

EVALUATION OF THE EU PROJECT "CHOIR"

The purpose of the project "**Common Heritage of Individual Regions**"- CHOIR is to focus on the similarities and differences in the cultures of the participating countries in order to find the common root in the European Region.

Also it is the overall purpose with this project to have a focus on possibilities in how to develop a way to analyze the different cultures, enhance the cultural awareness and abilities to express.

The evaluation of **CHOIR** is to follow up and to be aware of changes in the organisation, technical systems, use of learning styles and teaching and learning methods in the different participation countries. Different data, numbers, statements, descriptions and reflections are to be a part of the evaluation. The five countries will, during the two periods of the CHOIR-project, receive a number of evaluation papers that follow the arranged activities. The first part of the evaluation is to be put on the project website before the first school year ends.

Five different countries take part in this EU-project: **Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, and Spain**. In every country the participant is a school with a couple of teachers. A co-ordinator and an evaluator also represent Denmark. Ireland is responsible for the website.

The five countries have met once before the real project started – a meeting, where the participants presented themselves and the group of pupils – this was a kind of acceptance meeting. At this meeting Lithuania was also represented but did not get accepted by the Lithuanian national agency to be a part of the project.

The *First Meeting* after the acceptance from the EU was held in **Ennis, Ireland** in **October 2008**. Here all details of the project were discussed. The timeframe, communication and evaluation were debated together with the actual work and contents of the Cultural Boxes

The *Second Meeting* took place in **Oviedo, Spain** in **April 2009**. At this second meeting the participants looked at the first part of the project. The practical side and the amount of work within the project was discussed as was the *Cultural Box(es)* – and how to use these as teaching material.

At the second meeting it was also decided how to approach the next and last part of the two year project and how the five countries wanted the project to end.

The cultural box

One of the goals was to let the pupils work and being active in other word let the pupils be creative making the boxes. The boxes were then to be send to the other partners in the project. It will be of great interest – a final goal - if the participants are able to make a common cultural European box before the project ends.

Therefore it was decided to work not only with the knowledge of your own country but also with the knowledge of the different countries in this project. To make this work manageable, five subjects were chosen:

- Music
- Dance
- Literature
- Every day life
- Festival

In the cultural box, that was to be posted around to each country, presenting your country regarding the five chosen subjects, it was up to each country how they would pack their box. Each country could choose film, DVD, things to touch or smell or things to listen to. There were no limits regarding choices of contents. The only limitation that was agreed on, was that the box should have the size of a shoe box.

The boxes should all represent the five different languages but be presented in the common language English.

The time frame

In the school year 2008 – 2009 will all five schools from the different countries have worked with the project and produced a cultural box that has to be opened in another country.

After opening the boxes each country prepare 3 lessons to be used in the other countries.

The same project will for a second time be carried out in the school year 2009 – 2010. The Choir-project ends in Denmark with a presentation of all product produced by pupils in the five countries twice.

Communication

The project has chosen English as a common language. This means, that the boxes also should be – if you send texts in the box – in English. The reason for this choice is to prevent any guessing while reading and experiencing the contents of the boxes. Therefore it is necessarily, that all the participating teachers to some degree write and speak English. In every box the different languages will also be

presented, but to have a common language is a practical solution to the communication issue.

Between the meetings the Danish coordinator communicates and writes mails with information about the next meeting, the next agenda, following up on decisions and comments on questions and problems. This coordinator holds the position as a chair holder at every meeting.

The Austrian teacher has a function as the reporter and writes every decision down in a report from every meeting – also in English. This report is mailed to every participant including the two pedagogic centres in Denmark and Ireland.

The website is to be used as a common information site. The different countries present themselves and their local projects and products. Agendas and reports as well as the evaluations papers and evaluations results are to be found on the website.

Finally is the website the place where the project can be presented for everybody else to read.

Meeting – visits

Visiting every country is a part of the cultural meetings between the teachers in the project. They are given hereby the opportunity to learn about the other countries. The visit will show an every day life with the specific culture for the country that is the host.

In Ireland the partner's countries visited to the participating school, saw a local play on the local theatre and took a trip around the countryside.

In Oviedo the partner countries visited local cultural places where the different cultural boxes were exhibited as well as a music school and pottery school as well as a trip around the countryside.

The visits contain meetings at a local school or the pedagogic Centres like The Clare Education Centre in Ennis. Here the different partner's discuss the plan, process and outcome of the common work. The meetings are planned by the coordinator and there is made a report from every meeting to be put on the website.

All five countries are to host the teachers before the project ends. The last visit is in Denmark will show all of the boxes and present examples of the whole project.

To be able to make a common European Cultural Box will be the last challenge. The experience from the two year work with the project will show if this common box is possible to make.

Evaluation

The evaluation starts at the first real meeting in Ireland in 2008 and ends in Denmark in 2010, with the second presentation of the boxes and will include film, music and photos.

In the two years the project lasts it was decided on the first meeting in Ennis that the participating teachers will receive a number of evaluation papers. These are designed very differently using various papers to collect information. In some papers the teachers are asked to answer by giving a general opinion, some papers deals with numbers of for example lessons. The teachers will also be asked to give motivations for actions and items and finally the teachers will be asked to write the pupils success stories and quote the pupils statements. References to this evaluation can be found in the Danish book: "Interview" by Steiner Kvale 2002.

As an example of question from the evaluation is the reflection over signs. The teachers are asked to reflect over which sign in for example the pupils behaviour that show an interest. In other words are the teachers asked to look at the pupils and see what are significant in the process that show that the pupils are eager to work in the project, that the pupils learn from the project and that the pupils develop new knowledge that makes them aware of the differences and similarities between the five countries.

Another example of question is the storytelling. The teachers are asked to write stories that show how the pupils work in the process. It is not a goal just to reach for knowledge but instead to concentrate on the process how to be aware of what to learn. The pupils present their result in a creative product that demands a creative process. The stories from this process are of interest.

