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Integrating New Technologies into History Learning

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Abstract: This article analyzes the possibilities of learning History using new free online applications so that the interactive learning process facilitates the understanding and accumulation of long-term knowledge and skills as well as adapting the teaching process to each student. We consider that each student has the right to quality education, each student counts equally. The school curriculum in the history discipline aims to develop some acquisitions in order to create a good active citizen, equally a digital citizen adapted to the 21st century. eTwinning provides teachers and pupils from different countries with a collaborative and friendly learning environment and share the results. Different school curriculum themes can be approached during classes, with the work being continued at home by each student. Starting with the stage of project planning and development, students and teachers debate, engage and look for common issues that can be achieved. Participants use online tools throughout the project, meet virtually, proposing work tasks and finding solutions together. The role of the teacher is to help him to facilitate learning while students learn at their own pace in a common learning environment. The use of new technologies, of digital sources in History, leads to the activation and engagement of students in self-training.

Keywords: *Interactive learning; eTwinning; active citizenship; on-line tools; collaboration.*

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Since the seventies of the 20th century there have been significant changes in the scientific field. The education system has begun to adapt to the new requirements of postmodern society in order to prepare young people to integrate into the labor market.
Thus, French essayist and philosopher Jean Francois Lyotard remarked in the 1970s the effect of multiplication of computer equipment on the circulation of knowledge, sounds and images on humans. We find that the observations of the French author are pertinent and that in a very short time the contemporary society evolved quickly to informational education.

Within the European Union, each Member State has its own education policy, however, there is a tendency to harmonize, to support educational processes, in accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The purpose of education is to develop every citizen so that he can use his creative potential and adapt to a changing society. Also, in Recommendation 15 (2001) on Teaching History in Europe in the 21st Century, one of the directions addressed is the European dimension in teaching history and the proper use of information and communication technologies. The wider access of young people to information and communication technologies, at school and in leisure time, allows teachers and students access to original historical sources, as well as performing interpretations, critical analysis, accepting different points of view.

The 21st Century History Teacher has to face the new challenges as well as the information explosion, but also to substantiate the content, to provide pupils with answers to their questions using the new technologies. The emergence of the computer and its use as a means of learning by the teacher and the student facilitated student-computer interaction and access to logical information, structured differently.

The teacher has the role of guiding the student's learning process, mediating between student, information, techniques, didactic strategies and computer. Using the computer to create attractive learning situations for the student provides an in-depth understanding of history and retaining the attention of research-oriented students by accessing libraries, online archives, and using online learning tools.

Accessing different online tools offers the teacher and students a variety of opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge, creating animations, completing questionnaires, promoting collaborative learning within student groups.

Developing the ability to select information, integrate it into another context of learning, to think creatively, to familiarize students with

information processing, to train the student in active learning activities are only a few aspects that show the importance of the modern teacher adapted to the realities of the 21st century. The use of new technologies in the teaching process will influence the teacher-student communication and interrelation mode in a positive way, but will also lead to an increase in individualized work skills, or work teams, to use information media respecting safety rules on Internet. The teacher has the role of guiding the learning process, selecting genuine historical sources, providing them with interactive exercises, explaining the importance of the text-image-animation.

All jobs require the acquisition of digital skills. Users at the same time should have and observe moral rules when navigating the online universe.

Developing digital citizenship is therefore essential for young people to be able to participate in online society by using digital means to fulfill their civic duty and to make the most of the potential of technology. eTwinning is a powerful learning experience, giving students the opportunity to participate in collaborative educational projects. The society of the future is the digital society in which young people learn, work, live, interact together. Under these circumstances, we can talk about young people using new technologies and young people who have never used the computer, the Internet and the new technologies.

