



## **21st CENTURY STRATEGIES TO TACKLE EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING**

17<sup>th</sup> June 2017 – Milan

### **ROUND TABLE: PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN AREAS OF THE S.M.I.L.E. PROJECT**

#### **MODERATOR**



**Elena Fusar Poli** is an Italian Language and Literature teacher and History teacher at I.I.S. “P. Sraffa” in Crema, Italy. She is a certified CLIL teacher and she has been involved in two Comenius projects (2011/2013 and 2013/2015) as the contact person for IIS “Sraffa”, and in an Erasmus+ project (2015/2017) as part of the Management and Budget Committees. She is interested in new technologies, foreign languages and international projects.



**Anca Haita** is an English teacher at a Technological high school in Moreni, Romania. She has been teaching English for 12 years in both lower secondary and upper secondary schools and for seven years she has been translator, advisor and collaborator for several European projects, for both teachers and students alike. Anca is interested in raising the awareness on the importance of new methods of teaching and learning.

#### **“SPORT”**

##### **Why did the project focus on the educational value of sport?**

An increasing body of international evidence suggests that growing participation in sports and physical activity can lead to improved academic and social outcomes, benefiting students, schools and communities alike. Sport has generally been promoted for its positive impact on young people's physical and mental health. That's why we focused on it.

## **What activities did you implement in order to achieve your aims?**

We approached sport from various angles:

- the students wrote and shared information about sports in history, starting from the early times, the spring of the Olympic games, for instance and obtained an e-Magazine. The students also made a photo story about a relay race;
- gathered in a large room, students from each participating country explained the rules of two traditional games or sports. They showed them to the rest of the audience and then the games were played outside. An eBook and a poster on the common roots of European games are the result of our students' written work;
- several national and international sport famous people, be it individual players or team players, were either interviewed or received e-mails and letters to which they answered, enlarging upon their professional lives and achievements, becoming role models for our students. All these and much more are explained in the eBook that contains the letters to champions of individual sports, in the presentation and the animated interviews that the students made as well;
- The students found out about the hard work behind and the sacrifices one has to make in order to attain success, about the temptations they meet, drugs and doping and some stories on these subjects, stories about former champions and important sportsmen. They learnt how much these cheatings negatively influenced their careers and their personal lives. Afterwards the doping cases were gathered in an e-Magazine. The students flew balloons and kites with anti-doping slogans and they filled in a questionnaire about sports. Moreover, they shared guidelines on respect for rules and fair play;
- We have been provided with professional support and guidance from several specialists who delivered speeches about diets, healthy food and a healthy lifestyle that sports people - and not only - must lead/embrace.

## **What are the outcomes, generally speaking?**

The project has contributed to improved academic, social and sporting outcomes for schools and their students, by using sport as a context for learning and student engagement, by incorporating the values and characteristics of sport into the school environment.



**Anna Papapicco** and **Antonio Settimio Romei** are English teachers and teacher trainers.

They are currently teaching English at Convitto Nazionale “D. Cirillo” in Bari, south Italy. They have been teaching in high schools for more than 20 years now and have attended post-graduate courses on CLIL methodology and ICT applied to education both in Italy and abroad. They have been running courses on CLIL methodology and the use of digital tools as well as Pearson and Cambridge exam preparation courses for both students and adults.

## **“21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY METHODOLOGIES”**

### **What was the aim of using innovative teaching methods during the project?**

The traditional “chalk and talk” method of teaching that has existed for hundreds of years is no longer suitable to gain good results from students, especially from the weakest ones. Today there are more modern and revolutionary teaching methods available for use in schools. Active learning, greater student interaction are encouraged and a focus on enjoyment is emphasised.

The SMILE project, indeed, has made use of some teaching methods that have made an impact giving good results. The approaches used in the project have been: CLIL, PBL, Flipped classroom, Action Research, ICT tools mainly based on the pedagogical use of sport and physical education to involve pupils in school life and build significant ties with the learning community at large. The required creation of CLIL modules for student-centred active lessons also provided an incentive for teachers to update their teaching methods getting closer to students' changed channels of information and modes of learning.

As a matter of fact, among the specific objectives of the project there were - develop pupils' ability to plan, think critically and be creative; - implement up-to-date teaching strategies and exchange good practices.

### **What impact did these approaches and especially CLIL have on students?**

CLIL and the other approaches used in the project stimulated the students' creativity and were useful means to make pupils feel important and responsible towards their European peers since what they produced may be used as a model in other schools or may serve to persuade peers all over Europe to go on studying and engage more intensively in developing their potential. Each CLIL module learning outcome was appealing and engaging for young learners and they all cooperated to creating them, even the weakest or the most unwilling students were involved in the production of the L.O.

## **What were your goals when designing the modules?**

When designing the Modules we thought about the importance of making them flexible and adaptable so to meet diverse requirements. We also wanted students to be “dragged in” by means of one subject whose activities they generally like, that is P.E. At the same time, though, our aim was to engage our students in some other less playful issues ranging from doping to healthy eating to resilience.

