, by the end of high school, they will know how to write coherently about a wide range of topics, will show an advanced control of grammatical structures and vocabulary, and will not forget about the purpose of the writing and the audience to whom they write. Moreover, learning about the tangible and intangible heritages will teach them to appreciate cultural heritages and will give them a sense of belonging to a united multicultural European society.

Introduction
Writing in any language is a difficult skill to acquire. What is more, when students are required to write in a foreign language, it is understandable that many of them become anxious or discouraged if they do not experience success every time they attempt writing. However, good writing can change things for the better and can have an immediate and sometimes dramatic effect on our lives. Good writing can entertain, inspire, persuade and sometimes even move the reader to tears. We all know that such writing requires a real profundity of experience, feelings, and subtle skill.

Therefore, both student and teacher should approach writing carefully. As teaching writing is an ongoing process, the writing instructions cannot be focused only on repetitive in-class activities, they must include also real life, out-of-class opportunities and should contain a variety of purposes and audiences. Simply completing exercises in the workbooks is inadequate if students are not producing regularly meaningful texts themselves. Moreover, students should be encouraged to get involved personally in the writing activities in order to make their learning experience realistic, valuable and long lasting.

The Importance of Writing in the Classroom
Normally, in the classroom the writing activity is made up of three main stages: controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing. In the early stages of the writing activity, paragraphs with blanks to be filled can be considered a controlled composition. A composition in which the teacher provides situations and helps the class to prepare the written work, either through written or oral assistance, is known as a guided composition. A free composition usually means a composition in which only the title is provided and
everything else is done by the students. Generally, the controlled stage concerns itself with the production of accurate language in context, the guided stage with the organization of material which is given, and the free stage with the production by the student of both content and language. (Broughton, 2003:118)

Although many teachers prefer to give their students controlled or guided writing exercises, Jeremy Harmer in his book, *How to Teach Writing* (2007), describes how important it is for the teacher to engage students in interesting and stimulating writing tasks which involve them not just intellectually but emotionally as well. Such activities, as he describes, will amuse them, intrigue them, or make them feel good. When students are “switched on” by engaging tasks there is a good chance that some of their doubts about writing will disappear. What engages them may vary from one student to another, but clearly the stimulus we provide – to encourage them to write – will make a difference. Writing tasks can be initiated and conducted in a number of different ways, and if we are to build the writing habit in the greatest number of our students, we need to be aware of the variety of tastes and interests they have. Furthermore, in order to be good writers, students must be given the opportunity to write every day in a supportive, risk-free environment. The teacher should provide a great variety of writing tasks for the students to write creatively about themselves and their world.

Freire (cited by Grainger, T, 2005) reinforces the idea of embracing creativity in the classroom: “Teaching kids to read and write should be an artistic event. Instead, many teachers transform these experiences into a technical event, into something without emotions, without creativity – but with repetition. Many teachers work bureaucratically when they should work artistically.” Therefore, creativity needs to be encouraged in schools. We, as teachers, are responsible to create places in which students learn to think and make thinking joyful. And we have to accept that joy matters in everything our students do. The strategies that the teachers adopt should support creativity and depth of understanding. An essential part of preparing students for life is helping them see that life is interesting, it is worth living and above all it is filled with the potential of joy. If we want our students to be successful in their life, they will need more than just knowledge; they will need skills, attitudes and the ability to solve problems. They will need to see varied viewpoints and understand people coming from different cultures and civilizations. They will need to think flexibly and with imagination. In one word, they need to be creative.

Moreover, encouraging students to identify their own questions can increase their involvement and intentionality. Sometimes teachers need to stand back and let the students take the lead, but support them as they adventure into the unknown or encounter problems. Teachers should seek and exploit the full range of collaboration through pair work, group work, class work, as well as partnerships with parents, actors, poets, and writers. Thus, students will be involved in generating ideas through interaction, gathering knowledge from each other, evaluating their work and that of others. (Cremin, 2009:8)

Students who can write well have in their grasp the key to belonging fully to the school community as writing enables students to enter profoundly in their studies. Instead of groping for words, the students who can write well have the potential to achieve, both in their coursework and in real life. Students who are able writers can develop and express ideas that are uniquely their own, in a style that conforms to conventions of genre and form, while it remains original. Good writing skills help the students gain access and succeed in their chosen career, facilitating communication with colleagues and competitors and negotiation through all the complexities of adult life, public and private life, as citizen or
employee (Ahmad, R. and McMahon, K., 2006:3-4).

Taking all these aspects into consideration, how can we encourage our students to start writing as well as teach them about the importance of preserving the intangible and tangible cultural heritages? In the following, there are some activities designed for primary and secondary school levels which can motivate students to write and enjoy the writing activity. By using the following activities, teachers will not only make their lessons more attractive, interesting, and student-friendly but also they will develop their students' creativity and their ability to experiment with ideas and new information.

**Improving Writing Skills in Primary School**

It is a known fact that young children are naturally curious, they want to explore, to discover their immediate surroundings and learn from everything they do. If during their explorations they experience pleasure and success, they will want to learn more. During these early years children form attitudes about learning that will last for a lifetime. Children who receive the right sort of support and encouragement from their parents and teachers will be creative and adventurous learners throughout their lives.

Primary school students enjoy working with pictures, love drawing, cutting out shapes and colouring. All these can be successfully integrated in the writing activities in order to make the exercises more interesting and more student-oriented.

**Writing cards**

When visiting different UNESCO heritage sites, students can be encouraged to send postcards or write short letters/emails to their friends. Besides working on their writing skills it will also provide both student and beneficiary with a great deal of information.

**Comic strips**

With their bright colours and funny characters, comics are more visually appealing than traditional texts. No wonder that they can be transformed into a powerful tool in the EFL classrooms. The activities that involve using such images are not only fun but also inspire students and enhance reading and writing skills. For example, students can bring to school pictures of UNESCO Heritage sites and then, in groups, they can create comic strips with speech bubbles where their characters will ‘talk’, giving useful information about the chosen sites. After they have finished, the comic strips can be displayed in the classroom so that the students can read them as often as they like.

**Projects**

Projects allow students to discover something new and unknown before. Confidence, curiosity, creativity and imagination are features that projects develop and exploit. Even though at this stage the students’ knowledge of the language is limited, they can still be encouraged to find information on the Internet about tangible or intangible heritages and have a short presentation in front of the class. Moreover, working in pairs or groups will make their projects have better end results and they can benefit from peer interaction.

**Improving Writing Skills in Secondary School**

At this stage, students have an increased ability to write in different forms for different purposes and audiences; write coherently about a wide range of topics; organize
different kinds of text in ways which help the reader; craft writing which shows a developing control of grammatical structure and of differentiated vocabulary; write in style which is appropriate for the purpose, audience and subject matter; know when and how to plan, draft, redraft, revise and proofread their work; understand the nature and functions of written language. (Brindley 2005:153).

The following activities are only a selection of what teachers can do to improve their students' writing and at the same time to boost their knowledge about the world heritage.

**Writing stories**

Gail Tompkins (1982) offers seven reasons why children should write stories. These reasons are: to entertain, to foster artistic expression, to explore functions and values of writing, to stimulate imagination, to clarify thinking, to search for identity, and to learn to read and write. We want our students to think creatively, to question, and research in order to perfect their writing skills. Giving our students pictures with UNESCO world heritage sites and asking them to imagine that they are there and tell us their story will make the writing experience more meaningful and realistic.

Teachers can provide students with drawings or pictures of UNESCO ancient heritage sites without telling them what they represent or their history, and can ask the students to write a story about what they think had happened there. After that, the students can search for the information about the sites on the Internet and learn the real story or they can try to find similarities between their story and the actual one.

**Tour guide**

Resenbrink (1987) advocates that children can learn that writing can be like play, and suggests that taking imaginary trips, including their friends in their stories can spark inspiration and appetite for story writing. Moreover, encouraging writing stories contributes to the overall development of the child's cognitive and communication skills which should be continually developed through middle and high school years and beyond.

Students can be asked to imagine that they are tour guides and have to write the presentation of a historical site as captivatingly as possible and then ‘take their colleagues on a tour’ by presenting it to their classmates. As a follow-up activity, students can transform their presentations into descriptive essays and collect them in a handmade binded book.

**Brochures and travel guides**

A good brochure is well-written and persuasive, it gives sufficient information to keep the reader's interest from the start to finish. Writing brochures at school encourages and teaches students to practise writing for a specific audience and to keep the purpose of writing constantly in their minds.

Students can be asked to write a travel guide of the most important UNESCO monuments in their country by creating brochures and writing articles which later can be gathered into a travel guide format.

**School magazine**

Students will most certainly write articles at some point during their high school years and then, they will have to know how to persuade, inform or challenge the reader. But above all, they will have to make the article captivating and enjoyable.
As a class project, students can be assigned to design a class magazine in order to perfect their skills in writing articles. The class will choose an editor who coordinates, collects all the articles, gives the final touch and prints the magazine. All the other students will contribute with a piece of writing that is interesting and informative to read. The topic can be about UNESCO tangible and intangible heritages in a particular country presented in such a way as to raise awareness on the importance of preserving cultural and natural world heritages and put emphasis on why it is essential to pass them on to the next generation.

Advertisements

By writing advertisements the students have the chance to practise persuasive writing. Teachers need to articulate how persuasion in media can affect and manipulate people’s thinking and should show ways for students to develop awareness of persuasive writing. Thus, students can be asked to write advertisements about the tangible and intangible heritages in their county or country, put them up on the school notice boards or hand them to students or to passers-by on the streets.

Diary entries

World Heritage sites are places of mystery, wonder and exceptional examples of mankind’s cultural achievements. When students visit these sites they can record their most intimate thoughts, feelings and emotions which have been triggered by the impact of being there where history was once written. As diaries can contain a variety of different kinds of information from describing events, observing the world, writing about feelings and reactions, or places the person has seen, they provide the students with many writing possibilities. The writing is informal, that means the sentences do not have to follow strict grammar rules, words can be shortened, however, punctuation and spelling are still important and the ideas need to be clearly expressed. Although the writing is informal, students can improve their writing skills and at the same time they can become aware of the importance of preserving such areas of common interest.

Rescue missions

The future of our heritage depends largely on today’s children and their understanding and perception of the world. It is of utmost importance that students keep in mind that the natural and cultural heritages are irreplaceable and once they are destroyed or forgotten it will be impossible to bring them back. By erasing historical sites from the map of the world or people’s conscious minds instead of preserving and cherishing them, our children’s future will be more barren and they will be deprived of the knowledge and wisdom they provide.

Therefore, teachers can design tasks that will require students to devise a plan and describe ideas of how they can save some of the tangible heritages not necessarily in their own countries but anywhere in the world.

Conclusions

In order to improve their writing skills, throughout school years, students need to write in different forms for different audiences and purposes and should have ample opportunities to produce different pieces of writing. They need to learn that writing is a tool of thinking which involves generating, exploring and organizing ideas in order to offer
information through explanations, descriptions and persuasive arguments.

When students actually write, they think of things that they did not have in mind before they began writing. The act of writing generates an overflow of ideas. The writing techniques described were all designed to put students in different situations and contexts that triggered ideas and counteracted the “I don’t know what to write about” problem.

We can conclude that just as reading a lot helps to become better readers, so the more students write, the better and more fluent they become as writers. They will expand their range of written expression and will write with greater ease and speed. Moreover, if we manage to teach our students to appreciate and to contribute to the conservation of the national and international heritages while focusing on writing, we will ensure that our values and traditions will be passed on to the next generations.

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Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Developing Competences in Higher Education
by Feyza ÇUHADAROĞLU

Abstract

Education is paramount when trying to enable a change in values and attitudes towards sustainability. Higher education in faculties of education plays an important role in working toward this change because of its impact on future and practicing teachers in the school systems. This study inquires into the current role of education for sustainable development (ESD) in higher education. The results of the study suggest the importance of experiential, inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional learning, of problem-based learning around real-life issues with community and the natural environment, and of building partnerships with colleagues, students, and community organizations.

1. Introduction

1.1 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Sustainable development is concerned with the creation and the sustaining of the conditions for current and future generations of humans to live well on this planet. The notion of sustainable development was introduced by Brown (1981) and then adopted by the UN’s World Commission on Environment and Development: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 43).

The report by WCED (1987) recognized that “sustainable development requires changes in values and attitudes towards environment and development” and that education has to play a central role in achieving those changes in values and attitudes. Educational research has studied education as “a critical tool in the transformation towards sustainability”

The research identified three domains of the educational process relevant for such transformation: first, the content of what is being taught. Second, the pedagogy, with some scholars suggesting that sustainability education requires a constructivist approach to teaching (e.g., Firth & Winter, 2007), an ecopedagogy that “overcomes the anthropocentrism of traditional pedagogies” (Gadotti, 2010, p. 205), and even a complete new paradigm of teaching to account for a holistic perspective on education for sustainability (e.g., Sterling, 2001); and third, the education and professional development of those who are ultimately the ones responsible for implementing ESD, the teachers.

1.2 The Problem: Reorienting Teacher Education Toward Sustainability

The reorientation of teacher education, which is sometimes called mainstreaming of education for sustainability in teacher education programs “refers to the incorporation of ESD philosophy, content and activities within an initial teacher education system to such an extent that ESD becomes embedded within all policies and practices” (Ferreira et al., 2007, p. 226).

Based on reports by members of the International Network of Teacher Education Institutions, Hopkins and McKeown (2005, p. 30) have identified four classes of challenges to the reorienting of teacher education toward ESD (for some systematic empirical support of the list, see Down, 2006; Falkenberg & Babiuk, in press; and Firth & Winter, 2007).
These four classes of challenges are:
• lack of awareness, support, and resources at the teacher education institutional level;
• lack of prioritizing sustainability in the educational community;
• the common orientation when reforming education systems and structures (which does not give consideration to education for sustainability and is generally undertaken within the traditional disciplinary curriculum frameworks, which makes the incorporation of the transdisciplinary education for sustainability a challenge);
• lack of establishing and sustaining partnerships (lack of partnerships with communities in which education for sustainability is taking place and lack of coordinated efforts between different branches of governments beside ministries of education).

Higher Education for Sustainable Development
Universities as important actors for shaping the future of the world society in terms of sustainable development “by addressing sustainability through their major functions of education, research and outreach” (Fadeeva/Mochizuki 2010: 250)

Future-oriented Higher Education should promote the development of such key competencies which enable individuals to contribute to sustainable development(cf. Adomβentetal.,2007,2009;Barthetal.,2007;UNESCO, development (cf. Adomβent et al., 2007, 2009; Barth et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2004)

Issues of interest:
Concept of (key) competencies
Selection of sustainability key competencies
Development of sustainability key competencies
Assessment of sustainability key competencies

Concept of (Key) Competencies
From input to outcome orientation:
Background: increasing complexity, uncertainty and dynamics of social change and the associated demands on the individuals
Abilities to self-organise oneself become more important
Competencies = self-organisation dispositions
Acquisition of competencies as central goal of education

Concept of (Key) Competencies
Competencies are individual dispositions which include cognitive, affective, volitional and motivational elements facilitate self-organised action in various complex situations, dependent - dependent on the given situation and context ; are acquired during action –on the basis of experience and reflections.
Key competencies
-are understood as multifunctional and context-overall competencies
-are considered to be particularly crucial for implementing societal goals pypggg important in a defined normative framework;
-are important for all individuals.
Selection of Sustainability Key Competencies
Question: Which individual key competencies are crucial for understanding ypg central challenges facing the world society and for facilitating its development towards a more
sustainable future, and thus should be fostered through future-oriented university teaching and learning.

Different approaches for the selection of sustainability key competencies: e.g.: shaping competence (de Haan 2006), sustainability literacy (Parkin et al., 2004), sustainability skills (Hopkins/McKeown, 2002; Stibbe, 2009), „Professional Competences for Sustainable Development“ (Martens et al., 2010), OECD’s DeSeCo key competencies (Rychen/Salganik, 2001, 2003)

**Shaping Competence**

- Competency in anticipatory thinking
- Competency in interdisciplinary work
- Competency in cosmopolitan perception and change of perspectives
- Competency in handling incomplete and complex information
- Participatory competency
- Competency in cooperation
- Competency in dealing with conflicts of goals
- Competency in self-motivation and motivating others
- Competency in distanced reflection on individual and cultural models
- Competency in independent action
- Competency in ethical action
- Capacity for empathy and solidarity.

**Twelve key competencies crucial for sustainable development:**

1. Competency for systemic thinking and handling of complexity
2. Competency for anticipatory thinking
3. Competency for critical thinking
4. Competency for acting fairly and ecologically
5. Competency for cooperation in (heterogeneous) groups
6. Competency for participation
7. Competency for empathy and change of perspective
8. Competency for interdisciplinary work
9. Competency for communication and use of media
10. Competency for planning and realising innovative projects
11. Competency for evaluation
12. Competency for ambiguity and frustration tolerance.

**Development of Sustainability Key Competencies**

Universities have to become a “learning academia” (Adomssent 2006: 13) – they should create teaching and learning settings which can be characterised by aspects as inter- and transdisciplinarity, participation, problem-orientation as well as the linking of formal and informal learning and, thus, should facilitate the development of key competencies needed for dealing with (un)sustainable development.

**General didactic considerations**

Competencies can not be taught, but can only be (further) developed through practical experience.

This means for education for sustainable development that it has to create settings in which students can make their own experiences, can try things, have organise things for themselves and have to cope with challenges (learning by doing).

Therefore particularly suitable appear the following didactic approaches:

- Self-directed learning
- Project-based learning (projects in the local environment / in serious situations)
- Promotion of participation, dialogue and self-reflection
- Multi-perspective and interdisciplinary thinking and working.

**Didactic Principles**

Vision orientation, orientation towards action and reflection, discovery learning, systemic
Minor “Sustainability Humanities”
Dealing with sustainability issues
Students from cultural studies, economic psychology, administration, economics, engineering,
Analysing complex systems, scenario development, transdisciplinary projects
The Minor course facilitates the development of sustainability key competencies

Assessment of Sustainability Key Competencies
In general, lack of research on competence assessment in higher education (Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia/Kuhn 2010), basic research concerning theoretically as well as empirically sound models of competence structures, competence levels, and competence development is still required“ (Koeppen et al. 2008: 64). Only a few approaches for assessing the development of sustainability key competencies (cf. Bormann/de Haan 2008; Rost2005). Existing approaches focus on cognitive dispositions (cf. Eggert/Bögeholz 2010; Lauströer 2005; Rost et al. 2003; Klieme et al. 2010; Klieme/Leutner 2006) Need for integration and modeling of non-cognitive dispositions, particularly heavily abstracting and generalised key competencies face the problem that key factors of these competencies are hardly measurable. As key competencies are context-overall competencies, for their assessment different methods have to be used in different contexts.

Conclusion
Universities should integrate HESD in their curricula in order to enable future professionals to cope with issues of SD in their future fields of work. Results of the study show an international common ground for the definition and selection of SD key competencies. In particular important are competencies for systemic thinking and handling of complexity, anticipatory thinking and critical thinking. For developing these key competencies, new teaching and learning approaches are required. Further research on the assessment of sustainability key competencies is needed.

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ICT in Educational Context

ICT in the Context of Czech Primary Education
by Jan Lorencovič

The aim of this paper is to introduce the concept of information and communication technologies (ICT) education in the Czech educational context, namely, in Czech elementary schools. The text clearly presents the system of the process of ICT education, its place in the curriculum, legislative support as well as ICT in education of pupils with special educational needs.

ICT in educational process

The introduction of technologies into basic education provides substantial support for and improvement of the work of teachers. Teachers can use the technologies when preparing the lessons. Apart from using scanners and copiers to create materials, they can prepare multimedia educational materials in electronic form using text and graphical editors or programs for processing photos and videos. Hyperlinks to other resources can also be inserted into these presentations. Various forms of presentation of educational materials make lessons clearer and more interesting for the learners and also facilitate lesson planning. ICT can be applied in lessons in forms of presentations, use of interactive whiteboards, educational software, access to online tests, allowing information retrieval on the Internet, etc. Technologies allow teachers to communicate materials to pupils through various media; web sites, email, and others. The produced materials can easily be adapted to different needs of learners. Technologies allow a quick and easy way to update and store materials including inserting and storing links to other learning resources in any form. Besides presenting in lessons, teachers can make the materials tailored to individuals accessible to all pupils in the class, the students then actively work with these materials. Through video conferencing it is possible to mediate to learners discussions with experts in various fields. Technologies provide educators with a simple possibility to store archive and share with other teachers and school management for example learners’ results. What is of the highest importance is the communication between the participants in the education process, which is simpler and faster due to technologies. ICT can also contribute to the professional development of teachers.

Technologies help solve problems; pupils gather information and can analyse data to help them find solutions; ICT support creativity of students. Within various projects learners can use a range of tools and then present their skills. ICT foster autonomous learning and act as an important factor in motivating pupils. They have a very important position in teaching pupils with special educational needs.

Coordinator for information and communication technologies at elementary school

The position of ICT coordinator represents a systematic element in implementing ICT into the curriculum of Czech elementary schools. The position is anchored in the Czech legislation, specifically Decree 317/2005 adapted by Decree/ 412/2006, which in § 9 states: “Study for the performance of specialized activities: a) Coordination in the field of information and communication technologies.”

This Decree specifies for teachers performing this position conditions to be included into the third career stage. These condition specifically include professional
qualification and meeting other qualifications under the aforementioned § 9 of this Decree and three-year teaching practice. In describing the position there is stated “Methodical and specialized consulting services provided to teachers.” The main work of the ICT coordinator should include:

1. to assist colleagues methodologically in the integration of ICT into lessons of most subjects;
2. to recommend and coordinate further ICT training of teaching staff;
3. to coordinate the use of ICT in education;
4. to coordinate purchase and update of software;
5. to prepare and implement ICT plan for schools in accordance with its educational program;
6. to coordinate the school information system.

Educational area - Information and Communication Technologies - in Czech elementary schools

Czech educational and political authorities repeatedly stressed the role of ICT in education at elementary schools. The introduction of a separate educational area Information and Communication Technologies into the new curriculum for primary schools can be considered as an evidence of this emphasis.

Description of the educational area as a part of the Framework Educational Program for Primary Education

The educational area Information and Communication Technologies enables all pupils to achieve a basic level of information literacy – to acquire elementary skills in using computers and modern information technologies, to become familiar with the world of information, to work with information in a creative way and to use it in their further education and practical life. Given the increasing need for the acquisition of basic skills of working with computers, the educational area of Information and Communication Technologies was introduced as a mandatory part of basic education at stages 1 and 2. In the information society the acquired skills become a prerequisite for the labour market and a condition for efficient development of professional and leisure activities.

Mastering computer technologies, especially quick search for and processing information using the Internet and other digital media, allows pupils to “learn anywhere and anytime,” it takes the burden of memory while allowing for the use of a far greater number of data and information than before, accelerates the updating of knowledge and complements standard teaching texts and materials.

The skills acquired in the educational area of Information and Communication Technologies allow pupils to apply computer technologies with a wide range of educational software and information sources in all educational areas of their basic education. This application level goes beyond the content of the educational area of Information and Communication Technologies and becomes part of all educational areas of basic education.

Aims of the educational area

Education in this area is aimed at forming and developing key competencies by guiding pupils towards:
1. recognizing the role of information and information activities and using modern information and communication technologies;
2. understanding the flow of information from its generation, storage on a medium, transfer,
processing, search to its usage;
3. ability to formulate their request and using algorithmic thinking when interacting with computers;
4. comparing information and knowledge from a large number of information sources, thereby achieving greater credibility of found information;
5. using computer technology, application and education software to increase the effectiveness of their learning activities and to rationalize the organization of work;
6. creative use of software and hardware resources when presenting the results of their work;
7. understanding the function of computer technology as a means of simulation and modelling natural and social phenomena and processes;
8. respecting intellectual property rights in the use of software;
9. commitment of responsible and ethical approach to inappropriate contents appearing on the Internet or other media;
10. friendly work with computers.

Advantages of using ICT in teaching pupils with special educational needs
• Individualization of instruction - technologies allow educators to monitor all learners together, while having planned the lessons individually for individual students with diverse educational needs. Children can work independently with pre-prepared materials, or directly in an electronic environment, if the school conditions allow that.
• Compensation of common activities is more efficient due to use of ICT. Learners who are unable to perform common school activities using standard teaching aids have through various programs and facilities the opportunity to compensate for their handicap. For example, for physically disabled children, the computer program can compensate for the inability of the child to write in the common way.
• Re-education is a system of special educational procedures, which contribute to improving performance in the affected functions. Using special programs or audio-visual technologies allows the teacher to work effectively with individuals within a class; pupils find using technologies in the classroom appealing and often funny. The diversity of available technologies enables children perception of the subject matter in an interactive way involving multiple senses, which facilitates understanding a problem and remembering the taught matter.
• Diagnosis is not directly an educational method; it is an examination of the pupil in a special pedagogical centre. The examination must be done in order to assess the mental and intellectual level of a child and evaluate their personality. Nevertheless, diagnosis is an integral part of the educational process; accurate diagnosis helps determine the proper learning and teaching methods for individuals in the form of a report for the educational institution. Based on this report a school prepares an educational plan for a child with special educational needs.

The report may refer to:
• school readiness, school attendance delay (§ 37 of the Education Act no. 561/2004 Coll.),
• optimal placement in the educational process,
• placement of children, pupils and students with special educational needs (with disabilities) into education,
• placement in another way of compulsory school attendance - individual education,
• placement in the education of pupils with severe mental disabilities, and
• career counselling for pupils with special learning needs.