Choices and motivations from the teachers are also of interest. They can show us the way teachers make choices before they meet the pupils. The considerations are in the choice of selection of items before they are presented to the pupils but also how the choices are used in a prepared lesson and therefore of interest regarding the question of different didactic used in the five countries.

The evaluator has to be critical. If there is something to be notified or changed because it does not agree with the accepted agreement within the Comenius office, the evaluator has to make a comment.

The evaluation will look at the process, the different approaches towards the work with the pupils, the planning, the work and the didactic. It is of interest how the reactions from the pupils are. Therefore the teachers are asked to look at how the pupils react towards the project, the activities and the cultural boxes are as well as the knowledge about the different /countries/participants in the project. The evaluator does not participate in any active process in any of the five countries. It is essential that the evaluator learn as much about the five countries and the

process in the CHOIR project as possible. This knowledge is to be used making the relevant questions in the evaluation paper but also to understand the answers from the participants.

The evaluator is also to be aware of other issues for example if a participant acts differently regarding common agreements. Or keeping the time frame to solve what has been agreed on. How they use the common English language and how they are reporting back to the evaluator. That will be notified in the evaluation.

When the first evaluation have finished in spring 2009 all the answers will be presented on the website collecting knowledge from the first part of the whole project. In spring 2010 the second part will be presented as well on the website. After the meeting and presentation in Denmark there will be a final evaluation that gathers all answers and draw a common picture and where it is possible assemble similarities and differences

The Evaluation is divided in four steps

Step 1 – November/December 2008

The first paper the participants received was about the status before the project. It was necessary to have a clear picture of the institutions before the real project began. To reduce the amount of possible examples and descriptions the evaluator chose to ask the participants to give short answers and only three per question

The different items were:

- The institution before the project started
- This is what the participants believes is of great value within the project
- This is what we hope the pupils will learn from and experience working with this project
- This is what we intend to do - the preparation
- What are the sign's – what can we see in the way the pupils receive the project, that this
is a relevant and interesting project.
- Documentation for the evaluation

Added to the status paper was also a guide book, the teachers could use during the work with the project. This was a possibility not a must, but to be looked at as a tool to keep you on track.

The evaluator also gave the teachers a tool called the “**IAN-model**” - a three part evaluation tool with the combination of **Intention**, **Ability** and **Necessity**. This is an evaluation tool to be used to evaluate cultural products - a Danish way of working with evaluation regarding project of a Cultural nature.

Ref. www.aestetik.au.dk/onskekvissten/eng/present

Step 2 – January /February/ March 2009

The next paper included process, practise and product, but also success stories. The question was about the different approaches to work with this cultural box and the work with the different groups of pupils.

The different items:

- Timeframe – how much time did you use on the project?
- Motivation for choosing the timeframe and the place
- When did your work with the pupils take place?
- Success stories
- What method did you use during the process?
- Choice of partner – for example an artist

Step 3 - March/April 2009

This paper was to be use in connection with the expectation, the reactions and the reflection towards the five cultural boxes.

The different items:

- Knowledge about the other country – the six different subject
- Before opening the boxes – What do the pupils expect to see?
- To the subject – how do the pupils react?

Step 4 – May 2009

The last evaluation was placed at the meeting in Spain. The following questions were given to the participants and answered right away. All the questions relate to the questions from step 1.

The institution before the project started (Step 1)

Where is your institution now regarding cultural work/ cultural planning in connection within the school? (Step 4)

This is what the participants believes is of great value within the project. (Step 1)

Focus on three levels: pupil, teacher, school

Where you able to make clear, what were of great value within a project like this – signs? (Step 4)

This is what we hope the pupils will learn from and experience working with this project (Step 1)

Did the pupils learn what you had set up as a goal? (Step 4)

This is what we intend to do - the preparation (Step 1)

How did your intentions with the project work regarding with what you had planned?

(Step 4)

What are the sign's – what can we see in the way the pupils receive the project, that this is a relevant and interesting project. (Step 1)

Are there signs within the group of pupils, that they have learned something new and interesting things about the work with this cultural project? (Step 4)

Statements from the evaluation papers

Step 1

My institution before the project started

Country	Answers to the question
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. There have been major project in various field throughout the last years – among them the Comenius project “Across the Ages” from witch this actual project has arisenb. Currently there are three major project/activities that our school focus on.c. The schools profile puts a specific focus on creativity and ICT
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. An institution interested in working with the international levelb. The leadership is very much involved in the projectc. The classes in the school are informed about the project. Some classes take an active part in the project
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Cultural very active – arts, games and historyb. Constrains imposed by Curriculum
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. At the moment, the project doesn't seem to be a priority in my school. Instead, the Community, starting from Mayor shows great expectations.b. The principal has never made any reference to the Comenius project during our general meetings.c. All the cultural organizations are eager to start working on the project and their collaboration
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. We had meeting at the end of September to constitute the definitive group of teachersb. We had a second meeting in October. In this meeting we took decisions about: level, groups and worksc. All the teachers began to work

This is what we believe is of great value within the project.

Country	Answer to the question
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Awareness of what is interesting in other countries in Europe – similarities and differences b. The close look on our own regional and national identity, making the students to deal with things they consider “old-fashioned”. Maybe they will see things differently after the project. c. Working with other countries may lead to the awareness that we are sharing similar values – that there is not such a big difference.
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The students will get an insight in their own culture b. They will experience the difference between their own culture and others c. Through this process they will gain an understanding of each others way of doing things hopefully create a greater sense of tolerance
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. New insights into culture of European partners b. Greater appreciation of our own culture as a part of Europe c. Whole school working together
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The pupils will find that Sesto can offer a good example of Italy. An example which may be different from stereotypes for which Italy are known. b. The pupils and the community can work together regarding heritage/value of local, national and international levels. I see this as an example of active citizenship. c. The classroom won't be seen as the only place where we can work. The whole territory will be used, and the teacher will function as a facilitator as well as an expert.
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work in coordination with other teachers and students b. The work on European matters with TIC c. The grow in competence key like social and civic foreign language

