

MASTEROPPGAVE

To what extent does eTwinning promote intercultural competence? The case of: “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories”

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It has truly been a challenge to write a thesis but at the same time it has taught me so much. One is never too old to learn new things. With dedication and willpower one can get far. I have also come to realise how important it is to be an interculturally competent person in today’s society and what an impact eTwinning projects have on both students and teachers concerning the development of intercultural competence.

The reason why I chose to integrate this eTwinning project in my English teaching at an upper secondary school in Sweden has been to contribute to an international dimension where everybody feels equal, respected and is proud of his/her cultural heritage. I wanted to give my students opportunities for linguistic development as well as development of intercultural competence. I wanted to create a space where they could meet peers and express their fears and hopes for the future. In the article *Intercultural learning and values in Europe* (p.12), the following questions are asked: “How can we, citizens, participate and engage in a dialogue, in this construction of Europe? Will a “united” Europe still be a diverse Europe, where difference is valued? Will a “united” Europe finally be an open Europe, receptive to cultures from all over the world”? The answer has to be yes. By bringing the world into the classroom, I wanted to open my students’ minds and hearts towards other cultures and to understand that their peers in Europe may have different perspectives, values and behaviours but also that

they may have many things in common and that diversity equals richness and strength. If students are exposed to authentic intercultural dialogue, much of the hatred, misunderstanding, generalization and fear of the unknown will vanish and intercultural competence will equip them with a sense of unity in our diverse globalised world. I agree with the American writer Silverstein who states the following: “Intercultural dialogue is the best guarantee of a more peaceful, just and sustainable world”.

Abstract

This thesis explores the role of an eTwinning project in a Swedish upper secondary school and to what extent this particular project promotes intercultural competence. In a time of globalization and life in a multi-cultural society it is of utter importance to develop intercultural competence in order to avoid clashes among people of different linguistic, religious, cultural or ethnic affiliations. In order to avoid stereotypes and prejudice, educators need to critically reflect on everyday classroom practice and find ways to promote respect, tolerance and understanding of cultural diversity among students. One way of achieving intercultural competence in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is to incorporate eTwinning projects into the curriculum by opening the classroom to Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity. In this thesis this pedagogical method is analysed through a teacher and a student survey in upper secondary schools among diverse European countries which participate in an eTwinning project called: "The Universe is made of Tiny Stories" during the school year 2016/2017. The findings indicate that participation in this eTwinning project has helped both teachers and students to better develop their intercultural competence. This study supports the thesis that eTwinning promotes intercultural competence to a great extent.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background for the thesis

In today's globalized, diverse world it is highly important to know and understand first and foremost our own culture in order to discover similarities and parallels with other cultures. In other words, we need to equip ourselves with knowledge about other cultures, beliefs and behaviors to be able to compare them with our own cultural backgrounds. In order to do so, we need to find tools and ways of interaction in our everyday lives but also in our teaching and learning environments. Many researchers have addressed the topic of intercultural learning and its importance in education, scholars like Kramsch (1993), Byram (1997), Fantini (2000), Sedano (2002), Wiseman (2003), Deardorff (2006), to name a few. However, since intercultural competence is a complex concept which requires a lifelong process to develop, more research needs to be conducted in this area.

Information and communication technology (ICT) gives us huge possibilities to explore different cultures through the Internet and other media. Intercultural communication which means effective transmission of messages from members of one culture to another, is an important factor in our everyday lives. The use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snap Chat, has virtually exploded during the past decade. In a sense, the world has become smaller. The use of digital tools has made our lives easier. In a split second we are able to connect and interact with each other through Skype, Facetime, Chat, Hangout or Messenger. Furthermore, technology gives people immense opportunities to collaborate, develop, share and learn from each other while working, studying or travelling. Since people travel abroad often, either for work or leisure, they encounter many cultures, traditions and lifestyles. It is important to stress though, that having international experience does not equal having intercultural competence. Key elements like empathy, sensitivity, inclusion, adaptability, reflection, to mention a few, need to be embraced in our lives in order for us to become interculturally competent human beings. This takes time, we are learning constantly throughout life. Edward T. Hall, an American anthropologist, developed the iceberg analogy of culture in 1976. He argued that if culture is an iceberg there are only some aspects of culture which are visible and lie above the surface of the water. These aspects can include language, greetings, food, art, music and much more. This is the external part and according to Hall's theory this is the tip of the iceberg. The internal part of a culture, which lies beneath

the surface, is the part which can not be seen such as worldviews, norms, attitudes, values, feelings, behaviours and many more aspects. The more we interact with people of other cultures, the more aspects become visible to us. Therefore, we need not only see the tip of the iceberg but look deeper and detect cultural values which impact behaviour. We all see the world through different lenses and we need to be able to understand how other people want to be treated. We need to be humble and acknowledge that we are not better than people from other cultural backgrounds. Skills like listening, observing and understanding are fundamental. Furthermore, curiosity to learn more, openness towards otherness and respect are also important. Respect can be shown in different ways in different cultures. We need to see the differences, the similarities and embrace multiple perspectives.

Education plays an important role in order to foster the citizens of tomorrow. We need to prepare our students for a diverse multicultural society and equip them with 21st century skills. Skills like the ability to collaborate and interact through the use of ICT, ability to stay curious and open-minded, incorporate multiple perspectives and think critically, will be crucial. According to Risager (2000), we need to prepare our students to behave in an interculturally acceptable manner, in what she calls micro-context, our closest environment, as well as in the world at large; the macro-context.

In the Swedish curriculum for upper secondary schools (2013:9), it is explicitly stated that students should be able to “interact with other people based on respect for differences in living conditions, culture, language, religion and history” and also that students “can empathise with and understand the situation of other people, and develop a willingness to act with their best interests at heart” (ibid). Therefore, educators, have a big role to play in the English classroom. They need to teach students that intercultural competence is complex but not unachievable. It is important to find ways to behave and communicate with others effectively and appropriately based on one’s own cultural beliefs and values and promote intercultural education in the learning environment. AM Sedano (2002:268), (as cited in: *Challenging perspectives: Teaching globalization and diversity in the knowledge society*), identifies a framework in which intercultural education should operate. Such an education should:

- 1) Promote understanding of the cultural diversity of contemporary society;
- 2) increase the possibility of communication between people of different cultures;
- 3) create positive attitudes towards cultural diversity;

- 4) increase social interaction between culturally different people and groups.

Given the availability of ICT in the classrooms today, it is easy to connect teachers and students to wider global communities in order to learn from each other. One way of promoting intercultural education is through engaging students in collaborative internet-based eTwinning projects. These projects allow students from different countries to engage in real-time discussions with the aim of increasing their cultural awareness and also learning more through online interactions with digital tools.

1.2 Aim and research question

The aim of this study is to explore the use of an eTwinning project, “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories”, conducted through the school year 2016/2017 at diverse upper secondary schools across Europe and to investigate to what extent this particular project promotes intercultural competence in the English classroom. Since there is an increased focus on developing intercultural competence in the EFL classroom, I explore this issue through a survey in the form of a teacher and a student questionnaire (appendices 3 and 4) for the participating teachers and learners. With this aim, the research question is as follows: To what extent does the eTwinning project “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories” promote intercultural competence in teachers and learners respectively?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The next sub-chapter deals with the steering documents of the Swedish National Agency for Education and what is stated there about the implementation of intercultural learning at upper secondary school. In chapter 2 the role of eTwinning and its benefits are explained followed by some facts about the digital competence that eTwinning provides. Chapter 3 deals with the concepts of intercultural competence. The succeeding chapter 4 deals with the project description, its project tasks and content. In chapter 5 the method and research materials of my survey are described. In chapter 6 the teacher and student results are presented and analysed. This is followed by a short summary of the findings and a discussion in chapter 7. In the concluding chapter there will be some final comments.

1.4 The Swedish National Agency for Education

Let us have a look at the recommendations of the Swedish National Agency for Education about abilities that students in the upper secondary school should acquire in order to develop

intercultural competence. In the overall goals and guidelines (Skolverket, 2013:9) it is stated that the aims are that students :

- have the ability to critically examine and assess what they see, hear and read in order to be able to discuss and take a view on different issues concerning life and values,
- have a knowledge of international cooperation and global relationships, and can assess events from Swedish, Nordic, European and global perspectives,
- can observe and analyse the interaction between people in their surroundings from the perspective of sustainable development,
- can use books, library resources and modern technology as a tool in the search for knowledge, communication, creativity and learning.

By following these recommendations and incorporating them into teaching methods, students may be able to become global citizens in our diverse multicultural world. There are many pedagogical ways to do so and one of them is by implementing eTwinning projects into teaching. By promoting international collaboration and interaction students may develop characteristics like: openness, curiosity, flexibility, adaptability, and a non-judgmental view of the world in order to establish good relationships both inside and outside of the classroom walls.

2. eTwinning

What is eTwinning? It is the community for schools in Europe which is a safe, free, internet platform providing collaborative spaces, ICT tools and support for teachers and students in Europe. Launched in 2005, the action is funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme. The objectives of eTwinning (as cited in www.etwinning.net) are:

- To develop collaborative school partnerships
- To create an authentic context for learning
- To share resources with other European schools
- To enable teachers to be more creative in their teaching

The eTwinning platform has both public and private areas. The public area offers information about how to become involved in eTwinning. The private area, called eTwinning Live, is the

teachers' interface with the eTwinning community. When teachers work together in the project they have access to a restricted area called the TwinSpace. The process is easy; one registers, finds one or two partners, develops a project idea or uses a ready-made project kit and starts collaborating.

eTwinning is regarded as one of the most successful actions of the school education under the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme (as cited in Cachia & Punie, 2012:430). Today, the eTwinning network is open for school staff members from nurseries to upper secondary schools and has more than 440.000 registered users and over 56.000 ongoing projects. It has become one of the fastest growing online communities in Europe. In addition, there is a network of over 1000 eTwinning ambassadors consisting of teachers experienced in eTwinning projects. Their role is to help, support and guide new eTwinning users.

In addition to the 28 EU member states, plus Iceland, Norway and Turkey, that have access to the digital platform which is available in 28 languages, the current eTwinning community has also included the following countries to participate in various school projects: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Tunisia and Ukraine. These six additional countries are referred to as eTwinning Plus countries, due to their different status in the Erasmus+ programme. All in all there are 37 participating countries in the eTwinning community. The eTwinning platform provides opportunities for teachers to participate in Online Seminars (one hour lectures), Learning Events (-lasting two weeks), and Online Courses (-lasting six weeks).

In each country there is a National Support Service (NSS) which provides support and guidance and organizes professional development opportunities at national level. The Central Support Service (CSS), consisting of a consortium of 30 Ministries of Education, coordinates eTwinning at European level. The Central Support Service organizes an annual European Conference and a Prize event which awards teachers and students who have participated in outstanding projects. In order to get the Prize, the project has to be awarded with both a National Quality Label and a European Quality Label. These labels are a recognition that the work is of high professional level.

Any subject can be taught through eTwinning, despite the fact that many teachers tend to believe that eTwinning is only used in language teaching. Participation in eTwinning enables teachers to create projects through the online tools via the Internet. According to Cachia, Ferrari, Ala-Mutka and Punie (2010), "some teachers also claim that participation in

eTwinning has enabled them to ameliorate their leadership skills, through managing people, taking initiative and learning to support and instruct team work”.

Many teachers who have participated in eTwinning projects claim that eTwinning is a very successful means of raising student motivation, and enhancing students’ understanding of different European countries and cultures, according to Cachia et al (2010). This goes hand-in-hand with the recommendation of the Swedish National Agency for Education: “An international perspective is important to be able to understand one’s own reality in a global context and in order to create international solidarity” (2013:6). In addition the agency claims that: “Teaching in different subjects should give students knowledge of the European Union and its importance for Sweden, as well as prepare them for a society that will have closer cross-cultural and cross-border contacts” (ibid). Therefore, participation in eTwinning projects is one way to try to broaden students’ minds in relation to the European dimension.

In Sweden, it is the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR), which administrates the eTwinning programme. Here is their definition of the eTwinning programme (www.utbyten.se):

It is following the United Nations’ recommendations about education and international understanding. It is collaborating beyond borders without traveling but with quality and results. It gives opportunities to work with the learning objectives of Lgr 11 [curriculum for the compulsory school system]. Even the digital competence, one of EU’s key competences, is developed.

In Sweden schools are technically well equipped and teachers need to find ways to use ICT tools in a pedagogically meaningful way. Incorporating eTwinning into teaching gives students opportunities to develop digital skills and an open mind, and to realize the importance of international relations.

2.1 What are the benefits of eTwinning project work?

A Hungarian survey conducted by Török-Lakatos and Dorner (2013:7), about the experience of teachers who participated in eTwinning projects indicates, that:

eTwinning project work has an immensely positive impact on school life – both from the teachers’ and the students’ point of view. They [the teachers] underlined that project lessons do need more preparation and energy from the teacher – compared to a “traditional” lesson with books and workbooks. They mentioned the development of

ICT competence, the intercultural competence, language skills and social competence as the most important benefits of the eTwinning projects.

These findings show that even though taking part in eTwinning projects requires extra time and energy from the teachers' point of view, they agreed that it adds so much more to students' intercultural competence and digital skills, and that such projects are therefore worth their while.

In the article *Growing digital citizens* written by Cassells, Gilleran, Morvan and Scimeca (2016:17), the following is stated about eTwinning:

The importance of eTwinning in offering the experience of inter-cultural exchange for students and teachers within a safe and secure platform, is emphasized. Through projects, teachers and students show how they develop new digital skills and 21st century learning capabilities. Through the exchange of ideas, how they have learned to apply them within an environment that encourages understanding, openness and collaboration across all the different countries and cultures that make up eTwinning.

The implementation of the eTwinning programme in education has a big role to play by not only enabling students to become digitally literate but also to teach them fundamental values of intercultural understanding through collaboration. On the concept of collaboration, the following is stated in Cachia et al. (2010):

Collaboration across countries does not only signify intercultural cooperation for teachers, but also understanding different education systems. In many aspects, teachers are exposed to new ways of teaching and understanding other education systems beyond their own school confinement.

In fact, teachers may find it very interesting to compare what a normal school day looks like in different European countries, which subjects are taught, how students are assessed and share teaching practices with colleagues across Europe.

2.2 Digital competence through eTwinning

eTwinning may play an important role in developing digital citizenship since digital technology to a large extent dictates the flow of human life today. Digital means -are used to stay connected daily through work, studies or during free time. Access to modern technology is readily available and according to a survey by Eurostat Data for 2013, (as cited in the article *Growing Digital Citizens - Developing active citizenship through eTwinning*), 77% of

all citizens and 75% of all children engage in online activities in Europe. Participation in the digital domain increases every year through social media too. Young people share photos, videos, texts and opinions and have become producers rather than consumers. Educators need to draw on these activities to promote positive values and behaviour in a safe digital environment. Educators need to develop digital skills in all students and also raise awareness of democratic values that also, by necessity, should apply to a digital world.

3. Intercultural competence

What exactly is intercultural competence? Why should it matter? Scholars have argued that intercultural competence implies feelings, cognitions and behaviours. There is a plethora of definitions for the term intercultural competence. Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002:10) refer to it in the following words: “the ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and [the] ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality”. In order to gain intercultural competence, it is not enough to travel the world and to know foreign languages. One has to develop skills to interpret, compare and critically evaluate perceptions and perspectives of one’s own culture and of other cultures. The ability to communicate across cultures is an important skill which is required in our globalized world. When communicating with others, people are guided by values, beliefs and attitudes which everybody learns during childhood and if one’s own values and beliefs differ too much from the others’ they may lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, it is important to find ways to become interculturally competent. It goes without saying that individuals are not born interculturally competent. They become competent through education, training and self-reflection, and it is a never-ending lifelong process.

