



Inclusion, using ICT and social media for creative learning

The context for the use of ICT for Inclusion

The 'Children Like Us 2012' project, which is presented here, is provided by two differently oriented schools:

1. Základní škola, Prague 3, Lupáčova (known as Junior Language School [JLS] in English) and
2. Special School Korálek in Kladno, which is mainly oriented towards kids with special educational needs (SEN).

The project shows the possibility of including children with SEN, if such inclusion is supported by other schools, parents, administrators, founders and other organisations, such as school parent-teacher associations. The project's goals are oriented toward social integration. The inclusion of kids with severe SEN must be carried out under special conditions, but it can be fully realised during after-school activities in a sophisticated environment. Such inclusion was successfully realised here, not only on the school premises, but also in the National Gallery, the official trade market, a rehabilitation centre, a sports stadium, a sightseeing tower, in pottery workshops and at an environmental studies station (ornithology). Other activities are planned for spring 2013 and the closing camp ceremony will be held at a summer resort. Digital tools were included in all activities, not only for documentation, but primarily to facilitate education, creativity and communication. This can be clearly seen in the other sections of this evaluation.

The policy context

ICT is generally utilised as a creative tool. That is why the Glogster EDU cloud and social networking tool was used. Kids and teachers are able to create interactive posters from various types of media, which can be clearly seen from the project webpages (listed below). Such a presentation allows student immersion in the areas of education and creation, and this is the most advanced way ICT can be used effectively in social inclusion. This is one of the most efficient tools for education, as all students are somehow immersed in digital literacy and their competence in working with ICT is increasingly higher in co-operative groups. Therefore, these glogs represent not only educational content and project reviews, but also creative expression by all project participants. Students have a chance to express themselves graphically using digital media. For the kids from Koralek, this was an especially effective way to increase their competences. JLS also uses Glogster very dynamically for other projects, namely the protection of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization sites and the 'Asia-Europe Classroom Network' project, 'Who is the Next Scientist?'

The project was also introduced during the Microsoft 'Partners in Learning' programme, because some tools, like Windows Movie Maker and Office software, are being used. Microsoft will participate in some creative activities during the summer camp.

The use of ICT

Using Glogster EDU as a cloud and social network does not require any special preparation and the system itself is user-friendly. It can even be said that it is 'SEN-user-friendly'. Creative presentations in glogs can then be used by all known hardware, ranging from tablets, to smartphones, to PCs, to projectors and interactive whiteboards. Both schools are now in the phase where tablets (iPads and Prestigio tablets) are being introduced and they will also be used for this project.



Key outcomes and benefits

The project has strong support from both municipalities (Prague 3 and the town of Kladno) and the results will be carefully evaluated. Their support comes in the form of grants and both municipalities are eagerly awaiting the project results. The National Gallery, AC Sparta Praha and various firms, including Boxed and Glogster, provided additional support. Equally motivating is the response from parents, which has been published via the web. They greatly appreciate activities during which kids from different backgrounds meet one another, learn about real-life situations and help and assist others, but the main thing is that they view each other as friends. It was also clearly seen from the teachers' evaluations that the project significantly increased social awareness among the group of students and gave them new experiences which will be important in future real-life situations. Final evaluations will be provided after the summer camp. The results will be published, because such a long-lasting project of this nature is rather unique. The most significant support for the project was provided under the auspices of the Czech Commission for UNESCO.

Main challenges and obstacles

The main challenge was to overcome some prejudices among parents (and some teachers, too) regarding inclusion. The educational community is generally conservative and the idea of inclusion is not very popular in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, this model also supports the existence of special needs schools, because even a school operating with a high level of ICT would not be able to provide a fully developed and professionally prepared team of educators. On the other hand, follow-ups on social inclusion in special education indicate incredibly good results in socialisation, creativity and ICT competences. The project is mainly financed by school budgets, but some important sponsors have provided grants for activities. It must be said that both schools have got high digital literacy rates among teachers, which provides a good opportunity to introduce new technology (such as interactive glogs) into education. Despite the 50-kilometre distance between the schools, this project is organised without any major problems and works well. The general model of the project is completely transferable, but it requires great enthusiasm from teachers on both sides.

Additional information

School webpages:

<http://www.lupacovka.cz> and www.koralekkladno.cz

Project webpage:

<http://schooladmin25629.edu.glogster.com/dti-jako-my> (the webpage comprises various glog pages).

Other school glogs:

<http://karausovalup.edu.glogster.com> with student glogs

Year one final report for the Municipality of Prague 3:

<http://www.lupacovka.cz/download.php?file=bf6cfabf336187f94aecb79a1e5cc69c>

Project thesis and project activities:

<http://www.lupacovka.cz/download.php?file=54cdc3b0598519eb3356730b9b366806>

<http://www.lupacovka.cz/download.php?file=f534a477b13f1ca10490c96e490551d1>