• Using technologies and software enables educators to create special teaching materials and aids that supplement conventional teaching aids or serve as an alternative where it is not possible to use standard tools. The use of ICT should be a natural part of education of pupils with special educational needs. Technologies have greatly motivating function, teach learners to correct their own mistakes and increase autonomy.

• Motivation is a crucial argument for the use of ICT in the educational process of children with special educational needs. For many disabled pupils using technologies is the only way to carry out activities that are common for most of us. On the other hand, using technologies may also be motivating for teachers.

• Administration in electronic form considerably simplifies the work of teachers in these areas:
  • profile of a learner in electronic form and ability to track and compare the progress of learning and adaptation to their level;
  • learner’s portfolio with the possibility to monitor their progress within the educational process;
  • archiving aids for pupils in electronic form;

An ICT plan of a school
Creating an ICT plan can help schools improve the equipment with ICT resources and promote further education of teachers in ICT. The ICT coordinator participates dominantly in creating the plan.

ICT school plan describes the current situation, the goals that the school wants to achieve in accordance with the standards of ICT services in the school in reference to ICT equipment as well as the planned way to achieve them. The plan is processed for a period of 2 years. The plan also describes the range of ICT usage in individual subjects. Let us have a look at what this plan has to contain and what the ICT coordinator needs to take into account:

Existing condition
• the total number of pupils in the school and individual stages,
• the total number of teaching staff of the school, number of trainees at level Z, P0, P, S,
• the total number of classrooms, number of computer classrooms, of specialized classrooms and of general classrooms equipped with access points,
• the total number of PC workstations in the school, the number of work stations in the computer labs, professional and general classrooms, and the number of workstations for teachers,
• an overview of the age of workstations and estimated time of termination of their operation,
• way of securing access points in the school building (computer network, wireless, ...),
• way of securing server services,
• way of providing connection to the Internet,
• description of the standard PC workstation for a pupil, including software,
• description of the standard PC workstation for a teacher, including software, and
• overview of paid educational applications, respectively. paid information sources.

**Target condition**
• in a similar structure as the description of the current situation;
• statement if the target state meets the required indicators;
• way to achieve the target condition;
• purchase, further equipment or rent of workstations and peripherals in individual years;
• purchase, further equipment or rent of educational applications, respectively information resources in individual years;
• plan for training teachers in individual years.

**Conclusion**
Information and communication technologies are an integral part of modern civilization. Preparing students to use ICT is an important part of the curriculum of elementary school. Czech school curriculum has enough resources to support the implementation of ICT in education and with no difference for pupils with special educational needs.

**Resources**
The use of ICT as an educational tool to consolidate democratic values and awareness of European citizenship: an experience

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Abstract:
Working inside the frame of the Erasmus + UNESCO Heritage project has enabled us to count every day on technological devices in our didactic choices and to find strategies to develop an intercultural education both through the co-operative use of ICT tools and the production of educational material. ICT-based activities have proved to be a catalysing basis, founding different processes which imply the change of educational performances, such as a more democratic communication inside the class-group and a more tolerant, respectful relationship between the students.

Key words: technological devices, ICT skills, ICT-based activities, democratic communication

1. Introduction: setting of the activities

Castelnovo ne’ Monti, where our school is located, is a small town stretching in the centre of the mountain area in the province of Reggio Emilia (Italy) at an altitude of about 700 m. It happens to be a multifunctional centre able to support the economic activities of all the mountain villages spread around it and to offer a number of essential facilities to the people living in the area, one of the most important of them being the school service. As a matter of fact, Castelnovo ne’ Monti represents a catchment area for all the young people dwelling around it as far as 30 - 50 km. away.

The working activities of the inhabitants are connected to the territory and are very diversified: most people are employed in the agricultural or cattle raising sectors, some others in the service industry, some of them are factory workers and they travel every day to the bigger towns nearby, while others are professionals or found a job as employers in agencies, offices or departments. This is the reason why the cultural and social background of our students is so different and in our school the students’ community reflects all these multifaceted contexts.

This situation results in sometimes high, but more often low levels of educational achievement leading, the latter, to the loss of a number of students in the educational system as they choose to give up studying and leave school before getting the diploma, in order to start looking for a job or working in the family business (mainly farming or cattle raising).

The Erasmus + Project, proposing an intercultural and technological education, was offered to our students as an innovative alternative to achieve didactic targets connected to a different way to promote knowledge and with the aim, from our side, of trying to contrast the general school dropout. This project is deeply involved in a larger perspective that has been promoted in recent years by the Italian Educational Department which has
boosted initiatives and programs focused on educational activities\(^1\) based on intercultural and technological didactic practices considered essential for building knowledge, skills, attitudes, competences, through the recognition of the value of cultural diversity.

2. The Italian team’s experience

Thanks to the Erasmus + UNESCO Heritage Project we have promoted in our school several strategies for developing communication skills using social networks (especially the following: Facebook, Wikispaces, E-Twinning) and technological tools such as: Prezi, PPT presentations, e-books, e-lessons, softwares to create puzzles, Google Map, websites etc. These sites helped us to do lots of very interesting activities, but the importance of technology for the improvement of our students’ learning is nowadays a debated topic. Technology is essential but its correct fruition implies the need to be perfectly aware of its potentiality as well as of its negative aspects so as not to become ‘addicted’ to it. It implies thinking and being aware of the consequences of our work including ethical implications. We have at our disposal fantastic devices but we are submerged by mass of information to synthetize, organise, catalogue. We are offered every day a huge amount of opportunities to exploit: it is really difficult and tiring to manage all this. And we cannot forget that human body is not a machine, it has a biological rhythm, psychological needs that go far beyond anything a sophisticated equipment could ever program. (That stated, we can assure that we admired, during the mobility to Crete, a robot named Penelope dancing the Macarena!). Nowadays machines are incredibly important: they help us doing dangerous, complex or extremely precise works, so, as a consequence, one of the challenges of our society is that we all need to become specialists in order to manage the machine work and not to be managed by it. This is the reason why we appreciated one of the most important objectives of the UNESCO Heritage project being to promote the use of ICT-tools and technological devices. We observed our students working and noticed that:

1. No matter the social and cultural background they had, most of them spoke the same language (related to technology),

2. The technological skills were evenly distributed: again, no matter what the social or cultural background was, everyone had some special abilities, or competences, or extra-new information, or tricks to share with the group,

3. In front of a computer (or I-pad, or LIM etc.) instead of a book, all our students showed to be willing and ready to help each other to learn how to manage the device, to share knowledge and competences, to solve problems. In certain occasions they even helped the teachers with programs and applications.

These considerations led us to the conclusion that ICT devices helped to consolidate democratic values inside our community. As a matter of fact, students that were not considered brilliant gained new respect and found a more proper role inside the class group thanks to their acknowledged technological skills discovered during the development of the project: we can state that in a certain measure the use of ICT-tools abolished social and

cultural differences and promoted a more democratic communication inside the groups of students that worked together to do the activities related to the UNESCO Heritage program.

The consolidation of democratic values, but this is more obvious, was improved also because the technological devices set contact between students from the different nationalities arising curiosity, interests, desire to face new ways of thinking so developing tolerance and desire to deepen their knowledge. And to confront, to discuss about ideas different from ours is the core of democracy.

Both teachers and students used ICTs during the workshops, they studied and planned the application of new didactic methodologies that could provide interesting developments in education. They offered a new dimension for the technological use of ICTs in education and contributed to the access, the distribution, the application of knowledge as well as the competences to share with a large number of students. For example, thanks to the information sources, students could analyse and communicate their learning products even if physically very distant from each other from a geographical point of view. The activities aroused questions and debates about the countries they were becoming acquainted with, the people, the history, the works of art etcetera and we noticed that they started to focus their thoughts not only from the point of view of their country but on a European perspective. They fantasized about working in some European countries, asked about the validity of their diploma abroad, began to enlarge their horizon to farther borders beyond their family, town, country. For our students, who are so connected with their traditions, their world, their territory we considered this a first sign of a rising awareness of a European identity.

It's important to say that in our experience ICTs were considered not only as communication resources (to exchange knowledge) or tools to solve problems, but especially as cognitive elements that improved the creation of relationships both between students and teachers. From this point of view, ICTs were able to offer models of a cognitive education put at anyone's disposal, it opened for anyone new contents and focused on the collaborative production and exchange of knowledge. We think that this goal is directly related to the birth of a large European learning community based on the principle which states that everyone can contribute to the advancement of the knowledge in the educational process.

We have realized that the most important contribution would come from teachers from different countries, but the response of the students exceeded our expectations. Students produced and shared materials in videos, texts, PPTs, audios, pictures. One of the most important results was the acquisition of a new way of working, in which all the students are active agents in the learning process as members of a community where knowledge is socially generated and shared. During the workshops in each country students and teachers experienced that collaborative work could open opportunities to establish long lasting links and relationships among the participants. Everyone realized that the work inside a learning community brought a great number of opportunities for dialogue and intercultural interaction, despite the cultural and linguistic diversity. It is important to keep in mind that the continuity of such interventions depends largely on the possibility of providing people with technological possibilities for the exchange,
dissemination and creation of culturally appropriate content. This experience shows the need to use ICTs not only as a tool of information management, but as a technology for individual and collective expression centred on intercultural dialogue.

One of the main goals stated by the Erasmus + Project was that ICT should function as a learning and communication tool. The Italian students involved in the project had competences in the use of ICTs at very different levels, mainly related to age and personal way of life (use of PC, tablet, smartphone at home or in the previous classes). Teacher’s competences varied a lot, too, most of them were not familiar with the social networks or uncertain about their own ICT competences. At the beginning none of the Italian teachers involved in the project regularly used ICT in class, but the project required that all teachers used regularly email, Facebook, Wikispace, E-Twinning and looked for information in the internet. The Italian teachers were doubtful and a little scared by this widespread use of technology but they agreed to learn how to manage it because they understood that it was very important to acquire ICT skills. They tried to get the students use technology during the development of this project experiencing every day its advantages and disadvantages, accepting the assumption that technology had to be at the basis of our project because, if not, how else could we be in contact in real time with so many countries? They made experiments side by side with their students and tried to figure out with them what were the most reliable means, the fastest, the most connecting, the most amusing and entertaining.

After the fifth mobility we have noticed clear evidence that ICT skills have generally improved both for teachers and for students. They now count on technology use and ICT tools to do activities in class, such as the organization of data, the use of writing and presentation softwares. Teachers and pupils are more participative and love to experience new challenges proposed by the project.

3. Conclusion
This project gave us a number of relevant opportunities to use ICT for the best purposes. So, technology, as a basic means for learning, if used under the supervision of a competent adult, with the aid of positive prompts and specific aims, can fruitfully develop our students’ potential both in terms of knowledge and competences.

It is too soon to say that the encouraging experience of this project and of the use of technology helped even to contrast the students dropout from the school system, but we are collecting data about this.

We noticed that, if in the past the skilled students more generally came out from a high social and cultural context, nowadays technology has reduced this difference: people living in rural areas, in villages far from the urban centres can be connect to the entire world thus overcoming territorial and linguistic barriers as well as social and cultural ones thanks to ICT. But to exploit the positive aspects of the virtual reality that technology generates and to escape the risks related to that, we have to work side by side with our students in projects like this Erasmus + UNESCO Heritage. As a matter of fact, all the technological activities, the contacts on the social networks, the PPTs, the images and news of the researches become a reality in a short time as they are followed up by the mobility that puts under our eyes the real territory, landscape, artistic sites and introduces
us to the real people we have learnt about on the virtual platforms. In this way the real and virtual world enrich one another and there is no misleading break.

Using ICT in education

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ABSTRACT: ICT is of utmost importance, either in the process of learning or teaching providing both teachers and students with multimedia materials and a real life learning environment. The use of computers and the internet in education, more specifically in teaching English, increases very rapidly once with any technological progress. One essential reason of using IT tools in classroom is to stimulate students to take the initiative to study and fully exploit this authentic source of information in order to improve their language level.

KEYWORDS: Education, ICT, IT tools.

1. Definition of ICT

ICT stands for information and communications technology and may be defined as a “diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information” 2.

The ICTs comprise computers, the internet, broadcasting technologies such as radio television, telephony; a term connected to ICT is Information Technology, that is IT. Generally IT is a term referring to the technical possibilities that were achieved through progress within computer technology and telecommunication. Moreover, ICT emphasizes the importance of communication technology a little more than does the term IT.

On the whole, both terms IT and ICT refer to computer technology that enables the collection, storage and handling of information in the form of digital data such as text, speech, sound, images and films (https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/35169/1/gupea_2077_35169_1.pdf).

The main advantages of using ICT tools for education are the following:

- Images can easily be used in teaching and improve the retentive memory of students;
- Teachers can easily explain complex instructions and ensure students’ comprehension;
- Teachers are able to create interactive classes and make the lessons more enjoyable, which could improve student attendance and concentration (http://www.elmoglobal.com/en/html/ict/01.aspx);

The disadvantages of using ICT tools for education are as follows:

- Setting up the devices can be very troublesome;
- Too expensive to afford;

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2. Reasons for using the internet in the classroom

English teaching supposes that “teachers engage in classroom teaching according to the real world”. Moreover, the essential materials and the specific atmosphere stimulate students to take the initiative to study.

Using the internet in the classroom implies the following reasons:

Systematization: “the aim of English teaching is to provide students with such a learning environment and conditions”.4

Authenticity: teachers should use multimedia tools in order to create materials and real contexts and give background information to students to get them engaged in the topic.

Appropriateness: “appropriate witness of the type and amount of material, as well as making good use of time, can be more effective when learning English through multimedia language teaching”.5

Interactivity: “During the process of in-classroom English multimedia teaching, it is believed that the goal of interaction between teachers and students is to achieve exchanges in the real language context. Teaching content should be designed with consideration of how to achieve interaction between teachers and students, among students themselves, and between students and modern technology. This method of language teaching provides various ways to promote the growth of students’ creativity, cooperation, and interaction. It also makes multimedia language teaching and learning active and vivid, from which we can see that the interactive exchange of information reflects the characteristics and advantages of multimedia teaching in context creation”.6

Coordination: “During the process of optimizing multimedia English teaching in context creation, it is inappropriate to change the classroom into a platform for information exchange between students and modern machinery. Attention should be paid to coordination between teachers and students, teaching materials and methods, theory and practice and multimedia teaching and the real learning environment”.7

Pluralism: involves teachers’ choosing and creating appropriate but comprehensive educational methods in order to promote students’ progress, given the educational content, their interests, intelligence and different characteristics. (http://download.portalgaruda.org/article.php?article=158602&val=5966&title=Multi%20Media%20For%20Receptive%20And%20Productive%20Second%20And%20Foreign%20Language%20Skill%20Development).

“English teachers should constantly make use of the advantages of multimedia teaching to update English teaching concepts and teaching strategies, and produce scenario-style, animation-style, case-style, analogue-style, and game-show-style films as self-supporting material to inspire students”.8

Intelligibility: “An effective way to understand the discourse is to choose and establish an appropriate context to get people involved in the context. This includes communicative context, communicative environment, and communication based on common sense. English teachers should socialize and contextualize the multimedia classroom, as well as trying to transplant the real use of English into an in-classroom multimedia environment to improve students’ interpretative skills. It is helpful for teachers to use the characteristics of contexts in teaching materials to enable students to learn when and where they should

3 Ibidem, p. 379.
5 Ibidem, p. 380.
7 Ibidem, p. 380.
8 Ibidem, p. 380.
speak English in line with the discourse and ultimately improve their English language skills. Teachers can also use multimedia to help students to predict the text in order to grasp the context and enhance their comprehensive skills. From a practical context to language understanding and usage based on different types of training, students may improve their communicative competence effectively in different contexts”.

Penetrability: “To achieve the success of multimedia English teaching in context creation, English teachers should involve their own sincere feelings in the classroom and make use of multimedia to stimulate students’ emotions. This is a joint method, where the two elements complement each other to promote and optimize the context creation of multimedia English teaching, which is one of the internal driving forces of students’ learning interest”.

3. Uses of computers and the internet

Harmer acknowledges that the use of computers and the internet in education and particularly in teaching English, increases very quickly once with any technological progress. According to Harmer the major uses for computers and the internet in language teaching are the following:

• Reference, one main use of computers, either through the Internet or on CDs or DVDs, is as a reference instrument which can be related to teaching, the English language or general facts about the world and all kinds of other information available. Such availability of research material - in Harmer’s vision-means that teachers can get students to work on the computer to get ready for different tasks and projects looking for references in textbooks, or finding out about topics they show interest in. Many programs have extraordinary visuals and sound which make the material very interesting and attractive, but teachers should supervise all activities for students not to be distracted by some other search materials and forget about the initial given task.

• Teaching and testing programs: “language teaching software packages, often supplied on CD-ROM, offer students the chance to study conversations and texts, to do grammar and vocabulary exercises, and even to listen to texts and record their own voices”.

“A trend which will almost certainly gather pace is the attachment of CD-ROM-based packages to accompany course-books, full of extra input material and exercises. Some of these will be available, too, on the Internet. However, there are also web sites where students can sign up for complete self-study courses, which include all the regular features of a course- book together with the possibility of sending work to a tutor who will monitor progress”.

• E-mail exchange: this way permitting easy access to people all over the world. Much more, the contact between different schools and that one among students from different countries to write e-mails to each other, have increased students’ motivation about learning English. Since e-mailing promotes an informal style resembling speaking, giving students the chance to improve communication and fluency in writing, yet, “it may not enhance accuracy or help students to write in more than one or two genres”.

• Web sites offer lots of information, but there are also numerous sites specially designed for students of English where they can browse around reading different texts, playing

9 ibidem, p. 380.
10 ibidem, p. 380.
12 ibidem, p. 150.
13 ibidem, p. 150.
games or exchange e-mails and do exercises. Harmer points out that “some teachers plan whole lessons around the Internet”. “The potential is almost literally endless; training students to use that potential sensibly will be of great benefit to them, especially if and when they wish to continue studying on their own”.  

- **Homegrown materials production**—suppose a wide variety of materials: from grammar worksheets, word/sentence cards up to photocopied texts or texts taken from the Internet that we create on our own.

According to Harmer, when teachers make their own legible, clear and attractive materials for teaching purposes, they may follow the following five-stage procedure:

- **Planning:** homegrown materials begin with planning, more specifically, teachers have to decide on their aims, objectives, activities they want to involve students in, how to group them, and what the content of their materials should be. Once all this planned they can go on producing the materials, taking into account the above mentioned features.

- **Trialing:** in Harmer’s view, it is vital for teachers to try out the material before integrating it into the lesson by having a colleague or a student to spot possible mistakes in order to avoid problems.

- **Evaluating:** once the material is produced and trialed, teachers should integrate it into the lesson, use it and evaluate its appropriacy. That way teachers can recreate it for future use.

- **Classifying:** when teachers have used material in the classroom they have to find ways of storing it and classifying it so as to be at hand whenever they need it. Organizing material is “a matter of personal preference and style” in the end.

4. The role of computers and the internet in classroom work

In Scrivener’s view, lots of teachers today have access to computers and the Internet, whether in the computer science lab or at least one in each classroom. Computers are more than essential for home study, self-access and even distance learning.

In his view, teachers have an infinite number of ways to exploit computers in classroom work and even if there are no special programs, yet, there are so many useful things they can do with just a computer and standard office-user software. Moreover, Scrivener brings about some suggestions about using computers with students as follows:

- Teachers often consider a computer lesson, or planning lessons that involve computer usage for a short time, for example, “ten minutes writing a text as follow-on from a previous classroom activity and then printing it out for others to read”.

- “Up to three or four students share a single terminal, with one typing and the others suggesting ideas, reading and checking”; with more students it would be difficult to keep them engaged and motivated.

- If there is only one computer in the classroom, teachers should consider that all students “work on different things at different times so that each pair/group gets to work for a short time” on the computer.

- Computer-based reference materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias represent useful classroom resources, permitting students to rapidly check things during lesson

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time.
• Writing texts: since writing seems to be the best use of computers, Scrivener suggests teachers to let students work on a text they have to produce have a text on the computer.” Three or four students could work on a single console and co-operate in preparing a final text. The standard editing options (i.e. cut, copy, paste, replace, etc.) can help make correction and re-drafting less traumatic. Teachers should “encourage students to spell-check, use the built-in thesaurus, experiment with different layouts, fonts, paragraphing, etc.”

The advantages of using the internet in the classroom are suggested as follows:

**Increase in students’ interest** - “Many students love computers. Students feel comfortable with computers and are very receptive to any learning activities that involve the computer. Increased motivation leads to increased language use which leads to improved proficiency. When a writing activity is truly communicative, as e-mail projects are, the language is authentic. The students are not going through the motions of an artificial exercise. They are communicating because they need and want to communicate. Most of the information on the World Wide Web has been written in English by native speakers. The Web is, therefore, a rich source of authentic reading materials in English”.

**Worldwide awareness** - “Information can be exchanged easily between people in different corners of the world, connecting students around the globe. This enhances their chances of using the language and such activities may result into high proficiency. Students attest that this kind of communication increases global understanding”.

**Environment preservation** - “Use of the Internet can decrease the amount of paper used in the classroom. Much of the writing can be done on the computer. Web sites can replace some printed materials thereby preserving natural resources”.

5. Bibliographic resources:

1. Blurton, C. (1999), New Directions of ICT - Use in Education

Web resources:
• [https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/35169/1/gupea_2077_35169_1.pdf](https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/35169/1/gupea_2077_35169_1.pdf)
BENEFITS OF USING ICT IN EDUCATION
by Cemile Birinci

Abstract
This article discusses the benefits of using ICTs in education. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have become commonplace entities in all aspects of life. They are playing crucial roles in workplaces, business, entertainment and education. Education is a very socially oriented activity and quality of education has been associated merely with “strong” teachers; however now the use of ICT in education lends itself to more student-centered learning settings.

With the world moving rapidly into digital media and information, the role of ICT in education is becoming more and more important and this importance will continue to grow and develop in the next centuries.

In this paper at first the definition of the ICT has been stated, and then the benefits of using ICT has been explained with several steps; integration of multiple media, interactivity, flexibility of use, connectivity, access to the remote resources, enabling collaboration, enabling lifelong learning, developing skills for the workplace.

Introduction
According to UNESCO(2002), information and communication technology (ICT) may be regarded as the combination of “informatics technology” with other related technology, specially communication technology. These technologies, include computers, the Internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television) and the telephone.

ICTs are making dynamic alterations in society day by day. They are influencing all the aspects of life. The influences are felt more and more at schools. Since ICTs have the potential to innovate, accelerate, enrich and deepen skills, to motivate and engage the students to help relate the school experience to work practices, create realistic environment to transform information into action.

In Watson’s (2001), ICTs have revolutionized the way people work today and are now transforming education systems. As a result, if schools train children in yesterday’s skills and technologies, they may not be effective and fit in tomorrow’s world. This is a sufficient reason for ICTs to win global recognition and attention.

The Benefits of ICT in Education
Information and communication technologies have recently gained groundswell of interest and their nature has highly changed the face of education over the last few decades. ICT itself has changed as well. New ICTs differ in several dimensions from older technologies; including the integration of multimedia, interactivity, flexibility of use, connectivity and so on. Seeing these differences in detail and by giving examples will provide us a cleaner picture of why we should use ICT in education.

a. Integration of Multimedia
Because of advances in digital technology, it is now possible to integrate multimedia into a single educational application.

Multimedia applications on smartphones which are accessible anytime and anywhere, and websites may incorporate text, pictures, audio, animations, graphics, simulations, full-motion video and links to other software or websites greatly enriching learning experience.
b. Interactivity

Earlier technologies used for instruction were passive in nature. That is, the delivery of instruction required no action on the part of students beyond listening, watching and perhaps note taking. Such ICTs were one way channels of instructional delivery. But now new ICTs give the student and the teacher the ability to control the manipulation, and contribute to the information environment. Using ICT, students may not only make choices about the pace and the order of a presentation; but may choose topics, take notes, answer the questions, explore the virtual landscapes, enter, draw or chart data, run an experiment, create and manipulate images, make their own multimedia presentations, communicate with others and more. (Aldrich, Rogers & Scaife, 1998)

c. Flexibility of Use

In the past, when there was no ICT use, the information was delivered through one channel; on the other hand; old ICT use required students to be grouped together in a controlled environment at a specific time and location. For instance radio and television use was rigidly tied to schedules, was set in a classroom. But now, new ICT applications have given rise to the term “anytime-anywhere” which supports the flexibility of learning and teaching.

With the introduction of smartphones, now the flexibility has reached its peak. Students have access to anything, anywhere and anytime. This has been the development of “virtual” educational experiences. A virtual educational experience refers to educational situations in which distance and time separate the teachers and the students, who use ICT interactively to share resources, communicate and learn. It allow students to study at their own time place and pace; such as from home, workplace or anywhere that the student chooses to be.

d. Connectivity

Connectivity can be regarded as the most powerful feature of ICT. Prior to 1990s, computers in educational settings were rarely connected to the local area networks (LAN) or the Internet. With the widespread adoption of LANs, decreasing communication costs, increasing bandwidth, the invention of World Wide Web (www), educational access to the Internet is becoming commonplace. If equipped with a computer or a smartphone; students and teachers have access to every other person on the planet who has an internet connection; hundreds of thousands of information achieves and millions of webpages of educationally relevant contents.

e. Access Remote Resources

Historically, information resources at libraries, schools and universities have only been available within walls of these institutions, in a wide variety of physical media, at certain times of the day, and in limited quantities. Because of the advances in ICT, it is no longer necessary for students and teachers to be at a certain location at a specific time to acquire a physical object. The Internet represents the greatest collection of human knowledge ever assembled, and it is available to every student and teacher properly equipped with ICT. An unlimited number of digital representations of physical objects can now be made available to students at any time and from any place.