This is what we hope the pupils will learn and experience working with the project

Country	Answer to the question
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To transform traditional topics into their lives, that there is no reason to look down onto traditions. b. Overcoming stereotypes of and discovering similarities between themselves and their “colleagues” from other countries – their traditions, culture... c. Teamwork and co-operation – fair discussion in the decision-making process when deciding what to put into the boxes.
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. That the stereotypes they have of the other countries will be confirmed or denied b. To create an awareness of other countries in the project including their traditions etc. c. To create a consciousness of being a European citizen
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Working together – new horizons b. Exploring our culture in greater depth – greater appreciation c. Learning about our partners
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. They will know more about the place they live in and the culture it expresses, that the students will preserve and find worth reading. b. They will learn how to work in groups for a common aim and take decisions – and use skills they didn’t know they had. c. They will use English as a real means of communication to interact with the project and exchanging messages with their foreign partners.
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To grow in cooperative work b. They learn others traditions c. They can make a common work with Europeans, not only with Spanish

This is what we intend to do – the preparation

Country	Answer to the question
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Information about the project is given to: teachers, students and to the public. The head teacher and the project coordinator are participants. b. The work with the cultural box starts in week 45 with discussions, and reflection among the teachers. Later the students will be involved – expected start week 46.
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We have made a scheme from the results of the meeting in Ennis b. We have told about the project in all the classes, and a number of classes are involved. c. 2 classes and 3 teachers are “core classes”. The leadership is actively involved as coordinators.
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify ideas to go with topics b. Allocate ideas to different classes c. True representation of the past and present culture – challenge stereotypes image
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The students will be given detailed information about what was discussed in Ennis – regarding the boxes. b. The students will be asked which choices they would make and why – written and orally. Discussion and decision follows c. Groups with spokesmen will be formed. They will decide how to work, what to do and to keep record of their work. They will also inform the other groups.
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All the teachers take part in the process to decide what work will be done b. The teachers try to make the students understand the work that has to be done and it’s meaning within the project. c. Establish the way to work and how to take decisions in the group within a group frame.

What are the sign's – what can we see in the way the pupil's receive the project, that this is a relevant and interesting project.

Country	Answer
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. When the students ask what they can do for the project and act because they want to do something about it b. When the students are proud to be a part of the choir, dance group, the group that does artistic work as well as those that don't want to be involved. c. When the students provide private material and are willing to do additional work for example in their free time.
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It had the effect of an “eye opener” b. A reflection of the students' position in the culture c. An awareness of the diversity in culture
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enthusiasm and willingness b. Pride in their own culture c. Curiosity about gaining knowledge
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Active participation will be seen through the observation of their body language while working together b. Interaction during discussions c. Proposals, opinions the give.
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. They will acquire a joint vision of our box as something concrete and ? b. They will have to show the work? and to be able to appreciate the rest of the boxes. c. To get a common, collective and appreciative way of looking at all the boxes?

This is the way we are going to document our project

Country	Answer
Austria	a. digital photo b. Essay c. Information box
Denmark	a. the Box itself
Ireland	a. digital photos b. film c. essay and information box
Italy	a. Digital photo b. Film c. Essay
Spain	a. Digital photo b. Information box c.

Conclusion of step 1

The new project in the five schools

There are very different approaches to start a Comenius project like CHOIR. Some of the participation schools have experiences from other EU-projects and some schools have not.

To have the experience to work with a project in your own school is well known for almost all the teachers in the CHOIR-project, but to work with Comenius projects must be a challenge for most of the teachers involved for example in this project. There are many things to consider for example: planning in the different school systems among the different countries, different curriculum in the subjects compared with the many ages of the pupils, different ways of teaching methods and different ways of being look at as a teacher, but also working as a teacher.

This project CHOIR shows only after the first round, that many of these considerations are actually not interesting and they are not barriers. It is evident that a teacher no matter where the teacher work, he or she is prepared to try new things, challenging new possibilities and giving students new experiences and a seeing a new way in the learning process.

All five types of schools work with this projects because it is possible and they have the interest in doing that.

This is regardless of type of school or age of student. But the answers show that a project like this has the best conditions when it receives attention and positive recommendation from the leadership at the school.

Differences is a resource

Looking at what the teachers see that is of great value within this project, again here there is a common way – constructive and positive way of what can come out of a project like this. The teachers write about awareness of own and other cultures will bring the pupils to gain understanding and a greater sense of tolerance. By accepting the differences among the five countries you will get a better knowledge and acceptance of your own identity and there for will stereotypes not be of interest – instead will the difference be a resource.

In this project the pupils will try new ways of working. The pupils will have to make decisions in groups, working in groups, deciding in groups and having experiences in groups. The classroom will be a working place, where the common language is English or at least the product The Cultural Box is to be created and described in

English. This will give the pupils a real meaning of what a common language is and to communicate with other children of other ages will be a challenge but will for certain give importance to the work.

Awareness

The intentions, before the actually project starts, deals with how to make everybody aware of the project. That involves the leadership of the school, the participating teachers and information to the pupils.

In Ennis/Ireland at the first meeting in October 2008 between the partner countries some decisions were made and these decisions should now be passed on to colleagues and pupils before the work could start. This was also important because of the real involvement by the pupils. If they were to take a serious part in the whole process they needed to be given information and possibility to reflect before the actual work for example with the cultural boxes.

Signs

The teachers were asked to describe - the sign's they would expect to see in the group of pupils - how the pupils react to the project and the challenges during the work with the project.

The teachers answered that they would expect the project to be an "eye opener" and would make the pupils reflect on the diversity of culture. The work could result in a pride in their own culture and by the curiosity when gaining knowledge of there own as well as other cultures.

This will be clear when the pupils work with enthusiasm, willingness and active participation. The pupils will be seen through the observation of their body language while working together for example when they participate in discussions and express their proposals or opinions.

