"Learning by Doing" with European School Radio:

A Diversified Educational Approach

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Abstract: This paper presents a differentiated educational process that has been implemented in the framework of the School Activities Programs in Junior High School, in which the students, by creating and broadcasting their radio podcasts on the digital radio station of the European School Radio, approached the knowledge through different educational subjects, acquired digital skills using open-source applications, collaborated online using web 2.0 applications and socialized by actively participating in digital society.

Key words: experiential learning, European school radio, Edmodo, project

1. Introduction

According to Aristotle, "all we have to do after learning, we learn by doing" (Papadimitriou, 2000). This particular teaching proposal was based on this philosophy. When students stray from the narrow boundaries of the classroom and the traditional way of teaching (teach-exam-grading) they cooperate better, socialize, develop skills and learn experientially.

This differentiated educational process was carried out in the framework of the school activities programs of the 2016-2017 school years, by the Director of Secondary Education in Drama and was integrated into the cultural issues section. As these programs are out-of-school hours, for group living meetings, the school's IT lab was utilized and for modern and asynchronous remote meetings an online classroom was created which was used specifically for the program at the Edmodo educational portal[1]. Students from different classes and departments collaborated, created and transmitted their own broadcasts on the first European student radio the European School Radio[2].

By creating their own programs, students had the opportunity to engage with different learning subjects such as Information Technology, Modern Greek, oral communication, decoding of written speech, reading skills, social education, music, art and they also use a variety of ways to approach knowledge through web2.0 applications and open source applications.

The ability also to conduct educational visits in the context of School Activities Programs enhanced the educational process (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014), giving students the opportunity to visit large radio studios and

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[1] https://www.edmodo.com.

[2] http://europeanschoolradio.eu.

to broadcast live and conduct interviews.

The goal of this differentiated educational approach was to actively engage students in the learning process, engage them with different learning objects, help them develop skills in speech and speech decoding, increase their creativity, give them the opportunity to use new internet technologies and e-collaboration and learn the concept of digital citizenship in order to become active digital citizens.

2. Theoretical-Pedagogical Framework

2.1 Project Methodology and School Activities

The teaching methodology of the project is also referred to as an "action plan" (Vaina, 1996) and a "project plan" (Matsagouras, 2003) and is defined as a pedagogical learning process involving teachers and students alike. The role of the teacher is not central, but guidance - counseling, with interventions and advice only when students require it. It is an open learning process, whose boundaries and processes are not strictly defined and are always based on the individual needs and interests of the learner, empirical learning (Dewey, 1909). The term Project was used by educators in the early twentieth century. It has been proven that the Project method engages students more actively in the learning process, highlights students' weaknesses and contributes to their reduction, improves students' interpersonal relationships and enhances students with low-performance and self-esteem issues (Chionidou-Moskofoglou, 2000).

School Activity Programs are not yet another syllabus lesson but a lesson that students can optionally choose from different classes depending on their interests. It has no specific syllabus, examination and assessment. It enables the student to socialize, collaborate in groups, improvise and take initiatives to complete the subject being discussed in the program. The learner feels free, approaches and acquires knowledge at his/her own pace, while acquiring new skills, competences and knowledge through group searching, discussion and reflection.

2.2 Edmodo a Social Learning Network

This teaching approach uses distance learning methods through the educational social network Edmodo. An educational social network is defined as a social network in which members of the educational community (teachers, students) are involved and through this network members exchange information, material, ideas and opinions, while they can focus on specialized educational issues and interests (Sotiroudas et al., 2013).

Edmodo is a global, secure social media network and e-learning tool for teachers and students created on September 1, 2008 and used by more than 5,000,000 teachers and students, 350,000 schools in 190 countries worldwide with an increasing rate[3]. According to the 11th annual Digital Learning Tools Survey, it ranks 41st out of a total of 100 learning tools for 2017 proving its acceptance in the international educational community Center 4 Learning & Performance Technologies (2017)[4] and is classified as an interactive web 2.0. Features of the web 2.0 applications are creativity, information dissemination, collaborative asynchronous environment, use of tools that allow the user to make comments and make changes (Vickery & Graham, 2007). The use of the web 2.0 applications enhances collaborative learning that can be defined as "working together on a specific topic in such a way as to promote individual learning through collaborative processes" (Sgouropoulou & Koutoumanos, 2001).

Edmodo, (web site https://www.edmodo.com/), enables the creation of online classrooms, the management of

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[3] https://assets.edmodo.com/images_v2/marketing/docs/edmodo_overview_sellsheet2015_teacher.pdf.
[4] http://c4lpt.co.uk/top100tools/.

students' electronic folders, the sharing of electronic materials (picture, audio, video, text), teachers and students' modern and asynchronous communication. It also corporates a link to cloud applications such as Google Drive. Students can subscribe to the Edmodo online learning community without having an email account while a separate code can be given to students' parents to communicate with the teacher through messages and monitor the information the teacher exchanges with the students. Students under the age of 13 require written permission from the parent[5].

2.3 European School Radio (ESR)

From the 2016-2017 school year the ESR is one of the topics proposed for the implementation of the School Activities Programs according to no.113/16912/D2 decision of the Ministry of Education. The ESR is a non-profit digital web radio station and is hosted on the Pan-Hellenic School Network (PSN) platform and is heard through a dedicated platform from the EDU TV video service and adheres to the rules of the ESSP[6].