In conclusion, there is a "digital gap" between the two categories. We can talk about digital inclusion, the need for access to a personal digital device of each person. Participating in the digital environment is a multi-step process. The first step is made by those who are simple observers, consumers of the environment, the second step is done by those who change ideas, content, communicate with each other using social networks, the third step is taken by those who are content creators, ways to interact with other digital citizens, the fourth step is made by those who exploit the potential of technology, the fifth step (last) is done by those who want to shape the future of society, using digital tools and means.

It is very important to create a better digital environment, promoting positive values and attitudes. Access to the digital environment exposes users and risks, so we need to put in place strategies to provide children and young people with online protection.

We should convince them of the need to be responsible for their own actions, respect and protect the rights of others, but also to signal if they observe something moved in the virtual environment. ETwinning is a secure digital platform, where students and teachers collaborate and develop valuable projects.

I will present two eTwinning projects in the years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 that promote the idea of tolerance, civic involvement, inclusion in the digital world.

In projects, together with students and project partners, we used various digital tools to work together, discuss online chatting or videoconferencing, make decisions and vote, using digital communication.

The eTwinning European Immigration 2015-2016 project was attended by students from the Lycée des métiers Louis Blériot Trappes, France, Lyceum Archangelou Apostolos Markos, Nicosia, Cyprus and the National Pedagogical College Constantin Brătescu Constanța, Romania. The project was a perfect way to improve the skills of students from different social backgrounds, as well as among ethnic Greeks in Dobrogea.

Each student has been able to collaborate in an active manner on the topic of migration in the contemporary world. We started from a study in the three schools to learn the origins of our students. Students were very surprised by the results: in France, 54; Romania 11 and Cyprus 9. Young people have worked together in mixed international teams and have researched the migration waves in our country and in the partner countries. The online tools used were: Twinspace project, Email, Chat, Forum, Google Forms, Picktochart, Padlet, Thinglink, Survey Monkey, Sticky Moose, Answergarden, Madmagz, PPT, Video, Drawings, and Photos. The project has been integrated into the curriculum of History, Class AXIa, English, ICT, and Sociology. They have realized that this phenomenon is not new, population movements have taken place since antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages until today, and because of this diversity, the culture of the country is enriched.

One of the strengths of our project was the enhancement of ICT skills, communication skills in Romanian, as they presented the project of the whole school community, parents, and teachers, English language skills, exchanging ideas and looking for solutions to different work tasks in the project.

Young people gained autonomy, self-confidence, and learned to work in a team. They have understood that diversity is power and they have become more tolerant. They understood that together with others they worked efficiently, exchanged ideas and became open to collaboration with other cultures.

The final product of our project was the online magazine created with Madmagz https://madmagz.com/fr/magazine/735450

Our project link is https://twinspace.etwinning.net/12904/home. The project was awarded the National Special Prize for Citizenship in 2016

and the National Prize 2017 in France and the Third Prize at the Made for Europe national contest in Romania.

The project "@ctive @nd Digita@l Citizenship Dimensions", between 2016-2017 with participants from Slovakia (Obchodna Akademia Levice), Italy (Liceo Statale Carlo Porta, Erba) and Romania (Colegiul National Pedagogic Constantin Bratescu, Constanta), was created to nurture the interest of the students in the problem of the digital world, namely a deep understanding of what it means to be a digital citizen.

The project encourages the students to become active citizens in their day to day lives, including in the digital world, thus expanding their knowledge of it. Since teenagers are becoming more and more interested in what it means to be a digital citizen, we wish to help our students be more informed about and skilled in using technology in our modern world. The participants may be described as being "digital natives" who gained digital skills through completing the activities included in the project, those involving from simple digital users to active and responsible e-citizens. The activities mentioned above are tailored to shape the students' moral attitudes, in order to build up responsible online behaviour; a key objective of the project is to encourage students to understand the attributes a responsible e-citizen should have. The students worked together by discussing aspects related to the digital life and combining together their views on what a safe digital environment should represent. The means of these discussions were: eTwinning online forum, as well as web and video conferences. The project wishes to shape the students involved into responsible e-citizens, eager to build a better digital world, thus improving life in the 21st century.