Recommendations

- The different approaches to how the teachers work and their choices and motivations - the didactic – are of interest. The teachers' reflections are of great interest and can be described in a essay or in the log- book.
- Stories told by the pupils regarding awareness is also of interest and could be added to the evaluation.

Step 2

Timeframe – how much time did you use on the project.

Country	Answer
Austria	a. longer period b. about 6 hours per week
Denmark	a. longer period b. 4 hours per week c. 2 days per week
Ireland	a. 3 weeks b. 2 hours per week c. 1 day per week
Italy	a. longer period b. 4 hours per week c. 4 days per week
Spain	a. ? week b. ? hours per week c. 2 days per week

Motivation for choosing the timeframe and place

Country	Answer
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. As the activities were most embedded into regular lessons the timeframe varied from week to week, according to the timetables of the classes involved.b. Additional work has been done with the choir and the dance class
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The task has determined the timeframeb. The work has been done in the class, pc and different workshops during the Christmas Festival
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. It was the best use of the school resources, including teachers and available rooms
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. In order to combine ordinary work related to the curriculum with the new topics of the project the tasks and topics were distributed on three classes.b. Both the students and the teacher were involved in extra-curricular activities with partners.
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Two hours was enough time.b. The classroom was an appropriate place.

Where did your work take place?

Country	Classroom	Computer room
Austria	X	X
Denmark	X	X
Ireland	X	
Italy	X	X
Spain	X	X

Did you use special room for the different products?

1.Topic –Music

Country	At the school	Outside the school
Austria	X	X
Denmark	X	
Ireland	X	
Italy	X	
Spain		X

2. Topic – Dance

Country	At the school	Outside the school
Austria	X	
Denmark		
Ireland	X	
Italy		X
Spain		X

3. Topic – Literature

Country	At the school	Outside the school
Austria	X	
Denmark	X	
Ireland	X	
Italy	X	
Spain	X	

4. Topic – Every Day Life

Country	At the school	Outside the school
Austria	X	
Denmark	X	X
Ireland	X	
Italy		X
Spain	X	

5. Topic – Art

Country	At the school	Outside the school
Austria	X	
Denmark	X	X
Ireland	X	
Italy		X
Spain	X	

6. Topic – Festival

Country	At the school	Outside the school
Austria		X
Denmark	X	X
Ireland	X	X
Italy	X	X
Spain	X	

How the project started – how did you motivate the pupils?

Country	Answer
Austria	First by giving them information and making them curious Then show the students what we can do and what we are proud of
Denmark	All teachers and classes were informed about the project Some of the classes have been involved, but not all
Ireland	Children were very motivated following the visit to our school in October 08 of all the partners
Italy	The student got a questionnaire about the project to get information about their knowledge and skills. The students were invited to write suggestions – and they decided how to work on each topic
Spain	The project started with some teacher meetings. The teachers highlighted the most important parts for the student

How did the pupils react to the project - the work and methods?

	Austria	Denmark	Ireland	Italy	Spain
Curious	X	X	X		X
Eager	X	X	X	X	X
Interested	X	X	X		
Did not care		X			
Laid-back	X				
Not interested					
Positive attitude	X	X	X		X
Negative attitude					
Indifferent attitude	X	X			
Defeatist attitude					

Success story – max three from each country

Austria

- Arts.

After a short introduction about the Viennese Art at the beginning of the 20th century – Jugendstil – and a virtual museum-trip the students started to work on their own version of “The Kiss” by Gustav Klimt. They either took a copy of the painting, where there were nothing to see but heads and feet and tried to reconstruct the painting or took it as a starting point for their own work.

- Music/dance.

After the pieces that should be put into the box were chosen, the students tried to find background material – what does the song/dance come from, what should they express, while at the same time they trained and practiced for the recording.

- Everyday life.

Again there was some background research done – where do the dishes chosen come from, what are their history and how did the recipes change over the years. – the students did practical work by cooking the dishes.

Denmark

- The work with the **Christmas Festival** involved the whole school. Several aspects of Christmas were worked with and the whole work was filmed. We worked with Christmas for 3 days – all in all 10 lessons.

- **Photo-marathon** is a project the whole school has been involved in for the last 2 years. There has been made a teachers guide, which I will send to you by post. All pupils have been involved in this cultural project!

- The **Danish box** was presented to all pupils before it was closed. In that way all pupils know, what is in the box even if they have not directly participated

Ireland

- Children were enthused to learn about other countries when they realised that people from those countries would be visiting.
- The visit prompted staff to set up a museum for the school and the wider community, displaying aspects of our cultural heritage.
- It gave the children an opportunity to display their talents and experience the integration of music, song and dance.

Italy

- Noemi was one of the most active students. She worked on her own on the presentation of her favourite rock star, Piero Pelú. She made a video presentation with material of different sources combined with her own film and photo. She also suggested another son to be linked to Dante's poem and worked on all the other topics as well with great enthusiasm.
- Class 4 worked hard on the project. The students looked united and even the weakest ones did their best. The project also gave them additional opportunity to compare the Italian Literature with the English one in a spontaneous way.
- Also tests have proved to be a sign of success of the project. I used the topics of the project to test their progress. I found out the students were more motivated, they wrote more than I could have expected and even the weakest ones produced satisfactory material.

Spain

- They were interested in the work because they learned how to appreciate new cultures
- They worked together on power point. So they learned how to make decisions
- They were interested in the work because they learned new aspects about there own culture. So they worked together to develop their activities.

Describe the teacher's part of the project

	Austria	Denmark	Ireland	Italy	Spain
Classical teacher	X		X		
A Consultant	X	X	X	X	X
A working partner	X		X	X	X
A promoter	X	X	X	X	X
To listen to & accept a pupil as a resource	X	X	X	X	X
To pull back and let the pupils work alone	X			X	
To be an Observer				X	
To solve conflicts among the pupils				X	X

What method did you use during the process?