Digital library initiatives are being undertaken in countries around the world that will
provide collections that are electronically accessible of the Internet including printed works (e.g., textbooks, journals, illustrations, maps, charts, and graphs), photographs, films and videotapes, paintings, 3D models, graphics, animations, software, reference materials, audio files, and so forth. (Schauble and Smeaton, 1998) This ability to access remote resources and use them locally, fundamentally changes the quantity, nature and potential uses of information resources available for educational purposes.

f. Enabling Collaboration

Not all resources are inanimate. ICT enables educational collaborations between individuals and groups of people. Such collaborations may take place locally or between people in widely separated geographical locations. They may be temporary or long-term. Students collaborate with peers in other schools, teachers may collaborate with university professors, members of the local business community may serve as mentors to students, educational usefulness and access to ICT limit the possibilities.

E-mail, computer-mediated conferencing, and desktop videoconferencing are all being used to support collaboration between individuals and groups. Collaborations are also taking place by means of real-time chat system, whiteboards, news-group, computer-mediated conferencing. Such applications are internet-accessible, text-mediated virtual environments in which participants can both interact with others as well as help construct the common virtual space.

g. Lifelong Learning

Unlike in the past when a person’s education took place for a specific period of time during their youth, education is now widely seen as a continuing activity taking place throughout life-span. Establishing lifelong learning habits among citizens and providing lifelong learning opportunities has become a major goal of the government initiatives worldwide. (Hatton, 1998)

Because ICT can enable teaching and learning from anywhere at anytime, it is seen as an effective means to provide lifelong educational opportunities. Here is an example of how ICT is seen providing the means of enabling lifelong learning, UNESCO’s Learning Without Frontiers (LWF) initiative, which has sponsored many conferences, policy documents, publications, and pilot projects focused on lifelong learning.

“... is geared towards stimulating innovation and exploring alternative pathways/partners/technologies for the provision of lifelong and life-wide learning opportunities, particularly, to those who are currently un-reached by or excluded from conventional modes of educational delivery. As part of this challenge, LWF is concerned with exploring how various technologies and approaches can be used to overcome multiple barriers to learning. (i.e., age, time, space, circumstance) and to assist with broader development objectives. (UNESCO, 1996)

h. Developing Skills for the Workplace

After leaving school to embark on a career, young people can expect the day to day practice of every discipline to the effected by the use of ICT in the future economic competitiveness, employment, and personal fulfillment may no longer be based on the production physical goods. Personal and national wealth creation may be linked to the
production and dissemination of knowledge and depend on research education and training and on the capacity to innovate. Having advanced ICT skills and knowing how to use discipline-specific applications may help students secure suitable employment and enhance their productivity wants employed, furthermore as has been noted about the ability to engage in life learning opportunities offered by educational institutions around the world is increasingly dependent upon access to and use of ICT.

**Conclusion**

Information and communication technologies are influencing all aspects of life including education. They are promoting changes in working conditions, handling and exchanging of information, teaching-learning approaches and so on. One area in which the impacts of ICT is significant, is education. The adoption and use of ICTs in education have a positive impact on teaching, learning and research. ICT can affect the delivery of education and enable wider access to the same. In addition, it will increase flexibility so that learners can access the education regardless of time and geographical barriers. It can influence the way the students are taught and how they learn. It would also provide the rich environment and motivation for teaching & learning process which seems to have a profound impact on the process of learning in education by offering new possibilities for learners and teachers. Wider availability of best course material in education, which can be shared by means of ICT, can foster better teaching and improved academic achievements of students.

**References**

COMPUTER USAGE IN HISTORY LESSONS ABOUT
UNESCO CULTURAL PATRIMONY

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Multimedia systems and technologies represent an enormous potential for teaching and learning in case of pupils. The computer-aided teaching activities are multiple and they offer the possibility of some trans-curricular approaches, either by using a certain technology, either by combining them. The use of the computer in the educational process has become a necessity in a rapidly evolving IT environment. For the new generations of students already adapted to large amounts of multimedia information, the notion of computer-aided education is an inherent concept. Thus, computer-assisted instruction (CAI) represents a didactic or teaching method that utilises the principles of cybernetic modelling and analysis of instructional activities in the light of the new information technologies.

These multimedia systems give the possibility of using or regrouping on a single computer in the same teaching situation various media: sounds, voices, texts, drawings, photos, films, animations, graphics. The teacher’s new technology presentations offer the context for demonstrations, information synthesis, logical schemes, graphics, and major aspects prominence, in an interactive manner. The pupils’ presentations offer their coefficient of performance and evaluative data.

Romania has plenty of cultural objectives on the representative list of Unesco Cultural Patrimony, such as: cultural assets; assemblies of church monuments; seven Saxon fortified churches in Transylvania; eight wooden churches from Maramures; nine painted churches from the north of Moldavia; Hurezi Monastery; an urban assembly – the historic Centre of Sighisoara and an assembly of six Dacian fortresses from Orastie mountains, but it implies immaterial cultural assets as well: Doina (as musical genre), Calusi dance Ritual, Horezu pottery, group Carolling, and also a natural objective- the Danube Delta biosphere Reservation. All these monuments may be presented during the history lessons among the culture and civilization themes, which portray the Romanian contribution to the European and World wide cultural patrimony.

During the history lessons, pupils and teachers can use Microsoft Power Point or different educational software by presenting historic documents or vestiges, animation and sound projections (epochal images, film sequences, documentaries). The teacher can share activities/ study cases with his pupils for one class or for a longer period of time, and pupils can present them using Microsoft Power Point or different educational software, while the teacher comments or interprets them with the help of his students. Basically, educational software, which can be used in history lessons in order to raise awareness towards the importance of identifying and preserving the cultural heritage, are programmes or electronic lessons created with respect to objectives, specific content, students’ qualities, methods, sequential feedback, and formative evaluation.

The most utilised educational software used by teachers in history lessons are the following:
Informatics resources may be efficiently integrated in history lessons in more than one situation: for viewing pieces of information, images, schemes, plans, films or interactive graphics; models, construction patterns, dynamic images assembled in multimedia presentations with interactive board; for instruction and application exercises; for statistics or/and graphics; for editing texts or documents; in projected evaluations. Another possible activity during certain moments of the lesson are the short subject movie, which presents the theme discussed in the class, or documentaries that can be found on the internet.

The teacher demands his students search for three-dimensional images of different monumental constructions, suggesting sites where they can find this kind of images or checking the verisimilitude of the pieces of information found by the pupils. The same procedure is followed in case of other concepts that the pupil wishes to know from his history class. The material in question can be prepared by pupils working in pairs or in groups of three persons. The teacher indicates them the sites where they can find conclusive pieces of information, since their credibility and authenticity need to be checked beforehand by the teacher. If the materials from the internet are not censored, the teacher will check and select those sites that contain viable information from a scientific point of view, which can be used by pupils, without the risk of misinforming them. However, the teacher has to assure himself that the searching activity on the internet is based on a well-established working plan and on an efficient searching strategy.

The internet advantages originate from the fact that the majority of materials are updated at a low price, whereas the pieces of information are available in a digital format, so that the text, the images, and the sound can be undertaken for the history classes in order to be transposed on the school site or some other web pages, discussion groups initiated and administrated by pupils and teachers.

As far as pupils are concerned, the computer offers enormous possibilities in order to learn, analyse, and apply what they have learnt. Even in the case of the pupil who works on a material undertaken from the internet by the teacher, this approach is interactive and pupil-centred. Likewise, pupils are more motivated to search in detail on a specific topic, when they seek for important sites and documents. In most of the cases, this kind of situation whets the pupil’s interest for that specific subject, offering him the possibility to analyse events in a larger context by using primary sources.

Here are some multimedia applications in the field of history which teachers can use in order to convert theoretical information into the development of key competences:
- communication in foreign languages, digital competences, and social and civic competences
- interactive historical maps
- cartoons with historical subject
- history encyclopaedias
- history themed virtual exhibitions
- slideshows on historical topics
Pupils’ presentations offer measurable data of their performances, and cooperative learning implies sharing knowledge and habits for all the members of a working group, the collective decision capacity and the team’s responsibility, and the formation of multivalence learning communities.

From 2014 onward, the Education Minister and the Local Educational Inspectorates have been organizing each year the “History and Society in Virtual Dimension” Competition, which appeals to pupils prone to history, humanities, and informatics. This competition refers only to pupils from high school, irrespective of specialization. Its purpose is to produce materials on history and humanity topics by the help of a computer. The materials can be made, either in the form of “Web Pages” or, “Educational Software”. The evaluating process takes into consideration: scientific correctitude, the structural coherence of the information, the quality of the specialized language used, and the production of the material: functionality, interactivity, technical complexity, the esthetical aspect, originality, or the evaluative modalities. On the last lap, there are only two pupils who get qualified from the county, one for each General Section (I. History and II. Social Sciences). The winner of this year’s first place, at the History section, with an educational soft entitled “The Maramures Wooden Churches”, Morar Catalin Mihai, a pupil from Liviu Rebreanu National College, expresses his opinions about the competition:

“Participating in “History and Society in the Virtual Dimension” competition, I had the opportunity to see many web pages and educational software that could be used during the history classes. Although the competition may seem common, the ones that do not participate cannot possibly understand how much work it implies in order to make a soft or an interactive site, so that the jury could be non-stop attentive, listen to you curiously, and be enchanted by what you present, how you present and how it looks like more exactly. Since I have had the experience and the knowledge concerning the level of the competition, I decided to dedicate myself to this project and create an educational soft about “Maramureș Wooden Churches”. [...] Finally, this competition means finding didactical material created by pupils for pupils. I have seen wonderful projects that I would like to learn from, for the simple fact that it is a different kind of lesson. My generation becomes more and more uninterested in reading lessons from books or copybooks. If one used a computer-aided lesson, whether common or created by a pupil, where one can press buttons in order to learn new stuff, one could be more interested. The competition is something spectacular, something for the future, as long as the best projects from the county or from the national stage would be used as real lessons”.

In conclusion, the usage of a computer in teaching history, mainly the topics of culture and civilization from our discussion, can only be beneficial for both pupils, who can understand and assimilate better the received piece of information, and teacher, who can communicate with pupils in a more attractive manner. The computer is the most modern and attractive means of education. It deals with graphics, animation, monumental configuration, and it can give life to the past, and thus, to history, in a new form. Moreover, history teachers noted that by gaining history information in multimedia format, students transform from simple readers into spectators or even participants in interactive projects. If the presentation attracts them, or inspires and moves them, their attention is aroused,
and the information is more likely to be assimilated and comprehended. Thus, history can be perceived more vividly and students may feel the urge to learn more about the historical, geographical, and cultural heritage, and can come to the conclusion that the arts and spirit of a nation can defy time.

Bibliography


Innovative teaching strategies in constructivist classroom structures: Knowledge communities for educators and students.
by Anna Sfakianaki (Humanities and social studies, MSc)

Abstract

It cannot be disputed that it is a world of rapid change in all areas of human activity that we live in. Scientific and technological advances have changed the way we see the world around us and the way we approach and utilize knowledge. These multifaceted changes affect the attitudes and beliefs of teachers towards the education system and the process of their own and their students’ cognitive development. Traditional approaches of knowledge derived from the behavioral learning model are sharply questioned and emphasis is shifted towards an interpretive process model that integrates the meanings and experiences of the participants in a social context. Teachers, utilizing the example of constructivism, use increasingly available alternative means based on modern technology to bring themselves in contact with colleagues, students and parents, in an effort to share knowledge more globally through interacting within knowledge communities.

The need to redefine the process and content of learning.

In the monumental report to UNESCO of the International Commission on education for the 21st century, coordinated by the J. Delors (1996), entitled “Learning: The treasure within”, world today is presented as a global village. Owing to the advances in science and technology, distances have been decreased, almost minimized. Through the Internet, people around the globe can have live access to current developments. Access to information is now easier and faster than ever. Within such a context of continuous evolution, the education system, as an open system, receives influences from the outside that are defining and re-shaping it. (Theophilidis, 2012, Hatzigeorgiou, 2012).

The postindustrial society is the knowledge society both because innovations are mainly based on research and also because the weight of society is “measured by the gross domestic product and employment” (Bell, 1976). The above findings raise some legitimate questions about the education system and the school we have today. Can the current system, that is generally described as ‘traditional’ for most European countries and treats students as passive receivers of a set and non-questionable knowledge (Stylianidis, 2008; Salvaras, 2013) deal with such complex challenges? Can the new data - challenges of the 21st century be handled with the attitudes, behaviors, tools
and knowledge of the 20th century? The citizen of the 21st century needs, according to Darling-Hammond (1997, 2000), to learn to work collectively, to be able to make decisions after examining different data, to be able to face and solve problems and be able to make critical use of technology. The use of multimedia, virtual reality and the Internet is opening new horizons to the lifelong teaching-learning process enriching and enhancing the professional development of teachers (Day, 2003) and the learning achievements of students.

**The impact of changes in the educational process: the need for the construction of knowledge in new learning environments.**

Teachers are key players in the education system, they are the agents of conservation or change and are certainly cardinal factors in the performance of their students (Theophilidis, 2012). To meet the needs of a constantly changing world (European Union Council, 2002), teachers need to constantly update their cognitive supplies, develop modern attitudes and skills and a high level of professionalism that will lead to effective and qualitative teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Day, 2003). Their involvement in a lifelong learning process determines the quality of their teaching and is based on their willingness and dedication to continue learning (Day, 2003). The update of their cognitive supplies can be effected in well-organized learning environments that constitute authentic contexts (Veugelers & O'Hair, 2005) and are related to a culture of professional learning and sharing of knowledge (Mayer, 1997; Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000; Elmore, 2002). Conditions for the success of such a behavior are fair resource management, inclusiveness and provision of equal access to lifelong training (Burbules & Callister, 2000; Day, 2003).

The educator that prepares students to meet the multi-faceted needs of a constantly evolving society must display a high level of professionalism that requires participation in procedures and programs designed to sustain lifelong enrichment of knowledge and skills. Such procedures are those followed in learning communities which provide learning opportunities for participants and generate new knowledge (Kilpatrick et al., 2003). Because teachers are often role model for their students (Salvaras, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978), committing themselves to a lifelong learning process will convince their students of its indispensability. In addition, students who discover and then construct knowledge seem to have better and more permanent learning outcomes compared to students who simply memorize ready-made knowledge or apply ready-made rules (Salvaras, 2013). Students show willingness to engage in learning processes realized in communities and are ready to create and share training materials.

**On-line Knowledge communities: a modern way of knowledge approach.**

The need for the enrichment of the teaching-learning process with the integration of digital technology is richly recorded in modern research (Edelson, Pea & Gomez, 1996; Flake, 1996). Cognitive development is related to learners constructing representations in their social context. (Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Such a framework for interaction between participants of all ages is offered by on-line learning communities comprised of people who share a common purpose, collaborate, draw on individual strengths, respect different perspectives, actively promote lifelong learning opportunities, creating a vibrant synergistic environment, enhancing the potential for all members and creating new knowledge (Kilpatrick, et al., 2003).
Knowledge communities of teachers and students are informal groups consisting of teachers and students (often parents and scientific institutions) that reach for common goals and seek solutions to problems common to the education community. These communities constitute tacit knowledge repositories and make good use of the diversity and the collective intelligence of their members. According to Kilpatrick et al. (2003), the different views and practices of their members are accepted, learning opportunities for all are promoted and an active and collaborative environment that enhances the capacity of the community members is created. Production and sharing of knowledge, relating theory to practice, collective intelligence and action, collaborative learning, mutual support and exchange of best practices among teachers are prevailing aspects in knowledge communities.

The rapid advancement of digital technology assists the operation and effect of knowledge communities, forming attractive virtual online environments and encouraging communication between members in real and non-real time. The use of technology encourages and promotes lifelong learning acquisition providing multifold benefits to participants. The principles of adult education and distance learning are also implemented in online knowledge communities.

Apart from the potentials presented by the appropriate use and engagement of ICT (attractive design of environments, internet tools, communication structure design, software, ICT tools, applications), knowledge communities feature the educational dimension (pedagogical theories, educational materials, educational tools) and the social dimension (the characteristics of the members, the divided roles, promoting community goals) of this knowledge seeking process.

Online knowledge communities display a set of established features and characteristics that offer significant aid to the teachers in their pursuit of lifelong learning- training and personal and professional development but also to the students in their construction of knowledge in a group cooperation context:

1. A main feature is the commitment of the participants to the basis of a “unifying culture” allocated to strategies and objectives that complement a common vision. The computer screen visualizes the beliefs and conceptions on these objectives affecting the behavior and practice of the participants. In cases of resistance of some members to the common culture of the group (Thompson, 1992, Wenger, 1998; Olson, 1995), the computer manages to reduce resistance through regular communication between members and the exchange of views. The transformation of the hard core of the original concepts, which functions as a pre-coding of their action (Salvaras & Salvara, 2011, Salvaras, 2013), will lead to appropriation of changes and promotion of innovative perspectives to the content and process of learning (Kaput, 1998).

2. Electronic platforms (e.g., moodle, edmodo, edutopia etc), Web 2.0 tools (Google docs, wikis, padlet, prezi, etc.) have paved the way for the creation and presentation of educational material (Richardson, 2010) and have enriched the experiences gained along the journey to knowledge for both teachers and students (Wandersman, Duffy, Flaspohler, Noonan, Lubell, Stillman, & Saul, 2008). Teachers, as professional educators, know what it is they want to learn and often know how to learn it (Niebanck, 1999). Students are motivated to explore, to discover knowledge and to get feedback from peers and adults.

3. The model of collaborative online learning (connectivist learning model), (Richardson, 2010) supports the use of appropriate sites enabling the development of cooperation and synchronous or asynchronous on-line communication (Net meeting, Virtual meeting,
E-class, Moodle, Outlook, Outlook express, Eudora, etc.) and enables the creation of «social structures» (Efimova, Hendrick & Anjewierden, 2005). The implementation of such a model could enhance the motivation of teachers integrating them in a dynamic and engaging learning and personal development environment (Garcia, Brown & Elbeltagi, 2013; Redecker, Ala-Mutka, Bacigalupo, Ferrari & Punie, 2009; Day, 2003) leading to the consolidation of professionalism by providing incentives and vocational learning options. On the other hand, students who are generally attracted by technology learn by experimenting in a playful yet educative way.

4. On-line learning communities cultivate a sense of belonging to its members and form a culture of collaboration and collective responsibility that contributes to addressing complex issues faced by the education community and developing quality teaching practices to the benefit of the students. The diversity of the participating teachers and students, their multiple origins, their social biography are not considered to hinder but rather to enrich the ideological background. Westoby & Shevellar (2012) highlight the importance of the “oral narratives of the participants”, their personal stories, their “inside knowledge” and their critical dialogue as a means of making sense of the world and as a tool for the education of the community and its further development (Day, 2003). Personal and professional development is associated with a permanent search for the enrichment and upgrading of self-efficacy beliefs using transformations, reconstructions, critical questioning, reflection (teacher as reflective practitioner) and reframing of their initial perceptions allowing for tolerance and empathy towards colleagues and students.

5. Another feature of online knowledge/learning communities for teachers is the prevalence of the constructivist teaching model. Knowledge communities, following the modern pedagogical learning theories (Bandura, 1986) are moving away from behaviorism, which focuses on enhancing desired reactions to the learners, to the Gnosticism / Structuralism model that emphasizes knowledge discovery and investigation and the Constructivism model which perceives knowledge as something constructed by the participants within a social context (J. Salvaras & M. Salvara, 2011; Bandura, 1986). According to Johnson (2001), the application of constructivism in knowledge communities is associated for example with the posing of open-ended questions that are authentic and complex and are resolved in a collaborative interaction context in social and physical or virtual context. Shared goals are traded between participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) who often alternated the roles of trainers - as animators, facilitators or mediators - and trainees. The traditional hierarchy of the school environment is removed as the community students become instructors to other classmates, and even teachers, in parity. Constructivist learning in knowledge communities attempts to reshape their social interdependence (Johnson, 2001).

7. Adoption of modern pedagogical theories and innovations in the context of online learning communities:

a. Differentiated and personalized teaching plans are created. Differentiated teaching involves the application of different routine and practices (teaching methods, materials, activities, sources) even modifying the curriculum to address students’ diversity and the range of their interests, readiness and proficiency (Tomlinson & Mc Tighe, 2006; breeches, 2013? Ioannidi- Koutselini, 2009). Students are treated as differentiated social biographies.

b. The response of the members of the online community to other members’ questions provides invaluable feedback and input, broadens horizons and enriches the teaching
practices (Edelson et al., 1996). The teaching scenarios generated and shared emphasize not only the knowledge to be taught but also the steps to be followed and the teaching aids to be used in order to achieve maximum benefits for the students.

c. Pedagogical and didactic practices are adopted against the criteria of effectiveness, functionality, usefulness and availability, according to the neo-pragmatic model of Curricula investigation and evaluation (Salvaras, 2013), through multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach to knowledge leading to creating cognitive structures (Bruner 1996). Students gain the knowledge they can add more information to if the subject falls within their own interests.

It should, however, be clarified that the effectiveness of technology-based communal learning varies and is related to factors such as full support of the collective learning process, participation, interaction, collaboration, a strong sense of belonging, trust and commitment (Dawes & Sams, 2004; Wenger, 1998).

8. Another feature of knowledge communities is the effectiveness and quality of the results obtained. If for organizations effectiveness could be ensured for example, by the management approach of “Total Quality Management» (Deming, 1993 in Theophilidis, 2012 p. 280), in knowledge communities accountability as a form of evaluation could take the form of self-evaluation, peer feedback, peer assessment, individual or collective reflection. Teachers and students evaluate their practices and make improvements if they are found inefficient. The contribution of an external partner (critical friend) is requested, (MacBeath, 2004; Bagakis, 2005) who is readily accepted by the community because of his or her proven expertise and other virtues. It must be pointed out however that the reassessing and amending of pedagogical approaches, the sharing and consolidation of “good practices” in community learning have not been investigated in relation to their impact on students’ performance in school.

Conclusions
The development of on-line knowledge communities through the participation of teachers, students, parents and community members, leads to innovative educational proposals, generates a body of knowledge, promotes educational research (collaborative action research) with innovative practices tested by combatant teachers and students. Knowledge communities promote the sharing of effective practices and enhance the quality of the teaching-learning process. Through the invaluable process of self-assessment and reflection, the participant is lead to reflect on the appropriateness of the content and management of the curriculum and the methodological approaches it advocates. Finally, it provides the intellectual and political leadership (the decision makers) with an authentic context for the evaluation and reform of the educational planning focusing on optimizing the practical knowledge generated in the knowledge communities by the teachers and students who have “been there, done that”.

References
In Greek:


In English:


Use of computers in teaching
by Andrija Krištić

The Internet, unique global computing network and WWW (World Wide Web) interface that allows sending and receiving information in the form of text, sound, image, photography or animation from computers in any part of the network are new virtual surrounding for studying. Today, Internet, which is available to almost everyone, is the perfect tool to exchange information helpful to facilitate learning.

If we imagine school as one source of information for student, as a three-dimensional space of learning and teaching and narrower and wider environment (natural and cultural) as a fourth-dimension then virtual reality is the fifth-dimension that joins together all of the above. Schools can ignore existence and importance of surrounding and virtual reality, but with that decreases and limits its educational efficiency and confirms to be a closed system. If schools in Croatia decided to introduce students to the fifth dimension of education, it is necessary to equip them with computer equipment.

Computer literacy of teachers is poor and is far behind the students. This causes relatively low utilization rate and these minimum funds allocated and available in the process of computerization and internetization education.

All the above indicates the need for the creation of IT “tools / applications” that would encourage schools and facilitate their systematic approach to the use of information and communication technology in order to more effectively achieving the fundamental tasks of the educational process.

By the end of the four-year high school, modern student spends an average of about 7% of their life time in the classroom. The remaining 93% of the time is strongly marked by the influence of numerous communication media; television, video, radio, daily and weekly newspapers, phone and cell phone.

Therefore hypermedia learning imposes as a logical choice. The student and teacher will be connected in the comfort of their homes with any local and planetary source of information. This would significantly change the purpose of stay and interaction of students and teachers at the school of the new age. Systematicness, development and educational value of electronic (multimedia, hypermedia) sources of information in native language, in this context, is crucial for the integrity of school reform.

Therefore, the first objective should be creation of original educational content and educational software in native language and the development of hypermedia learning.

The focus in teaching must take a step forward from “pampering students with information” on their training for finding, evaluating, processing and storing information and collaborative team behavior, entrepreneurship, adaptability to change and lifelong
learning.

All of this assumes optimal opening of schools to all modern media and hypermedia and use of their educational and training opportunities in order to achieve a higher quality of students' knowledge. Research suggests that the use of computers in education undoubtedly produces significant positive effects such as:
- shorter learning time,
- lower total cost of education,
- greater motivation of the participants,
- creates a positive attitude towards the use of computers.

It is noticeable higher efficiency of adaptive systems for hypermedia learning which enables the selection and presentation to the student only those contents in a topic as new for him. This is achieved by testing students' previous knowledge, and then the development and application of his foreknowledge in customized educational programs. Such an adapted education program compared to implementing a comprehensive (regularly for all equal) program demonstrates the advantage where 30% more students for 30% less time achieve optimum performance better than 80% of the acquired material.

