Use of ICT and eTwinning in English Lessons at Lower Secondary Schools

Final Thesis
Brno 2018
The Final Thesis is focused on ICT and eTwinning as an innovative method of the learning the English language.

The definitions of ICT and eTwinning, their use in English lessons and description ICT in Czech schools are introduced in theoretical part. This part also provides a description of their advantages and disadvantages.

The eTwinning projects are analysed in the practical part. The target groups were three English groups at lower secondary school. The analysis was supported by the results of the questionnaire.

KEY WORDS:
eTwinning, ICT, computer, technology, project-based learning, e-learning, collaborative learning.
Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Mgr. Tereza Talavašková for her invaluable help, advice and patience.
## Contents

### Theoretical Part

1. Introduction ................................................................. 9
2. The Internet and Communication Technology ......................... 10
3. Using ICT in Czech Schools .............................................. 11
4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Using ICT .......................... 14
5. Using the Internet and ICT in English Language Lessons .......... 16
   5.1. Blended-learning ...................................................... 18
   5.2. Computer Assisted Language Learning ......................... 18
6. ICT in the Classroom ...................................................... 19
7. eTwinning ....................................................................... 20
   7.1. eTwinning as a Mixture of Teaching Approaches ................. 20
   7.1.1. E-learning ............................................................ 20
   7.1.2. Project-based Learning ......................................... 20
   7.1.3. Collaborative Learning .......................................... 21
   7.2. The Definition of eTwinning ....................................... 22
   7.3. The Structure of eTwinning ....................................... 23
   7.4. The Aims of eTwinning ............................................ 26
   7.5. Setting Up an eTwinning Project .................................. 27
   7.5.1. The Definition of an eTwinning Project ...................... 27
   7.5.2. TwinSpace and Its Tools ....................................... 28
   7.6. Specific Features of eTwinning .................................... 29
   7.6.1. Evaluation of eTwinning Project .............................. 30
   7.7. The Impact of eTwinning on Teachers ............................ 30
   7.8. The Impact of eTwinning on Students ............................ 31
   7.9. Advantages and Disadvantages of eTwinning .................... 33
   7.10. eTwinning and ICT .................................................. 33
   7.11. eTwinning in English Classroom .................................. 34

### Practical Part

8. Practical Use of ICT and eTwinning at Lower Secondary School .... 36
8.1. Participants of the eTwinning Projects ........................................ 36
  8.1.1. Teachers ................................................................................. 36
  8.1.2. Schools ................................................................................. 36
8.2. eTwinning Projects at ZŠ Nádražní 5 in Vyškov .................... 36
  8.2.1. Travel Diaries with Paddington ........................................... 37
    8.2.1.1. The Description of the Project ....................................... 37
    8.2.1.2. Educational Aims ......................................................... 38
    8.2.1.3. Assumptions ................................................................. 38
    8.2.1.4. The Preparation of the Project ..................................... 38
    8.2.1.5. Lesson Plan 1 ................................................................. 38
    8.2.1.6. Evaluation ................................................................. 39
    8.2.1.7. Lesson Plan 2 ................................................................. 39
    8.2.1.8. Evaluation ................................................................. 40
    8.2.1.9. Lesson Plan 3 ................................................................. 40
    8.2.1.10. Evaluation ................................................................. 41
    8.2.1.11. Lesson Plan 4 ................................................................. 41
    8.2.1.12. Evaluation ................................................................. 42
    8.2.1.13. Developing a Cooperation ........................................... 42
    8.2.1.14. Evaluation of the Project Travel Diaries with Paddington... 42
  8.2.2. Creating Virtual Bonds between Vyškov and La Paca ......... 43
    8.2.2.1. The Description of the Project ....................................... 43
    8.2.2.2. Educational Aims ......................................................... 44
    8.2.2.3. Assumptions ................................................................. 44
    8.2.2.4. The Preparation of the Project ..................................... 44
    8.2.2.5. Lesson Plan 1 ................................................................. 45
    8.2.2.6. Evaluation ................................................................. 45
    8.2.2.7. Lesson Plan 2 ................................................................. 45
    8.2.2.8. Evaluation ................................................................. 46
    8.2.2.9. Lesson Plan 3 ................................................................. 46
    8.2.2.10. Evaluation ............................................................... 47
    8.2.2.11. Lesson Plan 4 ................................................................. 48
    8.2.2.12. Evaluation ............................................................... 48
    8.2.2.13. Developing a Cooperation ........................................... 49
    8.2.2.14. Evaluation of the Project Creating Virtual Bonds between
9. Students’ Feedback on eTwinning Projects .............................................55
   9.1. The Questions and the Results of the Questionnaires ......................56
10. Discussion and Evaluations of the Results ...........................................67
11. Conclusion .........................................................................................69
12. References .......................................................................................70
13. List of Appendices ............................................................................76
Theoretical Part

1. Introduction

Nowadays, it is important to talk about the implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the educational environment especially in teaching a learning of foreign language. Schools must embrace the use of new technologies as a tool for teaching and learning on a wider scale. They should find new models of didactic practice involving use of problem solving techniques and collaborative practice. Students should be prepared for the life in 21st century and should be able to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life around them. And this is a task for schools to find the best techniques to develop many students’ skills in order to bring up such a well-educated human. According to me, the best ways to develop their skills are to address students the real situations in their schools and to take advantage of ICT because technology and all digital devices offer students new ways to practice their skills.

eTwinning is an ideal platform for modern education where the real-life projects and many ICT tools and devices are combined. That is the reason why for my final work I chose the use ICT and eTwinning in English Lessons at Lower Secondary Schools. I believe that eTwinning is an easy-friendly way of teaching the English language and students can enjoy it. The impact of eTwinning is on the both sides not only for students, but also for the teachers and this the one of the aims what I want to prove in this final thesis.

In the theoretical part, I introduce the definition of the Internet a Communication technology, provide a description of their advantages and disadvantages, analyse using the ICT in English lessons. I also describe eTwinning platform with its structure, its specific features and I also focus my attention on eTwinning in English classroom.

In the practical part, I analyse three eTwinning projects carried out at one Lower Secondary School in the Czech Republic. There were three target groups with students who were 11-15 years old and had been learning English for 5-7 years. The analysis is based on the results of questionnaire and my observations during the school year.

The goal of this final thesis is to demonstrate that the use of ICT and eTwinning in English lessons can improve learning foreign language in general. Using eTwinning as an innovative method of teaching is very motivating for students and I believe that this method has its place in the educational system of the Czech Republic, too.
2. The Internet and Communication Technology

Nowadays the Internet plays an important role and has a great potential in education. That is why it is essential to know what the Internet is. According to the researcher Christensson (2015), “the Internet is a global wide area network that connects computer systems across the world.” Singhal (1997), another researcher, claims that “the Internet is a confederation of thousands of computers from various sectors of society such as education, business, government and the military. It is a network of thousands of computer networks” (see Figure 1). All in all, the use of ICT cuts across all aspects of economic and social life. Technological developments in ICT are very rapid and the influence of ICT on education is a new phenomenon. The progress is inevitable and new technology will invade all spheres of human life.

It is very important to know that ICT is not about computers and the Internet, but it is also about a big amount of different tools such as mobile phones and tablets. New technologies have changed the way we communicate and the way we live and work. For this reason ICT in education is a tool that draws the school and the society closer together. In Figure 1 (Anderson, 2010) we can observe several options which allow us to understand better the society where we live:
This large amount of devices helps us to live more easily than before and these tools help us to organize the big amount of information that we receive each day. Of course, we do not use all of them every day but students do. As a result, we cannot ignore them. As Carmona and Marin (2013) claim, the role of teachers has changed since “teachers move from a push educator to a pull educator”. The teacher as a push educator fills the heads of students with content without any students’ activity in order to deepen their knowledge. The second one awakes in students the motivation to learn and help them in the “sought of meaningful information that generates knowledge” (p. 1.). This transformation from a push educator to a pull educator can change teaching into coaching. Carmona and Marin (2013) say that “good use of online learning stimulates active learning in the classroom which motivates students to continue learning activities beyond the classroom. Such online learning, in combination with sound face-to-face teaching (blended learning) is a powerful approach to learning” (p. 2). As a result, teachers and students can take advantage of these ways of communication.\textsuperscript{1}

3. Using ICT in Czech schools

In this section there are shown results of an ICT research in Czech schools that was conducted by the Czech School Inspection\textsuperscript{2} in the school year 2011/2012. For purposes of this paper we have chosen results of foreign languages that are taught at Czech elementary schools.

According to the CSI research it has been found that most schools use only basic software for the use of interactive whiteboards. This software is usually Microsoft Office (such as Word, Excel, and Power Point). Teaching of ICT in schools is mostly focused on its components as a basis for further education. Moreover, the representation of educational software as well as multimedia textbooks and other multimedia data content that support teaching by using ICT is very low. The following Table 1 presents results of the use of different kinds of software at Czech elementary schools.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Software & Usage & Frequency \\
\hline
Microsoft Office & 100% & 75% \\
\hline
Multimedia Textbooks & 90% & 50% \\
\hline
Other Multimedia Content & 80% & 30% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{1} Several studies point to this same conclusion. See Johny Lee 1.

\textsuperscript{2} In the Czech language it is Česká školní inspekce, we use this abbreviation - CSI for the following text
Table 1. Use of software at Czech elementary schools. Source: Česká školní inspekce, Výroční zpráva České školní inspekce za školní rok 2011/2012, Jan. 2013, table 45.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitored indicator</th>
<th>*ZŠ overall</th>
<th>small ZŠ</th>
<th>big ZŠ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS Office</td>
<td>96.2 %</td>
<td>93.6 %</td>
<td>98.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graphical editors</td>
<td>64.6 %</td>
<td>47.2 %</td>
<td>79.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Development Environment</td>
<td>8.5 %</td>
<td>4.5 %</td>
<td>11.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specialized software</td>
<td>30.1 %</td>
<td>22.7 %</td>
<td>36.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW for interactive whiteboards</td>
<td>90 %</td>
<td>81.8 %</td>
<td>97 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-learning</td>
<td>18.7 %</td>
<td>12.9 %</td>
<td>23.6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*ZŠ means Elementary School

Why do Czech teachers not use the Internet regularly? A lot of teachers and students use computer-based packages such as classroom resources and computer software which are used in many types of learning activities. Much of the software which is used at schools has been designed specifically for teaching purposes, but some teachers do not use them because they do not suit their aims. The use of the Internet in lessons depends on ICT skills of the teachers. However, Zounek and Šeďová (2009) define that the main competences for teachers’ profession are communication skills, psychological and educational skills, and organization skills', the ICT competences are not considered (p. 35). Moreover, they list many other barriers why teachers do not use the ICT:

- missing or inappropriate quality of technological infrastructure
- outdated hardware or susceptibility to failure of ICT
- the lack of suitable educational programmes
- a limited access to ICT (not enough rooms equipped with a quantity of computers)
- ICT is not involved in school’s strategies. (p. 26)

In addition, teachers are not motivated enough to use the Internet and they are not sufficiently educated in ICT technology. So these might be the decisive factors, why the percentage of teachers’ using the Internet in lessons is low.
Furthermore, Zounek and Šeďová (2009) claim there is another problem about using technology at schools. The authors point out the digital divide or digital gap in Czech society; they emphasize that there are big differences between schools in cities and schools in the countryside, largely in the amount of computers, interactive boards and other digital equipment (p. 27). The attitudes differ. Some schools are active on a global scale when they use ICT for international projects and then profit from them, others are not. The problem of implementing ICT is in Czech educational system. There have been some expectations that using ICT will gain in efficiency of education. In other words, teachers should provide children more skills and knowledge via technologies in a shorter period of teaching in comparison with older methods of teaching. These expectations are taken in consideration in many parts of society (for example in business) as the efficiency of work increases but it is not applied on education. Even though the government have invested a plenty of money in support of the digital equipment for schools and in qualification of teachers in using ICT, there are no visible effects on the improvement of education in the Czech Republic.