	Austria	Denmark	Ireland	Italy	Spain
Lecture on the theme	X	X	X		X
Workshops	X	X	X	X	X
Working in groups	X	X	X	X	X
Working with whole class	X	X	X	X	X
Pupils working alone	X	X	X	X	X
Outdoor learning		X		X	X

Comments on why these methods have been used.

Austria

The methods used were adopted to the topic – there were lectures on the theme when necessary and as much individual work for the students as possible. Some of the items for the box were made by students individually, some are the result of a group work and some – especially the recorded songs – the work of a complete class.

Denmark

That is the way in which we normally work.

Ireland

Most practical way of completing the cultural box

Italy

I have been experimenting this combination of different methods even in my ordinary lessons because I find that it can become easier to involve even the laziest or weakest students in the process of learning. Firstly, what I like of the role of consultant and promoter is the opportunity to make the students feel responsible for their own work. Secondly I like having the role of an observer because I can get lots of information about their study skills and social relations with partners.

Spain

Every teacher needed to use one or several of these methods

Choice of partner's for example: an artist

Denmark used:

- a dancer - a very good performer capable of involving all students

Ireland used:

- parents provided photos of festivities
- local music teacher in compilation of music programme
- parish website for photos
- whole school staff

Italy used:

Experts in making the students appreciate their heritage through knowledge and active involvement in a process. There for a music teacher was involved who gave lectures of Tuscan composers and help with videos and music. One teacher who teach to play instruments and two teachers from the Art Institute.

Spain used:

We chose to work on IES Llanera because it represents Asturian dance.

What did you choose to be a part of the cultural box?

Austria

Music	Video/audio recorded pieces of music, sent along with the lyrics, keys and a short essay about what "jodeln" means, where it comes from and what the original function was
Dance	Videotaped dances – step by step "course"
Literature	A poem by Peter Rosegger (local author and poet) – biographic material
Every Day Life	Interviews. Phrases in German and local dialect
Art	Power point presentation of a "Student book" working material on Gustav Klimt
Festival	Interviews, photographs and texts

Denmark

Music	3 songs. The oldest Danish song, a children song and a song for young people
Dance	Modern dance
Literature	"In Denmark I was born" H.C.Andersen
Every Day Life	Vox pop, slide show, photostory, and recipes
Art	Photomathon
Festival	Christmas and Midsummer

Ireland

Music	
Dance	Integrated programme for traditional music and dance
Literature	"Pangúr Bán" 300 years old Irish poem, first written by a monk in an Austrian monastery
Every Day Life	We hope to use a pre-recorded programme by an outside television agency, together with some of our own recordings
Art	St. Brigit's Cross – was a religious symbol, made by Brigit, the female patron saint in Ireland 1500 years ago. The cross is made of rushes – a type of grass.
Festival	Christmas and St. Patrick's Day. Pictorial and written images of both

Italy

Music	Cd's of classical music by Tuscan composers, two Tuscan folksongs, three modern songs
Dance	Trescone, a typical dance of the past which used to be danced in the Tuscan countryside
Literature	Part of the 5 th canto of "The Divine Comedy" by Dante, other poems by Caducci, Pascoli, Leopardi and Luzi
Every Day Life	Still in progress
Art	The reproduction of a drawing by Gio Ponti and projects for four plates
Festival	Christmas and the Wheat Festival

Spain

Music	Middle age music and pop music
Dance	Traditional dance
Literature	A part of Spanish middle age poetry
Every Day Life	A film made by the students
Art	Asturian ornaments – an horreo – and asturian middle age metal work
Festival	Christmas and a local festival: Excensuraos

Motivations for choosing products to the cultural box.

Country	Motivations
Austria	<p>For all the items chosen:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> We wanted to put items into the box that show our traditions, our identity but not in the way they are represented to tourists, but the way they are vivid in our area. The items were selected from wider range after intense discussion among the people – teachers and pupils – involved in the various “departments” of the project. Arts: Klimt – Viennese “Jugendstil” is maybe the only unique Austrian artistic movement and it is something that is very much identified with Austria Literature: Peter Rosegger is not only the man our school got its name from, he is our “local poet”, maybe the only one of international importance. The poem has been chosen because it is one of his best known poems and it expresses the background of our project – going out and facing new things and yet never forget about your roots. For the other topics the motivation has been mentioned above.
Denmark	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The application and the preparatory meeting in Asturias/Oviedo in January 2008 The partner meeting in Ennis The pupils have decided most of the items
Ireland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All the above best represent our culture and heritage
Italy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> We want to show that some songs can be as important as poetry to stimulate feelings and thoughts Being Trescone a country dance, it can be related to the Wheat Festival The poems have been chosen by the students as representative We want to give a taste of an Italian teenager’s ordinary life It is an example of importance of Crafts for the economy of Sesto Fiorentino. We want to compare similarities and differences about Christmas celebrations and something unusual like the Wheat Festival
Spain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Music was interesting for the students We chose the key aspects of Asturian culture Dance is important in Asturias The students had many ideas for the box The students thought it was important to include a variety of elements

Conclusion to step 2

The different approaches

The practical work with the boxes shows the differences between the school systems, the age of the pupils and the way teachers work.

These are naturally well known to the different countries but what is interesting here, is that a lot of the practical solutions are much alike. This could be because of the decision of a cultural box with six items/topics that the five countries agreed on at the meeting in Ennis.

To make an agreement about the contents had an effect on how to get to finish the product like a cultural box.

The five schools have different approaches to the way they are used to work with for example the technical and creative work. One of the schools has to find help elsewhere because the resource among the teachers at the school is not available. One school is used to work with projects and another school work with a project like this for the first time.

Interesting is it to read the success stories. Here are the pupils telling us what a project like this means to them and how they are willing to additional work in their free time.

The common language

The agreement on using the English language is not a problem for four of the schools, but the Spanish school does not send the cultural Box translated into the English language. This was decided in the beginning of the project and repeated in Ennis. The Spanish Cultural box is available in English if you search for it on the internet, but this should not be accepted in the next round.