Experiments with other methodologies have been taken into consideration and merged in the CLIL Modules so as to develop an approach linked to the students' background knowledge, stimulates their thinking skills and offers a range of highly motivating activities, which are not usually accounted for in a traditional class.

21<sup>st</sup> century education is moving ahead in a rather challenging way for both students and teachers. Educators have been asked to find new ways to engage students in their learning process and we hope we have given our contribution to it !



**Mariella Brunazzi** is a teacher of English Language and Culture at I.I.S. P. Sraffa Crema. She is coordinator of the Department of Foreign Languages, of the CLIL team, and of European projects.

Mariella is interested in innovative teaching methods and tools to actively engage students in lessons and increase their participation. She regularly attends online courses offered by the European Schoolnet Academy and the Teacher Academy at the School Education Gateway, as well as eTwinning Learning Events. She also runs eTwinning projects in cooperation with CLIL subject teachers.

## **“ EUROPE DIRECT”**

### **Why did the project focus on fostering active European citizenship?**

The project fostered active citizenship the future of our democracy depends on it. It is essential that students develop knowledge and understanding of what happens not only at local and national level but also at European level and that they realise what European citizenship involves. Other important aspects are the development of the sense of responsibility and an open-minded attitude towards people and other countries, the bases for an informed participation and integration.

### **Who were the main actors of this action?**

The partner schools and Europe Direct Centres.

Europe Direct Centres were involved and visited with the classes in each partner country to get information about the European Union and the study/job/volunteering opportunities it offers.

The centres gave the schools a large variety of publications and materials like games on various topics concerning the EU such as EU institutions, how the EU works, languages, climate change, and many more.

Europe Direct Centres also assisted with teaching about the EU and provided different kinds of workshops:

- some aimed at increasing knowledge about the EU and learning about aspects of EU citizenship;
- others aimed at making students find out study and volunteering opportunities in the EU and learn how to use EURES, the European job mobility portal, whose goal is to facilitate the mobility of workers within the countries of the European Union.

Another interesting activity was a set of interviews at the local Europe Direct Centres.

All sessions were tailored to the needs and age of the pupils.

Moreover teachers regularly received newsletters which gave them more information on workshops, projects and further activities for schools.

**Will the collaboration continue?**

The collaboration was really fruitful and it will be continued and enhanced in the future. Our students are now more aware of their role inside European society and willing to participate actively.



**Joanna Sawicka** is an English teacher at a Polish secondary school - VI Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Króla Zygmunta Augusta w Białymstoku. She has been teaching for 20 years now. She has participated in many European projects such as Comenius, Erasmus+ and POWERSE and is the author of two of them. Currently, she is a leader of European Exchanges at her school. Joanna is interested in developing versatile skills through the use of innovative technologies and methods as well as sharing the knowledge and experience with her students thus motivating them to further hard work.

## ***“eTWINNING”***

### **Why did you choose to develop an online project on the eTwinning platform, as part of the SMILE activities?**

eTwinning offers a platform for staff (teachers, head teachers, librarians, etc.), working in a school in one of the European countries involved, to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share and, in short, feel and be part of the most exciting learning community in Europe.

Our eTwinning project is entitled “Crossing Borders” and is conducted simultaneously with the S.M.I.L.E. project by all the partner countries.

Our goals set at the beginning were to communicate, collaborate and develop the project.

### **What kind of activities did you carry on in eTwinning?**

On the TwinSpace of the project we decided to publish and share the materials devoted to different subjects bearing in mind the project aims as well as the interests of our teachers and students. Therefore, it includes the folders about the European Union, customs and habits in participating countries, language bites, recipes of our national dishes, information about our towns, cities, counties and school lives.

All of the material is presented in a very attractive way by means of films, presentations, quizzlets, Powtoons, pictures.

The added value to the eTwinning project we are doing is a Forum where all the project members exchange their ideas, ask and answer questions concerning various subjects such as sport, the EU, migration and refugees.

### **Have you met your goals?**

I would like to assure you that all the set goals are achieved. It all resulted in a far better communication, mutual understanding especially between students. It created the unique possibility for them to speak up, express their opinions freely, understand another culture with all the similarities and differences it brings and of course to use the ICT tools effectively.

All of these means contributed to a greater motivation towards learning itself. Therefore, the eTwinning project turned out to be an immense value through the synergy of all the set and achieved goals. It conveys the important meaning of S.M.I.L.E. project and incorporates all the ideas of it.

Our eTwinning project is a perfect way of disseminating the whole project as well. We are proud that we have managed to do it so smooth and in an effective way.



**Ümit Contuk** studied Foreign Languages and English Teaching at Istanbul University and graduated from there in 2009. He started teaching English soon after the graduation and worked at three different schools, the first two of which were primary schools. Then he started to teach at Atışalanı Anadolu Lisesi which is a high school and his present workplace in Istanbul. He's worked with learners of all ages and now has 8 years of experience in teaching.