Internet provides the possibility of simple and rapid exchange of messages and documents among users' electronic mail (e-mail, mailing lists) and interest user groups or forums (Usenet). It is possible to communicate in real time (IRC), with a text message or an audio and video conferencing transmission. WWW interface allows publishing, storing and downloading content in electronic form (web pages, download) and their search and retrieval by keywords. These features have made the Web the most current source of information and virtually inexhaustible source of learning content. Allowing new forms of hypermedia learning and distance learning, such as learning in a virtual classroom.

Of course, like any other technology, it delivers education and training risks: it's endless jungle of information where it is easy to get lost and not achieve the educational goal, everyone on your web site can publish what they want but there is a big risk for undesirable exposure of education inadequate information students of a certain age.

So, we should find practical solutions which will enable better use of the Internet and the Web in school systematic strengthening of their educational potential and canceling possible risk situations and harmful effects. One of the possibilities in this direction is to set up and develop educational portal, applied IT ‘tools / applications’ to optimize the educational effects of the Internet and the Web.

The educational portal is general or specialized step-ins in information hyperspace of teaching and learning on the Web that allows the user to easily navigate in the content, finding quickly the necessary educational information and interest communication with other participants in the educational process. It encourages the creation of educational content in Croatian and establishes various forms of on-line education. It allows different types of communication and cooperation between entities in education and upbringing. Educational portals offer specific services to specific categories of users. The following categories who will use it:
1. Students will use the portal for creative expression, communication, and adoption of new knowledge. In this way, students will further develop their intellectual work and speed up the learning process.
2. Teachers, professors, professional staff and principals will use the portal to communicate with each other, information, collaboration, professional development, and for the publication and the practical use of new educational content and methodological procedures published on the portal.

3. Parents will be able to find information about schools, admissions, curricula, textbooks and other for them interesting developments in education, and will be able to communicate and collaborate with class, teachers, other parents, and educational administration.

4. Elementary and high schools will use the portal to present their activities and the strengthening of mutual cooperation, the publication of educational materials, send data to the Ministry and the Institute for Educational Development, use the information that have been published by others and to communicate with other schools, parents and students.

5. The bodies of state and local educational administration will use it to inform other subjects on the functioning of the school system and the decisions of its scope, plans and programs to improve and develop systems for business communication with schools, collecting data from schools and use of information that have been published by the schools and teachers.

6. Associations and clubs, which bring together students, teachers and parents in the citizens’ initiatives to assist in developing and improving the effectiveness of local and global education system, will use the portal to inform themselves about activities, communication and collaboration with educational institutions.

7. The public will use portal for the development of Croatian society as a knowledge society and for information on educational institutions and communication with them.

The lack of high-quality information services on the Internet appropriate to the needs of the Croatian education system and the lack of multimedia and hypermedia educational content in Croatian, prompted more individuals, groups and institutions in the attempts to solve these problems. Unfortunately this process is running relatively slow. Some of the educational information services (portals) in Croatia are:

http://skole.htnet.hr
http://www.prosvjeta.htnet.hr
http://www.edukacija.com
http://www.ucilica.tv
Chapter - Informal learning

APPLYING THE ARTS IN THE CONTEXT OF INFORMAL LEARNING TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

by Maria Metzaki (music teacher)
Paraskevi Markodimitraki (social science teacher)

1. INTRODUCTION

The arts bring people close to each other as they provide us with the opportunity to express ourselves, exchange ideas of both personal as well as social context. Emotions are running high being exposed to a work of art whatever is the way it has been produced, whatever is the form of art. Consequently, proving to be highly significant, the arts in the context of informal learning\textsuperscript{25} should be put into practice beyond the shadow of doubt.

The benefits of the arts are versatile, as their contribution to both unbending our minds and also letting us enjoy communication, helps us find a way out to create something new, being innovatively resourceful. Therefore, it is truly hard to lift restrictions on artistic expression as we gradually become familiar with the unique sense of universal conscience and our spiritual nature consolidates. The arts motivate conversation amongst us, they help us improve our characters, they teach us, they cultivate us and they enlighten the mysteries of our souls. A work of art promotes the sense of beauty, the enchantment of harmony, the functional benefits of symmetry and above all the balance of moderation. Due to artistic expression, not only is the modern man protected from alienation, but we also shelter our emotions from being obliterated. We make ourselves resistant towards the temporary pleasures of rank materialism. “Art is our spirited protest, our gallant attempt to teach Nature her proper place” (Oscar Wilde, The Decay of Lying- An Observation, 1891).

In the same way, the role of the arts in a student community may prove to be of vital importance. Art is the school subject that can introduce students to the amusing experience of development and it would be far more beneficial, if students were given the opportunity to share that experience as naturally as living, rather than being obliged to attend just another lesson compatible with duty. We need to bring up responsible citizens who respect and know how to appreciate art, not because they are meant to be musicians, painters, actors or writers, but because being able to identify an artistic work and its aesthetic qualities, we become more familiar with the discreet nature of our emotions, as specified by G. Babiniotis, Professor of Linguistics (2008) who recommends a “cultural inspiration in school training programs”\textsuperscript{26}. Thus, the contribution of the arts to the students’ cultural development is strikingly valuable and we could reap the benefits of this contribution via innovative educational programs\textsuperscript{27} as well as projects in the frame work of holistic

25 According to Jeffs and Smith (1990), informal learning is the process by which each individual, throughout their life, learn and acquire attitudes, values, abilities, skills and knowledge from their daily experience and the influences they receive from their environment. Additionally, according to Jarvis “what has to be predefined and programmed in the process of informal learning is only interaction”.

26 Innovative programs: “Innovation” according to the Dictionary of Common Modern Greek, means action characterized by a new perception of things, a novelty. With regard to education it focuses on three aspects: a) the change of principles and beliefs, b) the application of new teaching approaches and c) the use of new teaching media. (Fullan, 1991)

27 Project is a lengthy segment of research that tends to be illuminating about an important issue. Projects draw children’s attention to the analysis of particular events or daily incidents of their surroundings. During research, the participants are encouraged to make questions as well as prognosticate any possible answers. But the most important benefit that projects provide to children is the opportunity to acquire advanced mentality as well as additional, advanced skills. Moreover, students are supported to co-operate or to argue with others, to share responsibilities among them, to check data, to experiment on various diagrams in order to be efficient. Participants are challenged to reexamine their environment and as a result they learn about the significance of functionality and how to be capable of serving a purpose well. (http://methodproject.weebly.com/)
education so as to cover the learning objectives in cognitive, affective and sensory domains. As a matter of fact, an informal type of learning has been depicted in the very well-known Chinese rhyme by Xun Kuang, a Confucian philosopher:
“Tell me and I forget, Show me and I may remember, Involve me and I learn”.

(Xunzi, Book 8:“Ruxiao”-The Teachings of the Ru, Chapter 11)

It is really hard to define art and it is even harder to make a widely accepted outline of its meaning. However, there is no doubt that any kind of artistic expression derives from an inner human tendency to create, to communicate as well as to illustrate not only the feelings been untold, but also those ideas and estimations of personal life, which help us unfold our imagination. Besides, this is what John Dewey approves of in his “Art as Experience” (1934) where he claims that a basic tool of our learning development should be the inauguration of our imagination.

The artistic experience that will be gained from an informal learning process would also support a decent learning process with a view to incorporate many different cultural characteristics as well as the great variety of scientific achievements. Accordingly, that would be the connective link between the objective character of knowledge that the education system attempts to transfer to the students, and the unique quality of their personal perception. (Lila Skemberi, 2010)

2. A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO THE ARTS IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

In order to succeed in our attempt to introduce children to the arts, it is necessary to familiarize students with all types of artistic activity (fine arts, theatre, music, literature etc.) because the way symbolism works in any kind of artistic expression is uniquely illuminating and it also paves the road to the advancement of their intelligence. Additionally, due to the fact that there are numerous symbols in artistic expression which help us describe our emotions, our attempt to produce art helps us understand reality in a constructive way as we are provided with different alternatives apart from rational thinking. Consequently, students becoming aware of the wide range of their emotions and talents, they might be capable of expressing deep-rooted eternal verities.

2.1 VISUAL ARTS

Students are being introduced to visual arts in accordance with the school curriculum in order to become aware of them, probing into methods, enjoying investigation and benefitting from balance in activity. The target of the state education system is to provide students with the opportunity to gain experience of necessary skills and realize the significance of art work so they might be able to reap the benefits of artistic activity either as artists or as art-lovers. (Curriculums for Visual Arts in Primary and Secondary Schools. Academic Institute.)

However, how many graduates had been so lucky to gain experience from visiting a painting or sculpture exhibition in their early childhood? How many of us here today have paid a visit to an architectural achievement? Children need to appreciate art beyond the frame of their classroom. The new generation is struggling against tremendous dilemmas
challenging their future prospects. In order to have successful results and make their dreams come true, they need a better stand than the previous generation. Fortunately, modern schools are revised and the new educative methods are as much as possible away from restrictions so that there are no boundaries between the school and the rest of society.

A visit to an art exhibition is an invitation for students to decode the symbolism that the artists have embedded in their line of work. “Any work of art includes whatever the artist wished to be discovered by the cultivated prying eyes” (Kokkos, 2011). Each one of us is expected to observe according to our personal standards which have been acquired through our aesthetic development. Students - observers are to collect a lot of information in their minds and that will strengthen their cultural conscience. Meanwhile, each student’s emotional intelligence is to be triggered and as a result students’ way of thinking will become more analytical, more penetrating. Through observation, social values, philosophical views as well as history and politics will be explained in a student’s mind. (Doulia Athina, 2012) Sequentially, similar benefits will be delivered from a sculpture exhibition or a visit to a museum, from students’ becoming familiar with folk art or even from an exhibition of photography.

2.2 THE ART OF THEATRE

Regardless of their age, people who participate in theatre learn how to rearrange their determinations or even well-accepted values; they become aware of flexibility in their attitude and they usually develop their skills so as to handle efficiently with problematic situations they are involved in. (Gotzamanis, 2009) The participants are also helped to reexamine their own personality as they cultivate hence improve their “physical condition as well as their mental and spiritual abilities”. (Official Gazette, General Principles of Education, 2003)

The same benefits may come to light applying theatre education to a student community. Acting is undoubtedly a wonderful learning tool that promotes expression and exchange of ideas in the most fruitful way. The students, either as actors or as audience, will be provided with the opportunity to escape from the rigid framework of the school curriculum and simultaneously enrich their knowledge of history, society and culture in an alternative way.

The art of theatre develops people’s inventiveness, it advances their judgement, it shapes a good sense of reasoning, it nourishes their improvisation skills and it helps them appreciate art in general terms. It often provides shelter that relieves people from fears since the most hidden qualities of human nature may enter into the scene. Our ‘egos’ are shaped in a group of people so we become familiar with the powers of co-operation and this pursuit of self-fulfillment is crucially important for students as well as adults.

The students will become accustomed to following some rules and showing respect to our cultural achievements. Either acting or enjoying a performance, they will reap a great variety of benefits because theatre appeals to all extensions of our personality. It is therefore an alternative learning process based on experience that will help students adopt a spirited point of view, acquire social mentality, learn how to express themselves in a direct and liberated way.

Since 2008, the International Drama/Theatre & Education Association (I.D.E.A.) has appointed the 27th of November as the International Drama/Theatre Education Day (I.D.E.A. Day).
2.3 THE ART OF MUSIC

If we tried to shape a pyramid of all types of artistic activity, we could claim that the form of art which stands on the top of the artistic scale is music (very well-known as the Apollonian Art). Music is a unique journey of mind and soul that begins with our own existence. Plenty of scientific experiments and studies have provided us with proof about the way music may influence human beings who are even in embryonic state (Shaw D., 1991), not to mention the beneficial effects it may have to people from their early infancy to adolescence and thereafter (Fox, 1991). Besides, we should not forget that tune, rhythm or pulse is in our bodies; in our heartbeat, in our stride, in our respiration. There is music in every single part of our organism and it might be claimed that not only is music the cause of our emotions, but it is also the effect that requires to be expressed. According to McClellan, “due to the powerful characteristics of music, the original attraction that it applies to us is both ‘physical’ as well as ‘emotional’. On the one hand, it is a ‘physical’ attraction because music is in the air and it reaches our ears through the fluctuations of molecular thrusting waves. On the other hand, it is an ‘emotional’ attraction owing to the fact that we are offered an atmosphere which affects our mood and the way our feelings respond could be linked to a greater extent with a subconscious reaction rather than a conscious decision”. As stated by Heinrich Heine, “Where words leave off, music begins”. And according to S. Shaboutin, “Music heals our souls and it has been proved that it may also cure our bodies”.

Apart from the artful combination of sounds, music itself is a complicated demonstration of human behavior (Zatorre, 2000). It helps us expound our culture, enlighten our souls, develop our socialization skills, appreciate hence improve team work. Music helps us express ourselves, it expands our imagination and creativity, it helps us feel less tired, escape from stress (Dritsas, 2001) and boredom, improve logic (A.M. Graziano, M. Peterson & G.L. Shaw, 1999). Since we learn how to be more resistant and patient, students will be introduced to discipline and responsibility, they will learn how to concentrate, they will put self-confidence and self-respect into practice.

Beyond the frame of curriculum and following an informal type of learning, participating in ensembles, festivals, cultural programs, live performances would surely enable students acquire social conscience. Additionally, performing on stage, musicians receive recognition, they gain respect, they obtain public acknowledgement and people would look up to them inside or even outside school. As a result, multiple benefits will come to light, such as development and consolidation of self-confidence, group spirit, empathy as well as a spirit of emulation.

Admittedly, the beneficial effects of music may apply to all ages, constituting a lifelong asset. Beyond the pleasure we are offered, music provides us with a promising way out either being performers or being demanding listeners. Let us not forget the views held by Aristotle on the importance of music for youngsters. He includes “education, entertainment as well as conduct” in an attempt to emphasize the multiple hints of mental and aesthetic development that contribute to the formation of the musicians’ characters.

Undoubtedly, music may affect our temperament and cater to our positive influence since it stimulates emotions, mobility, knowledge as well as socialization skills of the individual. We are supplied with a lifelong ticket to dream of liberating travels along the universe since there are neither boundaries in melodies nor restrictions in music. At an unsuspected time, Einstein stated: “I live my dreams through music”. And Friedrich Nietzsche also pointed out that “Without music, life would be a mistake”.

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2.4 CINEMA- THE SEVENTH ART

Cinema is undoubtedly one of the most noteworthy inventions of the 19th century. In the new era of information, new means of communication and modern digital forms of expression (cinema, video, internet), cinema offers a new dimension in education through informal learning. Due to the high profile of a ‘global language’ and due to the great variety of films (fictional films, films of classic era, films of historical reference, documentaries, science-fiction films, animation etc.) the seventh art can provide students with unlimited knowledge of social and aesthetic context. Moreover, students will be equipped with awareness of the world living outside their field of action, a potential that would not even exist without the contribution of the cinematic art.

The informal learning process via this international type of art will prove to help students advance their critical analysis, empathy and imagination. It will help them comprehend with inventive thinking as they are involved in new experiences. Social issues being raised will keep them up-to-date. They will broaden their horizons so they might be able to absorb different norms and customs realizing how to respect any different aspects. Apart from all that, students will enjoy the opportunity to wander, to entertain, to relax, to be identified with heroes, to dream and marvel.

It would be very suitable here to make a significant reference to the film festival “Teenage Screen” which is organized in collaboration with the film festival of Thessaloniki as it is truly a wonderful example of informal learning. Children as well as teenagers have the opportunity to enjoy films from all around the world for free (apart from some exceptions). Those films, regardless of their artistic quality, target the introduction of cinema at the informal learning process (Zoumboulakis G., 2015).

Another noteworthy example is the program “Let’s Go Cinema” which is organized by The Greek Ministry of Education in collaboration with The Greek Ministry of Culture. Their target is to introduce students to the art of cinema in a special way so as to become aware of the basic principles of audiovisual narration. The timetable includes three different stages and in the final stage the students are to produce a film by themselves (www.pamecinema.net.). Through this exceptional process, the students-film makers will experience how to compose and create a film. They will narrate their own stories, they will discover new methods to transfer their message and they will develop creative expression skills.

2.5 MUSEUM EDUCATION

Equally, the advantages of museum education are remarkably important. Museum education as an innovative learning process improves children’s cultural sense to the greatest extent and teaches them to appreciate and respect their cultural heritage. It arouses curiosity as well as imagination and challenges children to test their ideas developing special interests (Paris, 2001). Museums are exceptional learning tools because they help us foster our aptitudes, advance our reasoning and appreciate team spirit providing teachers with exclusive teaching aids.

The principles of active learning are the foundations of museum education programs. Interacting with each child’s developing character, museums deliver experience as well as a new kind of understanding (Leinhardt & Crowel, 2000). As specified by Mouratian (2008), a museum is a place which is offered to either youngsters or adults in order to help them co-operate, share knowledge and delight without any stress and time restrictions. As a result, students are relieved from the standards of school and they enjoy the exhibits
because they are free to move, explore, observe, discover, juxtapose the past with the present drawing conclusions. Students become more aware of the past, the present and the future and being in direct contact with the exhibits, students acquire knowledge with less stress and a lot more easily. Hooper- E. Greenhill (1994:102-103) makes reference of the fact that “working in a museum, with original objects, the students’ are allowed to compare, collaborate, classify, wonder, migrate from something concrete to something abstract, or from something well-known to something unknown, and finally incorporate particular facts into new theories”.

Students are especially fascinated by the interactive exhibits which draw our attention to technology and science. Those exhibits attract public interest and they prove to be perfectly educational as they convert any single visit to an illuminating, pleasant and amusing experience (Rennie & McClafferty, 1996). Therefore, an important distinction is made between learning and sterile memorization; students are more involved in their education since they investigate, discover hence enjoy.

When visiting a museum or participating in similar cultural activities, the students penetrate into our civilization, become excited, socialize efficiently, tend to perceive creative ideas and finally entertain. A complementary opinion has been expressed by inquisitor Mouliou (2005) who affirms that the 21st century museums focus on interpretation issues; communication and learning are embraced and finally museums pave the road to our understanding the whole world because we are enabled to approach jointly and severally this perfect globe we call “Earth”. Museums contribute to our recreation and inspiration; they enrich our development with cultural mores and they ameliorate social equality conditions. According to Athanasopoulou (2002), in order to broaden our sense of beauty, to put our judgement into practice and achieve the wise combination of “sensibility, participation, awareness”, not only do we need a reason to visit a museum, but we also need a prospect of a favorable message that we are about to decipher. Thus, we can develop our artistic standards, we can consolidate our judgement, we can understand our history and we can decode successfully the symbols of our cultural heritage. In our modern society, because of the fact that we tend to get rid of objects and we constantly replace them with new ones, we need museums in order to protect our traditional symbols, our evolution, our maintenance, our endowment and our respect to human nature (Sullivan R., 1996:62).

“Sensibility, participation and awareness” (Athanasopoulou, 2002) are the educational tools of museum contribution that may polish the students’ personalities and may intrigue admiration as well as respect towards the cultural heritage of the whole world.

In conclusion, setting down Eisner’s (2002) ten most significant points of the arts’ contribution to children, perhaps we have a better view of what students acquire from the arts:

The arts:

i. Teach children to make good judgements about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgement rather than rules that prevail.

ii. Teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.

iii. Celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.

iv. Teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but
change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the ability and a willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.

v. Make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form nor numbers exhaust what we can know. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition.

vi. Teach students that small differences can have large effects. The arts traffic in subtleties.

vii. Teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which images become real.

viii. Help children learn to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them feel, they must reach into their poetic capacities to find the words that will do the job.

ix. Enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.

x. Their position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.

3. CONCLUSION

Taking everything into account, we could resume that a true contact with the arts can prove to be highly beneficial to the students. Escaping from school curriculum and becoming familiar with the arts through innovative programs, projects, cultural programs, through visits to art galleries, museums, theatre, cinema, live concerts, we help students develop their personalities containing significant characteristics. Experiencing the arts and being aware of aesthetics, the students are moved emotionally in an unexpected way. As a result, the students’ mental and moral development, bring up advanced qualities. Enjoying the arts, students acquire knowledge, they get inspired from shining examples and they become familiar with a wide range of skills. Liberating, responsible and creative personalities come to light and students are not afraid of combining ideas, they are not afraid of judgement, decision making, putting a theory into action. On the contrary, they are steadily encouraged to improve their mental as well as their moral development. Therefore, the lifelong learning process becomes a matter of conscience and a lot more capable adults will be brought up from generation to generation. If we sow love for the arts and culture in our minds, our students will reap the benefits that will assist them in shaping their personalities. The arts in the context of informal learning will enable people to set the foundations for a highway to the dream of our self-fulfillment.

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Chapter - Citizenship

European democratic life: learning it within school
by Caridade Maria Pereira
Communication presented at the International Symposium – 17th and 18th May 2016
European Identity – part of world heritage
Escola Secundária Dr. Mário Sacramento – Portugal

Introduction

Thinking about European identity there is a common set of values which unites the European individuals and therefore how European Society comes into being.

As we know values are the fundamental elements of the culture – they define the meaning and significance for the people within a social system/society. The rules and norms of a society are derived from its values. From this point of view it becomes clear that values have a deep significance for the respective social system due to the fact they crucially influence, control and regulate this social system.

Democracy is one of the most highly cherished values in our European societies and it appears to be the most suitable form of governance that there is. As Winston Churchill put in once “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others have been tried”29.

Europe is proud of its democratic system. This form of government is described as the backbone of the European model, as the essential pillar of our societies and as the founding principle of many fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, voting right, freedom to undertake economic activity, right to strike for example.

In our times democracy is no longer mainly procedural – a method to elect and change the elites that rules us at given time intervals. Democracy is more about civic cultures and the expansion of democracy and democratic decision making into everyday life. Democracy is a way of life (Almond and Verba, 1963; Pateman, 1970; Habermas, 1994, EACEA report, 2013; Guerra, 2002).

Since the 1970s and the emergence of so-called New Social Movements there has been much talk of crisis of the representative model of democracy30: the gap between the governed and the governors has been perceived as having widened resulting in low levels of trust in politicians and political parties as well and reduced levels of legitimization of democratic decision making process.

The EU is not immune to this, as debates about the democratic deficit illustrate (Held, 1996; Touraine, 1996; Wind, 2001). The past two decades have seen considerable interest in the topic of civic engagement and participation. This interest has been accelerated by concerns about a decline in civic participation in many developed countries including those in Europe (Avbelj, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Putnam, 2000; Ross & Dooly, 2010, ICCS report, 2009b). Formal political participation, particularly with respect voting in national and European elections appears to be declining (EurActive, 2009, ICCS report, 2009b).

As such, a broader conception of democratic participation stresses the value of citizens’ participation in civil society organizations and social movements coming up new ideas to breathe new life into our democracy, to engage our citizens and bring them

29 Sir Winston Churchill, Hansard, November 11, 1947
30 From the representative perspective, democracy is often reduced to a means of formalized decision-making and participation by citizens is limited to voting and legitimating the ruling elite, a system called by Schumpeter (1942, cited by EACEA report, 2013) “competitive elitism”. Participatory models of democracy originally advocated by Jean Jacques Rousseau emphasise the importance of effective citizen participation in a democracy and criticise the reduction to the periodic voting in or out of different elites (idem).
back into democratic life. As Pateman (1970:42) explains "the existence of representative institutions at national level is not sufficient for democracy: for maximum participation by all the people at that level socialisation, or social training, for democracy must take place in other spheres in order that the necessary individual attitudes and psychological qualities can be developed. This development takes place through the process of participation itself". According Pateman (1970) a civic or democratic culture of participation needs to go beyond the formal political process in order to sustain the legitimacy of democracy.

Civic engagement of citizens is a central characteristic of a democratic society and should not be confined to the sphere of politics. In his work on social capital and citizen participation, Putnam (1995:65) defines civic engagement as "people's connections with the life of their communities, not merely politics". Putnam views social capital (1993) as an important collective resource and a “kew to making democracy work” (p.185) and three components of social capital (social trust, social norms and social networks) provide a context for successful cooperation among individuals and for effective participation in society. This context, in turn, emphasizes the relevance of interpersonal relationships for individual engagement.

European democratic system must strengthens itself promoting more direct citizen participation and involvement in civic society and young people are stakeholders. In a context of changing political structures and technological opportunities it’s crucial enhancing the participation of young Europeans not only quantitatively (that is by making young participate more) but also qualitatively (enabling young people to 'make the most' of democratic participation and be better represented and more influential in national and international democratic systems) – (EACEA report, 2013).

1 – School and citizenship education

European countries need citizens to be engaged in social and political life to ensure that democratic values flourish and also to foster social cohesion at a time of increasing social and cultural diversity.

The challenge of educating young people in 21st century addresses a sound citizenship education focused on knowledge and understanding and on opportunities for participation and engagement in both civic and civil society. Many countries now use the term civic and citizenship education rather than the narrow term of civic education. Civic education focuses on knowledge and understanding of formal institutions and processes of civic life, such as voting in elections. Citizenship education focuses on knowledge and understanding and opportunities for participation and engagement in both civic and civil society. It is concerned with the wider range of ways that citizens use to interact with and shape their communities (including schools) and societies (ICSS report, 2009a).