The only part of the cultural box that should be in the different mother tongue was the literature part. This is because it is difficult to translate and sometime you can actually understand another language just by listening and the inner picture presents a lot of reflections. The different poems in the cultural boxes have been translated. The pupils from all five schools are therefore given the opportunity not only to listen and experience but also to understand.

Teacher or artist

It was accepted that if the school could not provide the qualified teacher in for example dance or music it was agreed that you could make contact to a local artist. In Italy the school do not participate with different teachers that represent the different topics. To almost every item in the cultural box there has been a corporation with an artist from the local community. In the next round of cultural boxes it would be positively notified if this changes.

The five boxes

Austria

The box contained all five topics that were decided. They came in a very little shoe box that gave the impression of “not much”, but everything was there.

The Austrian box presented local culture with no references to any of the other four countries, but a kind of reference to Hungary regarding food.

The traditional way of singing and in the native language was interesting to listen to as well as the traditional dance is something special.

The recipe was not traditional Austrian, but in the next round of cultural boxes this would probably be changed to a traditional Austrian dish.

The necessary translation was to be found in the box available when opening the box.

Denmark

The box contained all five topics that were decided. I assume that the Danish box was a real shoe box - the shoe box was sent to the other countries.

The Danish box presented local culture with some references to European culture. A traditional dance as well as a European and indeed the Photo marathon are local as well as European.

All texts were necessary translated. To use photos – that is a good way of communicating with the other countries. No translation is here necessary.

Ireland

The box contained all five topics that were decided. The box was divided in to the five topics and to find your way around the box was easy. The Irish box represents local culture but also with references to an Austrian figure Pangur Ban.

The box contained of a lot of positive drawings. Photo and drawings are a good way of communicating with the other countries. No translation is here necessary.

Some of the topics took up a lot of room and in the next round it could be a good thing to give every topic the same amount of space.

Italy

The box contained all five topics that were decided. A table of contents could have been a practical good thing to have because of the amount of contents music and literature.

The Italian poems are beautiful texts and well translated. Two poems should have been enough to represent the Italian literature. That goes for the music examples as well.

Spain

The box contained all five topics that were decided. The box contained three books in Spanish and there were no translation to be found in the box.

The missing English translation and text made it impossible to treat this box the same way as the other boxes.

Products made by pupils were not to be found in the box. Later we all received an address with links to film with for example dance.

The size of a shoe box

The different ages of the pupils participating must not reflect different sizes of boxes, but shoes have different sizes and therefore the boxes are also different, when they are to be sent around to the four countries.

RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE BOXES

- I recommend all the countries to use the IAN-model from the log-book. Here are the three demands for artistic quality – Intention, Ability and Necessity – regarding for example how to choose items to the box.
- Put only things into the boxes that the pupils have produced. That gives the pupils ownership to their own box as well as the boxes they receive.
- Select poems and music that represents the local community or country. Use only two examples. Use as many photos and drawings as possible.
- As an evaluator who wanted to have a general view of what was to experience in the boxes I needed a table of contents
- In the next round it is important only to put in the box what represents the five topics, give every topic the same amount of space and be aware of the necessity of the item that is put in the box.

Step 3

Knowledge about the other country – the six different subjects

1= no knowledge
2= not much
3= very much
4= a lot

Answers from: Austria, Denmark, Italy and Spain

Music	1	<u>2</u>	3	4
Dance	1	<u>2</u>	3	4
Literature	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	4
Every day life	1	<u>2</u>	3	4
Festival	1	<u>2</u>	3	4

After the first round of the project the majority of answers are marked with an underline.

Ireland answers to every country participating separately. This is what the pupils in Ennis know about the other countries. The youngest group in the project has a comparable knowledge when you look at the rest of the answers from the elder pupils from the other countries.

	Music	Dance	Literature	Every day life	Festival
Austria	1	1	1	2	1
Denmark	2	2	3	2	2
Italy	2	1	1	2	1
Spain	2	2	1	2	2

Before opening the box – what do the pupils expect to see?

Items	Austria	Denmark	Ireland	Italy	Spain
Photo	X	X	X	X	X
Film	X			X	
D v d		X	X	X	X
C d	X		X	X	
Homepage					
Drawings	X	X	X		X
Paintings	X		X		
Poems	X		X	X	X
Texts	X	X	X	X	X
Books		X	X		
Things to touch		X			
Things to taste					
Things to listen to	X	X	X	X	
Things to see	X	X	X	X	X
Things to try	X	X			
Unknown things	X		X	X	
Well known things				X	
Old things	X		X		X
New things	X		X		X

Ireland answers to every country participating separately. I have included at least 2 positive answers in the schedule.

Comments:

From the pupils in Italy following comments:

They expected to find items which are just stereotypes but do not represent local traditions. They expected to find flamenco, sangria and paella from Spain.

To the subject – how do the pupils react?

	Austria	Denmark	Ireland	Italy	Spain
They were curious	X	X	X	X	X
They were eager	X	X	X	X	
They were interested	X	X	X	X	X
They did not care					
They were laid-back					
They were not interested					
They had a positive attitude	X	X	X		X
They had a negative attitude					

Ireland answers to every country participating separately so the marks are a result of a majority counting.

The **Austrian** pupils had following comments to the boxes:

1. I wonder what will be in the box.
2. Can we open the box now?
3. Have the boxes already arrived? When will we see something from..?

The teachers were even more curious and eager to open the boxes – especially if there was something in them for their own field of work for example music or dance.

The **Irish** pupils had following comments to the Italian box:

4. I wonder what they will have in the box.
5. I wonder if they will give something to taste
6. I'd like to visit Italy
7. I'm surprised they liked so much opera music

They wondered if **Italians** listened to modern music from USA. Did they wear uniform? Did they learn other languages as well as Italian? Were the Italians fanatical about football?