Journalist Michaela Endrštová (2018) has even found out that according to the recent research of CSI most teachers only use ICT for presentations in PowerPoint and they do not allow students to take part in using ICT. Thus, computers are being used especially as a support for more traditional education. If we search for the reasons, the answer is very easy -teachers are not well trained in ICT. Teachers still have to work in school environment where policies are outdated and curricula no longer cover skills required for today’s society.

The findings from Hlásná, Klímová and Poullová’ research (2017) indicate that teachers most often exploit ICT for activities as follows:
- practicing and revising the study material,
- accessing pictures, music
- giving tasks through ICT
- explaining of the new subject matter
- testing pupils
- letting students to study the new material with the help of ICT (p. 686).

Respondents of Hlásná, Klímová and Poullová’ research confirm through these list of activities that teachers consider ICT as a nice change in their teaching and that they use ICT on a daily basis mainly in the teaching of Czech language and mathematics. This survey (Hlásná, Klímová and Poullová, 2017) revealed that “teachers often use the interactive boards, computers, CD
Although teachers use the Internet in their work, they do not think that ICT has a significant impact on students and that ICT would have any impact on the relationship between teacher and the pupil. The authors of this survey compared their findings with Zounek and Šeďová’s (2009) results and interestingly there was a big change in using ICT. The frequency of the use ICT increased thanks to the EU projects. As a result, secondary schools are well equipped with modern ICT. This fact was confirmed by annual report of the European Schoolnet (Czech Republic Country Report on ICT in Education, 2012). Hlásná, Klímová & Poulová (2017, p. 682) claim that ICT became an inseparable part of basic education, used as an instructional tool, as learning tool and as a school subject. Their analysis is identical with Enderštová’s (2018) findings in one point that teachers should be more trained on the effective use of ICT in education.

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Using ICT

Thomas, Reinders & Warshauer (2013) claim that “a new computer cannot make a teacher better. Nor can it provide a magic formula to improve learning” (p.2). Teachers should be knowledgeable about technology, and if they choose to use it, they should do it in a pedagogical way as best as they can. This view is supported by van Lier (2003) who wrote:

….if [technology] is to be a positive force in education, [it] should not be cast as an alternative to classroom teaching, or as replacing the teacher, but as a tool that facilitates meaningful and challenging classroom work ( p. 2).

Technology tools can help transform the classroom into environment in which learners actively construct their knowledge. Edelson (2001, p.356) explains three reasons for using technology in schools:

1. Computers have become increasingly important to the practice of science.
2. Computer tools offer important benefits for learning in their ability to store and present information in dynamic and interactive formats.
3. Computers provide unprecedented opportunities for a reform.

Thus, computers play a useful part in the language class if the teacher is interested in computers and wants to reward his/her students. He/she uses activities with ICT for having a break from regular classroom learning. There will always be teachers who will probably not involve the computer in their job, but there will be occasions when computers are the most suitable tool to
get the job properly done. Stanley (2013) suggests more than three reasons why to use technology. It could be used for:

- accessing information, including information about language
- exposure to the target language
- entertainment
- creating text
- publishing learner work
- managing and organizing learning
- creating community
- communicating and interacting with other language users (p. 1)

Each teacher will have to find her/his own way, based on their goals and the program, the needs of the students, and the materials and technology available.

Smith and Baber (2005) suggest next reasons why to incorporate information technology into teaching practice. The authors state that ICT:

- can help you create exercises and materials that are easily reusable
- can be cheaper than face-to-face teaching
- allows non-native speakers to interact with native speakers
- allows students to study at their own pace, whenever they want. (p. 11)

Stanley (2013, p.1), Smith and Baber (2005, p.11) have in common the belief that ICT provides access to up-to-date material on every imaginable topic and that the communication with foreign people is easy, motivating and interesting. Moreover, teachers using ICT can contribute their work and it could be rewarding for them.

Muehleisen (1997) emphasizes that “learning to use computers provides a strong intrinsic motivation for learning English” (p. 1). Not only are most students eager to use computers in class, but they also expect that computers will be needed in their future careers as well as their language knowledge. Therefore, students have positive opinions about using technology for learning and improving language skills. According to Pasupathi’s observation (2012) “the repeated practice with ICT produced better results” in the process of learning foreign languages. Implementing ICT in school language curricula “will help students to overcome their fear and anxiety of using English” (p. 9). ICT develops rather rapidly, and hence, teachers have not tried all its opportunities yet. Moreover, these opportunities are still changing. Teachers should be skilled in ICT because following trends in education is a part of their professionalism. And a modern English language teacher should encourage their students to use technology in developing the language skills. Higgins and Katsipataki (2012) claim about using technology
that “it should be where they [a wide range of digital technologies ] improve aspects of teaching and learning and help to prepare children and young people for their lives after school” (p. 20). All in all, teachers should respect now that students are a part of the net-generation, so using ICT is necessary in teaching and learning process.

It is clear that ICT will affect the complete learning process today and in the future but the role of the teacher is significant as the teacher should be a guide for students on the Internet. The first disadvantage is a fact that there are thousands of sources that students have to face so students can be lost and confused. Therefore the teacher should be a supervisor and the coordinator of all steps in a student-centred environment. It follows that next disadvantage could be how to integrate mass of materials into language curriculum as using the Internet in language learning and teaching may be the waste of time if it does not depend on a language curriculum. Alena Dobrovolná warns according to Kolář a Vališová’s research that there are also problems connected with using ICT: “students speak or write less in comparison with previous decades of education. Students reduce their speaking or writing only for social networks. What is more, there can be some health hazard connected with computers” (p. 19). Some teachers agree with this statement; however, most teachers use ICT in a reasonable way and try to find a compromise between common methods of teaching and ICT use.

5. Using the Internet and ICT in English Language Lessons

Modern information and communication technologies (ICT) have penetrated all spheres of human activities including education. However, it is teachers who influence and establish the quality of learning that take place in a classroom. In order for the teachers to achieve a good quality of teaching, they try to implement new technologies into their classrooms, accepting the challenge of improving their teaching. Teachers should be always aware of goals and the objectives of their lessons to reach required outcomes. If teachers want to implement the ICT in a classroom, it will always depends on their positive attitude towards ICT.

Frydrychova Klimová and Semradova (2012) have summarized recent trends in the teaching of foreign languages:

1) The teaching focuses on the student. The teacher is becoming a co-learner.
2) The concept of autonomous learning is being implemented.
3) Collaborative or cooperative learning is being advocated.
4) Curricula subjects are being integrated.
5) Diversity.
6) Teaching methods are closely interconnected with the latest scientific knowledge.
7) The concept of multilingualism is being implemented.
8) The learning of foreign languages is perceived as a lifelong process.

These trends have arisen from the Common European Reference Framework for Languages, whose aim is to increase quality of communication among European citizens (p. 90). These aspects come from constructivism. It is a theory of knowledge based on the statement that learners construct knowledge from their experiences, both positive and negative. According to the theory, learners are unique individuals who consider their cultural background, or support the responsibility and motivation for learning (Frydrychova Klimová, 2012, p. 181). The basis of these trends is a student learning foreign language who tries to collaborate through a range of techniques to master his/her collaborative communication skills. Moreover, teachers are a crucial part of students’ collaborative learning environment in order to create a pleasant and friendly atmosphere. Students use English not only in one subject, but they also use it in others. The constructivism promotes that learners should be sensitive and open-minded to other nationalities and the process of learning at least 2 foreign languages should start from early childhood.

If teachers want to implement ICT in the classroom, they need the Internet mainly as a resource. According to Zounek and Šeďová (2009), via the Internet teachers can produce materials comprising “texts, various presentations, photos, or multimedia materials combining texts, pictures, sound,” and they can share these on the Internet with their students (p. 21). Teachers can save their electronic handouts and materials online which they can use everywhere. Teachers can file not just their materials, but also learners’ papers, presentations and handouts in order to help them assess their learning in retrospect and to give them feedback.

As Ababneh (2013) says, teaching a foreign language to young students is a very difficult task and therefore “teachers need to use a variety of techniques, activities, and strategies to create an interesting environment that attracts learners’ attention and motivates them to learn better. Thus teachers are invited to use what could attract the learners most and addresses their needs” (p. 1). Therefore, the Internet motivates students in diverse ways during the learning process; it acts as a motivational drive to those bored by the conventional methods.

Today’s students are fond of using computers and the new ways of communication but they need further support in learning a second language. They should practice in hearing, reading, speaking and writing language in order to develop their skills. Each language subject

---

3 This type of learning is called Content and Language Integrated Learning – CLIL
area has different educational tools that are likely suited with it. For improving the four language skills it is essential for students to use various tools which can help them learn the language easily and effectively. It is not only about the Internet; there are other devices such as mobile phones, digital cameras, tablets, mp3 players, and voice recorders. However, the use of mobile phones is expected to lead in language learning process as students experiment with audio and video records and photos and therefore they become familiar with the use of MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) unwittingly.

ICT is a key tool for students in learning process and more and more language teachers have started to use it more frequently and in many ways in education as it could have a positive effect on the achievements of language learners. One way of integrating technology into a classroom is to adopt a blended-learning approach.

5.1. Blended-learning

Blended learning combines face-to-face classroom component with an appropriate use of technology (Stanley, 2013, p. 10). In this type of learning the student is not just a consumer of information, but he/she is also a producer through the use of tools ranging from the simple wordprocessor to Web. To contribute simple discussions on emails, blogs or chat rooms students have to be trained in various technologies and then they become creators of presentations which are a part of the Virtual Learning Environment (such as Moodle). It is very suitable environment for a teacher and his/her students who can collaborate actively with other students or can evaluate themselves. There are many tools that make it easier. Teachers can see how often, when, learners access study materials, can set tests or record learners’ grades.

5.2. Computer Assisted Language Learning

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has been defined in a seminar work by Levy in 1997 as “the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning” (Torat, n.d.). CALL is the general term for the range of processes and activities that employ computers in the teaching and learning of a new language (Stevie, n.d.). The main aim of CALL is to find ways for using computers for the purpose of teaching and learning the language.

The role of a computer in CALL has three meanings:
- computer as a tutor for language drills or skill practice
- computer as a tool for writing, presenting, and researching
- computer as a medium of global communication.

The use of computers in English language classroom is useful for both teachers and learners. There are numerous software application programs such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation programs, spelling check utilities, electronic workbooks, reading and writing programs. CALL makes everything much easier. It can teach, reinforce students’ knowledge, test them and can offer learners the space for practicing English for example with native speakers (via chats, discussion forums, message boards, emails). CALL allows learners to control their own learning process and progress. Even though CALL is user-friendly and effective, it will never replace the teacher.

6. **ICT in the Classroom**

With the rapid development of technology more teachers and learners use technologies such as computer and the Internet for learning and teaching. Some researchers argue that “the use of new technologies in the classroom is essential for providing opportunities for students to learn to operate in an information age” (Bingimlas, 2009, p. 236). Students must be prepared for the life in the twenty-first century. Modern technology offers many means of improving teaching and learning in classroom. Moreover, ICT in the classroom can assist teachers in education effectively, in case when we believe that students do not learn from technology, but with technology (Jonassen, D. H. et al., 2003, p. 11). According to Jonassen et al. (2003) technologies have some useful roles in learning as follows:

- Technology as tools to support knowledge construction
- Technology as information vehicle for exploring knowledge to support learning by constructing
- Technology as context to support learning by doing
- Technology as social medium to support learning by conversing
- Technology as an intellectual partner to support learning by reflecting (p.12).