What defines an interculturally competent person? Risager (2000:1) gives the following definition: “An interculturally competent person is quite simply one who is capable of living as a world citizen in this multicultural, globalised world”. She argues that language teachers often focus on the linguistic dimension of intercultural competence, in this case, the linguistic dimension refers to communicative competence such as appropriate grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, she wants to emphasize that it is also important to focus on adding content - a greater knowledge of the world. When we learn a language at school, we tend to focus on the

national or the ethnic dimension. This might lead to the promoting of stereotypes. Therefore, intercultural competence is needed in order to combat prejudice and maintain human rights.

Michael Byram (1997) has developed a model where he defines five important competences which should be acquired in order to become an interculturally competent speaker. These five competences that he calls *savoirs* are:

- Knowledge/*savoirs*
- Attitudes/*savoir être*
- Skills of interpreting and relating/*savoir comprendre*
- Skills of discovery and interaction/*savoir apprendre/faire*
- Critical cultural awareness/*savoir s'engager*

The following model illustrates the competences connected to intercultural competence:

	Skills interpret and relate (<i>savoir comprendre</i>)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (<i>savoirs</i>)	Education political education critical cultural awareness (<i>savoir s'engager</i>)	Attitudes relativising self valuing other (<i>savoir être</i>)
	Skills discover and/or interact (<i>savoir apprendre/faire</i>)	

Figure 1. Factors in intercultural communication (Byram, 1997:34).

According to Byram, *savoirs* is “knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one’s own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor’s country on the one hand; knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels, on the other hand” (1997:35). The first category of knowledge is always present in some degree and we acquire it in the family or in education, whereas the second category is not acquired automatically. Individuals need to know how to act in specific circumstances. This awareness provides the basis for successful interaction. *Savoir comprendre*, is the “ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one’s own” (1997:61). This means that an intercultural speaker can read text, analyze its origins and detect generalizations and stereotyping. The speaker can also identify areas of misunderstanding in an interaction and is able to explain them by referring to each culture involved and mediate. *Savoir apprendre/faire*, is the “ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” (ibid). This means that an intercultural speaker can identify different interpretations and is able to see similarities and differences in interactions with people of other cultures and can also use an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes with the interlocutors. *Savoir être*, refers to “curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own” (1997:50). This means that the intercultural speaker has an interest to engage with otherness on equal terms, is willing to question the values of one’s own cultural environment and possesses personality traits such as: openness, empathy, flexibility, awareness of others. *Savoir s’engager*, refers to “an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (1997:63). This means that the intercultural speaker can use analytical approaches in order to identify and interpret values in documents and events in one’s own and other cultures and is also aware of potential conflicts between one’s own and other ideologies.

Keeping Byram’s definition in mind, it is important to organize classroom activities where learners are given opportunities to practice these *savoirs* in order to promote intercultural competence. One way to achieve and develop these *savoirs* is through eTwinning projects when students and teachers are involved in intercultural communication and interaction both in the actual school environment and in the virtual one. Students need to learn when to say what to whom. Byram states that a person who possesses intercultural competence is “someone who has a critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) their own and other

cultures” (2000:10). To be able to interact with people from other cultures in a foreign language, to understand their beliefs, norms and values is intriguing and a necessity in order to live in a peaceful world. It gives learners the opportunity to understand their own culture as well. As Byram claims: “It is clear that one’s own religion, culture and values come under scrutiny in intercultural interactions, and that the intercultural speaker reflects upon their own as much as upon the other’s” (1997:113). It is vital for every individual to acquire skills of interpreting and relating, analyzing and reflecting in order to develop intercultural competence in our global, multicultural society. This is of utter importance especially today with the vast refugee movement and migration movements all over Europe. Without intercultural competence amongst people of diverse cultures it will be hard to live in a harmonious and peaceful world. To quote Byram (2009:222): “The values of openness to others, of critical self-awareness and self-analysis, are crucial to harmonious and peaceful relationships of one society with another”.

Byram’s model will be the basis for my own research where the aim is to find out to what extent eTwinning promotes intercultural competence. The eTwinning project “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories” focuses on the sharing of knowledge about other countries and the development of diverse skills for cultural interaction with peers across Europe. By collaborating in international teams, students get the opportunity to evaluate, analyse, think critically and overcome stereotypes. Therefore, Byram’s five competences provide the perfect tool for analyzing the data in my survey.

4. Project description

As we have seen, according to Byram et al. (2002:33), intercultural competence is much more comprehensive than mere factual knowledge about another country. So along with linguistic competence teachers should be able to develop intercultural competence in their learners to enable them to interact with people of different cultural backgrounds, multiple identities and specific individuality. One way to promote this competence is, according to Crawley et al. (2007:8), to make use of collaborative projects. They claim that “pupils’ understanding of cultural differences and similarities will grow in international collaborative project work”. One such project opportunity would be to take part in various eTwinning projects.

Let us have a closer look at the eTwinning project that is the basis for this master thesis. It started in the school year 2016 and ends in 2017. It is called: “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories” and consists of teachers and students from 20 countries in Europe, from the U.S.A. and from Canada. 13 of the participating countries have been active in the project by mid-April 2017. Here are the participating countries: Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, India, Italy, Madagascar, Mexico, Moldova, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, USA (appendix 1). The number of students varies and consists of a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 30 students per class and country. All communication and planning related to the project work is collected and shared on the TwinSpace, the collaborative area provided by the eTwinning platform.

The project started in August 2016. As there is no common start of the school year in Europe every single teacher was responsible for selecting the most suitable starting date. The project was eligible for participation by high school students from both academic and vocational lines of study. Students needed to have knowledge of competence in the English language. The coordinator who initiated this project, a Norwegian teacher, announced the forming of the project both on the eTwinning platform and on the social medium Twitter where she invited more teachers to join. It is not very common for eTwinning projects to have so many partner schools collaborating on a joint project. Such a large number of participants entails both administrative challenges, and benefits in the form of more input. After the project registration on the eTwinning platform, a blog site was created giving access to all the participating schools (www.theuniverseismadeoftinystoriesblog.wordpress.com). The next step was to vote for a suitable hashtag and we ended up with #tinystoriesetwinning.

The major goals of the project are that students will:

- Understand storytelling
- Meet international students and become a part of a global community
- Share their voice on the global stage/ Become powerful communicators
- Become proficient with capturing and manipulating digital image, sound, and video
- Understand properties and characteristic of different software
- Integrate different media (text, images, sound, video) into an online environment
- Develop critical skills to explore digital media
- Develop skills for intercultural learning

These goals may be achieved through diverse project work such as the creation of digital stories, through collaboration on Twinspace and through online communication and interaction with different European partner schools on Skype sessions. The structure of “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories” includes a number of items such as: Timeline, Skype sessions, presentations of teachers and students and project evaluation. In addition there were five assignments for the students. They will be explained in detail below.

4.1 Project tasks and content

At the very start of the project, all students introduced themselves with a short text stating facts like name, age, country, interests and such. Students had the option of posting a photo of themselves together with the short biography. These presentations were then posted on a public padlet, which is an online board where students and teachers can collaborate, reflect, share links and pictures, in a secure location. The next step was for the students and teachers to choose a project logo. The coordinating teacher from Norway, who initiated the project idea, created a diversity of logos and shared the link on google docs with all the schools. Then all the partner schools voted for the best logo. The result was then uploaded on TwinSpace.

For the second assignment, students were given digital tools to create avatars depicting a male and a female imaginary character from another planet. These avatars would get the opportunity to make a fictive visit to planet Earth and be hosted by each partner school for a week. All the student creations were uploaded on a Tricider, which is an online tool that engages students in the decision-making of the class and where students write an idea and other students collaborate by adding new ideas, give feedback and add pros and cons. The avatars, Sophie and Mr. House who got the most votes, were created by two Italian students.

For the third assignment, students made one slide per country showing facts about all the participating countries and schools. The facts showed information about inhabitants, capital cities, celebrities, traditional foods, companies and other tidbits about each country. The result of all this became a google slide show. Students also prepared questions about each country and created a game on kahoot which is a game-based learning platform. A few schools contributed with another task as well, this task was called student tidbits. For example, students from two different schools were paired up and interviewed each other, and then presented each other by text and photo which was uploaded on a padlet.

For the fourth assignment, a google sheet was created with the names of the different schools and with the dates for when the avatars Sophie and Mr. House could be hosted. After each fictive visit, students wrote a diary about the space characters' experiences during that week. This way students and teachers could share information about each other's country, school environment, food, cultural traditions and lifestyles. Some schools chose to show this content by creating short videos. The end result became a google slide presentation showing the journey of Sophie and Mr. House during their fictive visits to all the partner schools.

For the fifth assignment about inspiring people, students created a 5-minute presentation of one person who inspired them and presented this work in the form of a digital storytelling by using photos, audio and video. They explained what was unique about this inspiring person and why he or she was an inspiration to them. The inspiring person could be a friend, a family member, a famous politician, a singer, someone who represented their own country or someone internationally known. For this task, students were given suggestions of digital tools to use and also rubrics to follow because all the students' digital stories were to be assessed by students from other partner schools. Schools were paired up and lists were uploaded on the forums of TwinSpace so that everybody knew which students would assess which digital story. The end results were uploaded on a padlet on TwinSpace.

During the duration of the project, students and teachers decided to share Skype addresses and schedule Skype sessions in order to interact in a synchronous way. Many partners showed interest in skypeing with their classes and found it important to let students interact and learn about other people's customs, traditions, and way of life by sharing information face-to-face. However, due to the different schedules and time zones it was not always easy to find skypeing times when students had their English lessons simultaneously.

While working with projects of this kind, it is always important to evaluate the project work. Therefore, a mid-term (December) evaluation was carried out by the participating teachers and students and a final evaluation was made at the end of the project year (April). The evaluation results were shared on TwinSpace. Briefly, the evaluation results showed that teachers and students enjoyed working in this project, that they learned much about other countries and cultures, that they learned to use diverse digital tools and that they wanted to work with new similar eTwinning projects in the future. Appendix 2 gives an overview of web pages related to the project activities and the results.

5. Method and materials

For my survey I have used two questionnaires, one for teachers and one for students. The questionnaires were created in google forms and the links were mailed to respondents in 13 European countries. All the respondents have participated in the eTwinning project “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories” which was conducted during the school year 2016-2017. The teacher questionnaire consisted of 18 questions of which 14 had open-ended answers and there were 18 teachers from 13 European countries who responded. The student questionnaire consisted of 15 questions of which 12 had open-ended answers and there were 99 students from ten European countries who responded. Two teacher pilots were used first before the final questionnaire was mailed to all the respondents. The links were posted in the eTwinning project page and also sent through regular e-mail. The respondents had approximately four weeks at their disposal to fill in the questionnaires.

6. Results

In the following chapters I will summarize the answers from the teacher and from the student questionnaires and analyze the data in order to see if and how the answers mirror each other and to find out to what extent the eTwinning project “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories” promotes intercultural competence.

6.1 Results from teacher questionnaire

In the following the results from the teacher questionnaire will be presented. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions about the eTwinning project “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories”. I wanted to find out to what extent this eTwinning project promoted intercultural competence. The first four questions (see appendix 3) covered information about the respondents’ gender, age, nationality and eTwinning experience. It turned out that all the respondents were female. The age of the respondents ranged between 41 and 56 years. There were 18 teachers in total who filled out the questionnaire and who teach in the following countries (the number in brackets behind the country represents the number of participating teachers): Belgium (1), Croatia (1), Czech Republic (1), Hungary (1), Italy (5), Moldova (1), Norway (1), Poland (1), Portugal (3), Spain (1), Turkey (1), Greece (1). The respondents have

incorporated eTwinning into their teaching a minimum of one year and a maximum of 11 years. 5 teachers have incorporated eTwinning for 7 years which shows that they are experienced eTwinners.

In the following question I wanted to find out why teachers from different European countries chose to participate in this particular eTwinning project.

Question 5: What made you join the eTwinning project "The Universe is Made of Tiny Stories?"

The majority of respondents answered that the reason for joining were **personal contacts**: "I like and trust the teacher whose idea it was", "she is a serious and reliable person". Some of the respondents **met face to face**: "The participation in the eTwinning conference in Athens", some met **in webinars**, "a webinar about storytelling" and others **in online learning events**, "I met the teacher administrator in a LE". Some teachers have listed that they liked **the topic**, "its idea of telling and sharing online/digital stories", to quote another teacher, "the steps and the subjects are matching our English curriculum". Two respondents wrote that they read about the project **on the eTwinning platform**, "I've read a post by the coordinator of the project". Others have listed **learning goals**, "develop my skills", "trying something new" or **online collaboration** "a possibility of regular Skype sessions", "to make it possible for my students to meet their peers from other countries online; to learn from my more experienced partners", "connecting and collaborating with European teachers and students and an excellent opportunity for my students to improve their writing skills". One respondent liked **the team**, "excellent project team", another wrote: "I saw that there were many partners from all over the world, not just in Europe", in this case referring to the partner schools in Canada and USA. The project founder had personal contacts since she had collaborated in previous projects with the partner schools in Canada and USA. Judging from the answers, it is noteworthy to mention that the eTwinning community offers a huge network and that personal contacts play an important role when deciding which projects to register for on the eTwinning platform. In the next question teachers were asked what they learned by participating in the project.

Question 6: What have you learned by participating in this project?

The majority of respondents answered that they learned to use and manage **digital tools**: "I have learned to use Kahoot and Loomio", "webtools to be used in the future", "about new

tools pupils can use for their work”, “using tools I hadn’t used before e.g. padlet”, “how to incorporate Skype successfully in teaching English” and tools to make videos and digital stories; “how effective story telling can be carried out”. Some respondents referred to factors which contributed to new **learning experiences**, like “different methodology”, the planning and managing of a project with such a huge number of partners, “how an eTwinning project works with a lot of participants who are involved a lot, share and learn at the same time”, “how to cooperate with teachers who lack ICT equipment at their schools”. One teacher responded that she learned different **skills**: “I improved my English skills and learned a lot of new things about cultures”, another wrote “my students’ capacities” which is referring to how the students showed their engagement when they worked with the project activities. One respondent expressed the importance of **task and structure**, “that a good project needs clear structures and interesting task for the students to be able to cooperate”. The sharing of teaching practices, collaboration, innovation, patience and the support shown in this project were also emphasized as important factors by some respondents. The answers indicate that digital tools and good structure are necessary for online projects of this kind in order to achieve successful collaboration. In the following question teachers were asked to reflect upon differences in teaching when comparing the project to their ordinary classroom teaching.

Question 7: Is there anything in particular that makes this project teaching differ from your ordinary classroom teaching?

