INTEGRATION OF ETWINNING PROJECTS IN GEOGRAPHY CURRICULUM. A CASE STUDY IN ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we aim at analyzing how this program can be utilized in developing the primary students' skills through their involvement in school partnerships and integrated approach of the curriculum. The specific objectives were analyzing eTwinning; analyzing the design approach of eTwinning projects; analyzing the approach for achieving eTwinning projects; analysis of the eTwinning developed projects; analyzing how eTwinning projects can be integrated in the geography curriculum. The eTwinning program was officially launched in Brussels in 2005 as the main action of the European Commission's eLearning Program. ETwinning addresses to primary and secondary school teachers and students. The program has a portal which is available in 25 languages. In 2014, there were 230,424 teachers, 31,946 schools and 115,324 school projects submitted on the platform. Romania joined the eTwinning Programme in 2007, with currently over 13,000 registered teachers, 5,781 enlisted schools, 1,152 ongoing and 5,293 completed projects. We analyzed the designing and achieving approaches for eTwinning projects. In the second part of this paper, we analyzed two projects achieved with primary school pupils: "Cultural Feast: Turda, Romania" and "The Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy". At the end of the paper, we presented several ways to integrate curriculum in eTwinning projects.

Keywords: *portal, platform, integrated curriculum, project method, e-learning, educational partnership*

INTRODUCTION

The eTwinning program was officially launched in Brussels in January 2005, as the main action of the European Commission's eLearning Program[1]. The

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initiative of this program is derived from the recommendations of the European Council in Barcelona in March 2002 to achieve school partnerships (twinning schools) in order to give the students the opportunity to learn through collaboration and to practice and improve their ICT skills. It gained momentum in 2007 when it was integrated in the Lifelong Learning as part of the Comenius 2007-2013, coordinated by EUN (European Schoolnet chain consisting of 31 Ministries of Education in European countries). ETwinning addresses to primary and secondary school teachers. The program has a portal which is available in 25 languages. On January 19, 2014, 230,424 teachers, 31,946 and 115,324 school projects were submitted on the platform. Romania joined the eTwinning Programme in October 2007, with currently over 13,000 registered teachers, 5,781 enlisted schools, 1,152 ongoing and 5,293 completed projects[2]. In this paper, we aim at analyzing how this program can be utilized in developing in the primary's students skills through their involvement in school partnerships and integrated approach of the curriculum. From this general objective, we detail several specific objectives:

1) Analyzing eTwinning;

2) Analyzing the approach for designing eTwinning projects;

3) Analyzing the approach for achieving eTwinning projects;

4) Analysis of the eTwinning developed projects;

5) Analyzing how eTwinning projects can be integrated in the geography curriculum.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There are many studies on integrated approach of curriculum in literature (Ciolan, 2008; Bocoş, Chiş, 2012). According to Ciolan, to integrate into the curriculum means making "parties merge into a harmonious whole, so the result exceeds the sum of parts" (Ciolan, 2008, p. 115) "exceeds disciplines" (2008, p. 72), to transform their borders into connecting bridges to form the necessary skills for "society based on learning" (2008, p. 79).

Although some experts in science education (*cf.* Ciolan, 2008, pp. 113-118) equal between the integrated curriculum and interdisciplinary curriculum, curricular integration begins with the first step, the mono (intra) disciplinarity. Experts say that there is curriculum integration within a discipline. According to these views, geography, for example, can integrate knowledge from other geographical sciences in regional geography.

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[2] http://www.etwinning.net/ro/pub/connect/browse_people_schools_and_pro/country.cfm?c=642

According to Ciolan (2008, pp. 119-135), the next step is multi-curricular integration (multi-) disciplinarity and/or multidisciplinary. Multidisciplinarity refers to the integration of the content of unrelated disciplines (Ciolan, 2008, p. 123), and pluridisciplinarity brings together curricular subjects from the same area (Ciolan, 2008, p. 123). Multidisciplinarity means that a subject is treated individually by different disciplines, each contributing to the learning objectives, but not interfering and remaining independent. One example is the multidisciplinary approach of the curriculum at the "Cultural Feast: Turda, Romania"[3] items of local geography are filled with information from history, art, music, etc.

Interdisciplinarity brings the "joined up" disciplines, flexibilisation of their borders in order to facilitate cross-skills training. These can be exploited from discipline to another, especially to solve problems in real life situations. Curriculum integration at the interdisciplinary level was achieved within the project "The Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy" to create a virtual book. Disciplines as Romanian language and literature (design and writing text), Geography (information about energy sources), Arts (Illustration), Technologies (ICT - making virtual book) were involved. All these disciplines contributed with "their methodological and conceptual apparatus" (Ciolan, 2008, p. 126) to improve the skills needed for creating the virtual book about energy. Within curriculum for primary education, we note that in the Framework Plan for primary education (preparatory class), Maths and Environment are integrated in one discipline[4].