So the use of ICT in education offers many opportunities, but the user should know how to use it.

Classrooms combine various traditional teaching methods with the most modern technologies and digital teaching tools. We divide technology and its tools into two categories – Hardware tools and Software tools. The hardware tools allow teachers to move freely in the class
in order to improve classroom management. Among these tools belong: projectors, interactive boards, DVDs, digital cameras, mp3 players, flash drives, voice recorders, mobile phones, tablets and others. The software tools can be supportive in learning and teaching as well. We can list some: PowerPoint, Word Processors, eBooks, quiz-making software, music software and emails. When the teacher integrates approach in scope of hardware and software, the innovative approaches to learning and teaching processes are developed.

7. eTwinning

From the pedagogical point of view, eTwinning is considered as an educational innovation that is based on innovative teaching principles and ideas. Simultaneously, eTwinning can be seen in the light of e-learning (learning by using ICT), project-based learning and cooperative learning.

7.1. eTwinning as a Mixture of Teaching Approaches

7.1.1. E-learning

The use of computers and new technologies has become a crucial part of learning as well as teaching. E-learning is a computer based educational tool or system that enables learners to learn anywhere and at any time. It could be understood as a learning system based on formalized teaching but with the help of electronic resources. Today e-learning is mostly delivered through the Internet, but there are more powerful tools which make learning more interesting, interactive, meaningful and stimulating for students – such as Youtube, Skype, Twitter, Smart-boards, Blogs and Podcasting. The use of e-learning is growing in language teaching thanks to an easy access to materials, flexible space, time and pace of study and immediate feedback. There are more advantages for example that e-learning is a kind of cooperative learning; it is fast and dynamic and reduces the amount of expenses. In spite of the advantages of e-learning, it has some drawbacks such as some learners have little knowledge of using the Internet or that e-learning decreases social relations among learners. As Holmes and Gardner (2006) say the worst drawback of e-learning is “a perceived lack of face-to-face contact” (p. 10). All in all, e-learning offers new opportunities for educators and learners to enrich their teaching and learning experiences through virtual environments.

7.1.2. Project-based learning
Project-based learning (PBL) is one of innovative approaches to learning when students “drive their own learning through inquiry, as well as collaboratively to research and create projects that reflect their knowledge” (Bell, 2010, p.39). The basis is a project. Kratochvílová et al. (2014) explain that “a project is a complex task, connected with the reality of life” (p. 61) that means students solve real-world problems by designing their own inquiries, planning their learning, organizing their research, and “implementing a multitude of learning strategies” (Bell, 2010, p. 39). In other words, student’s choice is a key element of this project learning. The most dominant role is played by learning activities of the students and teachers are only supervisors. However, together they cooperate to achieve objectives and purposes of the projects (Kratochvílová et al., 2014, p. 61).

Based on Fried-Booth (2002) a project moves through three stages: beginning in the classroom, moving out into the world, and returning to the classroom (p. 6). At each of these stages, the teacher works with students, not directly, but as a consultant. It is the teacher who encourages students to choose the best form of the project outcome. This last step is the key motivating factor for which the children are implementing the project. The outcome of PBL is greater understanding of a topic, deeper learning and increased motivation to learn. The best way to involve students in project-based learning is a possibility to use a computer and the Internet. For all phases of project work they may use various technologies to display their learning. Via new technologies their parents or friends can receive a video, a podcast, a photo story or a comic, which is rewarding experience for them.

eTwinning projects offer a framework for project-based learning, which includes collaboration between pupils. Collaboration activities, as a part of an eTwinning project, can simply take place between the members of just one class group, who create a product they can share with the other project partners. They communicate in foreign languages and use many ICT tools. Therefore, PBL is an important part of eTwinning activities.

7.1.3. Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning (CL), an example of teamwork, is defined as “the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own learning” (Johnson & Johnson, n.d.). Students have to cooperate to complete some tasks by supporting each other. Basic features of CL are as follows:

- it gives the students a sense of responsibility to other members of the group
the success is based on the group effort
- each student respects the other members of the group
- it reduces the anxiety (Akdemir, 2017, s. 183)

Students engaged in cooperative learning experiences have been able to identify an increase in their own knowledge and self-esteem, trust of peers, problem-solving and communication skills and the technology proficiency (Orlich et al., 2010, p.270). Group members realize that each person’s efforts benefit not only him-or herself, but also all group members. If one fails, all fail. Simultaneously, the group must be accountable for achieving its goals. The promotive interaction is a very essential component of CL. Promotive interaction occurs when members share resources and help support and encourage each other’s efforts to learn. Outcomes of the CL are successful only when all members are working together. This type of learning could be realized in eTwinning when students cooperate online with partners from other countries.

7.2. The Definition of eTwinning

eTwinning is a European programme of collaboration between pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools in Europe with the use of information and communication technology (Gajek & Poszytek, 2009, p. 12). It was established in January 2005 in Brussels as the main action of the European Commission’s eLearning programme. This lifelong learning programme promotes collaboration through technology. It offers a platform (www.etwinning.net) which is safe for educators to connect and develop collaborative projects and share ideas (Gajek & Poszytek, 2009, p. 13).

Its official platform introduces E twinning as follows:

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.4

eTwinning is a vibrant community that involves almost 500 000 teachers working in 182 000 schools. More than 61 000 projects have been run, involving more than 2 000 000 pupils

---

4 https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm
across the continent over the years (Kearney & Gras-Velázquez, 2017, p. 3). Another definition states that “eTwinning is about people, teachers, pupils, head teachers, parents, support agency staff, webmasters, teacher trainers and pedagogical experts from the 32 Member States of the European Union, all united to bring teachers and pupils closer by working together to build a common identity and appreciation of what it is to be European” (Crawley, Dumitru & Gilleran, 2007, p 5).

Anne Gilleran (2017) propagates the motto of the European Union – “United in diversity” that affirms how Europeans have come together, “in the form of the Union, to work for peace and prosperity, and at the same time being enriched by the continent’s many different cultures, traditions and languages” (p. 47). Therefore, eTwinning helps students become more open minded in accepting others, they are also more ambitious, more interested in the world around them and happier having partners all over Europe. The logo of eTwinning symbolizes the main aim of this platform - the cooperation, see Figure 2.

![Logo of eTwinning](https://www.etwinning.net/cz/pub/index.htm)

**Figure 2.** Logo of eTwinning. [https://www.etwinning.net/cz/pub/index.htm](https://www.etwinning.net/cz/pub/index.htm)

### 7.3. The Structure of eTwinning

eTwinning was undertaken in the context of a Comenius project that is a part of Lifelong Learning Programme as an initiative of the European Commission. Papadakis (2016) points out that eTwinning is regarded as the community for schools in Europe. Teachers from all participating countries can register on the public area ([www.eTwinning.net](http://www.eTwinning.net)- see Figure 3) and use the eTwinning online tools to find each other, meet virtually, exchange ideas and practice examples (p. 279). This portal offers browsing visitors a wide range of information how to become involved in eTwinning; explaining the benefits it offers and provides an inspiration for collaborative project work. eTwinning Desktop changed to a new version called eTwinning Live
(see Figure 4) in Autumn 2015 with more advanced social networking and collaborative features, including possibility to set up live videoconferencing sessions. People can change the language of this area according to their nationality or the level of their knowledge of foreign languages.

Figure 3. eTwinning.net. https://www.etwinning.net/cz/pub/index.htm

Figure 4. eTwinning Live. https://live.etwinning.net/
Through eTwinning Live teachers can create their own projects in which they can set off activities on different topics and key competences by collaborating with two or more teachers and their students. If a teacher wants to be more familiar with the opinions and ideas of other teachers, he/she can also join specific collaborative space such as eTwinning Groups. There participants can meet and discuss various topics of interest with others. Nowadays, there is a novelty - an application for mobile phones with the name eTwinning Live app (see Figure 5). Via this application everybody involved in eTwinning can keep up-to-date with things happening on the eTwinning Live platform.

Figure 5. eTwinning Live app. https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/etwinning/id1293134979?mt=8

The most important platform from all eTwinning’s products is definitely TwinSpace (see Figure 6). This platform was initiated by a request from teachers for their pupils to work in safe environment. Only participants who are registered in some eTwinning projects have access to this platform. Teachers are usually the sole administrators of their TwinSpace and are responsible for uploading documents and tasks, but there is an option when pupils can be given full administrative access to TwinSpace in such a way they can become the coordinators of the whole project.

Figure 6. My TwinSpaces. https://TwinSpace.etwinning.net/
One of the unique things of eTwinning lies in the existence of very active support services at both national and European context. **National Support Service** (NSS) is the organization that represents and promotes eTwinning at national level. The role of the NSS is “monitoring projects throughout the duration of the project lifespan, which includes assisting schools and teachers in the registration process, finding a project partner, providing support in the registration and implementation of projects” (Gajek & Poszytek, 2009, p. 14) With the help of NSS, teachers can also participate in international workshops, which offer teachers the opportunity to look at the project method through the eyes of teachers from other European countries. eTwinning NSS in the Czech Republic is a part of Dům zahraniční spolupráce (DZS) that takes care of national portal [www.etwinning.cz](http://www.etwinning.cz) where people can find all information about eTwinning’s events. DZS is a legal body directly managed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. DZS is also responsible for Erasmus+. The National Agency for Erasmus+ is an integral part of DZS as well as eTwinning NSS.

At European level there is the **Central Support Service** (CSS) whose main function is to operate the European portal www.etwinning.net. What is more, it is responsible for organizing European competitions, conferences and events, both online and face-to-face. If a teacher is interested in attending a conference, he/she sends his/her application to appropriate NSS of his/her country that decides who will be chosen to attend. The official websites say about CSS that “it is operated by European Schoolnet, an international partnership of 34 European Ministries of Education developing learning for schools, teachers and pupils across Europe.”/5

### 7.4. The Aims of eTwinning

The European initiative under the name – eTwinning “aims to promote new and innovative ways for ICT use in European schools through school twinnings encouraging online collaboration among students and teachers” (Galvin et. al, 2006, p. 10). Other researchers emphasize not only collaboration and communication, but also the fact that “it aims at improving ability to use new technologies (both for teachers and for students), improving communication in foreign languages (basis competence in the EU- communication in at least two foreign languages), knowledge and intercultural dialogue” (Valea, 2011, p. 142; Papadakis, 2016,

---

5 https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/about.htm
p.280). To sum up, it was designed to offer a very flexible approach to school collaborative work via new technology and online networks and communities.

7.5. Setting Up an eTwinning Project

The implementation of eTwinning begins with the registration of a school and its teachers on the European portal www.etwinning.net. The teachers get a password, which enables them to go to a personal desktop where they can use a range of specific eTwinning tools (such as TwinFinder, Profile, Chat, Mailbox etc.) designed to find partners, and consequently communicate and collaborate with them. Registration allows users to get a TwinSpace which is a private space devoted to a particular project where partners can work together. The official website says that “The TwinSpace is a virtual classroom where eTwinning partnerships run their projects. Created as a collaborative tool specifically for eTwinning, it is designed to match eTwinners’ needs.”

The TwinSpace is the heart of teachers’ eTwinning project. It is a safe and secure online space where they and their partners work together. After the registration a teacher can start to look for a partner in eTwinning Live in section Partners Forums. There are messages posted by other teachers who are searching for partners for cooperation. It is recommended to read the profile of the teacher in advance and then contact him/her. An alternative possibility is to announce requirements on TwinFinder and wait for any response. As soon as a teacher finds a suitable partner for the project and chooses a topic, they are ready to set up a new project. One of them sends an application form to his/her NSS with the name of the project, a short description of it and who he/she wants to cooperate with. NSS contacts the partner’s NSS in the corresponding country and both institutions have to validate the project. After that, the TwinSpace is opened for future cooperation.