The majority of respondents answered that **online communication** and **interaction** with teachers and students from other countries “the contact with other Europeans”, added to a more intercultural dimension. To quote one respondent: “It is nice for the students to communicate and to glimpse students’ lives in other European countries, although time is always precious and our internet connection is awful”. Another respondent wrote: “Being able to connect with people from all over the world”. In addition to that, the teachers mentioned **motivation**: “The fact that students have to organise themselves in being actors, producers, argumentists” which is referring to the fact that students become motivated to take on other roles which are not required of them when working with the project activities, that students became more **active**, “students collaborate, are more active”, “students are more engaged” in the learning environment and “it involves students in a different way”. Some respondents expressed the following about the difference from the ordinary classroom teaching: “It’s more **ICT oriented**” and “involves students in a different way”, it offered “**project-based learning**, which is not usual in my school”, furthermore, the fact that teachers showed

dedication: “The energy all the teachers put in the project; being so active”! **Authenticity** was another issue that was brought up: “It offers my pupils a real audience for the writing and productions as well as the chance to meet pupils from other countries and learn with others”, and “live English – students like talking to fellow students as this gives motivation. Meeting and talking the language in real life is something that has no compulsory subject smell”. One respondent wrote: “It was **more fun**” because of the “intercultural dimension”. Taking the teachers’ answers into consideration, several of them express that the use of English in “real” situations plays an important role in this eTwinning project. In the next question I wanted to find out the teachers’ personal opinions on the concept of intercultural competence.

Question 8: What does the concept intercultural competence mean to you?

Judging from respondents’ answers there are 5 categories that stand out here. I use Byram’s model of intercultural competence when summarizing the answers. The letters A-E represent his different aspects of intercultural competence:

- A. **Knowledge:** Byram describes this as “knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one’s own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor’s country” (1997:35). In my study this entails to be able to learn from others and gain membership of the world. One respondent said that it meant to use : “Our knowledge of the world to establish connections between different world visions”. A second respondent answered: “Intercultural competence is the development of knowledge and skills, in behaviour and communication that are both appropriate in intercultural interactions”. These two statements corresponds well to Byram’s model of intercultural competence.
- B. **Attitudes:** This aspect refers to personality traits, to be able to show tolerance, to respect and accept differences, to show support, appreciation and mutual understanding. These traits are key elements in respondents’ answers. One respondent answered: “To be accepted and integrated in the learning community”, meaning that acceptance is part of being interculturally competent. A second respondent expressed the following: “It is good to use the English language to communicate with each other and be able to appreciate the other countries’ way of dealing with the same task”. A third respondent answered: “To me, it means to communicate effectively with other people who have different customs, thoughts, lifestyles and to meet in common with respect”. These three statements correspond well to Byram’s *savoir être*, which refers

to personality traits such as openness, empathy and awareness of others that are important factors when developing intercultural competence.

- C. **Skills of interpreting and relating:** According to Byram learners need to be able to interpret a cultural event or document from another culture, to show awareness of social cultural differences and different points of views. One respondent expressed the following: “Being aware of one’s own cultural identity in the framework of other different identities which together contribute to active common goals of peace, cooperation and inclusion”. Another respondent wrote: “It’s looking at things differently, according to other cultures”. Byram states that an interculturally competent person needs to have the ability to interpret, compare and contrast events from different countries and cultures and this is expressed in the respondents’ answers above.
- D. **Skills of discovery and interaction:** Byram refers to this aspect as the ability to analyze data from one’s own country as well as from another. It is necessary to be able to acquire new knowledge about other cultures and use that knowledge to communicate and interact effectively with people from all over the world. One respondent answered the following: “It is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures”. Another respondent expressed the following: “I find it very useful to gain intercultural competence as it is important to be able to communicate with people from other cultures, work together, learn and accept different points of view”. A third respondent wrote: “The capability of interacting with any different culture and know details and facts of new cultures”. These answers correspond well to Byram’s statement that it is important to see things from different perspectives and to reflect both upon one’s own and others’ values.
- E. **Critical cultural awareness:** According to Byram, this refers to the ability to acquire critical cultural awareness of the society and its values and practices. It is important to be able to understand and evaluate one’s own culture and remain non-judgemental in interaction with people of other cultures. One respondent posed the following question: “Does it mean to be aware of social and cultural differences and issues in other countries”? Another respondent expressed the following: “It means both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies”. Byram means that someone who has a critical understanding of one’s own culture and of other cultures possesses intercultural competence and this is expressed in the respondents’ answers.

All the teachers' answers are closely connected to the aspects that Byram includes in his model of intercultural competence. The teachers identify the importance of knowledge about other cultures, that attitudes such as tolerance, respect, acceptance, openness, are needed in communication and interaction with people of different cultural heritage but also skills of analysing, interpreting, comparing, and critically evaluating in order to develop intercultural competence. In the following question teachers were asked if and how this project has helped them develop their intercultural competence.

Question 9: Has this particular project helped you as a teacher develop your intercultural competence? If yes, in which way?

16 of the respondents have answered yes and two respondents have answered no: "Not this project in particular", "not very much due to some problems I've had, not being able to continue to work for the project". In the following I will summarize the teachers' answers and put them in different categories: **International collaboration**, "working with international teams is enriching", "I've developed good relations with some teachers and hope to continue our collaboration". **Sharing teaching practices**: The sharing of materials and the exchange of ideas led to additional knowledge about each other's cultures. To quote one respondent: "I have just read that developing intercultural competence is a lifelong process, in this case, this project has most certainly contributed to my development in as much as the enormous amount of communication that we did and the information shared on Twinspace". **Communication** was emphasized, a respondent wrote: "Yes, it has. There were a lot of participants from different countries and we could easily communicate with them. All of the participants shared materials that showed their cultural values, traditions and way of life". Thus, **cultural diversity** was found to be important. A teacher wrote: "Sure, as I have worked with many different countries". Another respondent expressed: "Yes, I've learnt a lot about the partners' cultures from all our project tasks".

Since there are many partner schools involved in the project, there were many opportunities to schedule **Skype sessions** during school hours which led to synchronous communication among both students and teachers about diverse subjects. Some respondents wrote the following: "Yes, especially when we skyped with Italy", "yes, because my students could meet other students from all over the world", "yes, it has. In this project, during its whole cycle, I was involved in online communication with my students through Skype

sessions, forums, and online tasks which we commented”. **Cooperation** was also mentioned: “Yes, you always learn from working with other countries”. Some additional comments about the teachers’ development of intercultural competence were issues of **otherness and friendliness**: “Definitely, my students and I learnt about other ways of thinking” and “there was a friendly atmosphere in our group, so I have been stimulated to keep in touch with many teachers, becoming more confident in my intercultural learning/teaching”, thus **confidence** is emphasized as well. Other factors which were mentioned were **professional development** and **reliability**: “Yes, a lot, like any other European project I have taken part in. In the large eTwinning community I learned to learn from the others, to rely on their skills and availability, to exchange ideas and mutual help in case of need”. One respondent mentioned **cultural differences**. She wrote that she learned: “How to cope with teachers who procrastinate as part of their culture”.

Judging from all these answers, the survey shows that this project has had a positive effect in teachers’ professional development of intercultural competence by collaborating in international teams and that it has been an enriching experience for both students and teachers through the online communication via Skype. In the next question teachers were asked to respond to if and how this project has helped students develop their intercultural competence.

Question 10: Has this particular project helped students develop their intercultural competence? If yes, in which way?

All respondents answered yes. The large number of participating countries allowed students to gain awareness of different countries and cultures. As for the teachers’ replies, Byram’s model of intercultural competence and the five *savoirs* is used when summarizing the answers. The letters A-E represent the different aspects that Byram includes in his model:

- A. **Knowledge**: Students got to know about each other’s cultures through the use of online communication and through authentic materials within the project work. One respondent wrote the following: “Working with international teams is enriching”. A second respondent wrote: “It gave them a chance to communicate with their foreign peers and learn a lot about the partners’ countries, cultures, traditions, etcetera”. A third respondent expressed that: “They were in communication with other students while doing tidbits” which refers to the activity when students from different countries interviewed each other, collected personal facts about each other’s interests and preferences and presented these facts on an online padlet. Through this activity

students gained a lot of knowledge about diverse persons and countries. A fourth respondent wrote: “Sure, they have met mates from other countries and have made friends”, which shows that the online interaction has given opportunities to students to gain knowledge of the world and to establish connections for a longer period of time. This is in line with Byram’s *savoirs* of gaining knowledge about social groups and their cultures through socialisation and interaction.

- B. **Attitudes:** Students had the chance to discuss values and tell about their lives when they had face to face conversations during the different Skype sessions. To quote a respondent: “They learnt to accept different ways of thinking”. Another respondent wrote: “Yes, a lot. The huge number of participating countries has allowed students to gain awareness of the different places, habits, traditions, attitudes and perspective inside our common European identity. United in diversity”. A third respondent expressed the following: “They learnt to be more respectful and interested in other cultures”. The answers correspond well with Byram’s description of attitudes needed when valuing people of other cultures.
- C. **Skills of interpreting and relating:** Students used two avatars who paid a virtual visit to the participating schools for a week and had the chance to learn what a typical day looked like in another country. One respondent wrote the following: “You open the doors of the classroom to other students and schools”. Another respondent wrote: “Yes, because they could meet other students from other cultures and countries”. This is in line with what Byram states about the intercultural speaker who needs to be able to interpret documents depicting another culture.
- D. **Skills of discovery and interaction:** Students used chats, forums and had real-time communication and interaction with each other. They made films and slide presentations about their countries, traditions and lifestyles. A respondent wrote: “They learnt to communicate online with students from other countries, learnt how to create an audio and video message”. Another respondent expressed that: “Students could communicate with their peers in videoconferences and engage in conversations about their countries and cultures”. The answers correspond well with what Byram states about the ability to identify processes of interaction and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances.

E. **Critical cultural awareness:** Students had the chance to gain critical cultural awareness about their own cultures and about the other partners' cultures. One respondent expressed it in the following way: "Being exposed to so many nationalities/cultures" which means that the intercultural speaker reflects upon his own culture as much as upon the other students' cultures. When they interacted with each other they were able to exchange ideas about stereotypes and to compare cultural similarities and differences. Another respondent wrote: "Yes, they learnt to become more aware of cultural differences and similarities and to respect difference. A third respondent wrote: "I think it has for most of them. Again, our internet connection is a problem but they seemed to overcome these problems with their own technology and communicating networks. They just got on with it. I believe that young people today are much more interculturally competent than we imagine, probably more than us". The answers are in line with what Byram argues about the ability to critically evaluate similarities and differences between cultures.

The last answer from the respondent indicates that students of today are very savvy when it comes to technology, in other words, they are the digital natives and the use of technology is a natural part of their everyday lives. Thanks to this project, students have made friends and may be able to continue interaction and communication in the future via different social networks. In the next question teachers were asked which online tools they found the most valuable and why they chose these particular tools.

Question 11: Which online tools have been the most valuable in this projects in promoting intercultural competence and why did you choose these?

Apart from Twinspace and email, the following tools were mentioned as being valuable in the project work: The following includes answers from a number of respondents: "Adobe Spark (for its easiness to create video narration), Blue robot (making an Avatar introducing yourself if you don't want to publish your personal photo), Kizoa (easy videos with lots of simple effects), Befunky (for user-friendly collages)", "Padlet as a tool for presentations; Skype – direct communication", "Vimeo, to edit movies", "Youtube, easy to use", "video editing tools (iMovie), presentation tools (Google slides), Kahoot" and "Calameo, to create virtual journeys".

It seems that the two most popular tools used in the project were Padlet and Skype. Padlet was used the most in order to collect products and materials and Skype was used frequently when students met face to face in real dialogues. In the following question teachers were asked to list which concepts they found to be important in order to better develop intercultural competence.

Question 12: Which concepts are important in this project in order to better develop intercultural competence?

“The concepts” referred to in question 12 are the various aspects that Byram includes in his model of intercultural competence namely, knowledge, attitudes and skills complemented by the values one holds by belonging to a given society. Attitudes such as curiosity, openness, ability to decentre and see things from other perspectives are important to possess for an intercultural speaker, according to Byram. The answers from the responding teachers correspond to Byram’s statement about **attitudes** because some teachers mentioned words such as respect, tolerance, openness, goodwill and effort as being important concepts.

Diversity and **national heritage** were also mentioned as important concepts which are needed to better develop intercultural competence. To quote one respondent: “Diversity, union, tradition, cultural habits, countries’ tidbits, national heritage”. Another respondent expressed that **knowledge** was important: “Knowledge about other cultures, knowing how to communicate with peers from other countries”. Two respondents mentioned **collaboration and sharing**: “Intercultural collaboration; exchange of information”, “sharing and cooperating”. One respondent mentioned skills and wrote: “Improved writing skills”. A few teachers brought up the importance of **storytelling**: “Each person has its own story and each story is valuable”, “telling stories, online communication via Skype sessions, interactive tasks”, “each story has its own value and all together can create a narrative universe”, “writing about you, your country, inspiring people, a school week with the travel diary”. One teacher emphasized the **pedagogical method** “project-based learning and teaching” and also the use of **digital tools** “exposure to ICT-tools – Google Hangouts and Skype”.

There were several teachers who mention that the communicative part among students and teachers was definitely rated as one of the most important concepts to better develop intercultural competence. By communicative part they refer to the frequent skype sessions which were organized among the participating schools. In the next question teachers were asked to list benefits with participating in this project.

Question 13: What are the benefits with “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories”, according to you?

The responding teachers referred to benefits such as **collaboration**: “A real example of working with interculturality collaboratively”, “connecting and collaborating with partners from different backgrounds”. **Communication** was another important factor which was mentioned as a benefit: “Enabling students to communicate with their foreign peers”, “having good communication skills with your students”, “Skype lessons were wonderful”. Some respondents mentioned **creativity**: “Students are given their voice/they can create stories about topics they are interested in”. **Authenticity** was also seen as beneficial: “Pupils had the chance to interact with the project partners for a while using English for authentic tasks”. **Knowledge** was mentioned by some teachers as being important: “Knowledge acquisition”, “the windows into other cultures”. The **European dimension** was mentioned as beneficial: “I think we exercised a kind of online European school 21 while carrying each individual project step”, “the fact that we, the world, is made by many countries, many languages but we have more similarities among all than we thought”. Some teachers mentioned different sorts of **learning**: “Learning new tools”, “learning to respect other cultures”, “deal with differences”. Several respondents considered that the **connecting** part had a positive effect: “Getting to know lots of teachers”, “having contacts, sharing, exchanging with others”, “meeting new students and teachers”, “using technology to connect”. **Involvement** during class lessons was brought up: “My students were more involved in the lessons”. **Variation** was considered to be another benefit: “The variety of tools which have been used or suggested”. Some teachers mentioned **challenge**: “Students’ curiosity to learn and to face also challenging tasks. The student of mine whose voice is recorded in the video narration spent a long time to rehearse her audio performance, recording herself on the mobile until she was satisfied with it”. **Determination** was mentioned by one teacher: “This project gave me the determination to continue in eTwinning projects”. **Belonging** was mentioned as being another benefit: “Feeling that you belong to a large group of students your age and do tasks not only for your own benefit”.

As shown in the teachers’ answers the benefits of working in this eTwinning project are many. In the following question teachers were asked to tell if they found any drawbacks when working in this project.

Question 14: What are the drawbacks with "The Universe is Made of Tiny Stories" according to you?

Some teachers responded that there were too many partner schools involved and that not all of the partners respected the assigned tasks and deadlines. A few respondents expressed the following: "Not all the partners follow the project calendar", "sometimes it is difficult to get teachers organized if there are many", "too many partners and not all of them worked according to strategies", "some teachers did sign up but did not do anything", "the only drawback (which was also an advantage) in my opinion, was that there were so many schools involved. So much material wasn't appreciated because it was just too much". In addition, some teachers expressed that it was impossible to keep in touch with all the partner schools through online communication. Here are a few more comments: "It was impossible to arrange 1-1 sessions on a regular basis", "there should have been more interaction between the students on the forum like we did in the first term to make student tidbits. Students really enjoyed that part". Some teachers mentioned lack of time as one drawback: "We'd be happy to find time to communicate more with more schools, spend more online time together".

