Qualitative Evaluation Europe Web Walking

'Walking the Europe Web'

1. Aims

As described on our website, is “Europe Web Walking” (not only) a virtual trip through nine European countries focusing on a "treasure hunt". Together, by visiting all the nine countries and hunting for the treasures we want to get to know each other and our national cultures, habits and customs.' These aims are a specification of the general Erasmus Plus aims for projects between diverse European schools, in which this collaboration leads to:

‘Quality improvement of education
Strengthen international cooperation between schools;
Parts of knowledge and good practices in the field of education;
Recognize and validate learning outcomes
Education renewal with a long-term effect’

To Judge whether we achieved these aims, a qualitative evaluation is more than a complement to the quantative one, because the former will show the true nature of the impact of internationalization for schools, teachers, students and families.

2. Teachers and coordinators

To evaluate on the outcomes of the project for teachers, we used questionaires and sociogrammes. Sociogrammes show the structure of interpersonal relations. These structures between teachers, and therefore countries, are divided into three sections. The teachers and coordinators involved answered the question as to who they mainly kept in touch with considering the three areas of:

- language skills/ CLIL
- digital competences
- personal life/ non education related matters

The relations between teachers and coördinators have been made visual by a sociogramme that shows the web of connections between the (individual) partners and targets the main players in these subfields. Only the most frequently mentioned names have been incorporated in each submap. The webs gives us insight in the existing relationships between coordinators and teachers, but also in the information made and kept by the participating schools. Therefore it locates the specific knowledge gathered in the European Web Walking project. It could also be used as a map for future projects; because it shows the strengths of each participant.

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1 Erasmusplus.com
During the mobilities teachers talked about language skills; best practices and in addition gave classes where Language and content were integrated. (CLIL). On this subject, the following map shows the communication in the last three years; during and in between mobilities.

The map shows that **Emine** (Turkey), **Guido** (the Netherlands) and **Joanna** (Poland) are important players when it comes to language competences. It is therefore no coincidence that these three names belong to language teachers. **Laura Timpano** however, is in the centre of the web as she was mentioned most often. In a sociogramme this is called *the star*. When it comes to language competences, Laura is the connector.

Teachers and coördinators sought contact and learned from each other about language education and integration. This led to the acquisition of new ideas inside schools; as becomes evident from the teachers evaluation: All of the 51 interviewed teachers indicate that there has been a spread of inspiration.
Many of the interviewed gained ideas from the CLIL classes, where for example mindmaps and language based learning were put into practice.

2.2: digital competences

From the second map it can be concluded that there are four centers that hold knowledge about digital competences. Given many tasks and communication via the internet (website / questionnaires), digital competences was an important aim in the project. **Matej** from the Czech Republic is the centre of the Digital Web, (the star). This honor comes to their school; considering they maintained the website and facilitated digital means. Although all the roads in the web lead to Matej; **Anna** (Poland) seems to have a crucial position in the field of digital competences as well. She seems to connect diverse countries, so none of the information is held. Anna communicates with Laura and Matej in this field, but more important she is the contact point for Turkey and Hungary. **Laura** (Italy) and **Jessy** (the Netherlands) are mentioned frequently as well, and therefore enforce the web.
As an aim we wanted to get to know ‘each other and each others cultures’. This goes for both students and teachers. Because of the frequent exchanges, teachers and coordinators got to know each other; also apart from education and project related matters. During the last meeting with students in the Czech Republic, statements were made about the familiarity between project members. The map shows a different image from the previous two maps. In the personal one, Guido (the Netherlands) and Laura (Italy) seem to be at the centre, as the progenitors of the project. The name of the coordinator of Portugal, Cristina, was mentioned frequently as well. This map shows, above all, that discussions on education and innovations meet the personal level of all teachers and coordinators. Education is connected to our personalities, and one might argue this very phenomenon promotes constructivity.
2.4: Sustainability

Now that we located existing knowledge and connections, rises an important question: How sustainable are these relations, once the formal Europe Web falls apart? The respondents believe that this network is long-lasting and do not fear a loss. This is based on expectations and plans for future projects and collaboration.

How sustainable do you think these connections are?

