Newsletter # 2 March 2015

Project `JOYFUL READING`

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We live in the age of changes. Have you heard the dictums – new generation, burned with IT or Z generation?

Next year children born in 2008 are starting the school. This is the generation that has been grown by modern technologies. At the age of two they could easily use tablets and other smart devices. They had the possibilities to communicate, play and listen to music in a completely different way. Nowadays several generations have to live together sharing varied views and experiences. For example, for teachers - IT is just a tool, but for teenagers it is an environment they can`t exist without. Technologies are very naturally integrated in their lives. For the 21st century teachers it is a big challenge to work with the children who will live in the 22nd century. How should educators improve teaching/learning methods? What is the future of education? What is the role of a school? What could teachers offer *digital natives*?

Today we have to give knowledge and skills which will be required tomorrow!

Steve Jobs says `…All books, learning materials, and assessments should be digital and interactive, tailored to each student and providing feedback in real time`. Students want to get real time feedback as soon as possible right now. Teaching methods as memorizing, understanding, applying should be Teachers have to measure what they teach, what it

is suitable for children; try to combine problem solving, creative thinking, innovation and collaboration.

We have to teach the new thinking approach - digital approach.

The best way to realize that is to study while solving real problems in real world's projects. The Project "Joyful Reading" funded by Nordplus Junior program tried to find innovative ways for motivating young people to read books by using new technologies. That means old values in modern clothes, for example `Reading and fun!` Can they survive together? Yes, of course, if we combine something special as `IT`, something old - fashioned as `Reading` and something borrowed as `The idea of a game`. *We simply adjust technologies in our everyday life.*

Inga Žemaitienė, Erika Remeikienė, Siauliai Jovaras progymnazium, Lithuania

Vera Lapkovska, Riga Grammar School of Nordic Languages, Latvia

The project Joyful Reading offered the project-based learning activities and tasks for students as well as for teachers. Within two project years students could learn by knowing and doing. The outcome of the project was the computer game but the additional benefits for students were improved communication and social skills, increased creativity and also broaden awareness raise. The project tasks provided integration of curricula in the grades 7-8, mostly in subjects of literature, English and IT. As the basis of the project students needed to read the books in their mother tongue or English. Following tasks required full-understanding and discussions about the read issues. Students also became creators and critics of the computer game which is one of the central ideas of digital literacy.

The outcome of the project will be a launched computer game "The Journey to the Centre of the Earth" which is possible to play using cell phones and computers. *When effectively integrated into the curriculum, technology tools can extend learning in powerful ways.* That is the reason why the game based learning is an innovative practice to engage students to the learning process and Joyful Reading project fully achieved its objectives.

Aire Rillo, Tartu Raatuse School, Estonia

Joyful Reading has taught us a lot. It has above all shown us new ways of learning, i.e. *to combine traditional learning with new innovative methods using tablets and computers.* Many subjects in our

school have profited from our learning and experiences because we have shared what we have learnt with our other colleagues.

The project has taught us how to combine traditional school work with new technology and it has opened our eyes for working more constructively with computers. The students have started to use Skype and face time as a way of communicating beside Facebook.

We have also got closer to both students and parents through meetings before and after our mobilities; when we have prepared and evaluated the mobilities.

For us, teaching different subjects and working in different fields, the project has made us cooperate more, which is good for general school development.

The project has also given us a good reputation among schools in the community and when other schools talk about taking part in an EU- project, they start talking about our Joyful Reading project as a successful example. The project has widened our horizons; we have learnt about books and places in our partner countries that we had never heard of. We also got an insight in the school systems of other countries that partly encouraged us to try to develop similar methods in our school like for example pupils` initiative and the work of the student´s councils. Last not least the project has given us new friends and colleagues.

Elisabeth Olsson, Valbergsskolan, Sweden

What have students learnt in the project? Have they developed IT skills?

Voices of the Estonian Students

 Kadri Joul:

`First of all, I met new and interesting people from other cultures. I also got three friends with whom I will continue communicate with. I can't tell that I improved many my IT skills in the process, but I had a chance to record words, which is a new experience for me. I am now more experienced in working with people from other countries and group work in general. I find that the biggest impact from Joyful As for me reading was language improvement. In English lessons, I write more than talk and it was a great opportunity to speak English in real everyday situations`.