It is not very common to find eTwinning projects with so many different partner schools involved, especially not with participating countries outside of Europe. Of course there will be benefits and drawbacks but in this case, it seems that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. In the last question teachers were asked to give further comments about the project.

Question 15: Any other comments?

Most of the respondents did not write any additional comments here but some expressed positive thoughts and opinions about this project: One teacher expressed the following about being a beginner of eTwinning projects: "I am new at my school and this is the first time my students have joined an eTwinning project. They were so eager to do it". Some teachers wrote these positive comments: "A great project; wonderful devoted teachers, really creative students", "we really enjoyed taking part in this project and being together", "we're all happy to have had the chance to take part in this project", "we liked it very much". In addition, the following was expressed by another respondent: "A pleasure for me working in this project because it has fulfilled my expectations, thanks to my students and thanks to other members". Some teachers would like to see a continuation of the project: "I hope to continue our collaboration", "I wish I could continue next year with a project like this", "I hope I will have the chance to take part in such an interesting project again, where I learned a lot and was

really happy of the students' interest and involvement". Here is one additional final comment from a respondent: "The best thing about eTwinning is the special people that you are able to meet and who share their expertise".

All in all, judging from the answers to this final survey question, several teachers express their gratitude towards eTwinning projects of this kind and state that they enjoyed participating in "The Universe is made of Tiny Stories". It is noteworthy to mention that eTwinning projects can become a springboard for further collaboration through the Erasmus+ strategic partnership programme.

In the following I am going to sum up the teacher survey and comment on some issues. I wanted to find out to what extent this project promoted intercultural competence. It is indicated by the teachers' answers that this eTwinning project has been successful in promoting intercultural competence and has added value to both teachers and students. For the teachers it has been beneficial to collaborate internationally because opportunities have been given to share methods and ideas and try innovative ways of teaching, to create networks, to learn about traditions and lifestyles, to compare educational systems, to become digitally competent to some degree and to enhance English language skills. Teachers have been able to introduce students to a wider European dimension. According to the teachers, students have developed their intercultural competence through this online collaboration by being exposed to many different nationalities when working in international teams, by interacting with peers during Skype sessions and by developing good relations and friendships across Europe.

6.2 Results from student questionnaire

In the following the results from the student questionnaire will be presented. There were 99 responding students in total. The first three questions (see appendix 4) covered information about the respondents' gender, age and nationality. It turned out that 49 students were male and 50 female. The age of the respondents ranged between 15 and 18 years. The respondents reside in the following countries: Belgium (2), Croatia (2), Czech Republic (1), Italy (29), Norway (4), Poland (10), Portugal (27), Spain (5), Sweden (14) and Turkey (5). The responding students from Italy come from three different schools. The participating students represent a large number of countries all over Europe. In the following question I wanted to

find out if the students have had any experience in working with eTwinning projects or if this was the first time they took part in one.

Question 4: Is this your first eTwinning project? If not, which ones have you participated in earlier?

Almost half of the respondents, 47 students, have answered that this was their first eTwinning project they participated in. Two answered that they did not know and 50 of the respondents answered that they have participated in other projects among which these were mentioned: “Apps4good”, “Apps4EL”, “Be careful, eat healthy”, “Exotic species”, “Hostel Europe”, “Intercultural Mosaic”, “Modern world challenges”, “Photo of Santander”, “Smart penpals” and “True colours”. Hence, many of them are experienced eTwinners and used to working with the tools offered on the eTwinning platform. In the next question the responding students were asked to mention what they have learned by participating in the eTwinning project “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories”.

Question 5: What have you learned by participating in this project?

Four students answered that they had not learned anything by participating in this project. Some students answered that they learned **how eTwinning works**: “What eTwinning is and how it works”. The majority of respondents answered that this project has led to learning more about two major areas, namely **internationalisation** and **digitalization**. The most frequent answers about internationalisation were that they gained **knowledge about other countries and cultures**: “I learned something about other countries in the world”, “I have learned about new people and new cultures”, “many things about other countries”, “I learned how school works in other countries”, “I learned a lot about other countries while I was talking to my partner”. **Meeting inspiring people** from all around the world and hearing their stories was also brought up, to quote one respondent: “I learned that the universe is made of tiny stories”. **Communication** on Skype and **cooperation** in teams were also emphasized: “I developed my communicating skills with people from other countries”, “communication and IT skills”, “communication”, “I learned how you can cooperate with other nations about important topics”, “work in team”.

The students who mentioned digitalization emphasized that they developed better knowledge of **digital skills** for example when they made videos or when they created avatars for the project assignments: “Use digital skills and many programmes”, “new online tools, communication on Skype with students, make avatars”, “many things: other students, other

countries, tools online". Being **part of a community via ICT** was also mentioned. One student wrote: "Despite the distance, thanks to technology, we can be closer". The use of digital tools offered creativity when working with the project activities. To quote some who mentioned that they learned to be **creative**: "I learned to be more creative", others mentioned the **fun** part of it: "Having fun while making projects", "having fun while working with friends".

Some students mentioned the development of linguistic skills and that they **learned more English**: "To use English", "to speak English better", "English skills", "to communicate in English", "it's important to learn all languages in the world". The students' answers correspond to the teachers' answers when asked the same question. In the following question I wanted to find out if there is anything in particular which makes the project learning differ from the ordinary classroom learning.

Question 6: Is there anything in particular that makes this project learning differ from your ordinary classroom learning?

Nine respondents answered no and 37 answered yes. The remaining 53 answered with different comments. Especially the **online communication** and **interaction** were emphasized: "The communication with people from other countries", "we were online with other students", "more talking and learning about other countries", "yes, we used skype", "yes, we could practice our conversation skills with other participants from different countries", "yeah, we chat with other students", "yes, skype classes", "it 's different because in this project we learn how to speak with people of others countries", "more interaction with different kinds of people", "yes, for example the contact with guys of other countries and the opportunity to compare oneself about some topics", "we have seen some Spanish guys by Skype. We have talked with them a lot, every Friday for half an hour", "the biggest difference is that you can "speak" with other guys from all over the world". **Authenticity** was also brought up by the respondents: "In this project we can practice our English in real situations", "yes, because when you hear other teenagers tell about their country and lives, it feels more real than if you read facts on internet. And I also made friends through etwinning by social media so now I can chat with them and so on". Another issue which was mentioned here was **group work**: "Yes, we work together and we have lots of fun", "yes, team work", "yes, because we learnt things in a different way, for example searching things on the internet and working in groups", "we worked together". Some students mentioned that the project added **creativity**:

“There is more room for creativity here”, “I saw what is creativity too”, “yes, we learned differently, it was more creative”. Another aspect which was mentioned was that it was **more fun** and less boring: “it is not boring”, “it’s more funny”, “yes, because we practice English in a funny way”, and that it was **more interesting**: “Yes, it’s really interesting”, “yes, it’s more interesting and keeps us motivated”. One student expressed the following: “The classes are faster and less “heavier”. Besides that, I’m sure that I’ve learned more in this classes than in the ordinary classes”. Many also enjoyed using **more technology**: “Yes, we use computers or tablets”, “yes, learning with technologies”, “yes, using technology and having fun while learning”, “yes, it has interactive tasks”, “I learned to use programs on computer”.

Judging from the answers, students liked interacting with peers from other countries, that they enjoyed using technology and that they felt that their English skills were developed since they had the chance to practice their English both orally, during Skype sessions, and in the written form through the practical work with the project activities. In the following question my aim was to investigate if and how the project has helped the students better develop their understanding of other people’s cultural values, traditions and way of life.

Question 7: Has this particular project helped you as a student develop your understanding of other people’s cultural values, traditions and way of life? If yes, in which way?

28 respondents answered no to this question. The other 71 responding students answered yes, it has helped them develop their understanding of other people’s cultures by communicating with other people. One topic which was brought up and which gave students an insight in was **school** and how it works in different countries: “Yes, because doing the kahoots and watching the videos of the other students, I learned some tiny things about the daily routine or about the school in other places of the world”, “by talking with foreign people, I’ve learned about them and about their cultures, the school system and so much more”. Another topic was **food**: “Yes, the people from other countries that I met told me how they eat, what their school looks like, their traditions [...]”, “yes, language, food and hobbies”, “yes I have. I have learned something about what they eat”, “yes, this project helped me because I could know how other people from another country conduct their lives and what they eat. **Perspective** was also mentioned: “Yes, I have got different perspective on their culture”. Another topic was **traditions and way of life**: “Yes, I have learnt how they celebrate Christmas for example”, “yes, I learned some things about the Turkish way of life, since my partner was from Turkey”. One student compared similarities and differences among countries and emphasized the

following: “I have found that teenagers are similar despite their country and religion”. This answer is close to what Byram refers to as critical cultural awareness. **Understanding of other cultures** was also emphasized: “Yes, by understanding different cultures”, “yes, I didn’t know a lot of things and talking with people helped me understand their culture”, “yes, in my opinion this project has been very useful because I have learned new things for example other people’s cultural values, traditions and so on”, “yes, I understand their cultural values with their own opinions”, “yes, because I learned about other cultural values and I understood they are not better or worse than my cultural values”. Another important topic which was mentioned was **respect**: “Yes, respect the other cultures”, “yes, because now I am more open to the different cultures”, “yes, because now I don’t believe in the stereotypes”.

Many of the students’ answers correspond to Byram’s aspects needed for the development of intercultural competence such as attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours. Byram claims that it is important to reflect upon one’s own cultural heritage, to possess a critical self-awareness and to remain open, curious, respectful and non-judgemental when interacting with others. The next question will focus on communication and interaction between students from different countries and which online tools that were used.

Question 8: Did you have the opportunity to communicate and interact with students from other countries in this particular project? If yes, which online tools did you use and why did you choose these tools?

Ten respondents answered no to this question but all the others answered yes and the most frequent online tool which was mentioned was **Skype**: “We choose Skype because it’s the best way to see each other and talk, and I think this is the most popular online tool to communicate”. **Email** was also used: “Yes, I have used the email because it is very easy to use”, **Instagram** was another option: “Yes, was great fun and we talked through Skype or Instagram”. Some students used **Whatsapp**: “My teacher chose Skype! Then we created a whatsapp group and sometimes we talked with them by Instagram”. Many answered that they used **Twinspace**: “We used only Twinspace”, “we use the forum”, “Twinspace chat”. Other students have used **Facebook**: “Yes, I used Facebook because it’s easy and fast to communicate” and even **Messenger**: “Yes, using messenger”. Some of them have used **Google mail**: “Yes, I used the eTwinning chat platform and the Gmail”.

People are used to fast connections that technology offers today, they are able to communicate with other people all over the world in split seconds and today’s students are

quick in taking advantage of this phenomenon. Using social media to communicate is a natural part of their everyday lives and this is shown in the answers above. The next question deals with which skills students have developed in online collaboration when working with this project.

Question 9: Which skills have you developed by connecting and collaborating online in this particular project?

Some respondents have answered that they do not know. Others answered that they developed **communicative skills**: “Communication with people of other countries”, “that you can talk to other teenagers in a way you wouldn’t have done if it wasn’t for eTwinning”, “we improve our communication skills”, “communicate with strangers, sharpening our English level”, “maybe a benefit could be speaking with people of different countries... It’s a good thing to improve English and learn new things about what is around us”, “communicative skills”, “talking with other people”, “to listen to others”, “I developed interactive skills”. Some students answered that they developed **creativity**: “We are developing our creative side”, “I have developed creativity too”, “it is more free than the usual teaching methods and more room for creativity and also you get to learn about other people’s everyday life”. Another issue that was mentioned was **global citizenship**. One student wrote: “I have developed global citizenship. I have learnt from other classmates and from students from other countries”. Quite a few students mentioned that they developed their **English skills**: “I think I improved my grammar skills because I write a lot”, “my writing skills”, “I improved my English because I could use it to speak about everything and about new topics”, “developing our language skills”, “I polished talking in English”, “my English is developed”, “talk English better because we did skype”, “it takes my speaking skill to better level”, “talking in English”, “more secure with talking to people in English”. One respondent mentioned **knowledge**: “You can know other people with different stories than yours and that’s a benefit because you can widen your knowledge”. Some students answered that they learned **ICT skills**: “Now I know how can I edit videos, making avatars, recording voices etc”, “I learned to use the computer more”, “I have learned to use a lot of app on internet”, “Ive learned to do video editing”. One student answered that he developed “**empathy**”. Judging from the answers, the majority of respondents emphasized the fact that this project helped them develop their communication and linguistic skills.

Many of the student answers correspond to Byram's model of intercultural competence. Skills which draw on knowledge and are needed about each other's cultures, attitudes such as respect and openness towards otherness, interpreting of similarities and differences between countries, relating and interacting by communicating on Skype, all of which play an important role in order to better develop intercultural competence. In the following question I wanted to find out if the students could detect any benefits with this eTwinning project work.

Question 10: What are the benefits with "The Universe is made of Tiny Stories", according to you?

Some students answered nothing or that they did not know. One respondent answered: "Being part of a community". The majority of respondents mentioned that they gained **cultural knowledge** about other countries. A few respondents expressed the following: "Knowledge of new traditions", "learn new cultures", "you can know other people with different stories than yours and that's a benefit because you can widen your knowledge", "we learned about Spanish culture, their language and some of their traditions", "learn the culture of other country", "we get to know things about people a lot far from us and then we are able to compare those things, like culture and way of life, with ours", "understanding cultures", "that there are many other people with different stories and lives than ours", "learn the culture of the other country", "ability to learn about other cultures, traditions and developing our language skills". **Meeting new people** was also brought up: "I met new people", "we can talk with people from other countries, that's something that possibly I would never could do", "meeting other people and learning about other countries", "know new people", "we got together with many students from different parts of Europe". **Work** with people from other countries was mentioned as a benefit: "We had the opportunity to work with people from other countries", "it connects students from many countries and makes us feel more like a community". The **communication** part was mentioned: "The communication, the collaboration and the will of inventing", "that you can talk to other teenagers in a way you wouldn't have done if it wasn't for etwinning", "communicating with other people", "communicating with people of other countries", "maybe a benefit could be speaking with people of different countries. It's a good thing to improve English and learn new things about what is around us", "communicate with strangers, sharpening our English level", "we get to interact with others", "we improve our communication skills".

The **creative** part was brought up: “I have developed creativity too”, “we are developing our creative side”. New **teaching methods** were also mentioned: “It’s more free than the usual teaching methods and more room for creativity, and also you get to learn about other people’s everyday life”, it’s a different way of learning”, “to work differently, meet and learn to know new cultures and educations”, “it’s a new experience that provides new skills and new feelings”. Two students wrote: “it was **fun**”, “having fun at school”. One wrote: “It was **exciting**” and a few others wrote: “It was **interesting**: “It’s interesting and keeps us motivated”. Some students mentioned the **storytelling** part: “That everyone has a story to tell”, “I think that the benefits are to know the others with these tiny stories”, “every school wrote about their stories”. The use of **ICT-tools** was also mentioned: “New ICT-tools”, “using ICT tools”. Some students mentioned the **skyping**: “Skype classes”. One student answered: “Now I am more social, informed and entrepreneur than before”.

All in all, the student responses were very positive and the benefits many for those involved in this project. The next question was asked in order to find out if there were any drawbacks when working with this project.

Question 11: What are the drawbacks with “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories”, according to you?