7.5.1. The Definition of an eTwinning Project

An eTwinning project can be carried out by two or more teachers, teams of teachers, librarians or pupils from schools across Europe and for collaboration they use ICT.

---

6 https://etwinninguk.wikispaces.com/TwinSpace
Teachers can work on any topic they wish. Projects should have a good balance of ICT use and classroom activities and should as much as possible fit into the national curricula of the schools participating in the project.

When the teacher looks for an eTwinning project partner, language is an important issue. There are also other questions that should be answered beforehand:

a) Who would he/she like to find?
b) What languages does the teacher want to use in his/her project?
c) Is the level his/her pupils have achieved in the chosen language high enough?
d) What is the age of the pupils?
e) What are the expectations of his/her project?

When teachers realize the answers to these questions, they can develop their projects. The duration of a project can vary from one week to several months depending on its quality and scopes. It may even be a permanent twinning.

A project will only be successful if the aims of the project are clear to the teacher as well as realistic, relevant and understandable to his/her pupils. If the teacher is a beginner, it is wise to start out with just a few aims. Afterwards, when the teacher has become more skilled, he/she can add more aims.

If we summarize the simple idea of connecting two teachers from two countries, it can be expressed in three words: register- connect- work. Through thousands of projects registered every year on the Desktop, projects vary in length and in the number of partners. The wealth of projects follows from their structure, complexity and aims. However, all have in common a determination to work together and do something different. As Crawley et al. (2010) say “eTwinning projects bring dynamism and creativity to classrooms across Europe- and in some cases beyond those borders” (p. 61). Work on the projects creates natural conditions for the use of computers and networks and expands learning environment.

7.5.2. TwinSpace and Its Tools

Christina Crawley et al. (2010) claim that “TwinSpace was developed in order to provide eTwinning projects with an online environment where teachers and pupils could work collaboratively, either in tandem or in real time, on their eTwinning projects. Each registered eTwinning project is thus equipped with its very own TwinSpace, which members are free to use as much or as little, and as simply or complex, as they so choose” (p. 45).
This platform offers specific tools in order to work on an online, international project. Christina Crawley et al. (2010) list the tools which are in the TwinSpace:

- a staff room for both teachers and pupils to have their own areas for collaboration
- a forum for discussions to take place over time
- a chat tool for real-time discussions
- a wiki for collaborative documentation
- a blog for reporting project activities and results
- webpages for pupils and teachers to create and customize project pages
- uploading facilities for integrating additional material such as documents, presentations and audio/video files (p. 47).

eTwinners do not have to use all of these tools; they can choose whatever they need and whatever suits the aims of their project. Firstly, teachers use the TwinSpace as a staff room where most projects are discussed among eTwinning partners. Secondly, they use this tool as a classroom that is suitable for sharing documents and for discussions. The last option how the TwinSpace can be used is as a portfolio. Users can store large files such as audio or video files. All partners have access to the project portfolio and as a result, collaboration between partners is easier.

7.6. Specific Features of eTwinning

If a teacher starts with an eTwinning project, he/she should be familiar with some specific aspects of eTwinning. Firstly, eTwinning projects do not receive any financial benefit from the European Commission as the program is based on the enthusiasm and motivation of the teachers. Secondly, the process becoming an eTwinner does not require following bureaucratic procedures, it means that any teacher can run his/her own project without any limitation in terms of topic, duration, quantity and even quality. These facts are very helpful for new participants who have no experience in implementing projects. Thirdly, eTwinning does not need any financial contribution from the participating schools. Everything is for free and depends only on teachers’ decisions. Fourthly, eTwinning is based on the ICT use, but it is not necessary to possess any advanced skills in technology. What is more, the portal also provides model ready-made projects and the inspiration for the beginners in eTwinning so if he/she hesitates how to continue, they can search for some advice on the portal.
Facts mentioned above help eTwinning to be widespread all around the world where the teacher wants to make lessons at school more attractive, to focus on his/her subject whilst presenting the topics in a way that is interesting to students.

7.6.1. Evaluation of an eTwinning Project

eTwinning projects have not been supported financially; however, it does not reflect on their quality. Besides a range of competitions for teachers and schools who are involved in eTwinning projects, there are European eTwinning prizes that are given to hundreds of eTwinners annually. Each prize is connected to an application submitted by the eTwinner (Papadakis, 2016, p. 289). Every eTwinner can ensure the quality of his/her project by applying for the Quality Label which is awarded by National Support Service. If the school partners are awarded the Quality Label by the NSS of each country, then participants get automatically the European Quality Label, which ensures maximum visibility for their work on the portal.

7.7. The Impact of eTwinning on Teachers

Schools are embedded in a quickly changing society, which reflects back on pupils’ behavior as well as subject content and methods. Therefore, teachers have to develop flexible mechanisms for adapting to new social challenges, subject content and methodological requirements. Collaterally, they have to improve their own teaching skills - usually without being offered the training they would need. On that account, teachers normally take part in eTwinning as they believe it will make them better teachers and this will ultimately enhance students’ outcomes.

Many teachers in fact discover eTwinning when they are actively seeking a change in their professional life or in their teaching methods – in short, innovation. Thus, teachers decide to get involved in eTwinning because they see it as an opportunity to develop professionally. One way to integrate with other teachers in the context of eTwinning is that they can take part in some European Professional Development Workshops which are held in different countries during the school year. Simona Velea (2011) claims about workshops that “teachers are able to experience and learn with the various tools, thanks of it teachers become acquainted with new teaching strategies” (p. 144). So if the teacher wants to implement cooperative learning
strategies, it is not enough to read about it, but he/she has to personally experience such a learning situation on the workshops.

According to Kearney and Velázquez’s survey (2015) focusing on the impact of eTwinning activities on teachers has been found that eTwinning has had a positive impact on teachers’ project-based teaching skills, foreign language skills and collaborative skills in working with teachers of other subjects. However, the top skill most impacted by eTwinning is their ability to teach cross-curricular skills (such as team work, creativity, problem-solving and decision taking). A large majority of teachers also have integrated new tools, resources and teaching methods into their practice. The last result of the survey mentioned above was that eTwinners teach their students the process of “learning to learn” more now than before (p.4). Students are more motivated and confident during the process of organizing their own learning, evaluating their own work, seeking advice or information.

Teachers who are actively involved in projects are a part of a local community that supports project activities within a school. By sharing ideas and common goals on a wider scale, eTwinners become a part of a larger community that is not bound to a physical location, but instead exists virtually. In such a community there are newcomers and also experts who discuss diverse project experiences. The interaction among them is very important. Newcomers can benefit from many resources on the portal. They can be detailed as project outlines (kits), short activities (modules), project reports and presentation (the gallery), or simple tips (guidelines) on how to move ahead.

In eTwinning communities there is a possibility to shift role from being a teacher in a classroom to a learner. Communities are also places where recycling ideas and resources take place. Within the eTwinning community, teachers have a chance to become lifelong learners.

The CCS and NSS developed a number of resources and opportunities for teachers to gain inspiration from their European counterparts, while contributing to their professional development. There are communities called eTwining Groups, or specific learning opportunities such as online Learning Events and already mentioned face-to-face workshops at national and European level.

7.8. The Impact of eTwinning on Students

Involvement in eTwinning projects has many benefits for students. Sanda Gabor (2018) says “eTwinning projects offer the possibility to connect to the world, allowing a monocultural class to become multicultural both teaching and learning reach new dimensions” (p. 1.). Thus, cultural awareness of “participants is enhanced, and intercultural competences are developed as a
side effect of contacts with partners of eTwinning projects. Language and culture are the main constituents of eTwinning projects. Through language comes culture, for while communicating students learn about each other” (Crawley, Gerhard, Gilleran, & Joyce, 2008, p. 5). Students become knowledgeable of other cultures, but also conscious of their own identities.

Gajek and Poszytek (2009) present that “language teachers find that eTwinning is an effective way to teach modern foreign languages, providing a real communication context, particularly to those pupils who, coming from a disadvantaged social background or living in remote regions, have fewer opportunities to come into contact with speakers of different languages” (p. 12). It is difficult to motivate students from disadvantaged social background to learn as they do not involve in much foreign travel. On that account, they feel that they do not need the knowledge of foreign languages.

According to the results of Kearney & Velázquez’s (2017) survey, eTwinners believe that eTwinning increases students’ motivation and improves their interpersonal relations through fostering collaborative work among students (p. 10). In other words, eTwinning is a driving force. It acts as a strong motivator mainly for pupils, students gain an opportunity to practice a foreign language by communicating with other European pupils of the same age and share interests and necessities.

Thanks to eTwinning, students are more engaged in project work, small group work focused on collaborative problem solving, and also create, together with their teachers, new materials and resources (Kearney & Velázquez, 2015, p. 35). Unknowingly, during an eTwinning project students’ autonomy and ability to take responsibility for their own learning have developed.

Students, who are mostly native computer and internet users, may find learning through technology in a non-native language with pupils from other countries as a part of their life. They need guidelines how to use digital tools for learning so they appreciate the fact that they use the technology in schools naturally. Participation in eTwinning projects gives a chance to develop computer skills in a way that is useful for education. Occasionally, students give up computer games and rather present their technical skills in authentic communication with partners.

Pupils who have worked on collaborative projects, on eTwinning platform have found an improvement in the teacher-student relationship. The reason is easy to understand. If the pupils are motivated to participate in projects, teachers are also motivated. What is more, through the work of teachers a school can proudly boast its achievements to parents and the local community.
Results of the survey has shown that pupils are willing to invest more time and energy in projects that are related to real life. When they are involved in real-time speaking and listening activities, the learners break the fear and anxiety of speaking English (Kearney & Velázquez, 2017, p.11). For students, eTwinning is not only the way to improve communicative skills, but also the way to develop their cultural competences and how to improve their ICT skills.

7.9. Advantages and Disadvantages of eTwinning

When we talk about the strengths and weaknesses of eTwinning, it is necessary to show the results of a survey carried out among teachers in 2017 (Akdemir, 2017, p. 185). The main advantages have been reported as follow:

- enabling intercultural exchange
- enhancing learning/teaching
- raising student engagement
- developing language skills

By participating in eTwinning projects students can communicate with counterparts from other countries, find specific cultural features and understand cultural diversity. Teachers in the survey agreed that eTwinning project enhances learning/teaching process much more than using video/audio or visuals in the classroom and plays a positive role in increasing student engagement who wants to present their work in the general public. eTwinning projects are expected to improve not only foreign language skills, but also interpersonal communication among students and besides that the relations between teachers and students.

To sum up, eTwinning is user-friendly, free, safe space in which teachers with students can collaborate with partners from other countries. They can start anytime during the school year, and may last between two weeks and two years.

However, it is also clear that many problems may arise when groups are working on projects. According to Miguela, problems can arise due to the lack of collaboration between teachers, low levels of motivation in students, different levels of language skills and the lack of equipment or technical support in schools (2007, p. 103). There could be difficulty in finding a suitable partner or in the lack of students/teachers’ ICT competences to use the eTwinning platform. The lack of free time during regular school hours was identified as the most important obstacle to the integration of eTwinning.
In spite of few drawbacks eTwinning is a valuable opportunity for teachers and students in terms of enhancing learning and teaching process, student engagement and developing language skills.