Citizenship, in this context, refers to the aspects of education at school level intended to prepare to become active citizens, by ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to the development and well-being of the society in which they live. It's a broad concept which encompasses not only teaching and learning in the classroom but also through practical environment.

Citizenship education is an area that requires practical skills. National programmes and initiatives were drawn to enable students to gain practical experiences in social and

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31 Civil society refers to the sphere of society in which connections among people are at a level larger than that of the extended family but which does not include connections to the state. Civic society refers to any community in which connections among people are at a level larger than that of the extended family (including the state). Civic also refers to the principles, mechanisms and processes of decision-making, participation, governance and legislative control that exist in these communities (ICSS international report, 2009a).
political life.

Students start to become familiar with values and principles of the democratic process through their experiences in the first communities in which they are active members - their class and school (EURYDICE report, 2012). It's what Dewey (1997) claimed “learning by doing”.

2 – Students participation in school governance

Various learning situations intersect civic and citizenship education at school. These include leadership and engagement, everyday activities within the school and the quality of relationships inside the school itself. What students experience daily in school influences their perception of school as a democratic environment (Dürr, 2004, ICCS international report, 2009a).

Establishing and experiencing relationships and behaviors based on openness and mutual respect, contributing actively to school decision-making process and participating in formal and informal governance process provide students with opportunities to practice a democratic lifestyle and to begin exercising appropriate autonomy (Reilly, Niem & McLaughlin, 2005, ICCS international report, 2009a).

All countries have introduced some form of regulation to promote student participation in school governance, whether in the form of class representatives, student’s councils or student representation on school governing bodies to encourage pupils to represent their interests in an organized fashion and become involved in consultative or decision-making school bodies.

3 – Upper secondary (ISCED3) student's participation on school governing bodies in Portugal

Portugal’s official regulations and recommendations establish the following types of arrangements for student participation (ISCED 3 level) in school governance:
- each single class may elect two class representatives who represent the whole class interests;
- pupil representatives on highest management level (though voting or becoming candidates in elections). This body is responsible for the general organization of teaching and school activities and may also approve the school annual report, approve the budget and monitor the work of the school;
- students school association which has legal form;
Besides opportunities for pupils to take part in the work of formal bodies other schemes or initiatives are aimed at involving them in school life like the following:
- all students of a single school may be members of students assemblies;
- all the class representatives from a single school may be members of a council of class representatives.

When participating in formal school bodies, students can exercise a decision-making.

Even their participation can exercise a consultative role however they may experiment to determine what power they have to influence how their schools are run, and in doing so may develop a sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1997, ICCS international report, 2009a).

Democratic practices in schools can provide students with a means of ascertaining the usefulness of political action. Opportunity to value participation in the school
Based on the premise that student’s school participation prepares them to undertake their role as citizens and civic engagement in later adult life, between September 2007 and June 2009 a first research takes place (Master degree) and the research question was:

RQ: What is the proficiency level of school students’ participation of lower secondary education (ISCED 2)?

We consider the following specific research questions.
- What are the characteristics of students representatives’ activities?
- Do the students have assemblies to discuss their interests?
- How do the schools exercise their autonomy to promote students ‘participation on school life?

Sample design: the student population was students in Grade 8 and 9 (students approximately 14 years old) and we gathered data from about 240 students of two lower secondary schools. The instruments used were a student questionnaire, class representatives questionnaire and we also analyzed the autonomy documents of schools sampled.

Our findings:
• Students ’knowledge about regulation about their participation is very low.
• Students only have an active participation on the election process of their representatives;
• There is only a formal/procedural participation of students on school bodies and not an active one in the decision-making process.
• There are no students assemblies or councils to discuss their interests
• The majority activities of students school association are leisure.
• The schools according their autonomy don’t encourage and value the student’s participation specifically creating measures to encourage student participation in school life.

Since September 2009 a national research took place (as PhD candidate) and the research question was:

RQ: What is the proficiency level of school students’ participation of upper secondary education (ISCED 3) on school governing bodies in Portugal?

Sample design: the student population was students of last grade of ISCDE 3; ninety upper secondary schools from north to south of Portugal participated in this research and we gathered data from about 2900 students of last grade of ISCDE 3. The main survey data collection took place between September 2011 and July 2013. We used a mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative).

Our first findings:
The qualitative study is in conclusion. The general findings of student questionnaire first analysis are:
• The students only have an active participation on election process of their representatives, especially of their representatives of school students association.
• Their representatives on school bodies have mostly a formal/procedural representation and not an active participation in school life (in school decision-making).
• The activities of their representatives of students association are most parties, sports activities, travels and dances parties.
• The students have a low knowledge about autonomy school documents.
• Students have a minimalist perspective of participation. For them participating in school life refers to do the activities promoted by school and respecting the school rules.
• There are no student’s assemblies or councils to discuss their interests.
• The work of their representatives is unknown for the majority of students.
Overall student’s participation on school governance seems to be only a democratic formally process and assumes a passive level.

Final reflections

Education plays a pivotal role in relation to young people’s participation in democratic life. It needs to be stressed in this regard that this should not merely be confined to education in a formal settings but also in non-formal settings.

Students learn about citizenship not only in the classroom but more effective if it is supported by a school environment where students are given the opportunity to experience the values and principles of democratic process in action. Citizenship education does not take place in a vacuum (EURYDICE report, 2012) – it’s a learning process and teachers and school heads may have a crucial role in this process.

Students may start to learn about democratic process by taking part in decision-making as active members in school governance.

All European countries have introduced some regulation to promote student participation in school governance.

As we pointed out school environment or school culture also known as the “ethos” gives an important contribution to citizenship education. But, do the educational regulations have a corresponding practice in school day life?

Our results show we need deeply to consider how far schools (namely in Portugal) daily practice and organization are with the aim and purpose of citizenship education according to official regulations and recommendations.

Participation in democratic life is considered a fundamental right recognized in article 10.3 TEU of Lisbon Treaty (2009) and an inherent part of the European citizenship provisions and when focusing more specifically on young European citizens (Article 165, Lisbon Treaty) one of the aims of EU action should be geared towards “Encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socioeducational instructors and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe” (Lisbon Treaty, emphasis added).

“The democracy appears to be progressing taking forms and passing through stages that fit the situation in each country. Its vitality is nevertheless constantly threatened. Education for conscious and active citizenship must begin at school” (Delors, 1996) if we want to preserve an important heritage we have – our democratic European life.

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Chapter - History

Curriculum development of Czech primary school after 1989
by Aleš Sasín

Czech education in the Communist era (1948 - 1989)

To be able to correctly describe the development of the Czech education system of the modern democratic society, we need to look at how the education looked like before November 1989.

After the victory of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia the new concept of uniform education was introduced in 1948. A great emphasis was laid on politicisation of schools in the spirit of the Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The uniform state education system was divided into three stages
• The first stage (1st - 5th year)
• The second stage (6th - 9th year)
• The third stage (compulsory education and selective high schools)

The compulsory school education was set at nine years thus being extended from original eight. During forty one years of Communist rule several changes in the length of compulsory education were made; several times it was shortened from nine to eight years and subsequently extended again to nine years. In 1976 in context with the new concept of basic education the compulsory school attendance was extended to ten years. The first stage was shortened by one year (1st to 4th year) and the second stage remained four years long (5th to 8th year); the pupils fulfilled the following two years of the compulsory school attendance by attending the first two years of their high school study.

The administration and management of education before 1989 was highly centralized. The education was controlled directly by the Communist Party or through the Ministry of Education. The education policy, content and educational processes were uncompromisingly determined and asserted.

Funding of the primary education corresponded to then central concept of the economy. Primary schools were funded by the District national committees. Schools were funded through the advance funding system. The authorities of school directors in terms of the economic decision making were significantly limited and their responsibility for management only was formal.

At that time a school was clearly assigned to each pupil, which he/she had to attend mandatorily with no options to choose.

The classification of pupils was determined centrally by a generally binding regulation, which was issued by the Ministry of Education. Before 1989, there was no institution with conclusive authority to provide the evaluation. There was no possibility to compare the knowledge of pupils in Czechoslovakia with pupils from abroad.
The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had several organizations that determined, who was allowed to study the teaching profession and subsequently work as a teacher and who was not. The profession of teacher was “controlled” and “supervised”; everything was strictly subject to the communist ideology. The same applied to further education of teachers.

The system of educational and psychological counselling bureaus was complex still with a great number of shortcomings. First of all, it laid the politically conditioned emphasis on career choice, which was related to the central planning of the workforce. This system also included counsellors of individual schools.

The Czech education system after 1989

The Velvet Revolution, which followed the events of 17 November, 1989, led to the fall of the communist regime. In the context with the transition to democracy it was necessary to re-evaluate and redesign the educational system. The entire system has been decentralized. In particular, educational curriculum has undergone significant adjustments. Teaching theories have re-established the connection to the theories of the pre-war Czechoslovakia and gradually contacts have been established with Western educational systems and institutions.

The administrative responsibilities were laid in the hands of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Boards of Education became the middle link of the departmental education administration. The Czech School Inspection Authority became an independent institution. Schools were transformed into allowance organizations. The legal subjectivity provided schools with autonomy and independence. A large part of the authorities and responsibilities was transferred to schools themselves, especially to their management. The system of state and local governments of the regional education built the structure at all management levels, including counterbalance.

- Director - School Board
- Municipality - the municipality council and its commission
- Board of Education - School Board
- Government (Ministry) - Parliament

In 2001 the public schools and educational institutions were transferred to the competency of regional authorities. This has led to the extinction of the boards of education and all competencies, including financing, were transferred to regional and municipal authorities.

Currently, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has become the central government authority for education. The Ministry is responsible for the condition, conception and development of the education system; it deals with drafting legislation for executive and operational activities, determines the overall strategy and education policy.

The regions have the founder function. Only 73 – especially special schools, diagnostic and educational institutions – have been left in the competence of the Ministry. Ensuring the conditions for compulsory school attendance has become the responsibility
of municipalities. School directors are appointed on the basis of the tendering procedures by the founder of the school.

The directors of schools are responsible for the quality and efficiency of the educational process, including the adjustment of educational programs, selection and purchase of textbooks. Other areas in the competence and responsibilities of directors include the financial management of the school, which consists mainly of operations and staff salaries. Last but not least, directors are directly responsible for staffing – both teachers and administrative staff of the school. Their competence also includes the communication and relationships with the municipality and the public.

Along with that a large number of alternative schools, such as church schools, Waldorf, Dalton and Montessori schools etc. have been established. These schools have been joined by private schools.

The current education system is a social institution. The state, society, parents and pupils have various needs, various requirements and ideas which the school is about to serve. School facilities provide services and training, which supplement the education or are directly related to it. They provide institutional and protective care or preventive care. These educational institutions include facilities for further education of teachers, school counselling facilities, school educational and boarding facilities, school facilities for interest education, facilities for school catering, school purpose facilities and educational facilities for institutional and protective education and preventative educational care.

Functions of school

• Educational
• Pedagogical
• Protective
• Qualifying
• Selection
• Integration

The mandatory attendance has been set for the period of nine years. Pupils can comply with this obligation in primary schools, which are divided into

• 1st level (1st -5th year)
• 2nd level (6th - 9th year)

Or at grammar schools, which have eight or six-year cycle. Pupils can attend this grammar school after the completed fifth or seventh year in the elementary school.

Nowadays, pupils have the freedom to choose the school. This causes problems with school enrolment for children, who are permanently resident in the vicinity of highly demanded schools. This problem is solved by territorial catchment of schools. Thanks to this, parents have a guarantee that their children will be enrolled at the school near their permanent residence in the respective school district.
The classification of pupils in schools has been moving in a similar direction as all thinking of the post-November Czechoslovakia. Everything was directed at relaxation and freedom of the decision-making and the creation of own evaluation rules within a school. The ongoing evaluation of pupil during the 10 months-long school year is reflected in the issue of the half-yearly report cards. At some schools also verbal evaluation was included after the consultation with parents. This has been mostly case in education of young children. Currently, it is possible to combine traditional marking and verbal evaluation.

After November 1989, changes occurred in training and education of future teachers as well as in further education of teachers. The crucial qualities include the professional and personal qualities of teaching staff. The emphasis is laid on the performance of educational work, therefore the remuneration system is not only based on the length of practice, but also on the career growth. The establishment of the Act of pedagogical staff governs the concept of a pedagogical professional and determines the requirements for professional qualifications of the teaching staff. Furthermore, it defines the conditions for the performance of the job of school directors and school facilities. At the same time, it determines the system of further education for teachers, including the career system.

Also the counselling system has undergone changes. Private counselling bureaus and special counselling centres have been established at special schools and they have been providing care to pupils and children with various types of disabilities. In primary schools educational counsellors were gradually established and in cases of more serious problems of pupils, pupils are sent to the educational and psychological counselling bureaus. Pedagogical and psychological counselling bureaus are focused on the integration of pupils with an extraordinary talent or, on the other hand, to help pupils with special educational needs.

With the Czech Republic’s accession to the European Union new possibilities opened up to the Czech pupils, students and teachers. They have had the opportunity to participate in all activities, education, training, community programs and cooperation with other educational institutions of the European Union and third countries. This is related to the participation of Czech Republic in European Union programs. The most important programs include Comenius, Erasmus+ and eTwinning.

One of the problems the Czech education system has been facing has been the low birth rate in the 1990s. Therefore, during the past twenty years the number of pupils in primary schools declined. The decline in the number of pupils in primary schools also relates to the emergence of grammar schools, where pupils were leaving to from the first or second year of the second level. Because of the population development some schools merged and some schools were completely abolished. Since elementary schools in municipalities contribute to maintaining social, cultural and economic ties, some schools with declining numbers of pupils have been financially supported by premium funds of the municipalities. These funds are not directly mentioned in the laws and are very individual.
From curriculum to the General educational program

In the 1990s several programs were created, which tried to liberalize, democratize and humanize the curriculum. They were primarily based on trends in the educational policy and development of educational systems in developed democratic countries. The first major event was the Freedom of education and the Czech school.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports subsequently issued a document called Quality and accountability. This document was to promote school autonomy and allow their own profiling provided that they respected educational standards.

The document called Standard of basic education followed, which provided the principal limits and content of education through the core curriculum.

The Standard Model of elementary education is followed by model educational programs called Primary School, which prepares the content within the traditional subjects, Elementary School, the aim of which is layering in social themes and concepts and the National School, the content of which can be integrated into interdisciplinary relationships, which in turn can go to the Block teaching, thanks to which combining various subjects may lead to the creation of a new subject.

The White Paper document was a breakthrough. The document defines the main lines and principles of education policy. All is based on trends that are given by the European Union. These trends include the lifelong education, humanization of education, equal access to education for all, decentralization and democratization. Here multilevel educational programs are considered. The State Education Programme - Framework Education Programs – School Educational programs.

The National Education Program

It is known as the national curriculum. It defines the general mandatory requirements and main principles of curricular state policy. It specifies democratic and humanist values, on which the education is based. These values should be passed on to pupils and also should become basics of the school life and relations between the various participants in the educational process. Goals and core competencies are namely focused on the personal development, civic education, preparation for further education or entry into professional life.

General educational program

The General educational program for basic education with the annex for the education of pupils with slight mental disabilities directly follows the General educational program for pre-school education. It is designed for primary schools, including those, in which pupils are educated with slight mental disabilities, and then for grammar schools with the multi-annual education cycle. For these schools it is mandatory, and their duty is to take it as a basis at developing school curricula.
New targets for basic education are formulated here. Unlike traditional objectives, which were focused on a wide array of curriculum, its mechanical teaching and reproduction, new targets aim at comprehensive development of the pupil’s personality, which is formulated in key competencies, which should be available to the pupil after completion of the education. These competences are defined as “a set of knowledge, skills and values important for personal development and the application of each member of society” (RVP 2007, p. 14).

- Competence to teaching
- Competence to problem solving
- Communicative competence
- Social and Personal Competency
- Civil and labour competence

Within the General educational program nine educational fields are defined, which are further divided into one or more educational fields.

- Language and language communication - Czech language and literature, a foreign language
- Mathematics and its applications - focused on the use of mathematics in real life situations, based on active activities, which are typical for working with mathematical objects
- Information and communication technologies - focusing on information literacy and basic skills in using computers and modern information technologies
- Man and his world - it concerns people, family, country, culture, society, nature, technology and health. It is the only area that only is intended for the first level of education
- Man and Society - History, Education for Citizenship (Civics)
- Man and nature - physics, biology, geography, chemistry
- Arts and Culture - Art, Music
- Man and Health - Physical Education, Health Education
- Man and the world of work – work activities, technical education, the region is aimed at professional orientation

Individual training courses include the expected outputs and curriculum, which is structured into individual thematic areas. The curriculum defined in the General education program is recommended. It only becomes binding after its definition in the School curriculum.

The General educational program only specifies certain boundaries for elementary education. Therefore individual elementary schools have enough space for its completion within their School curriculum.

School education program

The law binds all primary schools with the obligation to create the School Education Program. Its creation is based on the General educational program. Each school can create its own School educational program developed based on the needs of its students and the environment, in which a given school is located. Schools have additional hourly
subsidies, which are not listed in the General education program. As a result, they can include other mandatory or optional subjects, or strengthen mandatory educational areas beyond the number of their hourly subsidy based on the General education program. These options lead to profiling of individual schools and make them more attractive for future students.

Curricula vs. School education program

The main difference is that curricula were binding and applied to all schools in the country. Therefore, every school taught according to the same document, from which it was not allowed to deviate because curricula were identical for the whole country. The curriculum was based on average pupils and traditional setting of subjects in the curriculum. Their main goal was mastering the curriculum and assessment of the extent, to which the student is able to reproduce the curriculum.

On the other hand, general educational programs lay emphasis on the educational outcomes rather than the curriculum. They contain the basic state’s / public requirements for the education of pupils, which can be further elaborated into school educational programs, allowing a focus on the conditions at the school, pupils' needs and experiences of teachers. The change generally consists in the approach to pupils, their motivation, creating a positive atmosphere and active involvement in the learning process.

Curricular reform is supported by the creation of methodological materials. There is the methodological portal www.rvp.cz that through the consultation center facilitates the development and implementation of educational programs into practice.

Resources:


Development of education in our country and the current school system, implementation of ICT in teaching, no. CZ.1.07/1.1.02/02.0012 GG OP VK


General educational program for basic education (with changes made as of 1. 9. 2007).
Portugal embraces and is embraced, a sixteenth century reality

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European Identity-Part of World Heritage

Abstract: A new philosophy of teaching and learning History certainly goes through all of it, starting from the micro to the macro and embracing realities such as politics, economy, society, culture and knowledge. In this way we give life to anonymous actors, without whom the emphasis placed on “great characters” would not be possible and consequently to write the chronicle of humanity. Portugal is an example of this, a small country with about 1.5 million inhabitants, many of whom humble fishermen, in the early fifteenth century, taking advantage of the practical knowledge, and what we had been bequeathed, throw themselves into the adventure of the unknown, connecting it to the known and thus becoming a pioneer in the globalization of economy, culture and knowledge.

Introduction

Dear readers, the challenge is as simple as ambitious, go along an extensive area of thousands of kilometers, starting in mid-fourteenth century, the Genoese colony of Kaffa, in Crimea, and ending in the Portuguese maritime Empire in the middle of the sixteenth century. It is clear that time and space will be guiding beacons, explanatory frameworks, in which causes and effects are combined in a symbiotic what and why, toward an image that is pretended to be as clear as possible, of a cultural and civilizational exuberant past, where for the first time in the History of Civilization, East and West “sit at the table of the King”, engaging a mutually enriching coexistence.

Deaths, diseases, wars, broken families, suffering, epics, discoveries, all have a bit in a constant zigzag of feelings, experiencing various events, challenging the imagination of one and all, a constant discovery of landscapes, colours and smells. In fact, it is the historian the difficult task of trying to impregnate the reader the mindset of those times, making the “trip” much more real and lived, taking him back to the past, going to practice
the theory of relativity, not by mathematics formulas, but an orgy of feelings, coming from an experienced historical knowledge. And this, believe me, by self-experience, is able to snatch feelings hitherto never experienced, to project the mind to a reality in which we were very close to being active players in this distant past.

This is the goal of a “new history”, “total” I would even say, in a global sense where no one is left behind, starting from the micro to the macro, being the sum of the parts upper to the totality. Thus, all are called to intervene, to give its contribution, to become an active part of a past that we want as present as possible. This design rejects the “great characters” whenever these do not give the primacy to the whole cultural, mental, economic, political and social, forgetting those, who by their actions, have made the impossible become possible, anonymous actors who for so many years remained incognito, victims of a distorted and square view, I even say, suitable to rock children and boost dreams of Kings and Queens.

And here lies the importance of local history, so forgotten and mistreated, being enough to look around to perceive the drastic consequences typical of the third world countries and often rooted in ignorance that hurts inside. Monuments shamefully in ruins, others succumbed before various interests (highlighting the real estate), heritage of incalculable value, unable to cry out for help, needs new consciousness that is in our hands to be awaken. This myopia has cost us a high price, a very high price, I would say not only because it’s something irretrievably lost, and the abyss of time will not forgive, but also contributes to a very bad image of the country we are, removing from us the precious value by those who visit us.

It is thus for the public school, “produce” historical knowledge from the survey and crossing information, the result of direct contact of students with “their” historical sources, written, not written and oral, raising awareness, educating for citizenship, changing mentalities, creating a new generation of citizens active and aware, to identify with its people, with the heritage that surrounds them and the need for its preservation. This impulse surely result in a new civility by the current public actors, who will certainly not feel indifferent to all this, a change that requires something more of its elected, inducing them to structural changes, unprepared that are to respond positively to a new kind of challenges, as organized by according to purely economistic concepts.

So, it seems urgent to establish a network of partnerships, involving schools, local authorities, enterprises and individuals, who will compete for the success of all, then the own citizenship itself. Heritage, for its size and wealth charge us, all without exception, the ability to preserve for future generations a legacy that is irreplaceable.

Dear readers, come there and accompany me on this journey of knowledge!

The lever of the Black Death

The fourteenth century shows us a commercially vibrant Mediterranean, crossed by numerous vessels and a myriad of products that Europe was willing to pay for, fruit of successive transactions as a result of a route via Red Sea and Persian Gulf, which Muslims knew well how to boost, stimulating a highly profitable business for the various
parts involved. The profit and power walked through that time in hand. Silks, porcelains, various spices, slaves, everything was transacted, being reserved for the Italian "state-cities" the role of intermediaries between the Asian East and several European nations eager of all that was new. In fact, Genoa, Venice, Florence and Pisa had numerous colonies and trading posts scattered areas as vast as the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Iberian Peninsula and northern Europe, imposing their dictates on the pricing and delivery times. From the four before mentioned cities, the first two were, with all their splendor and naval power, a direct result of accumulated wealth, the main maritime and commercial powers of the time, dictating their law towards the competitors, the result of sea combat and successful ground attacks, which inflicted heavy losses to their most direct rivals.

Kaffa, located on the Peninsula of Crimea, was by that time, the most important Genoese colony of the Black Sea, so that at the end of the fifteenth century had about 70,000 inhabitants and a sea port with capacity for mooring near 200 vessels. Well, naturally, this would result in the attraction of indiscreet looks, allowing us to imagine the daily bustle of a rich city, crossed by diverse cultures and interests, where the East and West coexisted more or less peacefully thanks to higher interest that businesses would naturally instigate. Moreover the Genoese had plain notion of the pearl they held in their hands, resulting in this awareness the construction of a remarkable walled complex, able to protect them from other people's greed and ensuring them this necessary security that commercial activity requires. So, this atmosphere of relative peace and conviviality was close to come to an end.

In fact, by the end of that fateful summer of 1347, none of the inhabitants even realize that the world would fall upon them, in a way so cruel as devastating, and much less the consequences of that curse, literally coming from the heavens. It turns out that the Mongols, eager to conquer the bastion, but unable to topple the walled fortress that lay ahead, decide to use for the first time in human history, a biological weapon. Catapults are placed near the walls and, to everyone's surprise, start the shooting, not stones or other typical throwing objects at the time, but of corpses in a state of decomposition and infected by the plague bacteria, Yersinia pestis. We can clearly imagine how quickly it went from initial surprise, to fear and consequently to terror, a gradation of uncontrollable panic, challenging the medical knowledge of the time, unable to reply to such a big challenge. The result is in sight, when the Genoese ships, coming from Kaffa, begin to arrive to European ports bring on board three types of unwanted passengers, namely contaminated sailors (living and dead), the black rat, which usually coexists more closely with the man than the grey one, and its traditional guest, the flea of the Xenopsylla cheopis species. Well it happens that this kind of rat possesses, for the vulnerable medieval citizens some features capable of boosting such calamity: it carries the disease, usually lives in domestic environments and has a 21-day gestation period, being the female capable of getting pregnant in the first day the brood is born, resulting in an exponential multiplication. If to all of this we add the poor sanitary habits, the streets strangulation, the exiguous homes of wood and culm, the lack of sewage and the proximity between man and all kinds of rodents, we have the ideal conditions for the

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32 BALARD, Michel. La Romanie génoise, Rome et Gênes, Ecole Française de Rome, 1978
creation of the “perfect storm”.

Suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, between 1347 and 1351, a little everywhere, with the surprise quickly leading to a panic of death, begin to emerge infected people in which were visible blackened buboes (hence the designation of bubonic plague), resulting from infection of the lymph nodes, which amounted to a death sentence in less than five days. And the situation is getting worse, because before the total ignorance, contagion also happens by coughing and body fluids, causing an uncontrolled slaughter and subsequent burials in mass graves (lately discovered in several countries). Moreover, the escape to the lonely death, causes population displacement in mass of the countryside to the city in a desperate attempt to find some support in urban centers. Without knowing it, helpless, disoriented, uncontrolled, struggling with unequal arms against an unknown enemy, they were heading for certain death because the infection was much higher than in rural areas. The result of ignorance, of a deep-rooted religiosity and badly understood, the divine punishment was the justification at hand, and therefore not surprising that in desperation arose the famous processions of self flagellants, trying to find in the faith, or even mysticism, the response that stubbornly refused to emerge. Imagine the panic, parents burying children, these burying brothers, whole families victimized, others that survived one element, a bit of everything could be seen, in an “orgy of death” of which we have close knowledge thanks to some written records that were coming. Boccaccio in his “Decameron” work said the victims usually “had lunch with friends and had dinner with their ancestors in paradise.”

In the end, and taking into account the difficulties in obtaining exact figures, it is estimated that no less than 33.3% of the European population has perished, this is, 25 million or more souls with the particularity of some locations have become ghosts, no one to tell what happened. For the time and after three centuries growing (XI, XII and XIII), but a little sustained, because the increase in agricultural production was not such as to create surpluses, any serious setback would have dramatic consequences. So the fourteenth century is known in history for its black trilogy: Famines, which began as a result of a succession of bad harvests between 1315 and 1320 and who were dragging across the century; Wars, especially the Hundred Years War (116 exactly) between 1337 and 1453, initially being a conflict between France and England, quickly spread to several other nations and several Pests, highlighting the aforementioned. Imagine the confusion that was installed, the lands to cultivate, hunger, panic and outrage “at the table every day,” with each and every one.

The strongest trying to restore the old manor order, bailing up the monarchs for the purpose, the small fry refusing to go down, requiring very high salaries to make the cultivation of land and in desperation assaulting castles and properties, driven by feelings of centenarian revenge following the maximum that “revenge is served cold”.

35 Boccaccio – Decameron, cit. in Joffre M. de Rezende, Prof. Emérito da Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade Federal de Goiás
36 Mattoso, José. (1993). História de Portugal, segundo volume. Círculo de Leitores
Weakness is made strength

Portugal did not run away from the scene drawn before, I would say that I considered him worsened due to recklessness of King Ferdinand (1367-1383), who judging himself with rights to the Castilian crown, began the famous Fernandine Wars (1369-1382), three in number, of which the country was defeated economically and militarily. It thus appears that the situation of the kingdom was alarming in all aspects, and the political, economic and social issues absolutely dramatic and therefore requiring a more urgent resolution. If about the first ones everything got all right in a matter of 27 years, initially with the claim of King João the first (1385) and posteriorly with the victory in the armed conflict with Castile (highlight to the victory obtained in Aljubarrota Battle) and its subsequent signature in 1411 of the peace treaty Luso-Spanish, of Ayllón-Segovia, concerning the second ones, they will be distinct in form, space and time.

In fact, it was necessary to urgently respond to the alarming true national emergency situation that crossed the country from north to south. With completely depleted finances, unproductive economic sectors, the evident lack of food that coexisted with rampant inflation, a direct result of currency devaluation and lack of precious metals were the most in need the most affected. Well our land border was no solution, Castile was struggling with many or more problems, making it worse the Muslim presence in Andalusia, which provoked huge instability and forced to frequent spending in the advances and retreats of the "reconquest process". Thus, we are left with the maritime boundary and it is here that with the experience of those who dealt daily with the sea, to which we add the knowledge that we have been left by other peoples and civilizations, we find the so ambitioned exit. We invented, reinvented and reused for our own sake, one might even say for all (as we shall notice), the cultural legacy we have inherited, which resulted in the end of this epic, an interlaced myriad of feelings and emotions, linking people, cultures and continents. Thus, began a long walk, what I often describe as the first step towards the globalization of knowledge, this is, to the birth of a worldwide acculturation.

We’ll start by the pioneering, boosted by a series of unique conditions, of which three are the most important: politics, nature and techniques. As for the first ones, I would highlight the monarchs and all social groups support, novelty, clergy and peasants, that although driven by different reasons, saw in this adventure towards the unknown the way out for the crisis affecting everyone and promising to take the best out of them. In what concerns the second ones, I would highlight a maritime coast of about 900 km, various natural ports and a daily contact of our maritime populates with the sea, in an intimacy of contradictory feelings, where life and death walked holding hands, as a result of the search for daily sustenance. For the thirds, the virtue goes for the ingenuity and national arts alongside with the rich heritage that has been given to us: Sailing letters, with notable representations of the coastal zone and adjacent, inhered from the Portolanos, which signed many directions starting from specific points so as to make it possible to join certain places; navigation and orientation techniques of which the Genoese and Majorcan, paid by Portuguese kings, knew how to make it out to us; Knowledge of various orientation instruments as the magnetic compass, quadrant, astrolabe, cross-staff (the last three of national work), making the first one the most important, probably the most used, fruit of the Muslim cultural heritage and bettering received by “Italian” sailors; boats like “Barca” (national origin), the Portuguese Latin caravel, with its triangular sail, used in discovering voyages, distinguished by making possible to travel bowline, to be clear, to progress
in zigzag against the wind, the “Nau” (vessel) and “Carraca”, both of bigger tonnage, making it possible to have bigger shipments, as well as the usage of artillery parts in the defense of our vessels.

Reunited all the conditions to an astronomic well-succeeded navigation, despite the unknown that awaited us, clearly we were one moored raft to our land border, which was urgent to free the shackles and go to that blue as unknown as challenging, in search of the coveted riches. Let’s take our seat on board.

Two directions, but only one true output

After making the decision, we were immediately faced with two choices, at first tempting, namely: occupy commerce sites, which were largely situated in the neighboring North Africa, or go further, face the unknown and try to control the production areas. This choice was not harmless, which quickly was proved taking the first step towards Ceuta. Located in the Strait of Gibraltar was up to one of the most important trade places through which circulated spices, gold (coming from Timbuktu, current Mali and since 1988 is part of the Unesco World Heritage Site), slaves and many other riches coming from the African continent. To these factors we must add the excellent geographical location, with the control of the Atlantic-Mediterranean vector, cereal production in its surroundings, the possibility of the Portuguese monarch belonging to an emerging dynasty, affirm himself, occupying victoriously, a weakened Nobility and simultaneously “deliver to the clergy” territory controlled by Muslims. Having started on 25th July Lisbon (which is not the death of the Queen, plague victim, 19 can prevent) and scale in Faro, the fleet consisted of 200 transport ships and warships and near 20,000 men. The landing takes place on 21st August, with the defenders of the city taken by surprise, which facilitated the whole process of conquest of the walled castle, so that at the end of the day, intra walls, Portuguese and Berber were mixed. After converting the mosque to a church the king knighted the infants Duarte, Pedro and Henrique. Citing José Mattoso “(...) Ceuta became a field of honor and titles, sign of the existing crusade and the one to come, prestigious bastion for the monarchy, Portuguese credential in Rome and in all Christian principalities (...)”.

But the real problems lay in a second moment, the post-conquest period, in which the indigenous “dry” the entire city of the influx of wealth, diverting them to neighboring boroughs, destroying crop fields and limiting the Portuguese domain to the walled area. Thus, a lucky achievement quickly passed to a drain of people and money being necessary to supply the city of grain and weapons, its people depend on to survive. This is where the first major politic and social division in the country surges between two distinct paths, the North African conquest or achievements of maritime discoveries, which mark the nation to rise to the throne of King João the second, reappearing later on the reign of King Sebastian, the first cause of the Filipino domain between 1580 and 1640.

The dices were rolled, it was urgent to obtain riches quickly, the first cause of started adventure, and Ceuta did not respond to this desideratum. As such, Madeira (1419/20), Açores (1427), were discovered and colonized, followed by advancing along the West African coast, with such force that in 1434 the “Cabo Bujador” is passed, in 1445

37 Mattoso, José. (1993). História de Portugal, segundo volume. Círculo de Leitores
started the first trade in Arguim and in 1460 “Serra Leoa” was reached. In this period must be highlighted the actions of Infant Henrique (1394-1460) who, by royal delegation, became responsible for the management of the whole process, not only to advance along the African coast but also the repopulation, exploration and economic exploitation the above referenced Atlantic islands. And so the first factory dubbed “Gold Coast” was born, Arguim, with its castle, erected on this island, for which Alvise de Ca da Mosto, venetian sailor to the service of said Infant tells us, “Mr. infant Henrique made a contract on this island of Arguim for ten years, therefore, that no one could enter the Gulf to deal with the Arabs, except those who were in said contract, which has a factory in that island, and foremen who buy and sell those Arab who come to the sea, giving them various goods, such as cloths, fabrics, silver and alquiceis, which are a kind of tunics, carpets and especially wheat, which they are always hungry for, and receive in exchange blacks, which said Arabs bring from the negeraria and gold Tiber. So this Lord Infant is currently working on a fortress in said island to conserve this trade forever; and for this reason every year vessels come and go from Portugal to the island of Arguim (...).”

But the arrival of King Afonso the fifth to power (1446-1481), marks a period of great predisposition to the North African conquests, with emphasis on Alcácer Ceguer (1458), Arzila and Tânger (1471), fruit of the nobility pressure with the monarch, who “rents” the advance by sea to a bourgeois from Lisboa, Fernão Gomes. Those were years of weakened royal power and was seriously feared for the success of the discoveries. Henrique had died, the power of the nobility grew visibly, its hunger for titles, lands and positions, such as the payment of military support from the African squares was a reality and the monarch showed himself unable to cope with them. But soon everything would change, specifically from 1471, with the control of the discoveries to be deposited in the hands of King João the second, who eleven years later assumes the kingdom on the death of his father.

**The Joanina policy**

In fact, with a very different view on the various aspects of governance concerns, the new monarch will adopt as guidelines in its governance, centralization of power, as well as the clear choice by the findings with the ultimate goal of reaching India.

There was finally a project with well-defined objectives and a well-defined strategy, it was the famous “Plan India”. They were in fact “new times and new winds” from someone who was not looking at the means to achieve those he considered to be the best interests of the country. Nobility is persecuted without mercy and placed under his “wing”, as I often say among my students, examples of which are the public execution of Bragança Duke and the stabbing of the Duke of Viseu by the king himself, accused of conspiring against his authority. The maritime expansion process gets a vital boost with a number of measures, namely: the command of all advance along the West African coast, with the ultimate goal to India, and all matters related to it, pointing to policies of “enclosed sea” and “royal monopoly”, according to the monarch himself, “defense and closed thing”; the affirmation of the House of Mina, India from 1503, as a local control of the inputs and outputs of the kingdom, giving the Monarchs the “pulse” of the whole process; the construction of the S. Jorge da Mina Trading Post in 1482, in the Gulf of Guinea, the main centre of obtaining wealth, “was prepared a fleet of 500 soldiers and 100 building masters

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for the work to become lasting. The expedition left Lisbon on 12th December 1481 and 19th January following, hit the village on both sides, where with the native king’s assent the foundation of the new town was settled, with such determination that "(...) pera isso ordenou que toda madeira, e pedraria que pera portaaes, e janellas, e esquinas dos mouros, e torres, pera outras cousas que fosse necessarea, logo de ca fosse lavrada, e concertada pera sem detença do lavramento se poder logo assentar. E assy se fez prestes muita cal amassada, e composta, e telha, e ladrilho, pregadura e ferramentas, e mantimentos, e todalas outras cousas pera a obra pertencentes em grande abastança. (...)" (in archaic Portuguese). The effort paid off, slaves, pepper, ivory and especially gold, “As the gold monopoly brought the greatest wealth to Portugal, it used to arrive about 410 kilograms of this metal per year to the country." in exchange for cloths, shackles, cereals and knickknacks which allowed the fabulous profits and economic power ever seen that would catapult us towards India; advance south to the passage of the Cape of Good Hope, a feat done by Bartolomeu Dias in early 1498, when in the sequence of a huge maritime turbulence and leading north the land was presented to port, opening the doors of India and consequently “ carrying the smell of spices to Lisbon”; sending in 1487 Afonso de Paiva and Pêro da Covilhã as emissaries, respectively toward Ethiopia, the supposed Christian kingdom Prestes João and the Indian Ocean in order to obtain vital information, preparing the arrival by sea to India, “The Bartolomeu Dias voyage and of Pêro da Covilhã and Afonso de Paiva have the same ultimate goal: they were both intended to gather information, one on the shipping lanes and the other on the commercial circuit. Knowledge that you needed to be aware. If the first was successful, with the passage of the Boa Esperança Cape (...) it is to doubt the sufficiency that meanwhile arrived to Lisbon about what the senders observed by land about the Indian Ocean” the start of negotiations with the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella, following the arrival of Columbus to the West Indies, which ensured the signature on June 7th, 1494 the Treaty of Tordesillas, replacing the Alcáçovas one, which divides the known and knowing world, between these two powers, through a Meridian "placed" 370 leagues west of Cabo Verde, “(...) King João the second will have to undertake negotiations to enable him to expand the space reserved for 370 leagues west of Cabo Verde, and not the starting 100 leagues west of the Açores and Cabo Verde (which were not even on the same meridian, Castilian and Papal ignorance). (...)The Pope then approves the sharing of this res comune, which leaves out all other monarchs of Christendom, and the lands and islands in the East of that line would belong to Portugal and the opposite hemisphere to Castile; the secrecy or confidentiality policy that, despite being shrouded in controversy as to its overall effectiveness and results, I am sure, has allowed us to make concrete progress compared to our neighbors and rivals, leaving us as evidence in the “court of history,” some issues. His trial and final verdict will be up to the jury, which all and each reader belong to.

- How was it possible that, in 1484, Colombo proposed to King João the second the arrival to Índia sailing west, when the Portuguese were already at the doors of the Indian Ocean?

41 Rui de Pina, Chronica d’El Rey D. Ioham II
43 "(...) Uma semana mais tarde, deparou-se (...) a Serra dos Reis, o que coloca o acontecimento a 06 de Janeiro de 1488. Uma tempestade fez então dispersar os navios, que caminharam para o sul e deixaram de lobrigar a costa. O capitão-mor mandou que se fizesse rumo ao norte, mas pela posição já tomada a leste, quando a esquadra voltou a avistar terra, descobriu-se passagem entre os dois oceanos (...)". Cit. In Serrão, Joaquim Veríssimo. (1980). História de Portugal. Segundo volume. Editorial Verbo
44 Mattoso, José. (1993). História de Portugal, segundo volume. Círculo de Leitores
45 Mattoso, José. (1993). História de Portugal, segundo volume. Círculo de Leitores
- How do we explain that this well-known sailor didn’t know about the well-succeeded national advance throughout the African West Coast, when he was married to Filipa Perestelo, daughter of Bartolomeu Perestelo, donee of Porto Santo?
- How is it justifiable that seven years after the catholic Kings approved Colombo’s proposal, when in 1488 Bartolomeu Dias opened the doors to Índia by passing the Boa Esperança Cape?
- How to understand, by the same kings, the signing of the Treaty of Tordesillas, with a meridian “away” by imposition of John II towards 370 leagues west of Cabo Verde, when the original proposal was only for 100 leagues?
- How to accept that with this same treaty we were given “in an easy way”, Brazil, Africa, India and part of the Far East?
- How to explain the ignorance shown by the Castela monarchs in what concerns these matters, realizing they were claiming India for them based on Colombo’s informations?
- How to explain that arriving from the first voyage from Antilhas, Colombo had anchored to Lisbon square for approximately 10 days and informed the King of Portugal of his discovery, instead of hurrying up to tell the news to the catholic Kings?
- How to ignore the existence of spies in the two courts with the objective of obtaining informations paid in a high price?
- And finally, last but not least, who was Colombo, and even more, who was he commanded by?

I think that in what concerns the famous secrecy politics and its effects, the readers are able to make their own judgments and testify before their own conscience.

**Arrival to India**

The king is dead, long live the king. In reality the History was not just for the “Perfect Prince” and on 25th October 1495, only 40 years old, without legitimate children D. João II dies, leaving the throne to his cousin and brother-in-law Manuel de Elvas, future King Manuel I. The trip to India was in an advanced state of preparation, the plan outlined, the dreamed empire one step away from being realized. Thus, in July 1497 a navy leaves Lisbon captured by Vasco da Gama, composed of three vessels and a ship of supplies that, in May 1498, arrives at Calicut, beginning the famous Rota do Cabo and an effective process of economic, scientific and cultural globalization. To me, unlike many other historians, it was not the fall of Constantinople, not even the voyage of Columbus, which contributed largely to the opening of the doors to the modern age, but this successful journey, which puts the first time in history of humanity the East and West face to face, in direct contact, signaling the end to the already dying Middle Ages. The West, civilizationally late compared to the mighty East, would soon know a huge development process at all levels, “despite the 250 years intensive of expansion and high value concerning the world economy which we nowadays called Western Europe, the economic center of world was still in the East (62% of world GNP).”\(^{46}\) It is however obvious the Portuguese pioneering spirit, evident in the creation of an extensive network of trading posts and greed of knowledge expressed in the chronicle of Zurara that, when referring to the expansionary process, emphasizes one of the most important factors, “everything is duly registered in a certificate.”

Goa, as the capital of the entire eastern empire and residence of the Viceroy,

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Ormuz, controlling access to the Persian Gulf and Malacca dominating the passage toward the Far East, are the strategic tripod around this area. Commercial exchanges that highlight the arrival of spices, precious stones, silk, porcelain, in exchange for precious metals, linking Goa to Lisbon, by that time the economic capital and knowledge in Europe, and this one to the Trading Post of Antwerp. You can imagine the spin of merchants from all parts that roamed in the Portuguese capital in search of the best deal, the bustle of India House, the variety of languages that could be heard in the street of the Merchants, economic and financial center, dozens of vessels “clogged” the estuary of the river Tagus, the multitude of fantastic stories and news, transmitted by word-of-mouth on the most recondite places and events. Economy, Politics, Science, Geostrategy, Technician, Art and Religion interweave in a mixture of new knowledge and concepts, laying the foundation of a cultural revolution and mentalities that we will call the Renaissance. “The Portuguese Expansion is then framed in nine long geopolitical cycles that have occurred since the beginning of capitalism, in the times of the Chinese Sung dynasty of the ninth century until the US hegemonic dominance in the twentieth century. (...) the Portuguese innovated in the own art of innovating and began globalization, which the Chinese, Italian, Catalan and even Muslims forerunners ended up not finishing”.47

Conclusion

At this point, the “traveler-readers” are ready to disembark, but at the same time ready to acknowledge how admirable this trip at the four corners of the world was, and the new things you learned, being able now to share it with everyone, serving as a live witness, and perceiving the downfall of the literary knowledge, built with no scientific evidence. Now try to match with the sailors that daily came and departed, and the stories they carried along with them, craving to tell them and tell them again, and of course, they didn’t lack audience because there was a wonderful crowd willing to hear those amazing stories, with the people that came everyday from Europe to Lisbon, returning to their places of origin with products that in the past didn’t seem more than a mirage, but also with a bunch of news that would spread quickly. Finally, the scholastic knowledge had its days counted towards an experienced knowledge, son of observation and precursor of the scientific method.

Urges thus enumerate some of the preconceived ideas, living in the European imagery, limiting knowledge and its search and the Portuguese, with the help of the legacy bequeathed by people who passed through here, dared to overthrow:
- The supposed accuracy of Ptolemy’s map, medieval scholastic reference, a mixture of science and mysticism, highlighting the imaginary representation of the lands placed outside the Roman Empire;
- The idea that the Cape “Bojador” was the end of the world, meaning that by surpassing it, there would be no coming back;
- The impossibility of reaching East, sailing the West, considering the extension of the African continent;
- The square-shaped earth form, which made impossible its circum-navigation;
- The existence of monsters and maritime giants, of all sorts, which swallowed crews and boats;
- The tales that alluded to the impossibility of dwelling the equatorial zones, due to hot

weather, the water boiled;
- The existence of hybrid creatures with both human and animal representation;
- The deprival of happiness for all of those who failed to live by Christ’s sign;

Much more could be adduced, but not less important, was the opening to the world, a new world, in an immensity of knowledge and willingness to know, that Mattoso exemplarily sums up: “This humanism of the discoveries doesn’t lie in stable and fixed truths, devised by antiquity; it is a humanism that appealing to reason and experience, aspires to reach the Empirical possession of the Cosmos” and that Vitorino Magalhães Godinho complements, it is “essentially a knowledge related to the World’s discovery, an invention of the human being in the space once again reinvented”. This way we couldn’t end this “knowledge adventure” without enumerating the gift to a planetary scale of a nation that, however controlled by the enormous power of Inquisition and therefore limited in its capacity of self-development, knew how to contribute to its diffusion in a world globalized by itself. This way, I highlight:

- A new vision of the planet, supported by a cartography anchored in scientific bases with representations in a global scale;
- The globalization of the scientific knowledge, to which it is not strange the discovery of the press, anchored in observation, launching the bases of the scientific method;
- The birth of a culture in a global scale, fruit of the exchange of numerous one-to-one experiences, allowing me to highlight the Japanese folding screens, picturing the multiplicity of races, reciprocal linguistic influences, animals and art objects coming from the four corners of world;
- The direct link of the various continents through maritime routes, prevailing these towards the indirect contacts, highlighting the Cape Route and the “Galeão de Manila” (Spanish);
- The speed in the circulation of direct information, that, for the time, if compared with the medieval period, it is similar to the present one;
- The globalization of economy, with a multiplicity of exchanges and new products, giving birth to “Modern Capitalism”, associated to the bloom of Merchants Associations, Banks, Exchange Houses and their branches;
- The enormous contribute to the downfall of scholastic teaching, controlled by church and based in the Bible, in myths and tales, replaced by a practical and experimental teaching based in observation;
- The way that starting from a critical period (14th century) it was possible, utilizing the existent cooperations, and the sharing of existent knowledge (local, national and external ones), to reach the chronicle of the shared knowledge.

Allow me to finish, with the proper bow to Master Paulo Manuel Azevedo da Silva, by his happy choice of quoting in its Master’s Degree thesis this excerpt of the satirical poem “Ship of Fools” (1494), from the humanist Alsaciano Sebastião Brant, where it can be read: “They’ve found in Portugal since then (the time of Pliny and Strabo), And in Hispania naked men, And sparkling gold and islands, too Whereof no mortal never knew”. The quoted master concludes that “We find in this excerpt, a whole of a program: The Portuguese pioneering - followed by Spain; the counterpoint to the old knowledge; the anthropological exotic; the economic possibility; the almost superhuman dimension of the
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Chapter - Special needs

Teaching History to Students with Dyslexia
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ABSTRACT
History as a school subject is an interesting yet demanding study in terms of oral and written speech skills required. This is especially so for dyslexic students, who might feel discouraged and unmotivated. Given their impediment in reading and understanding of the written word, success is a matter of stimulating their interest, ensuring active participation, strengthening and improving their skills and finally setting and maintaining success experience. It is therefore appropriate that the teaching material used is not solely linguistic and abstract in nature. Visual, and audiovisual resources, mobilize the imagination, encourage participation especially of students with dyslexia, cultivate historical empathy and contribute to shaping historical thinking. Moreover, organizing these students in working groups, in which everyone assumes specific roles and responsibilities, reinforces their self-efficacy beliefs, fosters accountability and results in improvement of their performance. It is useful that the teacher takes into account that students and teacher act as key players in the teaching process, that the classroom climate should be supportive-cooperative, that the use of prior knowledge helps to better acquire and consolidate new knowledge and if students are motivated and are given clear objectives, they can properly regulate their actions and drive themselves to success experiences with appropriate learning support. The set of modes of behavior and teaching techniques with which the teacher organizes the classroom work, plays a key role in the activation of students with dyslexia.

INTRODUCTION
The study of history is particularly interesting to students, because more than any other subject it offers the opportunity to study man, who from a weak creature exposed to nature, became a conscious agent of events, creator of societies, language and culture. Moreover, the writing of history was born from the human need to share their experience and to record the individual circumstances of their life to posterity. (Schaff 1978:195-203, Carr 1984:12-13, 25-26). History is marked both as a social science, because it offers the possibility of a wider reflection on the human acts in cooperation or in conflict with fellow man, and as a critical science requiring documentation and the intersection of material (Glikatzi-Arverel 1996:32-33).

But the deeper aim in teaching history in secondary education is to help students realise that the world they live in today is the result of an evolutionary process driven by humans. As they study the past namely decisions, errors, actions or lack of action at different times and in different places, they become aware of and concerned about the future. Students learn to compare the past with present situations and develop social, political and cultural awareness. In that way they become aware of their personal responsibility for the state of the society they live in. (Cross-Thematic Framework 2003: 213-214, Greek Pedagogical Institute). Additionally, they grow accustomed to defining themselves within space and time. Indeed, space is a key factor that affects the activities
of people and is closely related to the character of the culture they develop while time, in the study of history, allows for the organization and presentation of the historical facts in a logical sequence (Cross-Thematic Framework 2003: 228, Greek Pedagogical Institute). Finally, the study of history is invaluable in realizing their own cultural identity while respecting the concept of diversity.