Some respondents answered that they did not know. The majority, 74 students, answered that there are no drawbacks: “I don’t see any drawback”, “no drawbacks”, “none”, “nothing”, “I don’t think I can find any”, “there are no drawbacks, in my opinion”, “in my opinion there weren’t drawbacks. All that we did was fantastic”. Some students mentioned that the project takes **time**: “It takes a lot of time”, “it takes a lot of time to make it all work”, “we didn’t have much time to do all the tasks”, “we do not have enough time for everything”, “it gives us less time to study other things in english class”, “it’s very time consuming”. Some students mentioned a **bad internet connection**: “For us the problem was the internet connection”, “in Skype sessions sometimes communication was very hard because of weak connections”.

Some additional comments which were given were that some partners did not do or finish their tasks on time. This is a relevant comment considering the fact that there were 13 participating countries involved in the project and that it took time to study all the material which was uploaded. Another impeding factor was that schools have different breaks during the school year and different times when the students had tests, which made it hard to finish all the expected work on time.

All in all, the majority of students enjoyed the project work and did not see any drawbacks. In the last question students were given the chance to express any other comments about the project.

Question 12: Any other comments?

75 students wrote no or no comments. Some students added a few comments such as the following ones: “I have enjoyed the project very much”, “I hope we’ll make this project next year too!”, “keep the projects”, “I hope that there are more projects like this one”, “I would like to do it again”, “beautiful activity”, “it was a great experience”, “it would have been nice if we could have met people in their countries”, “it’s a good way to learn more”, “I like doing these projects, they’re always interesting”.

Judging from the answers, the majority of students enjoyed working in this project by being connected to other European schools beyond the classroom boundaries and some of them would like to see a continuation in the near future.

7. Discussion

In the following I will compare and discuss the teacher and student answers in order to show if and how they mirror each other. When comparing the results there are some recurrent categories which are pointed out and appear to be essential in this project for both teachers and students. These categories which also correspond to some extent to Byram’s aspects of intercultural competence are:

7.1 ICT

Today’s students are digital natives and accustomed to a high tech multimedia environment. Therefore, teachers can take advantage of this and integrate ICT even more into their teaching. Quite a few students have different learning styles and would benefit from working with ICT tools rather than from written texts. In the article *Can E-Learning Foster Intercultural Competence?*, Rollin and Harrap (2005) state the following: “Language acquisition is not merely a case of learning irregular verbs by heart. ICT has a major role to play”. In fact, it is important to combine ICT with the regular teaching of English since digitalization is here to stay. When it comes to ICT many respondents have mentioned that they have learned to use and manage diverse digital tools which have been of great value for

this particular project and may also be of use in the future. Since this project was conducted online without any physical meetings, it offered both teachers and students possibilities to use the tools provided on Twinspace and also other tools which were suggested by different teachers who had tried them out in other projects and knew that they were suitable for online collaboration. Thus, the sharing of ideas on which tools to use became a successful motivator during the project activities. Students expressed that they enjoyed using digital tools while learning English and said that this led to more fun lessons and this proved to be a win-win situation.

eTwinning provides international relations free of charge and offers huge possibilities to develop digital skills which are needed in the 21st century. Two prominent scholars, Fiedler and Piñán, state the following in *Challenging perspectives: Teaching globalisation and diversity in the knowledge society* (2008:5): “The 21st-century Western learner has been exposed to more information bytes than most generations by means of technology. This means that a diversity of skills are in operation at a faster pace and that sharper, more refined, critical thinking skills are needed”. The Swedish government has proposed a new goal for ICT and proclaimed that digital competence is a prerequisite and should be integrated in the curricula in order to meet future challenges both internationally and nationally. This applies to language teaching and learning as well. With the fast development of technology the future will most certainly offer great possibilities to work within the areas of internationalization and digitalization, the sky will be the limit.

7.2 Collaboration

Also noteworthy is the fact that teachers and students stated that collaboration has had a great impact on them and that it was an important factor in this project. The collaborative work among students has helped them develop a sense of belonging in the European community. The project has triggered curiosity to learn and explore the European dimension even more. Communication and intercultural dialogue through Skype has played an important role in this project. As phrased by UNESCO in *Intercultural Competences* (2013:14), “intercultural dialogue encourages readiness to question well-established value-based certainties by bringing reason, emotion and creativity into play in order to find new shared understandings”. Opening the classrooms to other countries and cultures has been an enriching experience for those involved. It was also expressed by students and teachers that collaboration and team

work within the English classes was strengthened due to the fact that students helped each other when problems occurred.

7.3 Communication

To be able to speak English correctly according to the grammar and syntax is not enough in our society. In intercultural encounters students must also have the ability to communicate in an appropriate way, to understand different attitudes and beliefs and not generalize. In this project, the teachers expressed clearly that students had the chance to communicate with peers through the Skype sessions on many different occasions and that they had the chance to glimpse students' lives in other European countries. The students expressed the same thing, they truly enjoyed Skyping because they could see each other which gave them the chance to pick up non-verbal communication and facial expressions as well. The Swedish students prepared questions prior to the Skype sessions which helped even the most timid ones to open up and speak English. Both students and teachers emphasized the fact that they improved their communicative skills in the English language.

7.4 Authenticity

Moreover, the project has offered authenticity; the possibility to have real face-to face online communication with peers across Europe has been gratifying. Thus, this has been highly emphasized as beneficial by both teachers and students. In fact, it is important to give students opportunities to practice their English in real situations. When young people met on Skype they could tell each other about their countries and ways of living instead of just reading about it in text books. Since many of them continued writing to each other on social media the contacts developed into friendships as well. A few teachers wrote that they learned how to incorporate Skype sessions into their teaching since this is a phenomenon which does not occur very often in regular teaching. Thus, this method proved to be challenging due to diverse technology equipment and internet connection which sometimes did not work well, but at the same time the Skype sessions offered great advantages and were much appreciated by both teachers and students.

7.5 Cultural knowledge

The teachers expressed that they gained knowledge about other countries, cultures, customs and rituals and that this has led to good relations between the participating schools. To be able

and meet in common with respect and communicate effectively was also emphasized. Procrastination was also brought up and it is interesting to take this cultural aspect into consideration because it explains the differences between northern European countries and southern European countries. In some countries this issue of procrastination is seen as laziness while in others it is a natural thing of everyday life. Thus, it has taught some teachers to cope with this issue without showing irritation and has led to a friendly atmosphere. Many students expressed that they have learned a lot about other cultures, values and traditions through the presentations and that they could detect differences and similarities. Food was brought up by many students due to the fact that this issue was brought up when they interacted with each other. It made them realize that food plays an important role in all cultures.

7.6 Attitudes and awareness of otherness

From the students' point of view, the survey answers reflect that they appreciated gaining knowledge about other countries which led to more respect and tolerance towards each other. In line with the findings of the survey, students expressed that they have gained awareness about diverse cultural traditions and lifestyles. Both students and teachers mentioned the importance of breaking stereotypes because the more they learned about other cultures, the more they understood each other better. They came to realize that "otherness" does not have to be something negative but something which is enriching. It was also expressed that it is a benefit to hear about other people's lives and stories which led to additional knowledge. The findings concur with Byram's *savoir être*, about curiosity, openness and respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviours which are needed in intercultural encounters (1997:34).

7.7 Skills of interpreting and relating

Byram refers to this as *savoir comprendre*, which means be able to understand events from another culture, explain them and relate them to one's own culture. Furthermore, Byram refers to the willingness to relate and show politeness: "Politeness is only the visible symptom of a complex phenomenon: the difference in beliefs, behaviours and meanings through which people interact with each other may lead to conflict – unless relationships are maintained through politeness" (1997:3). In this project, students had the chance to produce short films about their countries. The films showed different traditions and lifestyles and both students and teachers could draw from this and add new knowledge to the existing one. Students discussed stereotypes and generalizations about diverse ethnicities and realized how these can

lead to misunderstandings. They had the chance to identify and explain these generalizations during the Skype sessions.

7.8 Skills of discovery and interaction

This aspect refers to Byram's *savoir apprendre/faire* which is described as "the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction" (Byram et al., 2002:13). In this project, students and teachers had the chance to interact and communicate via Skype and use live English to mediate. They referred to it as opening the windows to other cultures which allowed them to communicate effectively and appropriately with students and teachers of other European countries. They had to deal with both familiar and unfamiliar situations and draw knowledge on that. Many students discovered similarities and differences of school systems across Europe. Students also learned the meaning of netiquette, how to engage in conversations on the net in an appropriate way.

7.9 Critical cultural awareness

This refers to Byram's *savoir s'engager*, which is described as: "ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (1997:63). In addition, he addresses that the intercultural speaker should: "Interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills and attitudes" (1997:64). Through the project work which required many different activities, students and teachers became more aware of their own values and the values of others'. They had the chance to view the world from different perspectives and evaluate these perspectives in a critical way. They learned to develop their intercultural competence by avoiding misunderstandings which could lead to potential conflicts.

From the teachers' point of view, the sharing of teaching practices and the networking part in this project has helped them develop professionally. The majority of respondents have given positive comments about this eTwinning project and many wish that they will have the chance to work in a similar project next school year. The results indicate that students like variation and show more dedication when they are given the chance to participate in eTwinning projects of this kind. Barrett et al. (2014:30) state the following: "There is much research indicating that learners learn better in contexts where lecturing from the front and

transmitting information is minimal, and where pedagogical approaches, methods and techniques that encourage learners to become actively involved in discovery, challenge, reflection and co-operation are used instead". In addition, the results of the survey illustrate that this eTwinning project has had a positive effect on both teachers and students when it comes to the development of intercultural competence. It seems that attitudes such as respect, tolerance and openness have been developed and this has led to better mutual understanding of each other's cultural backgrounds. Moreover, students have learned to interpret and understand the perspective of others and at the same time question their own perspectives. Of particular importance to note here, is the fact that the project has fostered skills of interpreting, relating, discovery and interaction and the project activities have led to critical cultural awareness. Students have had the chance to enlarge their view of the world and to understand their own culture better. Students have also sharpened their English language skills in both reading, listening, writing and speaking. In the article *LOA eTwinning project: An intercultural approach in foreign language teaching to foster motivation*, the following is stated: "eTwinning must be recognised as an effective option for learners to meet and learn with and about people of their ages who may live in distant countries but with whom they may share common goals and develop common projects".

Studies show that researchers Kramsch (1993), Byram (1997), Deardorff (2000), to name a few, agree on the importance of teaching intercultural competence in the EFL classroom but the question is; do educators have enough time to teach it? It is a fact that teachers of today are stressed and need to prioritize teaching materials that cover the content of the courses they are supposed to teach. Time does not allow to find ways of integrating intercultural competence since it is not tested or assessed in national tests, for example. Maybe this is one reason why eTwinning in Sweden has not reached its full potential the way it has in many other European countries. In this case, the Swedish students who participated in the eTwinning project "The Universe is made of Tiny Stories" had to be assessed according to the English course criteria for writing and speaking. Therefore, it was important to find a way to integrate this project in the English course, to involve the whole class in all the project activities and to grade the students accordingly. Maybe principals and senior school management staff should be recruited in eTwinning, as it is suggested in the article *eTwinning ten years on: Impact on teachers' practice, skills and professional development opportunities, as reported by eTwinners* (2000:50): "Targeting those involved in school management will not only raise further awareness of eTwinning's opportunities for schools, but will also

heighten the chances that eTwinning practices will influence school policy and be mainstreamed”. If this piece of advice were to be followed, eTwinning might become even more accessible in Sweden. Hopefully, this survey will inspire more Swedish teachers to get involved in eTwinning and be able to see the positive effects it can have on both teachers and students, since my findings show that the level of concurrence is high concerning the development of intercultural competence in “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories”. Let us not forget that it is possible for teachers in Sweden to find support to promote intercultural competence in the steering documents from the Swedish National Agency for Education.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this master thesis has been to explore if the eTwinning project “The Universe is made of Tiny Stories” promotes intercultural competence. The evidence from my survey shows that this project has in fact promoted intercultural competence to a great extent. Byram’s model of intercultural competence includes aspects that are relevant for this project and they have been traced in many of the project activities. In order to develop intercultural competence, students and teachers have had to invest much lesson time. During the online communication students had to give information and to receive information on equal terms. Ability to communicate across borders with politeness and ability to critically evaluate has been crucial. Students’ and teachers’ own identities were broadened by being given the chance to become familiar with other cultures and by building good relationships. The parts of this project which have best promoted intercultural competence have without doubt been the Skype sessions and the sharing of knowledge about other countries through the virtual trips of the avatars. This corresponds well to Byram’s *savoirs* “knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one’s own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor’s country” (1997:35). Furthermore, Byram’s aspects of *savoir apprendre/faire* “ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” are very relevant here (Byram et al., 2002:13). Students and teachers have acknowledged and embraced the cultural differences and hopefully this may lead to better inclusion and mutual understanding across nations. The teachers are the key factors who should try to integrate projects of this kind into their teaching in order to inspire, motivate and arouse curiosity in students. By providing students with holistic knowledge through dialogue it may be easier to avoid labelling and categorizing people of other countries. As I have shown in my thesis, one way of successfully promoting intercultural competence in the EFL classroom is to conduct

eTwinning projects. To conclude, this eTwinning project has definitely promoted intercultural competence among the participating students and teachers and been a very enriching experience.

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Appendix 1

Here are the participating countries (the number in brackets shows how many schools are representing the participating country):

1. Belgium (1)
2. Canada (3)
3. Croatia (1)
4. Czech Republic (1)
5. Greece (3)
6. Hungary (1)
7. India (1)
8. Italy (6)
9. Madagaskar (1)
10. Mexico (1)
11. Moldova (1)
12. Norway (1)
13. Pakistan (1)
14. Poland (1)
15. Portugal (2)
16. Romania (2)
17. Spain (4)
18. Sweden (1)
19. Turkey (2)
20. USA (4)

Appendix 2, project web sites

<https://twinspace.etwinning.net/21062/home>

<https://live.etwinning.net/projects/project/127928>

<https://theuniverseismadeoftinystoriesblog.wordpress.com>

<https://twinspace.etwinning.net/21062/pages/page/161837>

https://padlet.com/barbara_anna_zi/rjqlca6q7gm0

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ZgqMKV6xT4VwcQOAeBI2PELzvU7MX2Qx7FqHFf0lQRs/edit#slide=id.g1722b4b451_0_15

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FasuOMSH4hc-pnjR-gPSOXwq1zgTNMAEfMcJNA0vIq8/edit#slide=id.p>

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rNiw_FNx5T6PcsEEZJgNIGi7OSGTa1bxoPvJCqgAbQQ/edit

<https://spark.adobe.com/video/lnwmoBSmrwhZb>

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EDtR-dZkk4S0a9MMn5Te4fL71diY0Y8RklgT11EFoEI/edit>

https://docs.google.com/a/gapp.uddevalla.se/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfMS-7Fuef5Kz kfOINmetmfQNEVNlhXykoyYC1_az3yHz5cXQ/viewform

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EDtR-dZkk4S0a9MMn5Te4fL71diY0Y8RklgT11EFoEI/edit>

Appendix 3

Teacher Questionnaire: eTwinning & intercultural competence

The Universe is Made of Tiny Stories

1. What is your gender? *

Male

Female

2. What is your age? *

Kort svarstext

3. In which country do you teach? *

Kort svarstext

4. How many years have you incorporated eTwinning into your teaching? *

Kort svarstext

...

5. What made you join the eTwinning project "The universe is made of tiny stories"?

Lång svarstext

6. What have you learned by participating in this project? *

Lång svarstext

7. Is there anything in particular that makes this project teaching differ from your ordinary classroom teaching? *

Lång svarstext

8. What does the concept intercultural competence mean to you? *

Lång svarstext

...