7.10. eTwinning and ICT

eTwinning is a new interesting way in which technology, together with the appropriate teaching methods, can situate learning and include important social and cultural aspects. It combines collaborative learning and technology, providing opportunities to connect students and classrooms with the rest of the world. eTwinning provides a large number of virtual tools to integrate ICT in teaching. The tools incorporated in eTwinning Portal include a mail service, bulletin boards, blogs, forums, membership tracking, and the facility to upload and download files. For these tools Galvin et al. (2006, p. 12) use the term asynchronous tools because there are characterized by a time lag between the delivery of instruction and its reception by learners. Additionally, certain types of ICT, such as teleconferencing technologies, chats, voice and video tools such as Yahoo, Messenger, Skype, Google Talk are examples for synchronous learning that are suitable for present online communication. Text chat messages are the important way of communication to foster learning foreign language, keeping contact with peer from other countries or carrying out web-based projects. The most effective tools are the ones that combine synchronous and asynchronous elements.

Research evidence indicates (Crawley, Gerhard, Gilleran & Joyce, 2010, p. 16) Web2.0 tools are very practical and they can relief teachers to organize their work. Web2.tool help teachers to make materials available for pupils, to distribute information or to disseminate audio or video materials. Today Web2.0 tools such as blogs, wikis and podcasts can easily increase the students’ motivation and engagement. eTwinning projects can take advantage of this fact and can use those tools which are available out of the eTwinning portal. Briefly, eTwinning is collaborative learning environment as well as an educational social network where teachers cooperate remotely synchronously or asynchronously with the use of internet technology in order to conduct a common project.

7.11. eTwinning in English Classroom
The number of registered eTwinners is now approximately 580,100 across the European education community and this is the evidence for growing number of teachers who try to integrate technology into their daily teaching practices for developing teaching a learning innovations. These teachers believe that eTwinning brings “an increasing motivation and improvement in the learning outcomes of students, in the development of electronic pedagogy, in professional and pedagogical development of teachers, a growing culture of cooperation within and among schools units” (Papadakis, 2016, p. 283). The impact of eTwinning is visible in many ways not only on students, but also on teachers and schools.

Firstly, students become more active, learning to express and publish their own thoughts. As a result, teaching becomes easier as pupils are more productive. Secondly, students and teacher improve own language skills as well as their digital skills. Thirdly, school becomes known and recognized within the profession as one offering good practice for international work (Cook, 2013, p. 5). This could be reason why parents choose such a collaborative school for their children.

Moreover, students want to use technology, and in so doing within an eTwinning context, not only do they improve their digital skills, but they also learn to express their thoughts in a clear way. If somebody wants to express his/her ideas, then he/she has to learn to do so in a coherent manner. Then there is an increase in skills such as problem solving, team work, learning to respect the opinions of others as well as an increase in awareness of the benefits of foreign language learning and cultural appreciation. The European Commission defines the key competences (see Figure 7) that are considered essential skills and attitudes for Europeans to succeed not only in today’s economy and modern society but also in their personal lives (Papadakis, 2016, p. 291).

| Communication in one’s mother tongue | The ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts. |
| Communication in foreign languages | Same as for ‘mother tongue’, but applied to foreign languages. |
| Mathematical competences and basic competences in science and technology | The ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking to solve a range of problems and the ability and willingness to use a body of knowledge and methodology to explain the natural world. |
| Digital competence | Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers and the ability to communicate and participate in collaborative networks. |
| Learning to learn | Includes the ability to organise and regulate one’s own learning, both individually and in groups; to manage one’s time effectively, to solve problems, to acquire, process, evaluate and assimilate new knowledge, and to apply new knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts. |
| Social and civic competences | Interpersonal competences comprise all forms of behaviour that must be mastered in order for an individual to be able to participate socially in an efficient and constructive way and to resolve conflict where necessary. |
| Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship | Comprises both the propensity to induce changes in oneself and the ability to welcome, support and adapt to innovation brought about by external factors. It involves taking responsibility for one’s actions (be it positive or negative), developing a strategic vision, setting objectives and meeting them, and being motivated to succeed. |
| Cultural awareness and expression | Comprises an appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, corporeal expression, literature and visual arts. |

https://www.etwinning.cz/
Practical Part

8. Practical Use of ICT and eTwinning at Lower Secondary School

8.1. Participants of the eTwinning Projects

8.1.1. Teachers

I am an English teacher at Lower Secondary School in Vyškov. I have been teaching English for 10 years. I heard about eTwinning for the first time at a training in Brno called *ICT in English education* in May 2016. As a result, I registered on eTwinning portal and since that time I have attended these training related to eTwinning:

- 14/03/2018 *Face-to-face training eTwinning-advanced*,
- 31/05 – 03/06/2018 *eTwinning Plus Contact Seminar “United in Cultural Diversity”*

These events were essential for my professional development as I started teaching with many ICT tools which teachers can implement in eTwinning projects.

There were other three teachers who participated in projects and they are introduced in following projects.
8.1.2. Schools

The research was carried out in a big lower secondary school that is situated in the center of a small town – Vyškov (ZŠ Nádražní 5, Vyškov). I work there as an English teacher. Students from 1st to 9th grade can attend this school. I have taught 3 groups of English lessons and have distributed a questionnaire among them. The first group were 7th graders who were the best from all classes. The second group were 9th graders who belonged to the worst group of students. The third group were 8th graders who were average pupils but they were very interested in English lessons. There were 3 teachers and their pupils that took part in the projects. They came from France, Spain and Poland.

8.2. eTwinning Projects at ZŠ Nádražní 5 in Vyškov

Three eTwinning projects carried out at Lower Secondary School Nádražní 5 in Vyškov from 2017 to 2018 will be introduced in this chapter. These projects differ in many ways as I have improved during 1 year in many skills with technology and it has been reflected on the later projects.

8.2.1. Travel Diaries with Paddington

In this chapter I will introduce the whole process of cooperation between the Czech school and the French one which it took only 2 months. It was my first project when I was not yet familiar enough with the tools available on TwinSpace.

8.2.1.1. The Description of the Project

The introduction of cultural aspects of two countries (Czech Republic and France) was the main goal of this project. Students were supposed to collect
information and interesting things about their own towns and then to transform everything into the form of a travel diary. Paddington, the main character of the English cartoon with the same name, should be a guide of the town and his name was a part of the project’s name (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. The screenshot of the project with French students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level:</th>
<th>Beginner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>English lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner school (country):</td>
<td>Collège d'Hastignan, Saint Medard En Jalles, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group:</td>
<td>11-12 (7th graders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students:</td>
<td>19 Czech students, 20 French students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>2 months (10/2017 – 11/2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed ICT Tools:</td>
<td>emails, photos, shared file archive, gallery, Internet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.2.1.2. Educational Aims

The pupils were motivated to practice a foreign language. They developed their abilities of using ICT and they organized their cooperation with other students. They learnt about historical and artistic itinerary in each country.

8.2.1.3. Assumptions

The pupils will acquire the positive attitude to learning the foreign language. They will foster communication and interaction among pupils. The pupils will be more self-confident in English and more independent in their work.

8.2.1.4. Preparation of the Project

During the summer 2017 I searched on the Internet for innovative teaching methods and some tasks for my students and I found the eTwinning portal. As I was already registered, I started to look for a suitable partner. I read the announcement from Marion Ducasse from Collège d'Hastignan in Saint Medard En Jalles in France. After exchanging few emails, Marion set up our project in September 2017. I registered my students and Marion did the same. In 4
lessons I planned to do the project at school. Additionally, students were requested to do some more activities on their own (for example drawings).

8.2.1.5. **Lesson Plan 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>10 minutes at the beginning of the lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td>introduction of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>an email from the French teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim:</td>
<td>to motivate students and make pairs of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions:</td>
<td>students will be familiarized with the project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activities:
- to tell pupils about the French school and the project
- to read an email
- a discussion about joining the project

After the introduction of the school from France I told my pupils about the aims of the project. There was one drawback of the project; the age of French students as they were younger than my students. Moreover, the French students just started to learn English, so they were beginners. When my students heard about it, they voted if they wanted to cooperate with them. I persuaded them that the opportunity to practice and improve English and project itself offered a lot of new activities in English lessons. They agreed and then we discussed the steps of the project. In this lesson students had to think what interesting buildings or things in Vyškov they wanted to integrate into their guides. The style and the composition of each travel guide depended on the students themselves. Due to the fact that creating a project was not an easy task, the students formed groups. In the end, there were 10 groups in total.

8.2.1.6. **Evaluation**

I saw that children were enthusiastic about a new approach in our English lesson. I relied on the factor that what is new can attract their attention and interest. I offered them the option of practicing English in a different way and in a way they had never done before.

8.2.1.7. **Lesson Plan 2**
Time: 45 minutes
Topic: doing some sightseeing in Vyškov
Material: cameras and mobile phones, pictures or figures of Paddington
Aim: taking pictures of historical sights in Vyškov with Paddington
Assumptions: students will take pictures of historical building for creating their guides

Activities:
- summarization of suggestions from students about all historical buildings in the city center
- instructions about points that should be in a travel guide
- discussions about interesting places in Vyškov

Our lesson was very unusual. We went out to take pictures of historical sights and some interesting places in Vyškov. Before the lesson, all students got homework to prepare a picture or a figure with Paddington in advance, because they would need it for the guide. They could print him or draw him themselves. Four students forgot their homework, but they had high level of digital skills so they decided to take pictures without Paddington and they added him later via Photoshop into the pictures.

8.2.1.8. Evaluation

Initially, this walk seemed as a waste of time as we did not speak in English; however, it was an essential part for the end of the project. Students at the beginning did not know how or from which perspective they could take pictures but gradually they became more imaginative and they took pictures at unusual places. As a result, these pictures were the best and the most entertaining. During taking pictures they spoke about details of the projects. They asked me how detailed the information about the sights should be. I told them that they did not have to write long texts as our peers were beginners in English. We took a picture of us at the end of our walk and we shared it with French students in TwinSpace.

8.2.1.9. Lesson Plan 3

Time: 45 minutes
Topic: writing texts in English about the sights in Vyškov

Material: pictures with sights and Paddington, details about the sights downloaded from the Internet

Aims: explaining to students what should be in the travel guide what type of information, writing supporting texts about the sights, cooperation among students about texts

Assumptions: students will continue with preparation of travel guides

Activities:
- to explain to students what information should be included in a travel guide
- collaborative activity among students – writing texts about historical sights – exchanging information

After an explanation about the content of a travel guide, the pupils started to write sentences in English for their projects. The pupils asked me for the correction of some sentences. I recommended them to write in simple sentences and only about interesting things and to use a mobile phone to search unknown words in English.

8.2.1.10. Evaluation

I think that thanks to sightseeing through Vyškov students recognized historical buildings from a detailed point of view. They realized the value of historical monuments and they had to think about the importance of some information. They developed their competence to solve the problem. Besides that, they had to translate sentences into English almost with no help as we were in a laboratory without any computers. Working on the project in a real group in order to achieve common goal helped develop their social and personal competences. Moreover, the students’ activities played the dominant role in this project, which follows the concept of Project-based learning (PBL) and proves Kratochvílová et al. (2014, p.61) definition about PBL. During the project we moved in three stages: we started our work in the classroom, then we went for a walk and afterwards we returned to the classroom through which we demonstrated Fried-Booth’s (2002, p.6) three stages of Project-based learning.

8.2.1.11. Lesson Plan 4

Time: 45 minutes
Topic: creating the travel guides
Material: an email from the French teacher, pencils, decorations, glue, colored paper
Aims: to read about the French students and their progress with the guides; to collect the travel guides from students
Assumptions: students will hear about the work of French students and they will finish their travel guides
Activities:
- to tell pupils about the work of French students
- to read an email
- to finish the travel guides (decorations and drawings)

In this lesson all pupils were in the classroom and heard about the French students’ guides. They found out that French students sent them later, so my students were satisfied that they could finish guides without any rush. Finally, I helped a few of them with some mistakes and then I collected the guides to take a picture of them (see Appendices).