Victoria Kolde:

1. What were the IT skills you learned during this project?
- Unfortunately I didn't learn any new IT skills, I already quite knew everything.
2. Did you use a lot of English during this project? Were there any new phrases or words that you learnt?
- Yeah, I used quite a lot English. Especially in Sweden, because if I needed something I had to use English. And I think it made me more confident as well - because I think I can manage with my English in different situations abroad and with foreigners. But I know that there is still so much to learn....
During this project I learned some Swedish words as well. The words that I learned in Swedish and I still remember are how to say hi, bye, no and thanks.
3. Did you like the outcome of the project? Why?
- I like the computer game that was made during this project, because it's good - not too easy and not too difficult. Game is also suitable for beginners and people who already know how to play different computer games. I think we did a great job and I would like to thank all the students and especially the teachers who did so much work!

Voices of the Lithuanian Students

Aušrine Bielskytė:

`Joyful Reading` project gave me a lot of benefits: I improved my IT skills, I saw what programmers do, how they work, I`ve got some ideas about programming, making a video game.

Also I have improved my English skills a lot. I gained a lot of self-confidence and leadership as well.

I'm glad to visit different countries and to discover their unique culture and nature.

I got to know many people from different countries. I learnt to choose which people advises, tips I like better. I can see from their viewpoint, from their angle, how they see life. I can compare my thoughts and beliefs and make conclusions.

I also meet new people, make great friends, and I am very happy about that, they're such good people.

I also had so many memories during this project, I changed my beliefs, and I change my attitude quite a lot. This gave me so many benefits.

If someone offered another project, I'd participate in it without any hesitations for sure`.

Rytis Šivickas:

`I really liked to draw characters and items. I got perfect lessons from IT and I was happy when I needed to choose music for background or actions. This project motivated me to draw better and create games. Thanks for Joyful Reading team and people who worked with me`.

Rugilė Drazdovaitė:

`I improved my English skills while doing presentations, communicating with other groups students, living in a host family. I helped with choosing the characters in a game, expressed my own thoughts and evaluated the game. The project gave me some information about different cultures; I found exciting things while visiting exhibitions and places of interest`.

Ugnius Viscokas:

`I was pretty excited when I heard that I could take part in this project. Our work was hard and even boring. But when we came to Latvia it became more interesting. Till now I communicate with my Latvian buddy. I am really happy that I have taken part in this project. It was totally worth doing that`.

Voices of the Latvian Students

Krists Jānis Lūkins:

`The income of the project is to meet new people and make new friends. It was a real fun creating the interactive game and testing it`.

Lelde Elizabete Kusiņa:

`It was great experience. I got new friends in Lithuania, Estonia and Sweden. I liked all project activities and practiced language and IT skills a lot. We presented our country and also got to know other culture and traditions`.

Edvarts Mežulis:

`The income of the project is huge. I met new friends and spent good time with them. Of course, I am better at English now. All the activities were interesting and useful - I enjoyed working with PC and Ipads`.

Elīza Kalniņa:

`I got just unreal experience how to communicate with people from different countries. The Project helped me to understand myself: I like to be active,

to travel and to participate in different projects. I am motivated now in studying English harder and I understand the importance of IT skills`.

Rinalds Rozenfelds:

`The project helped me to develop my computer skills. I`ve learned how to use new programs, either. The project was a great experience for me`.

Voices of the Swedish Students:

`We think that being part of the project has taught us how rich it is to make new friends from other countries. It was so nice being together all of us in one big group that we had wanted us all to live together in a gym hall or something. It has also taught us the importance of speaking and understanding English well. Before the project started we had no idea about life in the Baltic countries, we hardly knew where the countries were on the map, but now we both know and like the countries very much.

It was fun making logotypes and vote for them. It was also fun to draw Axel and the Professor as the game environment. We never thought the game would turn out to be so awesome! It is fun playing it and we like it!

We would all like to take part in similar projects in future to be creative and learn more new things, get more friends from other countries and widen our views`.

Here is the official link of our Game: https://apps.facebook.com/159082567780280/