9. Has this particular project helped you as a teacher develop your intercultural competence? If yes, in which way? *

Lång svarstext

10. Has this particular project helped students develop their intercultural competence? If yes, in which way? *

Lång svarstext

11. Which online tools have been the most valuable in this project in promoting intercultural competence and why did you choose these? *

Lång svarstext

12. Which concepts are important in this project in order to better develop intercultural competence? *

Lång svarstext

13. What are the benefits with "The universe is made of tiny stories", according to you? *

Lång svarstext

14. What are the drawbacks with "The universe is made of tiny stories", according to you? *

...

15. Any other comments? *

Lång svarstext

Student questionnaire: eTwinning & intercultural competence

The Universe is Made of Tiny Stories

⋮

1. What is your gender? *

- Male
- Female

2. What is your age? *

Kort svarstext

3. In which country do you live? *

Kort svarstext

⋮

4. Is this your first eTwinning project? If not, which ones have you participated in earlier? *

Lång svarstext

5. What have you learned by participating in this project? *

Lång svarstext

6. Is there anything in particular that makes this project learning differ from your ordinary classroom learning? *

Lång svarstext

...

7. Has this particular project helped you as a student develop your understanding of other people's cultural values, traditions and way of life? If yes, in which way? *

Lång svarstext

8. Did you have the opportunity to communicate and interact with students from other countries in this particular project? If yes, which online tools did you use and why did you choose these tools? *

Lång svarstext

9. Which skills have you developed by connecting and collaborating online in this particular project? *

Lång svarstext

...

10. What are the benefits with "The universe is made of tiny stories", according to you? *

Lång svarstext

11. What are the drawbacks with "The universe is made of tiny stories", according to you? *

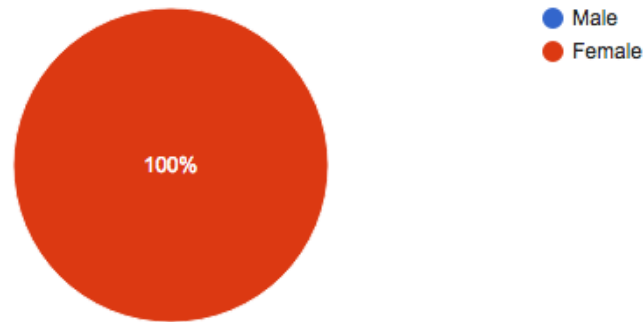
Lång svarstext

12. Any other comments? *

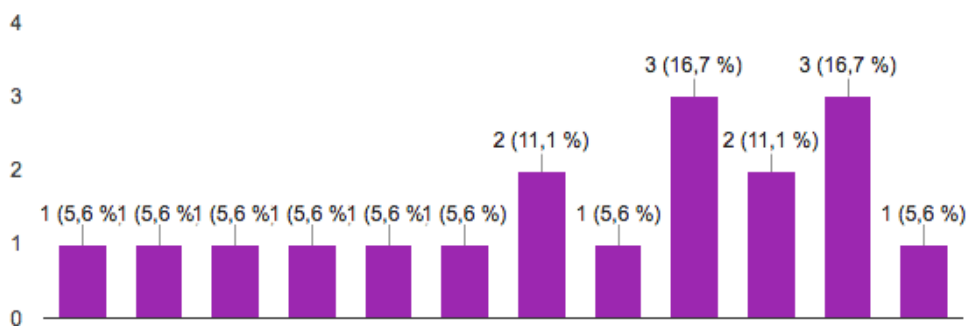
Appendix 5

Answers from teacher questionnaire

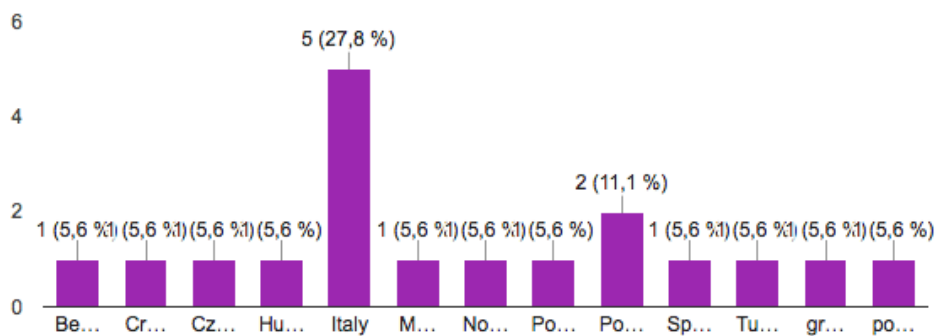
1. What is your gender? (18 svar)



2. What is your age? (18 svar)

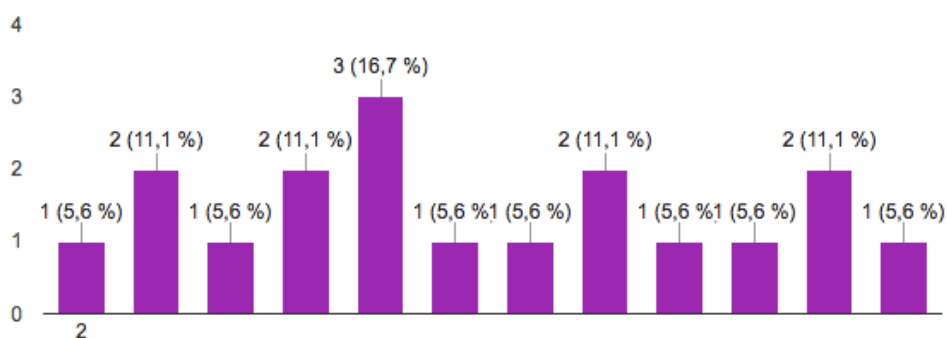


3. In which country do you teach? (18 svar)



4. How many years have you incorporated eTwinning into your teaching?

(18 svar)



5. What made you join the eTwinning project "The universe is made of tiny stories"?

Interest/Challenge/Contact/

To make it possible for my students to meet their peers from other countries online; to learn from my more experienced partners

First of I saw that there were many partners from all over the world not just in Europe. Then the steps I mean the goals were clear. Finally, the steps and the subjects are matching with our English curriculum.

I met the teacher administrator in a LE

I joined this project because I like and trust the teacher whose idea it was very much

Its idea of telling and sharing online/digital stories and also a possibility of regular Skype sessions. have been designing such projects for several years

the topic

The fact that I knew Barbara the founder, we met in a course and I invited her for her first eTwinning project and when she contacted me I accepted because she is a serious and reliable person, I gave suggestions to make the project more collaborative.

Friend teachers

Enlarge my boardings, meet new friends, learn new things, develop my skills

Excellent Project team.

I've read a post on the eTwinning platform by the coordinator of the project

the participation to the eTwinning conference in Athens

Connecting and collaborating with European teachers and students and an excellent opportunity for my students to improve their writing skills.

A webinar about storytelling with Bernard Robin, where some of us agreed with Barbara Anna Zielonka to join a project on this topic.

The topic

Trying something new, collaborating in something different

6. What have you learned by participating in this project?

Teachers and Students/Different methodology/Tools/My students capacities

lots of useful project tools, new ideas, how to incorporate Skype successfully in teaching English Cooperation and patience and also other webtools to be used in the future.

I've learned to manage tools effectively

I have learned how to use Kahoot and Loomio

How an eTwinning project works with a lot of participants who are involved a lot, share and learn at the same time.

how to plan and manage projects in the best possible way/ how to cooperate with teachers who lack ICT equipment at their schools

collaboration, support, innovation

About new tools pupils can use for their works

that a good project needs clear structures and interesting task for the students to be able to cooperate.

To make videos, films, digital stories

New interesting stories, collaboration tasks.

I learnt a different approach to digital storytelling, usually I apply DS in my literature class

using tools I hadn't used before, eg padlet and other stuff

How to handle a project with a huge number of partners.

How effective story telling can be carried out.

That during a project there can be problems you didn't expect concerning tools, timetables, students' engagements

improved my english skills and learned a lot of new things about cultures

Teachers and Students/Different methodology/Tools/My students capacities

lots of useful project tools, new ideas, how to incorporate Skype successfully in teaching English

Cooperation and patience and also other webtools to be used in the future.

I've learned to manage tools effectively

I have learned how to use Kahoot and Loomio

How an eTwinning project works with a lot of participants who are involved a lot, share and learn at the same time.

how to plan and manage projects in the best possible way/ how to cooperate with teachers who lack ICT equipment at their schools

collaboration, support, innovation

About new tools pupils can use for their works

that a good project needs clear structures and interesting task for the students to be able to cooperate.

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How to handle a project with a huge number of partners.

How effective story telling can be carried out.

That during a project there can be problems you didn't expect concerning tools, timetables, students' engagements

improved my english skills and learned a lot of new things about cultures

7. Is there anything in particular that makes this project teaching differ from your ordinary classroom teaching?

Students collaborate, are more active, learn from others/Teachers too.

it's more ICT oriented

Yes, we are active in etwinning project. We learn by doing and we have more interaction with our students.

It was much fun

It is nice for the students to communicate and to glimpse students' lives in other European countries although time is always precious and our internet connection is awful.

The idea of online communication with teachers and students from different countries.

students are much more engaged

the contact with other europeans

It offers my pupils a real audience for their writing and productions as well as the chance to meet pupils from other countries and learn with others.

Live English - students like talking to fellow students as this gives motivation. Meeting and talking the language in real life is something that has no compulsory subject smell.

The fact that students have to organize themselves in being actors, producers, argumentists....

Teaching from experiences of other participants.

Yes, of course, the particularity depends by the intercultural dimension

the energy all the teachers put in the project ; being so active !

Being able to connect with people from all over the world.

Project based learning, which is not usual in my school. Using ICT in teaching / learning.

yes, it involves students in a different way

no

8. What does the concept intercultural competence mean to you?

Learning from others/Respect differences/Tolerance/Support

the ability to communicate with people from different cultures and to cooperate

To me, it means that to communicate effectively with other people who have different customs, thoughts, life styles etc and to meet in common with respect.

intercultural competences are really important to me

Does it mean to be aware of social and cultural differences and issues in other countries?

I find it very useful as it's important to be able to communicate with people from other cultures, work together, learn and accept different points of view.

being able to understand/ collaborate and cooperate with people from all over the world

membership of the whole world

It's about using our knowledge of the world to establish connections between different world visions

It means both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies.

The capability of interacting with any different culture and know details and facts of new cultures

To be accepted and to be integrated in the learning community.

Intercultural competence is the development of knowledge and skills, in behaviour and communication that are both appropriate in intercultural interactions

It is good to use the English language to communicate with each other and be able to appreciate the other countries' way of dealing with the same task.

Mutual understanding, tolerance and respect.

Being aware of one's own cultural identity in the framework of other different identities which together contribute to achieve common goals of peace, exchange, cooperation and inclusion.

It is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures.

It's looking at things differently, according to other cultures

9. Has this particular project helped you as a teacher develop your intercultural competence? If yes, in which way?

Yes/ Working with international teams is enriching

Yes, I've learnt a lot about the partners' cultures from all our project tasks; I've developed good relations with some teachers and hope to continue our collaboration

Yes, especially when we skype with Italia ,I felt myself closer to her.

Yes because my students could meet other students from all over the world

I have just read that developing intercultural competence is a lifelong process, in this case, this project has most certainly contributed to my development inasmuch as the enormous amount of communication that we did and the information shared on Twinspace.

Yes, it has. In this project, during its whole cycle, I was involved in online communication with my students through Skype sessions, forums and online tasks which we commented.

how to cope with teachers who procrastinate as part of their culture

definitely. my students and I learnt about other way of thinking

Not this project in particular

yes

Sure as I have worked with many different countries

Yes.

There was a friendly atmosphere in our group, so I have been stimulated to keep in touch with many teachers, becoming more confident in my intercultural learning/teaching.

Yes, you always learn from working with other countries.

Yes, it has. There were a lot of participants from different countries and we could easily communicate with them. All of the participants shared materials that showed their cultural values, traditions and way of life.

Yes a lot, like any other European project I have taken part in. In the large etwinning community I learned to learn from the others, to rely on their skills and availability, to exchange ideas and mutual help in case of need.

Not very much because due to some problems I've not been able to continue to work for the project.

Yes because even if it is not the first time, it's always different passing the years

10. Has this particular project helped students develop their intercultural competence? If yes, in which way?

Yes/Working with international teams is enriching

It gave them a chance to communicate with their foreign peers and learn a lot about the partners' countries, cultures, traditions, etc

They were in communication with other students while doing tidbits.

Yes because they could meet other students from other cultures and countries

I think it has for most of them. Again, our internet connection is a problem so I but they seemed to overcome these problems with their own technology and communicating networks. They just got on with it. I believe that young people today are much more intercultural competent than we imagine, probably far more than us.

They learnt to communicate online with students from other countries, learnt how to create an audio and video message.

being exposed to so many different nationalities/ cultures

they learnt to accept the different way of thinking

Yes as they gace learnt to become more aware if cultural differences abd similarities and to respect difference

yes

Sure, they have met mates from other countries and have made friends

Yes.

They learnt to be more respectful and interested in other cultures

Yes, you open the doors of the classroom to other students, schools, ...

Students could communicate with their peers in videoconferences and engage in conversations about their countries and cultures.

Yes, a lot. The huge number of participating countries has allowed students to gain awareness of the different places, habits, traditions, attitudes and perspective inside our common European identity. United in diversity.

Yes, to feel part of a wider community

Yes, by knowing new things and growing our knowledge

11. Which online tools have been the most valuable in this project in promoting intercultural competence and why did you choose these?

All tools are valuable: Twinspace/email/others tools

Padlet as a tool for presentations; Skype - direct communication

Skype is the best and the easiest way for communication.

Padlet, because it is easy to use

We used varied tools. Skype and Padlets seemed to be the most popular due to their flexibility.

Adobe Spark (for its easiness), Blue robot (making an Avatar introducing you if you don't want to publish your personal photo), Kizoa (easy videos with lots of simple effects), Befunky (user-friendly collages)

the ones that are used for project management/ project collaboration and communication with others
skype, padlet

The project twinspace

country bits, chatting with partner students and making presentations about partner schools.

Vimeo to edit movies

Google presentation

the best online tool is Skype

padlet; youtube. As they were suggested and they are easy to use.

Skype, video editing tools (iMovie), presentation tools (Google Slides), Kahoot

Padlet as a tool to collect products and materials; adobespark to create video narration on inspiring people from each country and the ebook about the 2 avatars' travel diary, which has given (we used <http://ita.calameo.com/>) the opportunity to have a virtual journey around each of the participating countries and moreover the skype sessions in which students met face to face in real dialogues.

Tricider

Duolingo, busuu. To improve my english skills

12. Which concepts are important in this project in order to better develop intercultural competence?

Difference/Respect/Tolerance/Collaboration

Skype communication; intercultural collaboration; exchange of information;

Tidbits of students were great.

sharing and cooperating

Definitely the communicative part among the students but also among the teachers.

Telling stories, online communication via Skype sessions, interactive tasks.

project based learning and teaching/ exposure to ICT tools- Google Hangouts and Skype

openness, cultural awareness

The concept of hero and having virtual visitors hosted in our school students tidbits

cooperation

Tolerance

Communication, collaboration, creativity

each story has its own value and all together can create a narrative universe

writing about you, your country, inspiring people, a school week with the travel diary, skype sessions,

...