We started from real situations, which the students discussed together through video conferences and workshops. The students were arranged in teams, both national and international.

The students successfully reached an understanding of what it means to be an active e-citizen, as well as its importance in the digital world. Moreover, working in groups helped build up connections of understanding and trust between the students. They were able to use both the school library and the internet for documentation.

One of the educational benefits of the projects is the fact that it directly facilitates the creation of a better and safer online environment. The creativity of the project lies in the variety of teaching methods involved, especially the digital ones.

Communication between students was enabled through debates and group objectives. The inter pares evaluation of the results of the students'

work, as well as the dissemination of the results of the project, was done at a meeting involving both the parents and the students.

ETwinning became an integral part of the teaching carried on in the three schools involved. The project was integrated in the curriculum of the 11th grade, which studies European history in the 20th and 21st centuries. One of the topics involved was that of responsible used of the computer and the internet in day to day life. The students were split into teams with different tasks: documentation from various sources (scientific papers, other online resources etc.), application of surveys, and the presentation of the country, city and school of each team involved. The students were active in all stages of the project since the beginning, starting with planning, development, and evaluation. Our project is a result of individual work (personal profile, communication via chat or email), group work (establishing the means of presenting, editing), and international work (questions between partner. schools, answering said questions, adding information to Padlet together etc.). The students honed their English language and digital skills. The project "@ctive @nd Digit@l Citizenship Dimensions" involves different disciplines: Civic Education, History, English, ICT.

The students created online quizzes in mixed groups. The best questions were chosen and their answers were processed. Tools such as Padlet, Linoleum, and Quizlet were used in order to distribute the quizzes to students from all partnering schools. In addition, debates were organised, and as a result of them conclusions regarding the topics were reached and discussed. The participant schools continuously publish their activity on the eTwinning online space, and the results are evaluated together (Zoomerang forms, Google). The students worked on the project both individually and in larger groups, where communication and cooperation were greatly supported and encouraged. The participant schools also wrote about the results of the project in the schools' magazines, online on their websites, and in the local press (e.g. Echoes).

The project used all available IT services: video conferences, emails, files (Word, PDF, PowerPoint presentations), Linoleum, Slideshare, AnswerGarden, ProProfsm Animoto, Vimeo, Smile Box, Padlet, Zoomerang, Quizlet, and others. Skype, Facebook and Twinspace were used by the members of the project to communicate. The Twinspace journal was used continuously on the eTwinning public area. We also published information regarding cooperation and created our own website (https://digitalcitizenship0.wixsite.com/etwinning). We used software such as Photoshop, Corel Draw, and Brothers to create posters in order to promote our project inside our school and at PTA meetings.

The project is relevant not just for partnering schools, but also to every other institution, as it focuses on citizenship and safety in the online environment, which is a very relevant topic in our modern world. The activities of the project contribute to building a suitable attitude regarding the online environment. It is important to realise the importance of treating people equitable in the online environment. The project itself can be extended to other schools in Romania and Europe as a benchmark of interesting activities which may be applied during classes. The experience gained through participating in this eTwinning project can be used practically in day to day life. The results were presented in front of teachers, parents, other students, and the rest of the community, and has led to a deep understanding of the importance of an active digital citizenship. The application of this project was done thanks to the personal contributions of the students involved, who are responsible users of digital instruments, social media, and the internet as a whole. . The results of the cooperation between us have been published on the school's website and magazine. The project offers visible solutions and also demonstrates an increased interest of the students in this topic. The project received European Quality Label. The Slovak team has applied to the Competition for the best eTwinning team in Slovakia and our project has won 2nd place. The Romanian Team won in the national competition 1st prize for use of creative technologies.

In conclusion, the use of new technologies makes significant progress in the teaching process. The use of the eTwinning platform by teachers and pupils provides extraordinary learning opportunities, learners learn at their own pace, the role of the teacher is just to guide it, to facilitate cooperative learning.

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