8.2.1.12. Evaluation

I found out that all students participated with enthusiasm and they were eager to do this project. The students mentioned that they would like to cooperate with French students in the nearest future. I promised them to ask the French teacher.

8.2.1.13. Developing a Cooperation

I posted a message on the eTwinning forum and the French teacher accepted our suggestion to continue our cooperation. Teachers (Inma and I) made pairs and during writing messages via TwinSpace students evaluated the travel guides. They expressed opinions about them. Because the winter was approaching, all partners suggested to broaden our project about the topic of Christmas. Our students were supposed to write emails in English about themselves and then about the Christmas time. We used again TwinSpace for writing messages among students. They decided to send handmade Christmas cards and presents to each other. As it was a short-time project, we did not ask for a national quality label.
8.2.1.14. Evaluation of the Project Travel Diaries with Paddington

This project was beneficial for improving students’ communicative skills in a foreign language. The success of this project was not only in creating guides, but also in broadening the Czech-Spanish cooperation and using basic TwinSpace tools such as emails and messages. In real life students made a small leaflet or book and during this process they realized their own identity. They wrote English texts about history and about their culture and communicated in a foreign language. They compared their home town to another town in the EU and they realized the different cultures, which developed their civic competences. Simultaneously, they explored a new way of learning, its benefits, which was motivating for them in order to engage in lifelong learning.

8.2.2. Creating Virtual Bonds between Výškov and La Paca

In this chapter I will introduce one part of my second project which I set up in October 2017 with a Spanish teacher as a long-lasting project. My Spanish partner was more skilled in technology than me, thus I made use of it and I was inspired by her.

8.2.2.1. The Description of the Project

This project has been created to help students improve their communicative skills in English (both written and spoken) and to create means through which they will be able to make English-speaking friends. The two secondary schools involved were the IESO Pedanías Altas (La Paca, Lorca) in Spain and the secondary school ZŠ Nádražní 5 located in Výškov, in the Czech Republic. The main activities consisted of email exchange and multimedia presentations as it is visible on the screenshot (see Figure 9).
8.2.2.2. Educational Aims

This project has provided a learning environment for students to develop their communication skills and opportunities for intercultural learning in a real context, through the exchange of experiences, ideas and traditions among pupils. Thanks to the project, students’ interest in using ICT to communicate has considerably increased.

8.2.2.3. Assumptions

The students will improve their English skills, will interact by using a foreign language as well as they will improve their ICT abilities and strengthen their cultural identity through the discovery of a different culture.

8.2.2.4. The Preparation of the Project
I started discussions with Spanish teacher Inma Pernías Delgado from La Paca in Spain about the topics and detailed cooperation between the Czech and Spanish students during September 2017. We agreed on the topic of Halloween. After the registration of our project, we were ready to launch the project in October 2017. The main aim was to describe the celebration of Halloween in our countries. I was worried about the results of the project because the level of English of my group was average; there were some students with special educational needs and I did not know how they would deal with the real situation and communication in English.

8.2.2.5. Lesson Plan 1

Time: 15 minutes at the beginning of an English lesson
Topic: discussion about cooperation with Spanish students
Material: an email from the Spanish teacher
Aims: to read about Spanish school and teacher, to suggest to cooperate with them, to assign tasks for next lesson

Activities:
- to inform pupils about the Spanish school and the project
- to read an email
- to motive them to join the project
- to discuss tasks and preparations for the Halloween party

At the beginning of the English lesson I informed my students that I had emailed a Spanish teacher in order to find peers for them. Students gave consent to a cooperation with Spanish students. My students and I consulted the duties and what I expected from them because of Halloween party. When I explained to my students the influence of the project on their communicative skills, the project was unanimously approved. I told them about my vision about Halloween party, then they presented their own suggestions. We agreed that we would prepare a party for younger students – 4th graders and 5th graders.

8.2.2.6. Evaluation
The children were excited about a new element in English lessons. They started working on their ideas about arranging the party for younger students immediately. The pupils gained a chance to broaden their cultural horizons and they made use of this opportunity.

8.2.2.7. Lesson Plan 2

Time: 45 minutes
Topic: Halloween
Material: mobile phones
Aims: discussion about details for the party
Assumptions: students will find out what type of activities they will plan for the party

Activities:
- summarization of suggestions from students about the activities for the party
- brainstorming about Halloween in English
- discussions in English about details for the party (stations and instructions)

I could not prepare in advance for the lesson as it was built on students’ decisions. I announced them that I had registered them on TwinSpace and that Inma, the Spanish teacher, split the class into pairs for the next communication activity. After brainstorming about Halloween, we talked about the goals of the Halloween party. Someone suggested creating a video about that, not only PowerPoint presentation. It was a great idea, even though the Spanish teacher did not know about it. The different work in this lesson changed the students’ behavior as it was necessary to cooperate with each other. They had to start to work in pairs and they had to reach some conclusions about the party. It was agreed that there would be 8 stations where younger students would do some tasks. It was decided to do these activities: Apple Bobbing, Memory game, Mummy wrapping, Catch the leaves, Halloween bowling, Skeleton dance, Halloween creatures, Taste the food and Face painting. Students could use mobile phones to find unknown words in English for descriptions of their activities. That day’s task was to write notice boards for the stations and instructions in English that informed younger students about tasks at each station. For the party they had to create their own costumes, which was their homework. Some girls who volunteered wrote the text for the video.

8.2.2.8. Evaluation
I observed a change in students’ attitude to learning. They were eager to discuss Halloween as much as possible. By working in teams and implementing shared rules of communication they strengthened their communicative competences. They were highly motivated by the idea of creating a video about the party, which fostered their positive attitude towards English language lessons.

8.2.2.9. Lesson Plan 3

Time: 4 x 45 minutes
Topic: Halloween party
Material: mobile phones, digital cameras, decorations for the gym (the place of the party), costumes, masks
Aims: to organize Halloween party for younger students and during the lesson to speak in English
Assumptions: students will arrange a Halloween party for 200 students (6 groups of 4th and 5th graders) at lower secondary school and they will record the party and take pictures in order to create a video and presentations for Spanish students

Activities:
- arranging the gym before the beginning of the party in a scary style
- preparing all 9 stations for the party
- arranging scary music as background music for the party
- organizing the party

My students were very excited, they learned the texts at home and were correcting each other as they repeated and practiced them at school. They were extremely nervous. The party took 3 lessons (3 x 45 minutes) and approximately 200 students visited it. Younger students had to ask organizers only in English for the instructions what to do at each station. I observed them and made sure they obeyed the rules. Before the party started, we had had 30 minutes to make a video about Halloween party at school. One boy prepared the video for the following lesson and
then we uploaded it to TwinSpace. During the party some pupils took pictures and they sent them to me via Facebook where we have a hidden group, then I uploaded them to TwinSpace (see Appendices).

8.2.2.10. Evaluation

The party provided motivation for the pupils to learn and improve their English skills. This motivation arose from the fact that that day the organizers of the party were like teachers and young students had to obey them. This project helped pupils develop skills for real life such as teamwork, taking pictures and creating video. Making a film gave my pupils experience closely related to real life.

8.2.2.11. Lesson Plan 4

Time: 45 minutes  
Topic: feedback on Halloween party  
Material: computers  
Aim: to write about Halloween party to the Spanish students  
Assumptions: the Czech students will inform the peers in Spain about the event in the Czech school and they will read about the Halloween in Spain from the presentation that was uploaded in TwinSpace;  
Activities:  
- to write messages about the party to the Spanish students  
- to do a presentation and the best one should be uploaded on TwinSpace  
- to evaluate the party  
- to compare the differences between the Czech and Spanish Halloween events

My students were supposed to send messages via TwinSpace at Forum about our party to the Spanish students. They also expressed their opinions about Spanish Halloween contents. During the lessons my students in pairs created PowerPoint presentations with pictures from our party and students chose the best one that was uploaded to TwinSpace. We discussed differences between both Halloween events – our party and their contents. My students asked the Spanish students at forum why there were no people in Spanish pictures.
8.2.2.12. Evaluation

In this lesson the students learnt to distribute their work. Another outcome was that pupils got a chance to present their school to other country. They became more curious and interested in other European pupils’ culture.

8.2.2.13. Developing a Cooperation

As a result of this project, we continued the Czech-Spanish cooperation. In following lessons the Czech students suggested the topic of Christmas and both schools agreed. Our students were supposed to write messages on TwinSpace in English about themselves (see Appendices) and then write shortly about the celebration of Christmas in the Czech Republic. During following lessons my students made Christmas cards and bought some typical sweets of our country which we sent to Spain. Before Christmas the package from Spanish students was delivered and some students from my class were excited as they tasted sweets from another country for the first time. Spanish cards with texts were totally different from ours. One girl from our group sent her peer a postcard with Josef Lada’s paintings as she thought it would be the best picture showing winter time. Realizing these details helped our students understand their own cultural identity. To sum up, it was amazing to share it with Spanish students.

8.2.2.14. Evaluation of the project Creating virtual bonds between Vyškov and La Paca

This project offered my students opportunity to write messages in real life and they learned how to write specific words of English vocabulary. By writing messages they also practiced how to exchange personal and general information and learnt some of the expressions that are required for this type of writing. The pupils used the English language in order to perform and respond to simple social and information exchanges. Pupils practiced and enhanced their foreign language skills and used ICT for cooperation with Spanish students, e.g. messages and uploading the video. Their work was shown not only to the project participants, but also to the rest of the school, parents and the community. I have to point out that without ICT activities (e.g. word processors, making presentations, and using digital camera to take photographs or
video) and TwinSpace tools (e. g. Forums) it would not be possible to fulfill the goals of this project. Even though the project finished, some students’ communication changed into friendship. The project finished in March in 2018.

### 8.2.3. Penfriends club from Slupsk to Vyškov

In this chapter I will introduce a part of my last project for the school year 2017-2018 that I ensured for my 8th graders with average English knowledge. Even though it was my first year with them and I did not know what to expect from them, I wanted to encourage them in learning English.

#### 8.2.3.1. The Description of the Project

The project was based on communication in English in order to get to know students from Poland (see Figure 10). Students were supposed to enrich vocabulary connected with Christmas. The children gained good insight into their partner countries as they were in touch regularly. Students recognized differences and also similarities in Christmas customs of each country. By looking and comparing traditions and lifestyles, they became more familiar with our own roots and traditions.

![Figure 10. The screenshot of the eTwinning Project with Polish school from Slupsk](image-url)
8.2.3.2. Educational Aims

Students developed their technical skills and increased their motivation for learning. They were exposed to a foreign language, English, as it was the common language used. The project helped students to understand different cultures and foster interpersonal relationships.

8.2.3.3. Assumptions

Students will improve their skills in ICT and English. They will also develop their creativity, critical thinking and respect for other cultures. During the project they will learn about different countries and their ways of living.

8.2.3.4. The Preparation of the Project

The process of cooperation between the Czech school and the Polish one began in Brighton in Summer 2017 where I met the Polish teacher Patrycja Dabska. The English Learning Centre in Brighton held Teachers’ Courses for 55 teachers from all Europe. I attended a two-week course Teaching English with Technology. The cooperation with Patrycja was the best one for me, as we knew each other’s level of digital skills as we were trained together. We set up Penfriends Club from Slupsk to Vyškov in November 2017 (see Figure 11).