Improved writing skills, knowledge about other cultures, knowing how to communicate with peers from other countries.

Diversity, union, tradition, cultural habits, countries'tidbits, national heritage.

each person has its own story and each story is valuable

good will and effort

13. What are the benefits with “The universe is made of tiny stories”, according to you?

A real example of working interculturality collaboratively. Planification+Process+Results

enabling students to communicate with their foreign peers; developing creativity; learning how to collaborate; knowledge acquisition;

Getting to know lots of teachers, having a good communication skills with your students.

My students were more involved in the lessons

The windows into other cultures.

I think we exercised a kind of online European school 21 while carrying each individual project step

students are given their voice/ they can create stories about topics they are interested in

learning of respect other cultures

Pupols had the chance to interact with project partners for a while using English for authentic tasks

Learning new tools, meeting new students teachers, skype lessons were wonderful.

The fact that we the world is made by many countries, many languages but we have more similarities among all than we thought.

Developing of communication, collaboration, creativity and intercultural competences.

this project gave to me the determination to continue in eTwinning projects

feeling that you belong to a large groups of students your age and do tasks not only for your own benefit. Having contacts, sharing, exchanging with others...

Connecting and collaborating with partners from different backgrounds. Using technology to connect.

The contact and exchange with so many different countries. The avariety of tools which have been

used or suggested. Both these elements increased students' curiosity to learn and to face also

challenging tasks. The student of mine whose voice is recorded in the video narration spent a long

time to rehearsal her audio performance recording herself on the mobile, until she was satisfied with it.

Develop/promote intercultural awareness, dela with the differencies

Learning new things and try experiences

14. What are the drawbacks with “The universe is made of tiny stories”, according to you?

Some schools-countries couldn't follow the assignmets.

not all the partners follow the project calendar

Sometimes it is difficult to get teachers organized if there are many :)

It was really exiting

The only drawback (which was also an advantage) in my opinion, was that there were so many schools involved. So much material wasn't appreciated because there was just so much.

Lack of time, we'd be happy to find time to communicate more with more schools, spend more online time together. Otherwise, I can't see any.

some teachers did sign up but did not do anything/ it was impossible to arrange 1-1 sessions on a regular basis

it was going too fast, perhaps too many partners.

There should have been more interaction between the students on the forum like we did in the first term to make students bite. Students really enjoyed that part

too many partners and not all of them worked according to strategies.

It is a tiring challenge as you must orientate the students and collaborate with them

No

we need more time to complete the tasks

I think there were too many partners, especially those who are not active at all. e.g. we couldn't comment the videos on inspiring people in the forum because the Greek school we were linked to stopped the project without telling anyone.

It was impossible to be in touch with all the partners. It was difficult to keep up with all of the ideas of all the partners. Some partners never completed some of the activities. The messaging system was inadequate for a project with so many partners. There was too much "noise" in the communication channel so it was difficult to keep track of every activity. Some partners never replied to messages.

The fact that some countries have given up and have not respected the assigned tasks and the planned deadlines.

can't say

there aren't

15. Any other comments?

no

no

A pleasure for me working in this project because it has fulfilled all my expectations. Thanks to my student and thanks to other members.

A great project; wonderful, devoted teachers, really creative students; hope to continue our collaboration

I am new at my school. And this was the first time my students have joined an eTwinning. They were so eager to do it.

I liked it very much

The best thing about eTwinning is the special people that you are able to meet and who share their expertise.

We really enjoyed taking part in the project and being together.

Good luck with your thesis paper!

no comments

.

We liked it very much.

I wish I could continue next year a project like this

No

many thanks to the coordinator of the project, she's a nice person, very professional and kind and to all my colleagues, for sharing ideas and smiles.

Good initiative. When you try a new one, let me know...

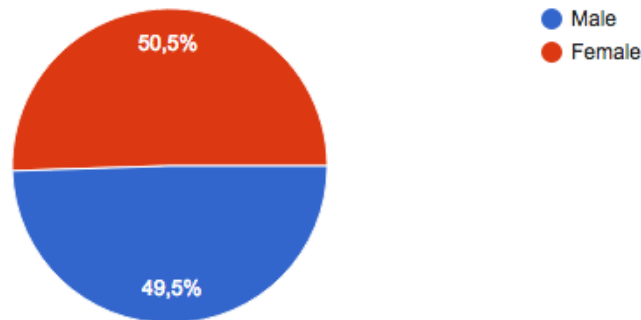
We're all happy to have had a chance to take part in this project.

I hope I will have the chance to take part in such an interesting project again, where I learned a lot and was really happy of the students' interest and involvement.

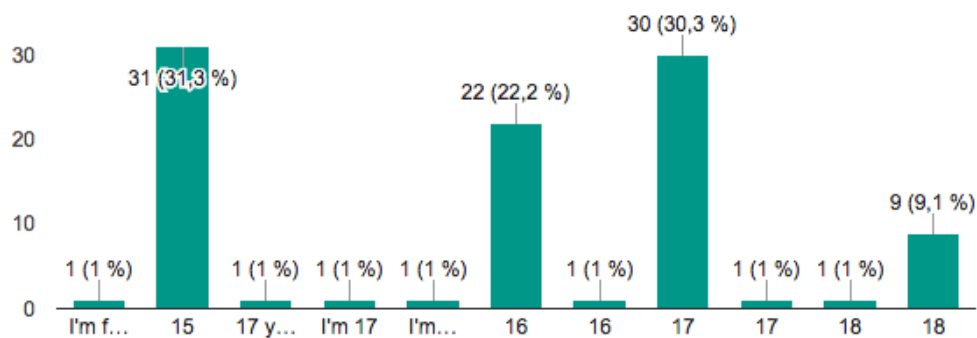
Appendix 6

Answers from the student questionnaire

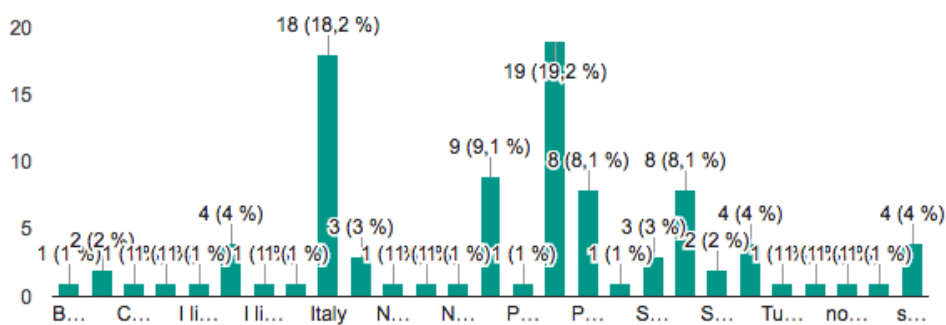
1. What is your gender? (99 svar)



2. What is your age? (99 svar)



3. In which country do you live? (99 svar)



4. Is this your first eTwinning project? If not, which ones have you participated in earlier?

- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- yes
- yes
- yes
- yes
- yes
- yes
- yes
- Apps4good; Apps4EL
- Apps4good; Apps4EL
- Apps4good; Apps4EL
- Apps4good; Apps4EL
- Apps4good; Apps4EL
- I don't know
- I don't know
- No, smart penpalls
- No, smart penpalls
- No , exotic species8
- No , exotic species8
- No, i have participated in an exotic animals project yet.
- No, i have participated in an exotic animals project yet.
- No it is not. I have also participated in the project "modern world challenges
- Yes, my first eTwinning project
- Hostel "Europe" and Intercultural Mosaic
- No, Hotel Europe, Intercultural mosaic.
- Photo of Santander
- Colors project
- My second project, I participated in project called True colours
- No, but don't remember what it was called.
- Second one
- The universe is made of tiny stories

no, the universe is made of tiny stories
Modern world challenges
The universe is made of tiny stories
Modern world challenge
It's my first time
Yes, My first Project.
No, I have participated in erasmus+ exchange.
Yes it is
My first eTwinning project was with "intercultural mosaic"
Yes, It is
yes,my first one
first
No, I have participated to "Be Careful, Eat Healthy"
No, "Be careful, eat healthy"
Be careful, eat healthy!
Be careful,eat healthy
Be careful eat healthy
No,I participated to "Be careful,eat healthy"
I participated to "be careful, eat healthy"
I participated to " Be careful, eat healthy"
No, last year I have participated in "Be careful, eat healthy"
Yes, last year's project was Be careful, eat healthy
yes , last year's project be careful, eat healthy
Yes, last year's project was "Be Careful,Eat Healthy"
No,it isn't my first eTwinning project.Last year I participated at another project about the healthy food.
Yes, last year I did the project about noutriction
No , smart pen pals
No, smartpenpals
No, smart penpals
yes, this is my first eTwinning project
No, my first project is smartpenpals
smart penpal
Yes, it's my first.
No
Yes
This is my first eTwinning project
It's my first time
It is my first one.
It's my first eTwinning project.
Yes, it is.
Yes.
Apps4Good ; Apps4EL
No, APPS for good
No, APPS For Good
No, apps for good
Yes.
No! The project was Exotic species
No, teen actions for good.
It's the first time.
No, I participate in a project called: Exotic Species
My first eTwinning project was "Smart penpals" from last year.

5. What have you learned by participating in this project?

I learned a lot about other countries while I was talking with my partner.

I learned a lot about other countries while I was talking with my partner.

I learned a lot about other countries while I was talking with my partner.

I learned a lot about other countries while I was talking with my partner.

I learned a lot about other countries while I was talking with my partner.

Nothing

Nothing

Nothing

Communication

Communication

Communication

cooperation

cooperation

anything

anything

Communication and IT skills

Communication and IT skills

I have a little bit more knowledge about other countries culture and how the school in other countries work. I also learned more about how you can cooperate with other nations about important topics.

Many things: other students, other countries, tools on-line, ...

Being part of a group, working together with friends. Also I had new friends and learned other cultures.

I learned to work more with my colleagues and to know all the other countries

I have learned more English and things about other countries.

A lot about other cultures and countries

As I participated in the video, I improved my social skills and role-playing.

new online tools, communication on Skype with students, make avatars

work in team

Communicating with other students

More about other countries and their culture.

Many things about other countries

nothing

I have learnt new things about other cultures and the world

How eTwinning works

english

What eTwinning is and how it works

About different culture.

How eTwinning works

I have learned about different cultures

Having fun while making projects

Yes.

English

I have learned a lot about: culture of other countries, inspiring people from all around the world.

I have learned that there are other different cultures but very beautiful

I learned new cultures and new traditions

I learned that despite the distance, thanks to technology, we can be closer

use digital skills and many programmes

to deliver tasks on time

english skills

to use English

The nutrition is important for an healthy life
I have learned lots of things like how to eat healthily and how important is food in our lives
I have learned to eat healthy food
I have learned to eat healthy food
To eat healthy
To eat better.
That it's important to eat healthy
I learned that it's important to eat healthy
I learned that the nutrition is important because we have to live an healthy life and we must never forget how much is dangerous if we underestimate that
It's important to learn all languages
from this project I learned about new people and new cultures
It's important to learn all languages in the world.
I have learned by participating that the Universe is made of tiny stories.
I learned that in this project the people other country and I spoke on Skype
In all the country, there is students who learn english
I learned the cultures of other countries
To comunicate in English
To comunicate in english
I have learned a lot of English
I learned to speak English better
I learn to speak in English with other people of different country
I learn to communicate more better. And I Learn to be creative.
Communication with others
Communicating with people
Work in groups
Communication with people
Communicating wit people
Communication with friends from other country.
I learn how to speak with other people from other country and thay culture.
I developed my speaking and communicating skills
communication with people from other countries
I've learned how live people in others countries and how is the organisation in their schools.
New cultures
New cultures
I learn more english
I have learn more english
I learned things about my teamates's country.
I learned a lot about other cultures.
comunication
I found a lot of information about the issue my group decided to tackle and, in that information, there were things I didn't even know were like that, for example, the goals for 2020 related to waste, in Portugal.
Learn more about English and are more created
I learned to be more creative and I learn more about english
I learned more about english and developed my communication skills
I learned to make prototypes for apps, learned to teamwork, learned to be more creative.
I learned to be more creative.
I've learned more about other cultures
Communicate and colaborate with other people
My communication skills
I learned a lot about other cultures and I improved my language skills.
Communicating and IT skills

I learned something about other countries in the world

6. Is there anything in particular that makes this project learning differ from your ordinary classroom learning?

No

No

No

No

No

No

Yes. In this project we can practice our English in real situations.

Yes. In this project we can practice our English in real situations.

Yes. In this project we can practice our English in real situations.

Yes. In this project we can practice our English in real situations.

Yes. In this project we can practice our English in real situations.

Different tasks

Different tasks

Nope

Nope

Yes , team work

Yes , team work

The communication with people from other countries.

The communication with people from other countries.

Yes, because when you hear other teenagers tell about their country and lives it feels more real than if you read facts on internet. And I also made friends through etwinning by social media so now I can chat with them and so on.

Students are more important and active in during the lessons.II

In classroom, I generally don't have any responsibilities so I'm not doing anything. But at this project, I had a lot of responsibilities and these are wasn't bad. I saw what is creativity too!

I learned to use the programs on computer

Yes, interactive things

There is more room for creativity here

Desire willing and learning by doing.

we were online with other students

learn and improve my level of english

Yes, skype classes

yes, we use computers or tablets

Yes, we used skype.

I don't learn anything at all

Yes, about other countries

not really

It contains a lot of practical work

More interaction with different kinds of people

We get to learn more about other countries

We work with several countries

Yes, Of course.

Yes we could practise our conversation skills with other participants from different country

Yes there is

It ' s different because in this project we learn how to speak with people of others countries

Yes, for example the contact with guys of other countries and the opportunity to compare oneself about some topics

project work

yeah we chat with other students

a lot of group work and students from other land

it is not boring

Yes, because we learnt things in a different way, for example searching things on the internet and working in groups

Yes, we work together and we have lot of fun

we work together

We work together

We worked together

We worked together.

We worked together

We worked together

Yes, we worked on internet and in groups

We have seen some Spanish guys by Skype. We have talked with them a lot. Every Friday for an half an hour

yes. I believe that maybe is more fun and also because all work together

Yes, there is! We have seen some Spanish guys by Skype! We have talked with them a lot, every Friday for an half an hour.

Yes, it when we made the stories with the funny two aliens.

I use the computer and the phone for internet

It adds something from people's life

We work in group

less bored

this is more boring

It's less boring

It's really interesting

It's more funny

It is interesting

yes, the classroom learning is more boring than this project, this is very interesting

yes it more interesting

anything

More talking and learning about other countries

A chance to talk with persons from other countries

We are talking a lot

Yes. It is more interesting

Working with people from other countries

we can practice our English

Yes, we learned differently, it was more creative.

Learning new cultures

Learning new cultures

Because we are cooperation with other people

Because we cooperate with other people

You talk with people from other countries.

Yes, using technology and having fun while learning.

Yes, learning with technologies

Yes, the part when we interact with people from different countries.

Yes it's more interesting

Yes it keeps us motivated

Yes, it's more interesting and keeps us motivated

It has interactive tasks

The creative we need to have to think about our project.

Yes, because we practice English in a funny way

Yes, we can practice our English

Yes we can learn more but in a funny way.

The classes are faster and less "heavier". Besides that, I'm sure that I've learned more in this classes than in the ordinary classes.

The communication with people do other countries

no

The biggest difference is that you can "speak" with other guys from all over the world.

7. Has this particular project helped you as a student develop your **understanding of other people's cultural values, traditions and way of life?** If yes, in which way?