All this makes the study of history very interesting for a scholar, but quite a difficult and challenging school subject for students. At this point we must point out two additional factors that complicate matters for students: a) fragmentation, namely loose or poor connection between the teaching modules, which creates discontinuity and b) the sheer volume of the curriculum. To address the latter, teachers often apply solely teacher-centered methodology, where the teacher is the authority and the student the passive receiver of knowledge, on the grounds that it is a safe route to completing the huge volume of the curriculum, without “losing time” with other activities that “disrupt order”. One can deduce how dull and indifferent the subject of history might appear to students (Hammersley & Atkihson 1986:118) and easily conclude that the monologue-passive hearing form of interrelation between teacher and students must be minimized (Pigiaki 1999: 114-133).

Furthermore, it is important to take into consideration that any teaching methodology should provide support for students within the classroom with specific learning impediments -of the dyslexia spectrum- who face a series of difficulties in copying with the learning material. Specifically, dyslexic students have difficulty in reading and understanding the historical text, classifying events in a historical context, consolidating knowledge of the basic concepts of the learning material, and thus evaluating a historical event. Moreover, the limited vocabulary they possess, prevents the production of oral and mostly written word. These difficulties often seem insurmountable in the eyes of the dyslexic student who needs the full support of the teacher both inside and outside the classroom.

**HISTORY AND DYSLEXIA- FINDINGS**

The general aim of teaching History is “the development of historical thinking and historical awareness” (Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework of History. Greek Pedagogical Institute). This requires activities that train the students to understand the geographical and historical space in which the events take place and in which people act and develop, to detect a historical event and place it in the time line (cognitive level), to look for elements that illuminate the human dimension of the event, since understanding of any society requires the study of all its aspects (economic, political, cultural, religious) and to define cause and effect (understanding level). Students should also be able to study, compare and evaluate historical sources (level study and research) and finally relate the information and knowledge they have gained with live human history (Ward 1971:4-18).

On the other hand, students are often found to have little interest in the subject, they seem to consider it tedious and often the reason they study it is more related to assessment and grading and less to an internal (intrinsic) motivation associated with the personal desire that drives a person to deepen and broaden their knowledge (Kolesnik. 1985:77κ.ε, 1992:89-91.Open University). The difficulties students with dyslexia face when studying History are related to comprehending the text and memorizing data. Moreover, they become discouraged by the fact that the historical text is often alternated
by narratives about people, actions and situations which may contain value judgments, something that requires extended knowledge and a high level of abstraction. Furthermore, names of sites and people, dates, terminology, abstract concepts and superfluous details, discourage students with specific learning difficulties. These students often find it difficult to understand not only the new terms but also common words. (Bernbaum 1972, Steele 1976:14-26, Eduards 1978, Stones 1978:11-12, Garvey & Krug 1989:64-78). Moreover, historical understanding depends on the language proficiency of the students and their familiarity with the concepts-terms of the historical science. History is a demanding subject in terms of written and oral speech skills (Sebba 2000: 39,59), since historical evidence is mainly approached and interpreted through words. History and Language are two closely interrelated school subjects (Cooper 1995: 5-6), and this emphasizes the importance of cultivating skills such as effective reading and speech output. Processing historical sources is a way for students to exercise these skills.

PARAMETERS-THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The first parameter to consider, is the realization that students together with their teacher, are the two key players in the educational process. For this reason, it is important that the teacher provides early encouragement and motivation by a) informing them about the annual planning of the course, b) familiarizing them with the curriculum and c) allowing time for their expressive views on the course and teaching methods. In this context it is important to clearly describe the objectives of the course. Teacher and students participate, from their respective positions, in the same process and must both have a clear picture of the starting point, the procedure and the final goal (Bertrand 1994:92). So the teacher presents the objectives of the course, provides the plan of the material, presents the structure of each module, gives a short text or another stimulus following the principle of diversity, allows time for revisions, encourages questions and monologues as little as possible.

Students in turn, become actively involved in the everyday teaching process. Research findings suggest that communication and cooperation among the students improve their knowledge and skills to a level that was initially beyond their abilities (Mevarech & Kramarsk 1993:96-109). They can work in pairs with their classmate and study an excerpt of the book, place subheadings to trace the main information, underline unknown terms. It is also useful to make a chart or concept map of the information presented in the historical text (Kouloumparitsi. 1995). This method enables them to visualize the interrelations between the concepts of the subject matter. It is of course important that this kind of material is not prepared by the teacher, but is created by the students in class to ensure their involvement and active participation. They can also cultivate skills through the use of a geographical map, which clarifies the “where” and infers the “how” and “why”. The use of maps facilitates the assimilation of the historical narrative text. (Kulhavy et all 1993: 161-169). Moreover, students can construct a chronology of a historical period including main people and events. They can comment on visual material presented in class in the form of films, photographs or paintings. Having the students work on a given historical material can cultivate, in a short time, skills that can be later transferred to a higher level of approaching other more abstract historical documents. (Dickinson, Gard & Lee 1978: 15, Cooper 1995: 132-136). Students can also approach the material in an experiential way by role playing or searching the web for information about the lesson and present it to their classmates. Using ICT tools, students can also develop teaching
“scenarios” (Ghika 2002) which is a great way for them to develop their analytical thinking, collaboration and presentation skills.

In summary, we could say that students, beyond the ‘listening, reading, learning, writing,’ part of the learning process, are involved in various activities which provides them hands-on experience of the material and the intellectual skills required to perform an activity. (Gagne 1972). Moreover, they formulate opinions and perceive knowledge as a system of structures.

A second parameter is the creation of a positive atmosphere in the classroom. The class is a structured whole in which autonomy and accountability can and should be developed. Moreover, it nurtures the feeling of “belonging” and in that context the students feel safe, accepted, respected, and able to rely on others (classmates and teacher), if necessary(Musgrave 1972:99κ.ε., Gergen & Gergen 1986:310 κ.ε., Κανάκης 1987:80 κ.ε.). However, to develop a sense of “belonging”, students need clear targets, fairness, personal support and experience of success.

Along with utilizing group potential, it is important to motivate each student in conditions of mutual respect, equal participation and democratic atmosphere. In this context the teacher is resourceful, witty, encourages all students and keeps the balance of the classroom (Rosenshine 1970:277κ.ε., Rosenshine & Furst 1973:122). For this reason, it is important to build the teaching methodology around actions that highlight the role of the teacher as coordinator and (Κοσσυβάκη 1998:51) and give priority to his or her role as an educator (pedagogos). The teacher is a facilitator, a mentor and a co-worker in the learning process. He or she guides the students towards knowledge discovery, with a view to enabling them to understand, decode and evaluate. Above all, teachers must create incentives for learning and continually adjust the course of their teaching.

A third parameter, thus resulting, is motivation, which is associated with activating and directing the student’s behavior towards a goal (Meyer 1982:156-159, Eccles & Wigfield 1985:188κ.ε., Kuhl & Atkinson 1986). A goal is the cognitive representation of what a person wants to attain or avoid. The function of a goal is to direct the students’ behavior towards a desired result. In the case of dyslexic students we are interested in target goals, such as studying without being distracted or sustaining sufficient performance at the course, and personal achievement goals which are associated with the self-commitment of the student within the environment in which he or she operates, like achieving high grades at school or maintaining good working relationships with his or her classmates. The latter goal belongs to the social goals associated with life tasks. (Cantor & Fleeson, 1990). Finally, we are interested in the self-orientation goal of the individual to fulfill themselves. This is a set of behaviors and attitudes in relation to the specific situations a person wants or must respond to. (Ames, 1992).

A fourth parameter that can be used is the principle of Constructivism following on the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner. Learning is seen as a subjective, inner process of constructing meanings and is the result of organization and adaptation of new information to existing ones. This principle is further distinguished in Cognitive Constructivism (Piaget) and Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, Bruner). According to the principles of Cognitive Constructivism, knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, not passively received in the form of information and data. Three factors play a role in this process: a. the student’s self-motivation for the construction of his or her knowledge, b.
the student’s prior knowledge to be exploited and expanded to result to learning and c. the teacher’s supportive and consultant role.

Under the Social Constructivism principle we make note of the Zone of Proximal Development idea (ZPD). This is the distance between the level of actual cognitive development the child has - what the child can achieve alone - and the level that he or she can reach if helped by more experienced adults or by his or her more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, what the child can do today with the help of others, he or she will be able to do independently tomorrow. Every child, depending on their current level is able to achieve some results in problem solving situations. If however his or her ZPD provides the potential to move above it when aided by adults or peers and internalize the corresponding meanings a given activity exercises. The idea of ZPD affects the design of learning environments today with great interest in collaborative learning, suggesting that the team members should have different levels of proficiency and so advanced classmates can help the less able members. The teacher’s role as mediator in the process, is gradually reduced. The point is for teachers and students to work together in different activities which aim at helping children with learning difficulties to learn more easily and better than they could have learnt unaided. To maximize achievement and learning acquisition of dyslexic children, the teaching material should be easy enough for them to experience success and challenging enough to stimulate self-efficacy beliefs and keep students involved.

Allied to the above is the process of learning support (Scaffolding), i.e. providing the students with any means, clues, suggestions or actions that enhance the learning process and makes it successful. Scaffolding can be provided a) by a properly designed learning environment with suitable resources (worksheets, PC) and b) by the teacher and the roles he or she assumes during the students’ work. This process includes three stages: Guidance, which involves outlining the learning objectives, interpreting difficult concepts, resolving queries, assigning roles, clarifying the modes of cooperation. Mediation, which refers to making suggestions, evoking existing knowledge, providing individualized support, encouraging dialogue, guiding work and cooperation. The third stage involves gradual decline of mediation until the students work independently. (Matsaggouras, 1998) Especially in classes that integrate dyslexic students, the teacher is careful to avoid monologue and tries to keep the students involved in creative, engaging activities that lead to the discovery of knowledge. In this context, team work is a teaching method that replaces frontal teaching. (Papakostoula-Giannara 1984:38-52, Kanakis 1987:125-151, Meyer 1987:8-14 & 42-47, Matsaggouras 1995, Anagnostopoulou 2001: 58-82). Team work is gaining ground nowadays, since most classrooms are heterogeneous (immigrants, refugees, students with learning difficulties). Groups (3-4 persons) are formed on the grounds of the course objectives, the students’ interests and the degree of difficulty of the task at hand (Pintrich 2003). Groups do not replace the plenary of the class since in the end each team reports to the whole class. Also, groups are not fixed but restructured throughout the year giving the chance to everyone to collaborate with each other. Working in a group nurtures the dyslexic student’s autonomy, incentive, sense of security and “belonging”. By assuming specific roles and responsibilities within a group, the feelings of isolation, helplessness and frustration fade and are replaced by a drive to help the team achieve the objectives set. So, as the student works towards a goal, assisted by the teacher and his or her more proficient classmates, he or she seeks success and recognition while developing a sense of adequacy and competence.
Moreover, group work enables the teacher to provide discreet support to students with dyslexia without drawing attention to his or her interference since his or her role is that of a moderator anyway (Kanakis 1987:152-156, Papakonstantinou 88:41-45, Carvey & Krug 1989:39k.ε., Trilianos 1992:21-32).

**CONCLUSIONS**

To better integrate the dyslexic student in the classroom and to actively engage them in the study of history, it is vital to turn to alternative approaches in learning. These are based on activities that engage students in active cooperation, seek to give meaning, motivation and challenge, aim to demystify a school subject that some students might find inaccessible, so that knowledge is a source of joy and not a source of anxiety or boredom.

It is important for the teacher to consider and utilize the following parameters:

1. Students and teacher act as key players in the learning process  
2. The classroom climate is supportive – cooperative  
3. Prior knowledge is extracted and assessed and becomes the basis for gaining and consolidating new knowledge.  
4. When students are motivated and clearly directed towards an objective, they become capable of properly regulating their actions and are driven to success experiences with appropriate learning support.

Based on the above, the activities are organized around the effort to build on the existing knowledge, precisely because this is the basis on which new knowledge is built upon. The primary goal is to challenge students’ interest and increase their participation with additional supporting material, exploring the Internet or discussing issues surrounding a historical event, which is related to situations encountered in their current context. (Flouris 1984:40-42, Kolesnik 1992:88,90)

Also worksheets are used in order to weaken sheer memorization (Pigiaki. 1999:47) in the acquisition of historical knowledge, to ensure the involvement of students and especially for dyslexic students to focus on the substantive facts and not linger on any unnecessary details of the school book. During class time students use teaching aids, contact directional dialogue, study and comment sources, search for information individually and in groups, follow the historical narrative of the teacher and are also encouraged to use their worksheets. In this way they classify new knowledge chronologically, understand the causal relationships between events, monitor all important parts of the course in the form of charts and provide a more structured summary of the teaching material using a final evaluation sheet.

Generally, the ways, the attitude and the teaching techniques around which the teacher organizes his or her classroom, play a key role in the activation of students with dyslexia. The tasks they are being asked to carry out should be challenging, various and innovative for obvious reasons. The principles of student participation in decision-making and creating incentives and opportunities, encourage the students with dyslexia to overcome idleness and isolation during class time and claim a more active role in the classroom.

Also, a particularly important factor as regards evaluation, is the recognition of their efforts, the provision of opportunities for improvement and the consideration of their errors as part of their learning. If students work in a pleasant environment of encouragement, support and mutual acceptance, the frequency of their participation gradually increases and their performance improves. (Bruner 1971:107). The learning environment can make
the difference between success and failure for a student with dyslexia. The more quiet and organized the working environment is, the greater the chances for success (Stones 1978:69-70).

Finally, the creation of collaborative classroom learning conditions among groups with different levels of competence favors students with dyslexia, who can cooperate with their more competent peers and be "taught" by them. It is also important to gradually reduce intervention by the teacher and the more competent peers of the group, and to assume more responsibilities. These methods strengthen the autonomy, self-confidence and performance of students with dyslexia.

In summary, we can say that the following teaching principles (Matsaggouras 2000: 279-282) contribute positively to the teaching of history to dyslexic students:

1. The Principle of psychological acceptance and support. Students with dyslexia have more need for psychological security, recognition, acceptance and support. Thus, the development of interpersonal relationships assist their smooth integration into the school team. Moreover, ensuring positive experiences in their academic and social lives, creates a sense of security and motivates them in improving their attitude in the classroom. In this context, the teacher’s acceptance, expressed by physical closeness, eye contact, justified praise, positive criticism, recognition of their contribution to the class, taking an interest in their extracurricular hobbies and avoiding personified criticism or threat, seems to be catalytic.

2. Principle of spontaneous participation. Learning is not an external enforcement procedure, but takes place through interactions with teachers and other students. The involvement of dyslexic students in the course in order to develop their cognitive and social skills and boost their self-esteem, is a key concern in the teaching process. The development of the students’ autonomy is guaranteed only when their activities and choices lead to successful experiences. This exactly is the point of mediation.

3. The principle of totality. Especially for students with dyslexia, it is useful to bear in mind that the human mind organizes information in a whole rather than in individual component totals. In order to make sense, the teaching material should be presented, from the beginning, as an organized body of a larger system. Thus, instruction is build around the overall perception of the material and not the gradual memorisation of its individual components. Organising and integrating new knowledge is based on the existing cognitive background of the students, for this, time should be allowed for the student to recall their previous knowledge. It is necessary that the teacher pre-plans and designs his or her course and then select the appropriate teaching methods.

4. The Principle of provision of systematic knowledge. New knowledge is organized in a systematic manner. Important information is emphasized and accumulation of encyclopedic knowledge is avoided as it might prevent dyslexic students from critically focusing on significant information. Developing critical thinking is a key aspect and it is helped by providing valid, well-organized and meaningful information.

5. The Principle of supervision. For students with dyslexia the learning material cannot be only linguistic and abstract. Conscious and deliberate use of visual and audio tools and resources, such as documentaries, panels, spreadsheets, images, maps, technology, ICT, engage the imagination, encourage participation of all students, especially students with dyslexia,
cultivate historical empathy and in the long run, effect change in skills and attitudes. Specifically, images and tables, engage students in observation and processing of historical facts. Maps familiarize the students with the historical site. Sources help connect information and comprehend both the framework of the events, and the ideas and values of the era they refer to. ICT tools are nowadays like a second teacher in the classroom. Every activity is designed to promote a more vibrant experiential learning that helps the learner become aware of the historical reality they are studying and shape historical thinking much more effectively than any instructional approach that involves sterile memorizing and passive acceptance of information.

6. The principle of differentiation.
The content, the objectives, the pace, the method and the degree of difficulty of teaching, are adapted to the individual strengths, needs, learning styles and interests of students with dyslexia (Bruner 1969:50). Thereby, learning differences among students is reduced (Bigge 1990:321) and integration is more effective.

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Chapter - Unesco

The importance of didactic workshops in the Erasmus + projects

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Abstract:
One of the teachers who took part in the first mobilities discusses about the most successful didactic activities developed during the stay. The students were organised in cooking teams and they made a research together: this was a very productive way to become friends, to fight prejudices and to overcome linguistic barriers.

Key words: competences, cooperative working, collaboration, interaction, communicative and social potentialities

1. Introduction: general aims of the Erasmus + project
I am a literature and history teacher and I took part in the Erasmus plus project. I visited Czech Republic and I organized some of the various activities set up in May during the foreign partners’ stay in Italy.

Our Erasmus plus project had the aim to promote the knowledge and the study of the monuments classified as “humanity heritage” by UNESCO. Some of the aims of this kind of project are to improve the acquisition of English and to spread integrated teaching methods, that include information technologies and foreign languages, in order to strengthen the European educational plan involving schools and institutions of the EU members. Another founding target is to sustain the students’ integration and socialization and to promote the intercultural spreading of the results achieved such as new learning techniques, new ways to activate communication and sharing knowledge.

Our project was to be developed within two years and it involved the educational institutions of the following countries: Romania, Greece, Czech Republic, Portugal, Croatia, Turkey, and Italy, of course. The schools which took part in this project have students that come from different social and cultural contexts so the levels of competences and knowledge are various. The arrangements concerning the mobilities were planned during the transnational meetings that were held in the schools of the above-mentioned countries.

2. The didactic workshops
Four students and two teachers from each country are meant to take part in every mobility; the students from each partners’ school are selected on the basis of the evaluation of their competence in the English language, their educational performance, behavior, open-mindedness and ability to adapt to new situations.

Among the activities organized during the mobility, the workshops are one of the most productive that I can mention, because they are focused on cooperative learning and cooperative working that create new relationships among the students of the group. Working side by side in a mixed group, the students, all coming from different countries and cultures, use English to communicate in a concrete situation, help each other in
doing things with their hands, have the chance to compare the different attitudes and competences. They are called to face problems and solve them together supporting each other. Inside the group work students learn to be competitive in a positive way.

The group work is not an activity in itself but it focuses on the production of some educational material: it can be a power point presentation, a photo story, a video or a booklet, for example. It can be anything your imagination is able to invent but it is a product that you can see and touch, that is finally shown not only to all the participants but it is to be spread within the local community, too.

Moreover, some platforms have been provided (eTwinning - Twinspace – Wikispaces – Facebook) where anyone can follow the activities that are carried on and get further information about the exchange program. The platform usage can help students to improve and increase their IT skills and to intensify their awareness of being all European citizens.

2.1. The workshops in Ostrava

In my opinion, some of the most involving and fascinating activities of the project were the didactic workshops that our students attended in Ostrava (Czech Republic). For example it was organized a ‘kitchen workshop” - for intangible national heritage - and a ‘lost UNESCO Heritage monuments workshop” - for tangible national heritage.

Kitchen workshop: the kitchen has been considered a perfect educational environment where the cooking team could express their creativity in a simple, informal context. As a matter of fact, I noticed that the students spoke English without inhibitions and cooperated sharing knowledge and abilities.

Each ‘cooking team’ was divided into two subgroups: the first had to prepare non-alcoholic fruit cocktails, while the other had to cook biscuits on the basis of a simple recipe, easy to learn and based on ‘international’ ingredients (I mean of everyday usage in the countries where all the students came from), and this in order to follow the direction of the Erasmus plus principles that recommend to develop this sense of community. All the students accepted the culinary challenge and worked intensely: some of them peeled and cut the fruit in pieces, others mixed the butter with flour, eggs and sugar to prepare the short pastry, others were ready to decorate the baked biscuits: even those who were not very good at cooking or not very fond of it found something to do. And this is most important. I felt that through the common work they were becoming friends in an atmosphere of sharing collaboration and harmony, it seemed that they had known each other for ages.

The kitchen work was not aimed at getting the students acquire culinary but social competences, the activity helped (and this was important because it was one of the first mobilities) to create acceptance inside the group, without prejudices, to underline the idea that anyone would be accepted inside the group and had a role, a function in it. Everyone in this way could feel comfortable in the social context.

The target of the activity was not that of preparing perfect cookies, or to evaluate the taste and quality of the food or to become cookies taster. Cooking and eating together created a friendly, convivial atmosphere that overcame linguistic barriers and laid the basis for a communicative productive interaction and a deeper relationships among the students of all the partner countries.

Lost UNESCO Heritage monuments workshop: the students were divided into
groups, made up of boys and girls of the seven different nationalities, and they had the task to find information in the net about the lost monument given for the research. The most skilled in the ICT field took the pictures from the internet, the more creative ones drew the monument. Then the students added a brief history and description of the item. Every student worked with great effort and the maximum care, they all were deeply motivated, they worked concentrated and silent, eager to produce something relevant. In the end, each group presented their work to friends and teachers and compared their final production with the others’, so arousing interesting discussions and critical evaluations.

This activity was important because it implied that the students learnt to accept and respect the other people’s proposals, including them in a creative product that reflected the variety and wealth of the different inputs. Here collaboration and cooperation met, thanks to the common English language. Moreover this workshop got the students to know outstanding details about historical monuments and particular places of the partner countries involved in this Erasmus + project.

3. Conclusion

The whole project is based on the idea that students’ educational path should be integrated in a wider perspective: a cooperative setting-up of knowledge with a community sharing it, in order to encourage their communicative and social potentiality.

The given proposals were developed assigning and differentiating the teaching and learning tasks, basing the cognitive linguistic and intercultural development on the group resources. In the future students will have to conform to new types of knowledge and face new social situations; this means that school must be continuously evolving and ready to change.

UNESCO - in European language

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“My motherland is the Portuguese language”, said with all the sensitivity, the genius and Portuguese writer, Fernando Pessoa. But also in his writing he appeals to the English language, certainly for having lived as a young student in South Africa. The truth is, he released himself from prejudices and based his aesthetics on plural, inventing and creating heteronyms. From his map, he deleted the borders by creating a plural work of the whole world. He did it calling upon heteronyms who completed the work by being different, by having different beliefs and intellectual culture.

Our message in this article, is to recognize that UNESCO also has a language that can be a world language, but in our work, as an integrated teacher in a team that develops an Erasmus + project, remained a language and a “European language”. European propagating and transmitting the values of the old Europe: freedom, peace, multiculturalism, tolerance, absence of gender and the respect for the many differences that may exist among the crowds.

Present met the future. Art stayed alive. Why not? We are all proud of the legacy
of the past. Our heritage requires us to be mercenaries in defense, and that our young people and students may be prepared and sensibilize their souls to their obligations with the past and preserve it in the future. This dialectic can only be recognized in the present, because those hungry for values outside the nobility of the ones defended by UNESCO, are capable of dealing their history and their future, as traitors, corrupts, being so often not condemned.

The post-modern man needs a new and more complete consciousness, that makes Europe more united and cultured in a tiny continent approaching people who deserve it. For that, an intellectual and comprehensive awareness for all European in the present is needed, or of recognition in the future. And only those will have access to the “slate”. Those who respect and value peace, the identity of the people and let the concept of universal heritage own them, serving as an example the democratized heritage between nations and peoples, belonging to everyone, wherever it is, cultural or natural, tangible or intangible.

Fernando Pessoa wrote “A Mensagem”, Camões “Os Lusíadas”, Beethoven dedicated his talent to the French Revolution, Bach to his religious belief, Picasso immortalized Guernica and all these cultural references are available to everyone. Istanbul displays its heritage without pinching its sovereignty, and even more, it is proud of its heritage protection and cooperates in its disclosure, making it one of the most interesting cities in the world.

The complex, present of the future, created in all the civil society around the world, the appearance of “Club UNESCO” and this is the route that today we leave you as a challenge for the dissemination of the UNESCO ideal, fulfilling its objectives of promoting peace among the people. A Unesco Club is an association of people who believe in their ideals and join it without prejudice of their social origin, age or profession. They should, rather, unselfishly disclose these ideals, on the way to a better and well cared world, where its legacy is also preserved for future generations, having in mind the local dynamics and the community where they are inserted.

“... We can not forget that we are the cradle of freedom and defense of the death penalty abolition, which immediately are according, in a very significant way, with the general values promoted by UNESCO like peace, tolerance and harmony. It wouldn’t make sense the non-existence of UNESCO Club in Aveiro. “ UNESCO Club in Aveiro - Principles and guidelines of UNESCO Club of Aveiro.

Does it make sense that there are no such clubs in your school? In your city?
Thus, with the intention of fighting the absurdity of the future destruction, we appeal to the construction of values and the dissemination of the ideals of UNESCO, based on a continuous rhythm, staging the collective emotions and associations of civil society.
It is time we open another chapter in this book.

My homeland is the Portuguese language with speakers all around the world (Portugal, Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Goa, Daman and Diu ...), but the language of Erasmus + Project - UNESCO - Heritage is spoken by all Europeans of good formation, that is, by those who believe in these principles that are intended to become universal. Against ignorance, against obscurantism, in favor of the equality of gender in which I, in this article, call the “no gender” ones. So UNESCO - in European language is the belief and practice of the protection of cultural heritage and the fight for the preservation of heritage files without homeland or borders, believing that being ones heritage, must serve all, thus making Europe and the world even smaller.
Convention concerning the protection of the World cultural and natural heritage
by Dijana Dvornik
Paris, 16th November 1972.