3. Students and families

3.1: students

Of course, the ones for whom the project is mainly designed and destined are the students. Hence, an extensive evaluation took place with them, both after each exchange and in the meantime. On the question which value they best awarded to the project, they answered:

- meeting new people and their cultures
- People, new experience.
- To learn foreign culture and improve your social skills
- Learn English
- New friends
- NEW FRIENDS
- Getting connections and friends all over the world.
- learning new songs
- solving treasure hunt

Most students indicate that the personal aspect and growth in contacts and social skills are the most important outcome for them. Some students took part in exchanges twice, or received the pupil in their home where they had been before. Especially with these students we see a change: friendships arose and they actually got an insight into a new culture. A boy from the Czech Republic replied: 'The project has made me realize that I want to travel when I grow up and that I would like to work with people from other cultures. This is in line with the outcomes on the questions pertaining to vision:
Most of the students indicate that the project has developed vision and future plans.

3.2: families

During the project, it was confirmed that parents and families were enthusiastic and involved in the exchanges and experiences of their children. Parents felt like being more involved in the education of their children and saw benefits, especially at the personal level.

Multiple evaluations also took place among parents and host families. In the final evaluation they answered **how the project had changed their child:**

- 'My son got more communicative and open self confidence
- My child broke down the barrier to speak the foreign language
- more opened to europe
- He improved his language skills and abilities to communicate with other boys
- He grew a lot and gained more autonomy
- Ha cambiato la sua visione delle altre culture e la sua maturità e capacità di sviluppare rapporti interpersonali.
- Inoltre certamente il suo inglese è decisamente migliorato
- He became more confident with the language and he gained selfesteem
- More confident and broke down barriers
- now she wants more english lessons to be prepared to travel a lot’

We saw family members and neighbours all participating in the project, in a way that was not foreseen. Parents organized self-closing evenings and took up work of teachers. Sports clubs, friends and classmates showed interest and this caused the web to spread to unprecedented extent.
On the importance of the project for families, it is apparent from the evaluation that parents consider it as useful and bonding.

What is further noticeable is the persistence of the contacts between the students and their host families. More than sixty percent indicate, even after three years, to be in contact with the family they stayed at:

Are you still in contact with your guestfamily?

139 risposte

38.9% YES
61.2% NO
3.3: the story of the Hensels and family

A qualitative evaluation comes to its right based on stories. A wonderful story, which we think is the essence of European web walking, is that of the families Hensels and Tomassino. Throughout the project, Tom, a Dutch boy, and Antonio, an Italian boy, came into contact. They stayed in each other’s families, but more than that, in addition their families got in touch as well. This is so profound that the two families talk to each other daily in a common family app. In this app, birthdays are celebrated, issues are discussed and even holidays are planned. The two families get together also outside the project. For example, they will spend their summer in Italy and they were together in France. For the families, the project has enriched their lives. Tom and Antonio have visualized for this occasion how their friendship originated and how it lives on.
Evaluation Tom:

At school we got the chance to participate in the project. I was one of the lucky ones. I found it a great opportunity to learn new people, cultures and habits. This would come true soon. The first exchange for me was to Italy, there I was hosted by an Italian boy Antonio. We became very good friends and are still in touch with each other. The activities were fun and the Necropolis from Cerveteri, the place where Antonio lived incredible and full of history. We also visited Rome. I had never been to Rome before, this was a good first time then. We visited many famous places such as the Colosseum, Trevi Fountain, Forum Romanum. Later that year, I went to Hungary, there I was hosted by Péter. He was friendly as well. I slept there with Andrea from Italy, whom I already knew from Italy and Honza, from the Czech Republic. This was also a fantastic experience. The year after, The Netherlands were going to host the other countries. I hosted Antonio, whom I already knew, and Matteo. It was fun, we visited the city centre of Maastricht, visited the caves of Slawave. Matteo even learned me a bit Italian. Dopo, a few months after this exchange, I went to the Czech Republic, where I was hosted by Honza, whom I also knew from Hungary. He, Jakub from Poland, Honzás brother Jakub and me played outside in his garden and went to the horse riding school, to drive a horse! We also went rafting, which was a great experience. You see, I have met a lot of new people, this project gives the opportunity of making new friends and learning new cultures by fun activities. This was a project every school should participate with!