The **Italian** pupils had following comments to the boxes:

1. It's my turn to open the box
2. The photos that were taken when the boxes were opened should illustrate the eager attitude
3. Can we have a copy of the CD?
They appreciated the differences of the common cultural items. The pupils needed time to see the items in the boxes. They appreciated the differences of the languages
They are not familiar with – Danish and German – so they started guessing the meaning of some of the words.

Conclusion to step 3

Knowledge about the participating countries

The answers from the four countries regarding knowledge about the other countries music, dance, literature etc. show that they have not much knowledge of the other EU-countries participation in this project. The four countries agree on the answer “not much” regarding music, dance, literature and festival.

Every day life scored most negative answers and therefore the conclusion to this question is that all around culture knowledge regarding the partner countries from the four other countries in EU is very limited.

The pupils interest in the project

The **Austrian** pupils had knowledge about Christmas in general and had not much knowledge about for example Denmark apart from the fairytale author H.C. Andersen.

The common knowledge about culture in Europe is limited among pupils in these five countries The interest is obvious and the pupils show curiosity, they are eager and have a positive attitude towards opening the boxes and learn and experience information about the partner countries. The comments from the pupils show their interest and expectations which are over all positive. It is interesting to see that pupils show interest in a project is a common observation.

As a natural reaction in a classroom there will always be pupils with no or less interest in a subject or project. This is also to be seen in this project. The reactions among the pupils can be put into a similarity – a common way of being a pupil in a school and acceptable to be described as such.

Recommendations

- It is of interest how the pupils show interest in the project. This can be shown in statements from the pupils.
- How to motivate pupils with no interest is also of interest and here an exchange of prepared lessons or ideas are of interest

Evaluation Step 4

handed over at the meeting in Spain (March/April 2009)

1. Where is your institution now regarding cultural work/cultural planning in connection within the school?

Country	Answer
Austria	The awareness of their roots has increased. Teachers have widened their information about partner countries – personal contacts
Denmark	The work with cultural aspects is well known in Danish and in our school. The new and essential thing is that we work intentionally with known school/ receivers and give something back.
Ireland	Children have gained greater insight into new culture. They have deeper appreciation of similarities and differences between cultures. They now see themselves as a part of a greater European family.
Italy	The cultural work became part of the curriculum. I think of it as part of a pilot experience
Spain	We are deciding what to do with the cultural boxes that we have received plus material inside.

2. Where you able to make clear, what were of great value within a project like this – signs?

Country	Answer
Austria	Yes, I think so. This can be seen by the reactions while waiting for and when receiving the other boxes.
Denmark	It is essential that there is a coordination person in the school – then it is possible. This should be a practical working teacher.
Ireland	Their stereotypical beliefs have been devaluated. The teachers have forged new thinking – gave new ideas
Italy	I think I did. Families and community were actively involved and provided materials and assistance.
Spain	For the pupils it was important to do something outside of the curriculum. For the teachers it was doing something new and seeing work from other schools. For the centre it was good to open up to other centres in Europe.

4. Did the pupils learn what you had set up as a goal?

Country	Answer
Austria	To open their minds, overcome stereotypes, work on the topic in different situations and surroundings. Some pupils learned others did not.
Denmark	Yes, an awareness of own culture and knowledge of others
Ireland	Children will learn that they are part of European culture and require deeper appreciation of their own culture. Also new horizons were opened up to the pupils
Italy	Yes, they did. Moreover some of them took their own initiatives and made up things in a play, which had not been planned.
Spain	Yes, on the whole

5. How did your intentions with the project work regarding with what you had planned?

Country	Answer
Austria	Work with pupils took much time. Some things could not be done for examples videos. All in all it fit.
Denmark	We gained the goals which was set from the start
Ireland	Teachers had lots of idea. We wanted to give an overview of culture and wanted to explain our history/heritage and link it to the present modern Ireland.
Italy	The objectives achieved were fare beyond expectations even though the activity took a lot of time.
Spain	Overall we achieved what we wanted to, except for problems with time and class dynamics.

6. Are there signs within the group of pupils, that they have learned something new and interesting things about the work with this cultural project?

Country	Answer
Austria	<p>Their interest in continuing the work.</p> <p>Eagerness for the partners boxes</p>
Denmark	<p>Signs: reflections on our own culture things to be sent in the box</p>
Ireland	<p>To date boxes haven't been fully opened.</p> <p>Children were anxious to learn about and explore new cultures and developed a greater appreciation to their own culture through creation of their own box</p>
Italy	<p>Yes, they are. Some of them did things you would never have expected – they all wrote about their positive experiences.</p> <p>They admitted to learning new things about their own culture/symbols.</p>
Spain	<p>They have learned about other cultures and are now more open minded towards other countries.</p>

At the meeting in Spain (March/April 2009) following questions were a part of a small interview.

1. How many pupils are in the classes that worked in the project 2008-2009?

Country	No. pupils in a class	No. participating classes
Austria	25 pupils	8 classes
Denmark	20 pupils	6 classes
Ireland	26-34 pupils	4 classes
Italy	24 pupils	3 classes
Spain	20-25 pupils	13 classes

2. How many girls and boys are in the classes?

Country	Description
Austria	Equal numbers
Denmark	Equal numbers
Ireland	Equal numbers
Italy	More girls than boys
Spain	Equal numbers

3. How many pupils have another ethnic background?

Country	% of other ethnic background
Austria	0 %
Denmark	40%
Ireland	10%
Italy	7%
Spain	0%

4. Is it the same group of pupils working with the project next school year?

Country	Answer
Austria	Partly the same
Denmark	New pupils
Ireland	Partly the same
Italy	Partly the same
Spain	Uncertain

5. Is it the same group of teachers that work with the project next school year?

Country	Answer
Austria	Obviously the same group
Denmark	The same group
Ireland	The same group
Italy	The same group
Spain	Uncertain