8.2.3.5. Lesson Plan 1
Time: 15 minutes at the beginning of the lesson  
Topic: introduction of the project and explanation about Padlet  
Material: an email from the Polish teacher  
Aims: to motivate students to cooperate and to show them how to work with a new tool  
Assumptions: students will be interested in the project and they will be informed about a new tool  

Activities:  
- to tell pupils about the Polish school  
- to read an email  
- a discussion about a new tool - Padlet  

When I introduced the Polish school via email from Polish teacher and I showed students their websites, my students approved it in one voice. The first step of the project should be an introduction of each other. In this lesson students wrote few sentences about themselves at school and as homework they were asked to upload the information about themselves to the notice board on Padlet. It was a new tool for them, so it was necessary to explain to them how to work with it. My homework was to register my students to TwinSpace. At the end of the lesson when students expressed worries about their identities saying they did not want to show photos publicly, I persuaded them that TwinSpace was a safe environment that the photos were only for the participants of the project.

8.2.3.6. Evaluation  

The children were excited about a new tool in English lessons as they uploaded their notice boards very fast. Some of them were in trouble with the process of uploading so I helped them via Facebook. They introduced themselves in a few sentences and shared their photos (see Appendices).

8.2.3.7. Lesson Plan 2  

Time: 45 minutes  
Topic: making introduction
Material: computers
Aim: checking homework – uploading students’ information on Padlet
Assumptions: students will cooperate with a teacher in order to check homework

Activities:
- checking homework
- reading Polish introductions
- discussing the preparation of a quiz

At the beginning of the lesson I started to check if everybody had their homework. There were 3 people who forgot it. With the rest of the students we read the notice boards. First students read their introductions in a group of two as our computer laboratory has only 8 computers and there were 17 students in my class. We corrected mistakes and then we read what Polish students wrote. For the next lesson I suggested that I would prepare a quiz based on the information from introductions. Students got new homework- to fill the quiz online about the Polish students.

8.2.3.8. Evaluation

I noticed that my students were amazed at a new tool. They wrote sentences about themselves and they corrected them in pairs, so the teamwork was developed. The TwinSpace offered them a possibility to communicate with peers from Poland and they were happy about that. For some of my students exposing their private information was the hardest homework they had ever got. Incorporating ICT into a classroom program increased the students’ motivation to continue with the project.

8.2.3.9. Lesson Plan 3

Time: 15 minutes at the end of the lesson
Topic: Kahoot quiz
Material: computers, mobile phones
Aim: to revise knowledge about Polish students via Kahoot
Assumptions: students will test themselves in knowledge about Polish students’ personalities
Activities:
- passing the quiz with personal information about Polish students from their private life

We were again in our computer laboratory because the Wi-Fi connection was the best there. I told my students in the previous lesson to bring mobile phones for my lesson. I uploaded the Kahoot quiz on TwinSpace and the students could try to pass it (see Appendices). It was a competition and the students via this quiz revised details about the Polish students. I gave them homework to bring Christmas decorations for Christmas cards.

8.2.3.10. Evaluation

Students via a new software could strengthen the detailed knowledge about Polish peers and they realized how entertaining it was. I promised my students to create more Kahoot activities for revising grammar.

8.2.3.11. Lesson Plan 4

Time: 45 minutes
Topic: Christmas
Material: mobile phones
Aim: to come into contact with other European culture and traditions
Assumptions: students will create Christmas cards
Activities:
- creating Christmas cards

In this lesson we created handmade Christmas cards. I wrote some Christmas wishes on the board and students could use them for their cards. At the end of the lesson I collected them and sent them to Poland. They used their mobile phones for searching necessary information on the Internet.

8.2.3.12. Evaluation
In this lesson the students were proud of their products and they were very happy about communication in English in real time.

8.2.3.13. Developing a Cooperation

In next lessons the Czech students suggested that the topic of Christmas was very suitable for them and they agreed on a new topic – food. During following days, I emailed Patrycja and she proposed to create a Cook-book. It was a big challenge for my students. In order to find out how much the the Polish students know about Czech cuisine, I created a questionnaire about Czech basic products and food in Google forms (see Appendices). I waited for the Polish answers and I must say that the results were interesting and we discussed them thoroughly. Only two of 11 Polish students were familiar with Czech food; they knew Studentská pečet’ (chocolate) and surprisingly fried cheese with chips. After the questionnaire we continued to create our Cook-book. Students were supposed to cook their meals and take pictures during the cooking. We sent the Cook-book to Poland at the end of March 2018.

8.2.3.14. Evaluation of the Project Penfriends Club from Slupsk to Vyškov

There were many positive impacts for students thanks to this project. Students became familiar with writing emails, using the TwinSpace platform, writing comments on Padlet and according to students, the activities were more interesting than regular classes. Being in touch with a class from another country was a new and exciting experience for them. Working on project involved a lot of language practice because all activities were carried out in English. The project enhanced students’ motivation and promoted openness to other cultures. Generally, students’ tasks involved a wide use of new technology and thanks to it students improved their knowledge in using ICT tools.

9. Students’ Feedback on eTwinning Projects

During summer 2018 I sent my students online questionnaire in Google Forms, which consisted of 18 questions, so that I would know their attitudes, comments and opinions about eTwinning projects. Simultaneously, the questions were given in order to support theoretical ideas about ICT and eTwinning in English classroom. The questionnaire was written in the Czech language in order to express students’ ideas in free-flowing manner (see Appendices). The
questionnaire was built on open format questions with the aim to give students space for their reflections. I am going to introduce the questions and students’ answers translated into the English language (see Appendices).

9.1. The Questions and the Results of the Questionnaires

The first and the second questions were personal in order to have better overview of students’ answers. I received 48 answers from 51 participants of the projects.

3. Had you heard about the eTwinning before the teacher introduced it?

I wanted to know if the students had had an opportunity to meet eTwinning platform before I introduced it to them. Only one student answered YES and forty-seven students answered NO. This result demonstrated that eTwinning project was a new method of learning English for the majority of students.

4. Do you like the eTwinning and TwinSpace? Would you change anything? If so, what would you change?
The intention of these questions was to learn about students’ attitude to eTwinning platform and to its tools. Forty-five students were satisfied with the eTwinning platform and its tools and only three tagged their experience as negative. These three students had some complications with logging into TwinSpace, but they would not change anything.

5. Have you had to learn any new IT skills to do eTwinning tasks?

The question number five was significant for gaining knowledge about the level of students’ skills in technology. Nine students out of forty-eight said YES and thirty-nine answered NO. The results of this question are unsurprising because I expected that the majority of students would have better digital skills in comparison with my own digital skills.

6. What are the positives of eTwinning? Name at least three?
With the question number six I wanted to find out words in connection with positive aspects of eTwinning from students’ point of view. The students wrote answers in sentences and I summarized them into single words or into phrases and I created from them a word-map (www.wordart.com). The most frequent words are larger in this word-map than words with low frequency.

The results reflect classroom activities because students’ work with eTwinning during the school year was mostly done in the written form. The largest words are as follows: Internet, teamwork, writing emails and new friends; these are expressions for online collaborative work.

7. Describe what was most enjoyable. What activity did you like the most?
This question was focused on activities that students liked the most. It is visible that communication via TwinSpace (writing messages) won the first prize. This activity would be not possible without the Internet connection. Therefore, ICT technologies play a decisive role. Christmas Cards and writing comments were on the second position. It means that students liked real-life activities that are characteristic for project-based learning.

8. Have you connected with your foreign pen pal/student/partner on some other social network?
8.1. Why yes?
8.2. Why not?
8.3. How long have you been in touch? Where do you communicate?
With the question number eight I wanted to find out if the students had made use of eTwinning in order to communicate with the peers from a foreign country more often than we did together at school. Thirty-six persons answered NO and only twelve students answered YES. If students started to communicate on other social network it was their own decision.

There were additional questions about the reasons. Those thirty-six persons answered that it was enough for them to communicate with penfriends at school and the lack of time was the most frequent excuse. Those twelve students were excited to write with their new friends as one student wrote: “I wanted to get to know my penfriend myself, not through the school.” One answered that the penfriend contacted her via Instagram. Other responses were similar to those mentioned here. Students wanted to be in touch on regular basis. Students mentioned social networks such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

The last additional questions to question eight was about frequency of communication between peers on other social networks. One answered once a day, eight answered once a week, three students said once in two weeks.

The result twelve positive responses out of forty eight is satisfying as my expected number of positive answers was lower in comparison with the real answers. This number of twelve students is not high, but for me as an English teacher it is encouraging that the eTwinning is worth doing.
9. Have you improved any of your skills in English thanks to eTwinning? (writing, speaking, listening, etc.)

The ninth question dealt with the students’ personal awareness of the advantage of eTwinning. There were thirty positive responses YES and twelve responses A LITTLE BIT and six negative answers. The positive ones wrote about improving their skills in writing and communication in global. Two girls wrote that they started to think in English and this is very praiseworthy. Students who participated only in the two-month-long project with French students gained a negative approach. Maybe the reason lies in the length of the project that could not influence their English knowledge that much.

The majority of students thought that eTwinning had helped them to improve their English and this is the most important result for the teacher.

10. Can you say that eTwinning has enriched you in any way? Write something more about it.
The question number ten was important for knowing the students’ attitude to eTwinning in general. Thirty-six persons agreed that it was positive for them and nine persons claimed a negative attitude. Three persons were not able to assess it.

Making new friends, doing projects, getting a new opportunity to improve English were most frequent replies. One of the replies was an opinion on a teacher that they were satisfied with me as an English teacher and my work with them. Among negative sentences were no explanations so I cannot comment on them.

11. Have you encountered any problems during eTwinning project? Write something more about it.
The intention of these questions was to find some negative aspects from the students’ point of view in order to avoid them in future projects. The results are satisfying because there were no problems. Two girls wrote about their negative experience with logging in via a mobile phone. It can normally happen that some devices do not work properly from time to time.

12. *What ICT tools did you use for work on eTwinning projects? (apps, websites)*

The twelfth question demonstrated which ICT tools students used during eTwinning projects. I gave them clues in brackets. The answers to this question varied considerably. The majority of them used Google (16). Other students liked PowerPoint (7) and Kahoot (6). The same amount of students (3) highlighted Viki, Quizlet, Word, Lingea and Translator. Five students mentioned Padlet. Answers Lingea, Google and Translator give evidence that students need to find unknown words during the communication with foreign students. The results of this question show that students remember a large amount of tools that could be helpful for eTwinning projects and that ICT is essential for the aims of eTwinning projects.

13. *Do you like eTwinning as such? Would you make it a part of education for everyone? If so, why? If not, why not?*
In the thirteenth questions I wanted to know the students’ opinion if the eTwinning should be a part of school education for everyone. Forty-four students answered YES and two students replied NO. Other two students could not assess the question. The negative respondents were not satisfied with the level of English; they thought that eTwinning was difficult and so it was not for everyone. When I translated some positive replies to English, there were these phrases:

“Definitely yes, students can gain new skills and improve their English.”

“This is the best way to practice English”

“Yes, definitely, it is a new experience”

“Yes, of course, it is better than filling gaps in the students’ book.”

“Yet, it is not boring.”

“Yes, it is more entertaining than traditional methods.”
14. Do you think that eTwinning improves the quality of lessons? Explain your answer.

The question number fourteen was significant for knowing the students’ opinion about the influence of eTwinning on the quality of English lessons. Surprisingly, nobody replied a radical NO. Six students were not sure about the impact and two of them could not assess the questions.

If I take into account their explanations from the majority of students, they claimed for example:

“ It is better to cooperate in teams and speak in English during that.”

“ We can use this experience abroad as we can see that the English knowledge is necessary. “

“ It is better than to stare at the books.”

“ It is more entertaining for us.”

“ We work on real tasks.”