## ***"SOCIAL MEDIA"***

### **Why are social media so important nowadays?**

Today we cannot think of a world that is without social media. They are widely used and appreciated by the billions. They are nearly in every part of our life. So naturally we have utilized social media too.

### **Facebook is probably the most popular social media. Did you use it during the project and how?**

Facebook has been the most effective medium for our project. Right now we have 443 members from, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Poland and Turkey. Facebook has been a useful platform especially for the students. They could interact with other students from other countries and they could exchange culture. And for the teacher we uploaded all the work done during the project on the group page. So you find almost everything there. We shared local activities which includes lessons to promote the aim of our project, intellectual outputs like e-books, mind maps and posters, also pictures and videos from the mobilities.

### **Did you use any other social media?**

Twitter has also been used. It was of a great help during the discussion and brain storming activities. For example we started a subject and students from the participating countries twitted about it. They freely expressed themselves through Twitter.

We have an Instagram account too. As Instagram is a platform where you can share photographs we shared a lot of photos that were taken during the project. I can say that these photos draw the attention of many students who are not involved in the project and helped us disseminate the results of our project.



**AĪJA BĪLDJUGA** is a dedicated professional, M Phil, with a 33+ years experience in teaching English to 16-19 years old students in Bauska State gymnasium (Latvia) and adults in Municipality Education center. Attended a variety of professional development workshops centered on innovative 21st century approaches to classroom management, student motivation, and engaging learning activities. Uses effective and efficient methods of teaching whilst focusing on individual needs of each student. Interested in methods developing students' creative thinking. Actively involved in Erasmus+ projects.

## **“COUNSELLING”**

### **Was counselling necessary?**

**Yes.**

Teenagers are young people who don't know who they are, what they can be or even want to be. They are afraid, but they don't know of what. They are angry, but they don't know at whom. They are rejected and they don't know why. All they want is to be somebody.

The project S.M.I.L.E. main task was to convince the teenagers that school time can be enjoyed and that teens need to learn for life, and that the school's role is in their future lives.

### **What were the main targets of counselling?**

- To create relaxed atmosphere
- Help project participants enjoy meeting each other, enjoy the chance to share something about them also in international teams
- Improve teamwork and cooperation
- Give recommendations how to concentrate better at school
- Suggest the best stress management methods
- To offer psychological advice to teens and their parents
- To supply teachers with methodological material
- how to cope with teenage problems
- how to handle different groups of people and personalities (the prevailing, the cynic speakers, the timid etc.)
- how to lead conversations (e.g. –lesson about the goals in life- 1<sup>st</sup> step-my own goals and my priorities list, 2<sup>nd</sup> step- others' priorities, 3<sup>rd</sup> step- group's created final list)

## How were the targets met?

### -Using various techniques

- team work, pair work not to intimidate teenagers (various group forming devices were offered) and widen the ability to communicate
- Having discussions (on teenage problems, on emotions)
- Starting every module lesson with an icebreaker or a warm-up activity of various type:
  - a song
  - a video (Mod.7- Non-standard education-Changing education paradigms by Kevin Robinson)
  - a non-verbal game (sculptor and sculptures)
  - listing issues in alphabetical order
  - prioritizing ideas
  - filling mind maps
  - creating posters
  - using picture descriptions
  - brainstorming
  - using guided questions
- Writing diaries where students' mental and physical feelings and progress were depicted



**Dario Malchiodi** is an associate professor at the Computer Science Department of Milan University, where he teaches "Statistics and data analysis", "Big scale analytics", and "Informatics didactics". Previously he worked as software architect at Inferentia-DNM, as statistical analyst at The Continuity Company S.r.l. and as software developer at Olivetti S.p.A. His research activities are focused on the treatment of uncertainty in machine learning. He published more than ninety scientific papers and he participated in the activities of around ten national and international research projects. He is involved in activities focused on the popularization of computer science, including the development of teaching methodologies for primary and secondary schools, the training of secondary school teachers and a radio broadcast on informatics.

### **Which kind of data can be collected in order to assess the efficacy of a project like this one?**

We coordinated with all teachers and we decided to record on a trimestral basis the evaluation of students concerning five attributes: Attendance, Participation, Commitment, Behaviour, and Progress.

We also monitored how teachers and students used the Facebook group of the project.

### **Which analyses have you performed?**

We processed the evaluations of students extracting features in terms of:

- descriptive statistics,
- relations between attributes,
- temporal trends,
- statistical significance in the differences of performances w.r.t. a control group of students which were not involved in the project, and
- statistical significance in performances between the two years in the project implementation.

Concerning Facebook, we collected statistics about posts, photos, videos, likes and so on, building a timeline and creating a tag cloud of the most used terms.

### **Which results did you obtain?**

Analyzing data is always a difficult task, and in our case we also gathered data from six different kind of schools, as well as six different cultural contexts. Thus it is not surprising that the results which we obtained were specific for each of the participating institution. In all cases we noted increases in almost all attributes, although their statistical significance varies a lot.