6. How many teachers work in a class – a classroom?

Country	No. teachers working in every class
Austria	1teacher
Denmark	2 teachers working in a team
Ireland	1 teacher
Italy	1 teacher
Spain	1 teacher

7. Do the teachers have the different qualifications in music, dance, literature?

Country	Answer
Austria	Yes
Denmark	Yes
Ireland	Having a general education
Italy	No
Spain	Yes

8. Are you used to work with projects – the special way of working?

Country	Answer
Austria	Yes
Denmark	Yes
Ireland	Yes
Italy	Yes
Spain	No

9. How did you present the Choir project in your local community?

Country	Examples
Austria	The schools website, local newspaper, local exhibition, local newsletter, information to the parents
Denmark	The schools website, local newspaper, local exhibition, local newsletter to the school board
Ireland	The schools website, local newspaper, local exhibition, local newsletter
Italy	Local newspaper, local exhibition, information at local meetings, television
Spain	The schools website, local newspaper, local exhibition, local newsletter for teachers

Conclusion to step 4

To sum up this first round the teachers were asked to comment on their expectations regarding the plan, product and outcome of this project.

For this first round all the five countries reached their goals and they were satisfied with the project. Some practical adjustments were preferred for example to make the opening of the boxes a working process more than just an experience. At the meeting in Spain all the countries were asked to present an example of how to make a didactic use of the box.

The amount of time and practical problems were different in the five countries. An exchange of experiences was made at the meeting in Spain and could result in a better and more manageable plan for everybody in the next round.

The pupils were all challenged regarding the stereotype way of looking at the other country and of course their own. The pupils all learned a lot about themselves and were open minded regarding the possibility to learn about other cultures. This project generates not only local and national cultural knowledge but indeed also a European understanding and cultural knowledge.

At the meeting in Oviedo following didactic examples were presented.

Austria

Presented "Ornamentation in Jugendstil".

1. Knowledge about the period in Austria, the painter Klimt and one of his works "The kiss"
2. The example can be used in a classroom without considering age
3. There were some practical ways of working with the ornaments.
4. This is possible to work with and demands no further qualifications from the teacher

Denmark:

Presented "Photomathon"

1. Practical knowledge how to work in a large group of pupils.
2. Ideas of different topics to photographing
3. The time frame makes this a manageable work for any group of pupils/age of pupils
4. Ideas to work with pictures – having good talks about ways of interpreting pictures

Ireland:

Presented "St. Brigit's Cross"

1. Knowledge about the cross, where it came from, to which festival it belongs and how it is used locally
2. Practical exercise in making the cross
3. The story and exercise is to be used no matter the age of the pupils
4. This is possible to work with and demands no further qualifications from the teacher

Italy:

Presented Italian literature

1. Background to chosen poems, local poets and how they are used in the schools
2. Reading/listening to a poem in Italian searching for associations without a translation
3. Looking for inner pictures – an idea for pupils no matter the age

Spain:

Presented Ornamentation and buildings in Asturia

1. Historic background to the ornamentation and special buildings
2. How to work with ornamentation and buildings in geometry in the classroom
3. How to use this knowledge in the classroom – practical exercises.

After the presentations there were discussions about how to use the different ideas. For example had the Irish school tried to let the pupils listen to the Italian poems in the Italian language and the pupils did actually to some extent understand the intonation and again the contents of the poem. You can perhaps

conclude that it is possible to understand across the borders without having the knowledge of the actual language.

It is a good idea to teach and work with these examples in the different countries.

That was the conclusion from all the participants and therefore the five countries decided to try this.

It was then decided that every country should prepare lessons to the other country, send them and then use the different prepared lessons in the class room. These practical exercises are to be evaluated in the next round.

The Critical Evaluator looking at the first round of CHOIR in general

1. **Timeframe.** The plan was made clear and it was possible to work with the project as one out of many working projects at the schools – a project they had agreed on doing this school year.
2. **The products** – the cultural boxes – are very different. They reflect the possibilities and the resource of the different schools. All the boxes did not make it on time.
3. **Meetings** – planning on the first meeting was visionary but also realistic. Good discussions and a good understanding between the partners.
4. Realistic plans and a timeframe are decided and well conducted by the coordinator
5. **The communication was decided to be in English.** There are participants that do not master the English language and therefore cannot participate on a reasonable level in different discussions and decisions.
6. **The cultural boxes** and therefore text in the box should be written or translated in to English. The Spanish box was not written in English, witch made in impossible for the receiver to understand. This must be changed in the second part of the project.
7. **The meetings** between the members on location showed a number of cultural offers that made the understanding and knowledge between the member countries easy. It is a good way of to lean about the different cultures. The meetings are well prepared and it is of great importance the there is a good meeting room available.

The meetings in general in the first round

The meetings are an exchange of ideas and possibilities. The positive atmosphere among the participants makes it possible to exchange worries, good experiences, new ideas and problems. The coordinator let the participants discuss but he also reach for conclusions and therefore you never leave a meeting without closure. There are always decisions made for the next period and before the meeting ends there has been a look at the whole project.

Before the second round

- The prepared lessons from the first round will be a part the first evaluation.
- The two meetings in Ireland and Spain will be evaluated before the next meeting in October 2009
- The communication between the countries will be evaluated regarding the first round.

To the next round it would be interesting to look at following aspects:

- Is it possible to look at and perhaps agree on the amount of class's participation and at the same time look at how many teachers who work in this project at each school?
- It is of great value if all the teachers that work in the project are colleagues and therefore use to working together.
- Is it necessary to use extern helpers? Perhaps reflections on this issue can be brought up
- The language English is the common language and should be used in the boxes. That is the agreement among the participants. How much has to be translated?
- It is of great importance that the participants respect the deadlines
- How does the website function? Is it easy to find on the internet and how do the participants use the website?
- The different countries are to present themselves but the editor is allowed to edit in the text to make the website presentable and readably. How does that function?

The four steps use in the first round will be used again with the necessary adjustments.

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