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

no

no

no

no

no

no

no

Yes, when I was talking with my partner.

Yes, when I was talking with my partner.

Yes, when I was talking with my partner.

Yes, when I was talking with my partner.

Yes, when I was talking with my partner.

No

No

No

Yes

Yes

Yes, I have learned that in the world there are lots of different cultures and they are all interesting

Yes, I have learned that in the world there are lots of different cultures and they are all interesting

No.

No.

Yes , the other cultures

Yes , the other cultures

Of course. The language, food and hobbies.

Of course. The language, food and hobbies.

Maybe in some ways. I learned about other cultures but not too much about why or the underlying reasons to cultures.

I have found that teenagers are similar despite their country and religion.

Of course, now I'm more entrepreneur than before. I know other countries inspiring people, or one day if I go these countries what kind of things I'll see I know.

Yes through the forum where we could talk about our lives

Yes because now I have new friends and new knowlege.

Yes, because you get to communicate with other students that has a different culture and that helps to break stereotypes about other cultures.

Yes. There were five tasks in the project and each country handle the task as in the way, through their life expentency.

yes, we had skype sessions with students from Portugal and Poland

yes, to work in team

Yes, I have got different perspective on their culture

not that much, but i learned something new about other countries that I didnt know

Yes, i have learnt how they celebrate christmas for example

Not yet

Not really

Maybe a little bit

not yet

Yes, I understand they're cultural values with their own opinions

Yes, has helped me in almost every way.

Yes, I learned a lot of about other countries

Yes, through presentations their cultures.

Yes, because with this project I have learned the others cultural values and traditions

Yes, because now I don't belive in the stereotypes

Yes, for example by the videos that we did in that project and by the questions asked in Skype at school

maybe

nah

do not know

talk to others

Yes, because people from other country told us what they eat

Yes,I have learned that the world is full of different cultures and they are all interesting

We have learned that in the world there are many different cultures and they are all different

Yes, this project helped me because I could know how other people from another country conduce their lives and what they eat

Yes,I have. I have learned Something about What they eat.

Yes,it is.In my opinion this project has been very useful because I have learned new things for **example other people's cultural values, traditions and so on.**

Yes, with the videos

Yes, every direction

yes

yes, I read the story of the other countries

Yes, it has

yes, it was helped me because i understanding how are the other Schools in Europe.

Yes. I didn't know a lot of things and talking with people helped me understand their culture.

Yes, by understanding different cultures

No, not really

Yes by understanding other cultures

Understanding difrent coulture

Yes, I talked with people from other country

Yes because i know more about other culture

Yes, I learn a lot about culture in other countries

yes I known cultures of other countries

Yes, when we have read the introducing of schools wich taken part in the project and when the two characters "travelled" around the schools.

Yes, because I learned about other cultural values and I understood they are not better or worst then my cultural values.

Yes, the people from other countries that I met told me how they eat, what their school looks like, their traditions...

Yes, Beacouse i learn how they eat and what they do in free times

Yes, I learned some things about the Turkish way of life, since my partner was from Turkey.

Yes, by communicating

Yes, by communicating with people

Yes, by communicating with other people

Yes, I learned more about the habits of people that live in Poland

Yes, respect the other cultures

Yes, because now I am more open to the different cultures.

By talking with foreign people, I've learned about them and about their cultures, the school system and so much more.

Yes, language, food and hobbies.

anything

Yes because, doing the kahoots and watching to the videos of the other students, I learned some tiny things about the daily routine or about the school in other places of the world.

8. Did you have the opportunity to communicate and interact with students from other countries in this particular project? If yes, which online tools did you use and why did you choose these tools?

No

No

No

No

No

Yes. Email and instagram, because is the easiest way.

Yes. Email and instagram, because is the easiest way.

Yes. Email and instagram, because is the easiest way.

Yes. Email and instagram, because is the easiest way.

Yes. Email and instagram, because is the easiest way.

yes

yes

no

no

Yes, skype

Yes, skype

We interacted with the other students by Skype. We chose Skype because here you can do videocalls

We interacted with the other students by Skype. We chose Skype because here you can do videocalls

Yes. eTwinning and Instagram.

Yes. eTwinning and Instagram.

We chatted through etwinnig mostly because it was the easiest way to communicate. We also used skype to ask each other questions.

Yes. We have used skype, emails, twinspace mailbox.... Besides, we have used other tools for collaboration.

I used Adobespark, Mybluerobot. I made these tools to make Tidbits and avatars.

Yes through video calls with Skype because we could talk live
Yes, I did. We used computer, interactive board and phones.
Yes, for example we used Skype to communicate.
No because i have joined the project at a late time.
Yes, we spoke online in Skype lessons, we commented digital stories on Twinspace
Yes I have, eTwinning most of the time
Yes, we used Skype because everybody Know how to use it
Yes, skype and Twinspace chat
Yes, I used the eTwinning site
Yes, we used skype and chatrooms.
Yes, etwinning and skype
yes, skype, because it was the only thing that worked
Not on my own
yes, skype
Yes,skype
Yes, skype and eTwinning
skype, and i did not choose the online tools.
We communicated italian students with skype
Yes, Twin page.
Yes, Skype
Yes, we choose skype because it's the best way to see each others and talk, and I think this is the most popular online tool to communicate.
Yes, I have used the e-mail beacuse is a rapid online tool
I communicate with the email beacouse is very easy to use
No, I didn't
yes, i used skype
yeah/many times
yeah many tools barbara showed
mysimpleshow and google docs
We used Skype, because we could see each other
We interacted with the other students by Skype. We chose Skype because here you can do video calls
We used Skype to contact students from other counties
Yes, we used Skype to interact with the students from other countries.
Yes we used Skype to interact with students from other countries
Yes,we used skype to interact with other student from other country
Yes I had, we used Skype because we could see each other
Skype and Instagram
yes, was great fun and we talked through Skype or Instagram
My teacher chose Skype! Then we created a whatsapp group and sometimes we talked with them by Instagram
Yes,I had the opportunity to communicate and interact with students from other countries in this funny project.I communicate with the other through Skype and Whatsapp. It was very exciting communicate with them.
Yes, with Skype because it was the only way to communicate
yes, it was great. It was by skype, why not ?
Yes , we spoke from skype because it is handy
We used skype
Yes, we use skype or forum
We use the forum
skype
Yes, I use skype
Skype

skipe

yes, we use Skype

i have used twinspace, google images, camtasia studio 8 , paint ,windows movie maker.

yes but not

Yes. It was skype because it is easy to use.

Yes, I used skype only

Yes, using skype

Yes Skype

Skype, because it is easy to use.

I speak with there on a instagram,skype

Yes, we used skype to talk with other students

Unfortunattely not.

Yes using messenger

Yes using messenger

Yes, facebook and instagram

Yes, facebook and instagram

I used email, Instragram and eTwinning.

Facebook, instagram and the etwinning website.

Yes, Etwinning, gmail

Yes. I used the Etwinning Chat Platform and the Gmail.

We used Appshed, Ppt etc

We used Appshed, Ppt, etc.

Yes, I used Facebook because it's easy and fast to communicate

Yes, e-mail

Yes, we use the twinspace and the Facebook because was more easy to access.

Etwinning, Facebook and Whatsapp

eTwinning and Facebook

Yes, I had. We used only Twinspace.

9. Which skills have you developed by connecting and collaborating online in this particular project?

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

My writing skills.

My writing skills.

My writing skills.

My writing skills.

My writing skills.

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

nothing

nothing

/

/

Comunicative skills
Comunicative skills
Communication skills
Communication skills
Comunication
Comunication
Communicating skills
Communicating skills
Communicating
Communicating
Communication and IT skills.
Communication and IT skills.
I actually do not know
Language skills, ICT skills, personal and interpersonal skills and global citizenship too.
Now I know how can I edit videos, making avatars, recording voices etc. Also I learned how can I be a part of a group in real life.
I learned to use the computer more
Collaboration is important
I've become better at talking to people in English
I am now more self confident in speak english.
writing, searching and communicative skills
all kind of skills
Critic opinion and team work
I didnt use much skills
None that I can remember
-
Ninja skills
none
None
More secure with talking to people in english
Painting
Not any I did'nt had before
My English is developed
Yes
IT Skills
I think that developed our communication skills.
I have learned to use a lot of app on internet
I developed my use of the language
I improved my english because I could use It to speack about everything and about new topics
do not know
ict
to listen to others
empathy
To talk with other.
To talk with other
To talk with other
Unfortunately We had lots of problem with Internet Connection,and some of them did Skype at home.
I have learned some thing:differents cultures,i have known the other students through the socials and I have read and commented the stories for example the story about John Lennon or the schools in Norvegia
The other computer programmes
The speed and the understanging
I developed my english

I read the story the other countries
communication skills
...
communication skills
Communication skills
communicative skills,and creativity skills
anything
I polished talking in English
Talking with other people
Language skills.
Better communication
Talking in english
I developed talking skills
It takes my speaking skill to better lvl
Speaking and understanding what other people are talking about
language
I've learned to do video editing.
Write English better
Talk english better because we did skype
I developed IT and interacting skills.
Communication skills.
Communication, interpersonal, leadership and IT skills
Communicating skills and I also know more about English
I developed my english, my creativity, and my team communication.
I developed my communication with others, muto creativity and muto English.
I've developed communication skills
My communication and research skills.
My language skills
Communication and IT skills
anything
I think I'd improved my grammar skills because I write a lot.

10. What are the benefits with “The universe is made of tiny stories”, according to you?

We can talk with people from other countries, that's something that possibly I would never could do.
We can talk with people from other countries, that's something that possibly I would never could do.
We can talk with people from other countries, that's something that possibly I would never could do.
We can talk with people from other countries, that's something that possibly I would never could do.
We can talk with people from other countries, that's something that possibly I would never could do.
I don't know
I don't know
I don't know
I don't know
Meeting new people
Meeting new people
Meeting new people
We had the opportunity to work with people from other countries
We had the opportunity to work with people from other countries
anything

anything

Communicate with other people

Communicate with other people

Communication with people of other countries

Communication with people of other countries

The communication, the collaboration and the will of inventing.

The communication, the collaboration and the will of inventing.

That you can talk to other teenagers in a way you wouldn't have done if it wasn't for etwinning

I have developed global citizenship, I have learnt from other classmates and from students from other countries, I have developed creativity too.

Now I'm more social, informed and entrepreneur than before.

Knowledge of new traditions and the direct link that people from other countries

All the news

It is more free than the usual teaching methods and more room for creativity, and also you get to learn about other people's everyday life

Collaboration, know in new cultures.

we got together with many students from different countries of Europe

all

We are developing our creative side

There aren't benefits

Communications and learning about other countries and culture

nothing

It connects students from many countries and makes us feel more like a community.

It was fun

i don't know

We get to interact with others

It's a different way of learning

Nothing

i don't know

You can communicate other people

No

Know new people

That was additional practice for us and we have more experience than before.

The benefits are a lot

Learn new cultures

That everyone has a story to tell

having fun at school

talks with foreigners

skype classes

it is exciting

That there are many other people with different stories and lives than ours

We had the opportunity to work with other people from another country

We had the opportunity to work with people from other countries.

We have the opportunity to work with other people from other countries

We had opportunity to work with people from other countries

You can know other people with different stories than yours and that's a benefit because you can widen your knowledge

I don't know

I don't know

We learned about Spanish Culture, their language and some of their traditions!

I think that the benefits are to know the others with this "tiny stories"

Every school wrote about their stories

The contact with a lot of people from all the country

It has developed me from many directions.

.....

everything

I meet the new country

Learn the culture of other country

I know any others colture

...

I learn culture of other country

Learn the culture of the other country

cultural benefits

Skyping

Language skills,

Understanding cultures, new ICT tools

Using ict tools

I learn communication with people from other country

Understanding other culture

Ability to learn about other cultures, traditions and developing our language skills

I developed and practised my English

To work differently, meet people and learn to know news cultures and educations.

We have opportunity to meet new people

We have opportunity to meet people of other countrie

I met new people.

Meeting other people and learning about other countries.

We get to know things about people a lot far from us and then we are able to compare those things, like culture and way of life, with ours

Its interesting

It is very interesting and we can learn more about programmes

It's interesting and keeps us motivated

Communicate with strangers, sharpening our English level

Communicating with people from other coutries and sharpening my english level.

It's good because we meet other people and we develop communication skills

We improve our communication skills.

It's a new experience that provides new skills and new feelings.

The communicating and collaborating

Maybe a benefit could be speaking with people of different countries... It's a good thing to improve English and learn new things about what is around us.

11. What are **the drawbacks** with “The universe is made of tiny stories”, according to you?

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

I don't see any drawback.

I don't see any drawback.

I don't see any drawback.

I don't see any drawback.

I don't see any drawback.

No drawbacks

No drawbacks

No drawbacks

No drawbacks

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

I don't know

No

No

No

None

None

None

Nothing

Nothing

nothing

nothing

no

no

It takes a lot of time

It takes a lot of time

No one

No one

I think that don't have drawbacks

I think that don't have drawbacks

The parteners don't awser

The parteners don't awser

It haven't.

It haven't.

I don't think I can find any

No drawbacks.

Every little stories, lifes, people, animals getting together and make a huge things. Like atom, a lot of atoms gets together and at least and we occur...

All the draws

It takes a lot of time to make it all work

Some countries didnt finish\do their tasks on time.

we didn't have much time to do all the tasks

all too

We do not have enough time for everything

Tehre arent drawbacks

We aren't learning that much grammar

I don't learn anything at all

It gives us less time to study other things in english class.

-

I do not see any drawbacks

It's very time consuming

I don't have an opinion

Nothing

i dont know

Every single students have different opinions on life
Anyone
I think that in this projekt there aren't any drawbacks.
The drawback is a beautiful horizon peace
Some steps were Boring
it is only in english class
do not now
only in barbans class
too short
We don't know what kind of people we are talking to
I don't know.
The only drawback is that you never know who are you talking to
In my opinion there weren't drawbacks. All that we did was fantastic
I think that the drawbacks are to write a stories because is difficult.
For us the problem was the internet connection
I don't undersand the rapport with the title and the project. And I don't like the evaluation like this
.....
.
There aren't
A lot of English
hhh
nope
I dont found any drawbacks
I don't see any
in skype sessions sometimes communication was very hard because of weak connections
I find the platerform not enough clear.
There was no drawbacks.
There are no drawbacks.
There are no drawbacks, in my opinion.
There are no drawbacks in my option
There is no drawbacks in my opinion
There are no drawbacks, in my opinion
There arent any drawbacks.
Sometimes we lost a bit of time talking instead of studying
The partner don't colaborating with you
I haven't
anything
Uhm, I don't know. Perhaps you have to complete lot of projects (sometimes difficult) in very few time
and you're not able to do this.

12. Any other comments?

No
No
No
No
No
No
No
No

No

-

-

nei

nei

/

/

No.

No.

I have enjoyed the project very much.

I hope we'll make this project next year too!

No, i appreciate with co-operation with my english teacher.

Keep the projects!

No good

we should focus on classes instead of this project

Nope

We have not written anything yet so it is a bit hard to give feedback

No thanks

Nope

I think that's all what i have to say :)

I hope that there are more projects like this one

I would like to do it again.

I think that the contest with the stories on Tricider was very useful and funny

I wish you a long life

Thank you for survey

Beautiful activity

.

i'd like this project

no

....

It was a great experience

It would have been nice if we could have meet people in their countries.

No comments.

No coments

No, that's all.

It is a good way to learn more

It's a good way of learning

I like doing these projects, they're always interesting