15. Have you done eTwinning also at home or only at school? Explain your answer.
The fifteenth question was focused on finding if the students were able to force themselves to work at home as well as at school. Sometimes it was necessary to do some tasks at home because we struggled with the lack of time during the lessons. The results are not astonishing because I know the students’ attitude to school homework at their age. There were twenty-seven responses AT SCHOOL and twenty-one AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME. The ratio could be worse, therefore this result is acceptable.

16. Were your parents aware that we were working with students from other countries? What was their opinion?
The purpose of question number sixteen was to find out if the parents were interested in their children’s school work of their children. The result seems to be very positive and it is clear that we will continue with the projects.

The following are some responses translated from the Czech language:

“Parents were glad that we got interesting things from another country.”

“They were very happy about that.”

“They helped me to buy a present for my penfriend.”

17. Do you agree that eTwinning helps our school to develop in language skills and education? Explain, if you want.

With this question I wanted to find out students’ opinions about the impact of eTwinning on our school. The majority of responses were positive and the students expressed that it was beneficial for them to communicate with someone who was at the same level of English knowledge and of the same age.
18. Do you agree that eTwinning helps to improve the teacher-student relationship in English lessons? Explain, if you want.

Last question was important for me as the teacher because I wanted to know if the relationship between teacher and students could be influenced by eTwinning activities. Surprisingly, large majority said that there was an improvement and only four students disagreed. Unfortunately, they did not explain their answers in detail. The results were the best acknowledgement I have ever got.

10. Discussion and Evaluation of the Results

The main reason why I have chosen ICT and eTwinning as topics were my desire to know more about this activity. eTwinning was at the beginning of the school year 2017/2018 a new method of teaching and learning the English language for me and my students.

The target groups consisted of 51 students. Although these were three large language groups, the evaluation of the results (only 48 respondents) was not difficult thanks to ICT technology. Students were enthusiastic about an innovative approach of teaching, they confirmed that a user of eTwinning does not have to be digital skilled and that eTwinning was a very easy tool for cooperation.

According to the results of the questionnaires, there was a twist in students’ mind. The majority of students expressed satisfaction with the possibility to learn about different cultures and to make new friends. They appreciated working in teams, developing new skills and
improving their English as well. Real life has come into our classroom through eTwinning projects. The students were members of the TwinSpace team and they enjoyed writing in the forum to their friends. They found working on the project enjoyable and valuable experience. I appreciated that some of them worked from home voluntarily so they became more self-confident. According to them, eTwinning is the way to improve the quality of English lessons and what is more, they would like to integrate it into the curriculum. Last results of the questionnaire were related to the impact of eTwinning on the wider community as some of the students’ parents supported the idea of eTwinning in our English lessons.

I was pleased to see the students’ enthusiasm when we communicated with partners. They tried to communicate independently, sometimes they opened online dictionaries or they asked me for help. I was always curious about their messages which they had written but I did not check them. eTwinning was not only about communication between foreign partners, but also about communication between students and me as a teacher. Our communication has improved, too. The answers are evidence of this statement.

I consider eTwinning a very useful tool for many reasons. Students can be motivated to work in teams as well as independently. Via this tool they can acquire the skills they will eventually need in a real-life context. Being in touch with the partner in another country would be new and exciting experience.

In my opinion, as a teacher of foreign languages, the use of ICT is a very rewarding way of learning and communicating. eTwinning offers an opportunity for students to develop these skills and we-teachers should make use of it.
11. Conclusion

My final thesis is focused on ICT and eTwinning in English lessons. The usage of ICT in eTwinning is an essential for creating safety and innovative learning environment for all students and teachers from whole Europe.

According to the questionnaire results, based on the students’ responses, the majority of the students enjoyed the participating in projects. They would change nothing on the eTwinning platform and they were aware of the process in learning English language which eTwinning projects have provided them.

The most important benefits for the students can be defined as developing their communicative and collaborative skills through ICT and eTwinning as well. The student became more motivated in learning English and at the same time more confident during the process of organizing their own learning and evaluating their own work.

I consider an improvement in the teacher-student relationship the main benefit for the teacher. Getting students to fulfill collaborative tasks that prepared them for life, encouraging student autonomy in learning, frequent use of ICT in teaching are changes that I found after participating in eTwinning projects.

To sum up, eTwinning is a valuable opportunity for teachers and students in terms of enhancing learning and teaching process, student engagement and developing language skills.

I would recommend the eTwinning project to all teachers who are not afraid of new innovations in teaching in order to communicate in foreign language and use many ICT tools.

12. References


13. List of Appendices
Appendix 1. eTwinning Certificate – cooperation with France
Appendix 2. eTwinning Certificate – cooperation with Spain
Appendix 3. eTwinning Certificate – cooperation with Poland
Appendix 4. The Czech Travel Guides with Paddington
Appendix 5. Pictures from our Halloween Party and from Spanish Contents
Appendix 6. Print Screen of the Communication among Czech and Spanish students
Appendix 7. Print Screen of Communication on Padlet
Appendix 8. Print Screen of Kahoot Quiz
Appendix 9. Print Screen of the Online Questionnaire about Food
Appendix 10. The Questionnaire in Czech language
Appendix 11. The Questionnaire in English language

Appendix 1
marion ducasse, Collège d’hastignan, Francie
Darina Koblihová, ZŠ Vyškov, Nádražní 5, Česká republika

získali (získal/a) certifikát za svůj projekt:

Travel diaries with Paddington

02.10.2017

Marie-Christine Clément-Bonhomme
Národní podpůrné středisko Francie

Marc Durando
Centrální podpůrné středisko

Pavla Šabatková
Národní podpůrné středisko Česká republika
Creating virtual bonds between Vyskov (Czech Republic) and La Paca (Lorca, Spain)

09.10.2017
eTwinning Certificate – cooperation with Poland

Appendix 4

Patrycja Dabska, Szkoła Podstawowa z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi nr 5 im. Gryfitów w Słupsku, Polsko
Darina Koblihová, ZŠ Vyškov, Nádražní 5, Česká republika

získali (získal/a) certifikát za svůj projekt:

Penfriends Club from Slusk to Vyškov

20.10.2017

Pavla Šabatková
Národní podpůrné středisko
Česká republika

Marc Durando
Centrální podpůrné středisko

Ph.D. Paweł Poszytek
Národní podpůrné středisko
Polsko
The Czech Travel Guides with Paddington

A picture with Paddington taken during our walk

Travel Guides with Paddington from Czech Students
Appendix 5

PADDINGTON'S TRAVEL GUIDE

THIS IS OUR CASTLE GARDEN. WE HAVE A FOUNTAIN AND ALOT OF TREES.

THIS IS OUR ZOO. THERE WE HAVE GRANDMA'S YARD. THERE ARE LOTS OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS.
Pictures from our Halloween Party and from Spanish Contents

9th graders prepare the competition for the 4th and 5th graders.

8. Halloween creatures

4. Mummy wrapping
OTHER PUMPKINS

Appendix 6
Print Screen of the Communication among Czech and Spanish Students

---

**Veronika**

**FROM:** Veronika  
**SUBJECT:** RE: Hello!  
**TWINSPACE:**  
**DATE:** 14.11.2017, 14:13

To: Maria Isabel Segovia Pérez

Hi Maria Isabel!!! I'm fine. And you honey? I am 14 years old and I live in Czech Republic, Vyškov. My hobbies are: my friends and my dog. I like animals too!!! I have brown and green eyes, curly hair and I have glasses. I like books and films. And you? I have younger brother. His name is Tomáš. Do you have any sibling? Ok, that's all. Thank you for your email. Bye!!!<3

----- Original message ------

Hi Veronika!!! My name is Maria Isabel. How are you? I'm fine. So, I'm going to talk about me. I am 13 years old and I live in Zarcilla de Ramos, Murcia. My hobbies are: painting or drawing and playing with my pets. I love the animals! And you? Do you like them? I will to describe myself. I am tall with big green eyes and long curly brown hair. I am funny and a little nice.

I'd love to meet you. I expect your answer!!!

Bye*

---

**Adéla**

**FROM:** Adéla  
**SUBJECT:** e mail for Ana  
**TWINSPACE:**  
**DATE:** 23.11.2017, 19:59

To: Ana Alarcos

Hi Ana, My name is Adéla and I'm 15 years old. I have one sister Michaela and she is sooo clever, but she isn't ugly. I do firesport. Yes, it's weird. I like it, because I found second family there. I think I'm weird too. I have green eyes and blond hair. My favourite pet is rabbit and... I have one at home. She is Smudiinka. I live in Vyškov. Vyškov is little town near to Brno. I look forward to your reply.

---
Appendix 7

Print Screen of Communication on Padlet
Appendix 8

Print Screen of Kahoot Quiz
Print Screen of the Online Questionnaire about Food

Appendix
Dotazník o eTwinningu a ICT na druhém stupni základní školy

1. Jméno, věk
2. Název projektu, kterého ses zúčastnil/la.
3. Znal/la jsi eTwinning dříve než ti ho učitelka předvedla? ANO/NE
5. Bylo nutné se doučit něco z počítačových dovedností, abys mohl/la plnit úkoly na eTwinning?
7. Popiš přesně, co jsi v rámci eTwinningu dělal/la nejraději i nejraději? Kterou činnost jsi dělal/la nejraději?
8. Navázal/la jsi kontakt se svým protějškem-studentem z jiné země i na jiné sociální síti než je TwinSpace?
   a. Proč ano?
   b. Proč ne?
   Podotázka: Jak často jsi byl/la se studentem z jiné země v kontaktu? Kde jste se potkalí?
9. Zlepšil/la ses díky eTwinningu v nějaké své dovednosti v rámci anglického jazyka (např. v psaní, mluvení, poslechu aj.)
12. Jaké ICT nástroje jsi používal/la při práci na eTwinningovém projektu? (aplikace, názvy webových stránek)
13. Líbí se ti eTwinning jako takový a zahrnuje/la bys ho do výuky povinně všem? Proč ano, proč ne?
16. Věděli tví rodiče, že spolupracujeme se studenty z jiných zemí? Jaký byl jejich názor?
17. Souhlasíš s názorem, že díky eTwinningu se může naše škola rozvíjet v jazycích? Vysvětlí, pokud chceš.
The Questionnaire about eTwinning and ICT at Lower Secondary School

1. Name, age.

2. Name of the project, in which you have participated.

3. Had you heard about the project before the teacher introduced it? Yes/No

4. Do you like the eTwinning project and TwinSpace? Would you change anything? If so, what would you change?

5. Have you had to learn any new IT skills to do eTwinning tasks?

6. What are the positives of eTwinning? Name at least three.

7. Describe what was most enjoyable. What activity did you like the most?

8. Have you connected with your foreign pen pal/student/partner on some other social network?
   a. Why yes?
   b. Why not?
      How long have you been in touch? Where do you meet/communicate?

9. Have you improved any of your skills in English thanks to eTwinning project? (writing, speaking, listening, etc.)

10. Can you say that eTwinning has enriched you in any way? Write something more about it.

11. Have you encountered any problems during the eTwinning project? Write something more about it.

12. What ICT tools did you use for work on eTwinning projects? (apps, websites)

13. Do you like eTwinning as such? Would you make it a part of education for everyone? If so, why yes? If not, why not?

14. Do you think that eTwinning improves the quality of lessons? Explain your answer.

15. Have you done eTwinning also at home or only at school? Explain your answer.

16. Were your parents aware that we were working with students from other countries? What was their opinion?

17. Do you agree that eTwinning helps our school to develop in language skills and education? Explain, if you want.

18. Do you agree that eTwinning helps to improve the teacher-student relationship in English lessons? Explain, if you want.