It is an independent radio station with respect for diversity and human values. It enables school students to become active digital citizens by addressing the concerns of the student community while socializing and collaborating across a wide network of schools both in Greece and abroad. It is both entertaining and pedagogical. It has been used in Comenius programs since 2012 and e-Twinning programs and schools from 8 countries have been participating. The shows may be live and directly heard or prerecorded and heard on set days and hours. In this particular project short thematic shows and radio spots were created. The official languages are Greek and English. Since 2015 more than 400 schools from Greece, Cyprus and European Union countries have been participating[7].

It has a useful blog on its website that guides the user in simple steps to create, edit, organize and broadcast radio shows[8]. The kinds of broadcasts that can be transmitted on the European School Radio platform are: short radio messages, spots (up to 3 minutes), and short thematic broadcasts (up to 15 minutes), long broadcast (half hour, 1 hour or 2 hours). The shows may be live and directly heard or prerecorded and heard on set days and hours. In this particular project short thematic shows and radio spots were created. The official languages are Greek and English.

2.4 Implementation

This educational approach was implemented in the 2016-2017 school year at the 5th High School in Drama, with 18 students from different classes of general education from the second and third grade, 10 boys and 8 girls. The students worked in groups of 3–4 people and collectively as a group.

In-person meetings were held in the computer lab, 11 computers were used, and one projector, audio console, camera and software like Netsupport, wordpress, audacity, photoscape, pixlr, windows movie maker. The remote modern asynchronous collaboration-communication was done through the online class "European School Radio" created on Edmodo by the teacher.

2.5 Objectives Set by the Teacher

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• Learn what digital radio is.

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[5] https:\\www.edmodo.com/teachers.
[6] http://europeanschoolradio.eu/esr-profile-and-history.
[7] http://europeanschoolradio.eu/esr-profile-and-history.
[8] https://sites.google.com/site/esrhelp/home.

- Learn how a radio shows is created and which technical means are needed to present it on an online digital radio.
- Develop reading skills and improve their writing skills.
- Learn how to write articles, organize and conduct an interview.

Skills

- Use online media to communicate and exchange views.
- Create their own broadcasts according to their interests.

Attitudes - behaviors

- Learn to collaborate, agree, disagree and argue to defend their point of view.
- Express themselves creatively and develop their imagination and ingenuity.
- To cultivate skills and a critical spirit.
- Learn what digital citizenship means.
- Become active digital citizens through their broadcasts.

3. Methodology

The Project teaching methodology was used and the principles of constructivism (Fosnot & Perry, 1996) and empirical learning (Dewey, 1909) were applied.

After the students' application for participation at the program, the first meeting, in which the program was presented and also the way in which the group would act and be organized, followed. Responsible parents' consent statements were shared for the students' participation in the program. Parents were also informed about the online platforms we would use such as Edmodo and the whole student contract was put in place. The online classroom in Edmodo was created by the teacher and access codes for the online classroom were given to students. Students easily enrolled and learned to use the online classroom because they are familiar with the use of social networks such as Facebook. For the recordings, an improvised radio studio was created at school and the open source audacity software for recording audio was learned using a suitable workbook which was distributed to students in the lab as well as in the online classroom.

The brainstorming technique (Osborn, 1963), the design and the duration for each radio broadcast followed. Students were divided into groups according to their interests and each group chose or proposed the topic to be covered on the radio. The final choice of each broadcast on the ESR platform was made by the class plenary through the Edmodo web class. 6 short thematic broadcasts and 2 short radio messages (spots) were created. The topics of the broadcasts and the titles were: Music (Top Ten), Technology (Tech), Poetry (Poems of Drama poet), Books (Books made into films), Interview (by the school theater group).

The most important part in implementing the programs was the active participation of all students and the development of a collaborative spirit. One student (or more) wrote the text, and other students engaged in reading or creating the background music to end up in the final broadcast. The broadcast was re-broadcast to Edmodo and aired on ESR by the teacher only if it was approved by the plenary or after some improvements were made by the team.

An important experiential part of the program was educational visits to the Radio Museum in Thessaloniki and to the studios of radio stations (STAR Drama, ALFA Drama, ERT3 Thessaloniki), where students gave interviews and had live shows. In the end, a presentation video was created with all the shows and visits by a

student, and was posted on the school's website.

4. Results

This teaching approach was assessed using the method of systematic and objective observation (Kirkpatrick, 1979), based on the end result presented by each group and the class plenary as well as the way the students worked.

The results were more than satisfactory. The students were thrilled with the European radio and the creation of their own programs. It is noteworthy that students with low self-esteem were incorporated into the group to create and broadcast. Implementation of this differentiated teaching enhances the goals set by the teacher. Students learned to work both live and in distance using the new technologies of the Internet and were actively involved as digital citizens on European Radio expressing their views through the broadcasts they created.

5. Conclusions

Applying this innovative teaching approach leads us to conclude that outside the confines of the classroom within an innovative, pleasant, digital socio-cultural environment by implementing group-based teaching methods, students can be guided in their learning (Doing).

"If we teach today the same way we did yesterday, we steal from our children tomorrow" (Dewey, 1916).

6. Suggestions

This teaching approach could also be applied to other themes of the School Activities Programs such as environmental, health education, Research Project in Senior High School, Creative Activities Zone at EPA.L and in Elementary School in the context of "Information Literacy" according to the ICT curriculum in Primary Education.

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