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, at its 17th session held from 17 October to 21 November 1972, held in Paris, noting that the cultural heritage and natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction, not only due to the traditional causes of decay, but also because of changes in social and economic life, which further aggravated the situation by introducing new ways of horrific damage and destruction, considering that damages of any specimen of a cultural or natural heritage is impoverishment of the heritage of all peoples of the world, and that the protection of this heritage at the national level is often incomplete due to the volume of funds that are necessary for her and insufficient economic, scientific and technical resources of the country where there are objects to be protected.

The Constitution of UNESCO provides that the Organization will assist in the maintenance, advancement and dissemination of knowledge, taking care of the preservation of world heritage, and to this end by giving the necessary recommendations to the nations of the international conventions, The existing international conventions, recommendations and resolutions concerning cultural and natural resources show the importance of preserving these unique and irreplaceable assets, for all the peoples of the world, no matter which country they belong to, Certain cultural or natural heritage are of great importance and should therefore be protected as part of the gen. heritage of all mankind, In terms of size and severity of new threats to them, the international community has a duty to participate in the protection of those cultural and natural heritage which have outstanding universal value, pointing the collective help.

For this purpose it is necessary to adopt new provisions of the convention, which will establish an effective system of collective protection of cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal values, organized on an ongoing basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods.

Having decided at the 16th session that the issue will be the subject of an international convention

This Convention was adopted on the date of 16th of November 1972.

1. DEFINITION OF THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Article first

For the purposes of this Convention, “cultural heritage” means:

monuments: architectural works, monumental sculptural and painting parts, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave, which were used for housing and the combination of elements which are of outstanding universal value from the historical,
Artistic or scientific point of view; groups of buildings: groups of individual or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the historical, artistic or scientific point of view; sites: works of man or the combined works of man and nature, including archaeological sites which are of great importance from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

Article second

For the purposes of this Convention, “natural heritage” includes the following:

Monuments outings consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;

Geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the scientific and conservation point of view;

Natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

Article one of Article three

For the purposes of this Convention, “cultural heritage” means:

Monuments: architectural works, monumental sculptural and painting parts, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave, which were used for housing and the combination of elements which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, artistic or scientific point of view;

Groups of buildings: groups of individual or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the historical, artistic or scientific point of view;

Sites: works of man or the combined works of man and nature, including archaeological sites which are of great importance from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

Second article of article three

For the purposes of this Convention, under the “natural
It is for each State that is a part of this Convention to identify and delineate the different properties situated on its territory mentioned in Article 1 and 2.
II. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION OF CULTURE AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Article four

Each State that is a part of this Convention recognizes that it’s duty is to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of future generations of cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2, which are located in its territory. To this end, it shall endeavor to effect personal efforts, using all of your options, and where necessary using the international assistance and cooperation in the financial, artistic, scientific and technical terms.

BASIC LEGISLATION FOR protected

CULTURAL HERITAGE of Croatia

“Law on Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage”

The beginnings of protection in Croatia date back to the middle of the 19th century.

2014 was characterized by 160 years of organized preservation of the heritage of the Republic of Croatia.

The period of the early 19th century, in which begins caring for the “Antiquities” which are today called cultural property, marked by the creation of new social relations, strengthening national identity, returning to past values, founding society and professional associations, and the establishment of the first scientific and cultural institution.

In the mid 19th century, the idea of protection of monuments in the Austrian Empire gets its statehood by the establishment of the Central Commission for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic monuments in Vienna, and the appointment of a conservator Vicka Andric for Dalmatia, Ivan Kukuljević Sačinski in northern Croatia, Peter Kandler for Istria, begins organized activity of protection of cultural monuments in Croatia. Ivan Kukuljević Sačinski among the first focuses on the collection of material and the organization of new institutions and associations, with a particularly important foundation “Društva za povestnicu i starine”.

At the end of the 19th century, the influence of the Vienna school of art history with theoretical works of Riegel and Dvorak is crucial for the establishment of basic principles for the protection of monuments in theory and practice of conservation and restoration in Croatia, the principles of which will be taken over by Duro Szabo and Ljubo Karaman.

Cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, common wealth of humanity in its diversity and uniqueness, and its protection is one of the important factors for identifying, defining and affirming cultural identity.

The Ministry of Culture of Croatia develops mechanisms and establishes measures to
protect cultural heritage to ensure its sustainability which includes identifying, documenting, research, maintenance, protection, use and promotion of its values.

Cultural heritage are movable and immovable cultural heritage of artistic, historical, paleontological, archaeological, anthropological and scientific significance.

Archaeological sites and archeological zones, landscapes and parts thereof testify human presence in the area. Non-material forms of cultural heritage and appearance of man’s spiritual creativity in the past as well as the documentation and bibliographic heritage and buildings, or areas in which the permanently stored or exhibited cultural goods and documentation about them.

Taking care of the cultural heritage of Croatia implemented by the Board of protection and preservation of cultural heritage as one of the 4 administration of the Ministry of Culture.

Management consists of two sectors:
Sector for Protection of Cultural Heritage
• Department of immovable cultural heritage

• Department of Movable, ethnographic and intangible cultural heritage

• Support documentation, registry and promotion of cultural heritage
Department of conservation departments and inspection

• Department for Inspection of cultural heritage protection

• 19 Conservation Departments

In Croatia there are the Croatian Conservation Institute, founded in 1996. By the decree of the Croatian Government on the merging of public institutions For conservation and restoration in Croatian property:

Office for the restoration of works of art (founded in 1948) and Conservation Institute Of Croatia (founded in 1966).

The basic legal framework that monitors the protection of cultural heritage of the Croatia
• The Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Goods (OG 69/99, 151/03, NN 157/03 Correction, NN 87/09, NN 88/10, NN 61/11, NN 25/12, NN 136/12, NN 157/13, OG 152/14)
• Ordinance on the form, content and manner of keeping the Register of Cultural Property of Croatia (NN89 / 11, NN130 / 13)
• Ordinance on physical and legal entities to obtain permission for performance on the protection and preservation of cultural goods (NN74 / 03, NN44 / 10)
• The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Culture.
• Strategy for protection, conservation and sustainable economic use of cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatian for the period 2011th-2015th
• Apolitics 2013-2020.
• Accepted laws, conventions and regulations in the European Union and UNESCO The Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage (Official Gazette 69/99, 151/03; NN 157/03 Correction, NN 87/09, NN 88/10, NN 61/11, NN 25/12, NN 136/12, NN 157/13, OG 152/14)

The law provides:
• types of cultural goods
• establishing protection of cultural heritage
• obligations and rights of the owners of cultural goods
• measures for the protection and preservation of cultural goods
• work on the protection and preservation of cultural goods and inspection activities
• financing the protection and preservation of cultural goods
• the scope of work of the Council for Cultural Heritage

The competent authorities for implementation of the Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage are: the Conservation Department and the Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage.

The main tasks of the Conservation Department are as follows:
• identification of properties of cultural property, legal protection and registration in the Register of Cultural goods of Croatia
• the establishment of measures for protection and preservation of cultural goods
• approval for the conservation and restoration of the cultural goods
• special conditions of protection of cultural property in the process of issuing location permits and construction criteria inspections
• authorization for export of cultural goods
• Conservation studies for the purpose of spatial planning

On the basis of expert evaluation, objects of cultural heritage for which the Ministry Of Culture determines its status of a cultural good shall be entered in the Register of Croatian cultural goods.

The register is a public book of cultural goods which is led by The Ministry of Culture and is comprised of three lists:

1. The list of protected cultural monuments

2. List of cultural property of national significance

3. The list of preventive protection of cultural objects

In the Croatian Republic, legal protection of cultural property is regulated by Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage (revised) which is effective from 30.12.2014. years until today.
Intangible Heritage

CAROLS AND CAROLING IN
ROMANIAN INTANGIBLE UNESCO HERITAGE

by Vasile Filip - teacher of Romanian language
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On December 5th 2013, the Inter-governmental Committee UNESCO, reunited in Baku, Azerbaidjan, decided to include CAROLING IN MAN BANDS from Romania and the Republic of Moldavia (who had submitted a common file) in the Immaterial UNESCO Heritage of Humanity.

As an ancient tradition, dating back long before Christianity, caroling was initially a social ritual meant to induce, at the beginning of a time cycle, order, prosperity and happiness through the magic power of the word, associated with rhythm, and later with melody. (Here worked, on a social level, the same magic principle that, on an individualized, intimate level resulted into the “spell”.) The custom is connected to the archaic meaning of the Holiday as an end and, at the same time, a new beginning of a time cycle. In the Christian environment, it has migrated from Christmas and the New Year towards Easter (the ancient beginning of the agricultural year), but this last manifestation entered the passive repertoire. The Romanian language is the only one that still traditionally refers to the great Christian celebration of the Birth of Jesus, using a term of mythological, pre-christian origin: Crăciun.

Caroling is practised with, as well as without masks. The first form represents a tribute to the Dionysian holidays, while the second one – to the cycle of the Roman winter holidays, where the word colinda comes from (in Latin, Calendae Ianuarii, naming the first days of January).

Going caroling by a group of unmarried young men from the village (and, later, of married men as well), organized by a military pattern, is the oldest form of the tradition, as women going visiting at the beginning of a new time cycle was not considered a favourable omen for the family. In time, there started to emerge mixed groups, especially in the northern areas of the country. The repertoire, from a literary and musical point of view, has evolved from the heroic script and the jerky rhythm (sometimes accompanied by drums), into a biblical script (more frequently based on the New Testament) and the infusion of poetry and melody.

The repertoire is divided, traditionally, in religious (Christian) carols and social (secular) carols. More, and definitely older, are the last ones. A more appropriate name would be Christian and pre-Christian carols, due to the fact that all carols have a mythical-ritual structure, adapted to the new religious context. The Crucifix, for instance, takes upon and develops the archaic functions of the Cosmic Tree, while the death and resurrection of Jesus is allotted to the mythical structure of the repetitive Cosmogony.

The Romanian collection of carols was classified in 216 types (some with numerous subtypes), divided into ten categories: I. Formal, II. Cosmogonic, III. Professional, IV. The young boy and the girl – lovers and suitors, V. Familial, VI. About the Royal Court,
VII. Edifying and moralizing, VIII. Biblical and apocryphal, IX. Ballad-carols, X. Song-carols (according to Monica Bratulescu, The Romanian Colinda [Winter-solstice songs], publisher: Minerva, Bucharest 1981).

The section of the carols sang by a group of men is often marked by the existence of a tree. If a wild and dangerous area is evoked, the tree is usually a fir-tree. If, on the contrary, the area evoked is a familiar space around the house and the household, the tree is most likely the apple-tree, and only seldom the pear tree or another domestic tree. The sea and the tree usually have verbal disputes, threatening each other. If the sea threatens with destroying the tree, the tree threatens with drying up the sea, significantly associating its boys with the plough and the girls with making flower gardens where the sea used to lie.

The opponent of the sea could be the shepherd, who relies on two miraculous rams. Their crash of horns also seems to have a magical function. In other contexts, fifty horseback riders try to cross the sea, but only one of them, swimming on the back of the horse, reaches the island where the girls dance and marries the most beautiful one. When crossing the sea on a horseback, the most dangerous moment appears to be the fight between the hero and an unknown sea monster, with a royal status. The evil and deconstructing force of the sea is embodied by an aurochs or a stag which comes out of the water, as well as by a fish or a sea-creature that attacks the tree or the girl’s garden. However, in both cases, defeat or overlapping this force by the hero or heroine, leads to marriage, meaning reforging, on a smaller scale, of the world.

The aurochs or the stag that comes out of the sea wears a swing between the horns, in which a young lady is preparing her wedding gifts. She restrains and controls the animal (produced by the abyss) with a song that includes a threat: the girl has three brothers, well-known hunters, who might kill it, and then build a house for their sister with its bones and skin.

When the product of the sea is a fabulous fish or a creature that damages the tree or the flowers in the garden, it becomes hunted as well, either by the young fisherman, to whom it promises its own sister as a bride, or by the girl to be married, to whom it offers its body as food for the wedding.

Adapted to the function of marriage greetings, the mythological paradigm of building from the body of an animal, associated with the guiding-animal or initiation through ritual hunting, has generated the appearance of professionally specialized carol types for fishermen or hunters, that remain the most beautiful and archaic ones.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive presentation of the themes and motives in carols. An image of these could be offered by either the quotation above from the typological index completed by Monica Bratulescu, or by the synthesis called The Universe of the Romanian carol (in the perspective of some archaic mentality structures), by Vasile Filip (publisher: Saeculum, I.O., Bucharest, 1999). What we meant to reveal here was the fact that the universe of the Romanian carol allows a glimpse upon a traditional lively and evolutionary mythology – a syncretic cultural product. Although its layers are extremely difficult to effuse, they are even more exciting due to requiring the effort to know and understand them.

Here is an example of a content to apply the theoretical
Caroling as a tradition – inception and evolution

**Origin** – in the roman world. (It cannot be established, based on documents, any prototype of caroling for the Daco-Thracian or the Thracians.) It perpetuates the mutual visits that the Romans used to pay to each other on the occasion of the Calends in January (the first three days, meaning *omen* = prediction, augury, auspice), visits accompanied by greetings, but also by trivial songs (St. Augustine labels them, later on, as “vain”, “immoral”, “dissolute”, without reading their texts.). Triviality < the mythological, pre-Christian belief, granting the prosperity of the “sacred dissoluteness”. (According to the motto “*nomen est omen*”: the name, idea, word is prediction / Creation).

The term *“colinda” (=carol)* (reg. *corinda*) < lat. *Calendae* (*the phonetic rule intervocalic l > r in words coming from Latin* did not apply equally everywhere, under the influence of the Slavonian term *koleda* – cf. Al. Rosetti, 1920). There is a term having the same root – *kali* – in modern Greek, in the word *Kalikanţari*, which defines some monsters haunting the human settlements between Christmas and Epiphany, emerging from the bottom of the Underworld and trying to eat through the roots of the World Tree, which is about to collapse.

**The evolution**

The Roman custom of visiting and (more or less trivial) greetings on Calends, was nothing more than the core that has gradually gathered beliefs and religious practices based upon the time cyclicity, according to which the transition from one temporal cycle to another is done by a reiteration of the cosmogony: the beginning of a year implies the remodeling of a “new time”. This leads to an entire cycle of Roman winter holidays: *Brumalia* (24 Nov. – 17 Dec.); *Saturnalia* (17 – 23 Dec.); *Calendae Ianuarii* (1 – 3 Jan.); *Vota* (flexible holiday dedicated to the Emperor), *Compitalia, Larentalia* (private commemorations of a family member).

In the new religious, Christian environment, the function of the reiterative cosmogony is assigned to the birth of Jesus (set by the Founders of the Church on 25th Dec., a date with a solstitial significance, previously deputed to a pre-Christian god, of a near-Oriental origin, *Mythra* (whose worship becomes a state religion under the rule of the emperor *Aurelius*), called *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti = The Birthday of the Conqueror Sun*). Early Christianity (until the 14th century) overlaps the New Year’s Eve and The Birth of Jesus, both celebrated on 25th Dec.

The pre-Christian dimension of the “sacred dissoluteness” (more emphasized on *Saturnalia*, which implies a Carnival, a king of the Carnival embodying Saturn, sacrificed at the end of the celebration) is extended until late, including in the Christian environment, as from the 16th to the 17th century, the Lutheran ministers from Transylvania (G. Heltai, 1552; A. Mathesius, 1647) complain to the superiors about “the great feast of the devil”, which begins, in Romania, after celebrating the Birth of Christ, as well as about “their wicked songs” (= carols with epic composition, slightly or at all christened).

Nowadays, most carols in the active repertoire have a Christian-religious origin, the ones with pre-Christian epic composition (or containing “*mitologeme* = nucleuses of the old myths) passing to the passive repertoire, subsisting in the memory of some old people, former members of the man groups of carolers from certain areas and more conservative villages.
Typology

From the ethnographic point of view of performing in a group and the pertaining props, there are:
Caroling with masks – zoo- or humanlike ("Capra"/"Turca" = The Goat, "Cerbul" = The Stag, "Ursul" = The Bear, "Hâzii"/"Ciufurii"/"Belciugarii" = The Ugly), practised by lads and men, perpetuating more archaic elements of mentality, probably originating in the Greek Lenees (Dionysian holidays, also celebrated on the Geto-Thracian land) connected to pressing grapes, public feasts with fresh wine, sacrifices, bacchanal songs, masking and disguising with animal skins, trivial jokes, grotesque gestures.

Caroling without masks, in man groups or mixed ones (the first category – made up by two groups that play the carol non-melodically, chanting it rhythmically and joining it alternatively, with a line at a time – is the oldest, preserved as such only in certain areas, such as the lower Danube area, the S-W of Transylvania, Apuseni Mountains, the Transylvanian piedmont of the Calimani Mountains etc.)

From a folkloric point of view (of the literary content of the texts), there are:
Religious (Christian) carols, which would have, on the whole (cf. Al. Rosetti), a cultivated, literary origin (The New or The Old Testament, The Lives of the Saints etc);
Social (laic) carols – based, in fact, on pre-Christian mythical-ceremonial structures, which means – the oldest and the most “valuable” (culturally).

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Mediterranean diet, the way of life through centuries
by Ivana Drnasin

In the 1990s, UNESCO’s Cultural Heritage Protection committee began to shape the concept of intangible heritage as a part of world heritage. At the 2003 Abu Dhabi convention, intangible cultural heritage become a part of UNESCO’s world heritage. Intangible cultural heritage, as a part of intangible world heritage consists of: oral tradition, art performances, social customs, rituals, festivals, knowledge and traditions connected to nature and universe, and finally traditional arts and crafts.

Croatia has over 130 intangible cultural treasures listed in the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. Out of those, 13 treasures have entered the UNESCO’s Representative List of Intangible World Heritage in the period between 2009 and 2013: Festivity of St. Blaise, Patron Saint of Dubrovnik, Two-part Singing and Playing in the Istriand scale, Traditional Manufacturing of Children’s Wooden Toys in Hrvatsko Zagorje, Spring procession of Ljelje/Kraljice (Queens) from Gorjani, Procession Za Križen (following the cross) on the Island of Hvar, Annual Carnival Bell Ringer’s Pageant from the Kastav area, Lacemaking in Croatia (Pag, Hvar, Lepoglava), The Sinjska Alka, a knights’ tournament in Sinj, Gingerbread craft from Northern Croatia, Bećarac- singing and playing from Eastern Croatia, Nijemo kolo-silent circle dance of the Dalmatian hinterland, Klapa multipart singing of Dalmatia, southern Croatia and Mediterranean Diet (multinational candidacy of Spain, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Portugal and Croatia).

Each of these countries had chosen one region through which it represented its culinary Mediterranean heritage. Croatia has chosen the islands of Hvar and Brač. Ojkanje, traditional polyphonic folk singing from Dalmatian hinterland, Velebit, Lika, Kordun and Karlovac, as the 14th treasure is currently on the UNESCO’s list of the endangered intangible heritage in urgent need of protection. The Republic of Croatia has thus become the second country in Europe and fifth in the world based on the number of elements that had entered the UNESCO’s list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Mediterranean Diet is not to be understood as a nutritional trend, but as a specific way of life in tune with nature and the use of its resources through centuries.

It embodies life of the social community and the family with all its generic, generation and socio-economic circumstances. It involves religious, family and social celebrations which always and without exception end up at the family table. Therefore, the increasing interest and the spreading of social consciousness about the traditional values which this cuisine maintains and generates, doesn’t come as a surprise. It could be studied as a phenomenon through cultural heritage, tourism, medicine (from the aspect of nutrition), agriculture, oenological and gastronomic scene.

Mediterranean diet on the Croatian part of Adriatic is conditioned by environmental, climatic, historical and cultural factors on the Mediterranean. This type of diet in Croatia, as well as in all other countries on Mediterranean, is manifested in social, spiritual and material aspect of everyday life, in the customs of life-cycle and the change of seasons. Mediterranean cuisine is the basis of our people’s identity, an acquest of different cultures and influences which have continuously been transferred from generation to generation. This shaping of our cultural identity is what makes it unique. It is mostly manifested in customs and ceremonies, as well as the dialect on the coast, the islands and the hinterland.

The important characteristic of the Mediterranean diet is the connection between
nature and natural food sources. Fishing and agriculture are the basis of this nutrition and an important starting point for further development of this geographical area in the direction of natural heritage preservation.

The cuisine differs between different areas and different social classes. It can be divided into fishing (except in the part of the hinterland) and farming cuisine or combination of the two, which is common on the islands.

The basis of each cuisine is the use of specific groceries, preparation of the dishes and its consummation in everyday life or during holidays.

Olive trees and vines are grown on the Croatian Adriatic for centuries and are used in different ways when preparing dishes. Today, they are important products, connected not only to consumption but also to the cultural identity of the inhabitants. Except in the part of the hinterland, on the area specified, it is common to consume fish, seafood, meat (goat, mutton, pork, poultry etc. and in some areas – game). Different vegetables, legumes, cereals and various wild plants complement this diet. Wild plants are used in nutrition as well as for medicinal purposes.

Milk is mostly processed into various dairy products and the most famous are quality cheeses.

Bread used to be baked once a week for the whole family out of home-grown cereals.

At festive and holiday occasions, sweets are prepared, such as cakes and pastries, mostly from the groceries available in the immediate surroundings: nuts (almonds, walnuts and hazels), dried fruits (figs, carob, lemon and orange peel etc.)

Mediterranean dietary model has been studied by scientists for a long time. It has been discovered that this type of diet contributes to longevity, protects your heart and prevents the occurrence of certain types of cancer. Since the cuisine abounds in healthy groceries such as fruit, vegetables, fish, whole grains and olive oil, its positive effects are no surprise to anyone.

Health, as well as cultural aspect of this diet, was the main reason why, since 1995 the traditional Mediterranean diet pyramid has been promoted and successfully became a way of preventing and treating different health conditions and diseases.

Nine Mediterranean dishes are on the list of Protected goods of the Republic of Croatia:
- „sack cheese“ on the area of the Dalmatian hinterland, Velebit and Lika
- a traditional welcoming dish, cake hrapočuša from the island of Brač
- traditional cake makarana from the city of Makarska
- traditional dish from Sinj, arambašići
- traditional production of paški sir (cheese) on the island of Pag
- traditional chard-filled-pastry dish from Poljica, near Omiš
- traditional meat dish, brački vitalac from the island of Brač
- traditional pepper cookies, starogrojski paprenjok, from the island of Hvar
- Mediterranean diet on the Adriatic

Typical examples of the specific intangible treasures which combine Mediterranean heritage and experience brought from the homeland are: SOPARNIK, BRAČKI VITALAC, KAŠTRADINA S KUPUSOM, BRAČKA TORTA HRAPOČUŠA and SINJSKI ARAMBASIĆI.

Apart from specific ways of preparing food, Mediterranean diet on the Croatian part of the Adriatic also embodies production and consumption of wine with this area’s recognizable
oenological status, some with gradation of 15% vol.

Among the autochthonous Croatian wines, the most famous are red variety wines such as: dingač, postup, crljenak, istarski teran and lumbarajski grk.

Mediterranean diet on the Croatian part of Adriatic, its coast, islands and in the hinterland is conditioned by historical and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean and old customs transferred from one generation to another which were brought to Mediterranean by Croats from their homeland.

Mediterranean diet is much more than just food. It promotes social interaction because common meals are the foundation of social practices and festive events. Thus, a rich cultural heritage of songs, tales and legends was created. That way of life is rooted into this territory, it respects biological diversity, and insures the safekeeping and the development of traditional activities and crafts connected to fishing and animal farming in Mediterranean communities.

Apart from the connection between nature and nutrition, the importance of social and economic component is not to be neglected, either. Ancient daily routine of this area was characterized by mutual help and food sharing between the fishing and the land-farming families, helping the underprivileged by those who are richer, interconnection of all the family members during food harvesting (such as grape or olive harvest) preparing food and eating together etc. Each family member participated in every segment of daily life, notwithstanding their age. From very early age children were taught to live in harmony with nature and its resources while women had an important role of transmitting the culinary knowledge, safeguarding the preparation techniques and preserving tradition. The tradition of Mediterranean nutrition is being renewed in the context of family life and through civil society organizations, cultural institutions and individuals. This confirms the perception of Mediterranean nutrition as our own cultural heritage. Up until recently, the art of traditional food preparation, knowledge and craftsmanship of production, hunting and processing groceries was mostly transfered by word of mouth. Lately, different communities create various records of these crafts.

Mediterranean nutrition is lived, renewed and changed every day as a consequence of economic changes, reduced number of agricultural population, availability of industrial food products and better trade communication between the mainland and the islands.

Environmental aspect of Mediterranean diet is recognized again. In the framework of small family farms and agricultural collectives there is a tendency to renew partly abandoned crop plants (such as olive trees and vines). Almost forgotten recipes for traditional dishes and medicinal remedies made out of Mediterranean wild plants are being rediscovered.

The difference between the everyday and the festive nutrition is still present, whereby everyday nutrition underwent noticeably bigger changes than the festive one. Family, and especially religious rituals, consistently cherish traditional nutrition. Different crafts and knowledge connected to nutrition on the Croatian part of Adriatic should be cherished and transferred to new generations so as not to be lost in the modern way of life. Food is an important part of numerous festivities and events, lately also the part of tourist offer, and its quality development is necessary for the long term influence on the whole area.