

Pilot project: MY SCHOOL (UK, Italy and others)

ITALY – University of Palermo, Primary teacher education

by Loredana Messineo, eTwinning ambassador/Tutor teacher trainees' coordinator

The project started January 2014 and was based on the project kit “My school”. It lasted roughly 2 months (1 month planning and 1 month Implementation).

First Phase

The first planning phase was only between tutors and ambassadors (Loredana Messineo for Italy, Palermo - Jane Powell for UK, also project founder). Since the trainees placement in school had different timings in Italy (all year round) and UK (end of January for two months), activities had to be re-scheduled and adapted to the different situation. In Italy trainees registered in twinning from the beginning under the supervision of their tutor and “analysed” some existing projects and their TwinSpaces and learned how to use it. UK trainees registered only later and were less active in the platform, their activities being mediated by their tutor. Direct contacts among students were therefore not very frequent.

Project Implementation

All trainees, with the help of their supervisors, agreed to gather school and pupils presentations during their placement. It was not possible to foster a collaborative work among pupils from different schools because of internet access problems for trainees in the UK. All pupils have nevertheless taken part actively to the project activities and partners' presentations have been shown and commented in class. All materials were uploaded in the TwinSpace.

Outcomes

Italy: pupils' presentation through voki; school presentation with an e-book (created with an Italian software “Il mio libro”).

UK: PowerPoint presentation on pupils, school, and the surrounding area.

Critical points and possible improvements

- Activities planning and different timetables. It would be important to have a clear picture of trainees' calendar in each university/country from the very beginning.
- Project registration: it is confusing to create a project with many teachers and few trainees, since there is no eTwinning profile for “trainee” and it's difficult to understand roles. It would be desirable that two trainees' supervisors could plan together a project and register it before inviting two students each. It would be better to limit the number of partner to 2 founders (supervisors/ambassadors) and 4 trainees/students.
- Insufficient collaboration and direct interaction between trainees and between pupils. Without collaboration, the project can be very poor. It would be desirable to foresee some online meeting opportunity and some collaborative work (videoconference, podcasting or video messages, collaborative works with wikis or google drive or even a simple padlet).
- Evaluation and follow up: it would be important to foresee a questionnaire for trainees to collect their opinion and considerations on eTwinning and on the pilot experience, monitor the acquired skills, spot difficulties and highlights, collect ideas and proposals