Transdisciplinarity directs learning "beyond disciplines" through "fusion" and "fully joined up" them and it prepares students to be responsible in society. An example of cross-disciplinary approach is the project "Geo-mathematical Hopscotch"[5] in which students translate into the role of experts and arrive at conclusions by following some steps and making "internal connections " (Ciolan, 2008, p. 138).

METHOD

To achieve the research objectives we went through several stages.

1. eTwinning analysis. We analyzed the eTwinning Programme objectives, the operation of the platform, the involvement of teachers and students, criteria and procedures for evaluation of the eTwinning posted.

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[3] http://culturalfeastturdaromania.wikispaces.com

[4] http://programe.ise.ro/Portals/1/2013_CP_I_II/OMEN_Plan_cadru_primar_2013_20001.PDF

[5] http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=135506

2. **Design of the eTwinning projects**. We followed several substeps: enrolment in the eTwinning platform, search and choice of partners, project development. We examined how a teacher, school and projects perform enrolment on the platform. We analyzed the partner search and choice procedures for carrying out the projects. We came to a design approach in which we first examined the aims of education (Education Law, Law no. 1 of 2011, Article 2, paragraph 3), general and specific skills curriculum, the students' educational needs. We chose the theme, established the targeted skills to be developed in students, selected and organized content, designed learning activities.

3. **Achievement in eTwinning projects**. At this stage of curriculum implementation we informed students about eTwinning, about the objectives and competencies covered, organized teams, communicated tasks, organized learning activities in collaboration with partners, involved students in making products, presentation of students solving tasks; the teacher provided feedback to students on solving tasks, improving their products, posting on the platform of products made by students, provided feedback on partners' posts.

4. **The eTwinning projects evaluation**. The students' own projects were self-assessed in two stages according to the evaluation criteria specified in the platform. For this self-assessment we detailed descriptors for each criterion on the basis of which the evaluation was carried out. Project partners were assessed by means of teachers' partner evaluation according to the criteria during their accomplishment and in the end they were voted. The projects were evaluated by assessors from eTwinning. We analyzed the approach of the project with the students.

Table 1. Assessment project tool

Criteria	Descriptors	Project 1	Project 2
Pedagogical Innovation and Creativity	To develop students' creativity through drawings created		
	To develop students' creativity through posters created		
	To develop students' creativity through stories created		
	To develop students' creativity through texts created		
	To develop students' creativity through role play		
Curricular Integration	There were integrated into the text content of several curricular areas		
	There were integrated methods and techniques of several sciences		
	Aspects of reality were represented in drawing, in an integrated manner		

	Objects made were done in an integrated manner		
	Curriculum integration was achieved through music, dance, stories		
Collaboration between partners	Students communicated with partners through VoiceThread		
	Students communicated with partners through video conferencing		
	Students discussed with partners on the forum		
	Students made comments to posts on the platform		
Creative use of ICT	Students analyzed materials by blogging		
	Students sought information via Internet using search engines		
	Students restructured text to be posted on the Internet using ...		
	Students followed the rules of behaviour on the Internet		
	Students processed photos and video with Web 2.0 tools		
	Students posted the products made (text, photos, multimedia presentations) on the platform		
Sustainability and Transferability	Students formed their lifelong skills		
	Students formed their skills that they can use in other projects, in other life and school contexts		
	Students gained thorough knowledge in various fields		
	Products (texts, images) posted on the platform are resources for other students and teachers		
Results and Benefits	Wiki created by students on the platform		
	Texts written and posted by students on the platform		
	The posters created and posted by students on the platform		
	Drawings created and posted by students on the platform		
	Stories created and posted by students on the platform		
	Records of discussions / presentations posted by students on the platform		
	Students developed their individual autonomy in organizing activity		
	Students developed their creativity through products created		
	Students become more responsible		
	Students formed and developed skills and		

	communication skills via Internet		
	Students worked with students from other countries		
	Students learnt to search for information in various sources		
	Students learnt to restructure information (written texts)		
	Students learnt to take photos and videos		
	Students learnt to know and respect people from other cultures		
	Students established relationships between theoretical knowledge and everyday life		
	We used the knowledge gained through the project in everyday life		
	We communicated with their parents about the project		
	Students learnt to perform activities according to the project		
	Students learnt how to discuss about project objectives, tasks		
	Students learnt to work in teams		
	Students learnt to present the results of the team to the class		
	Students learnt to improve their performance(s)		
	Students analyzed/ assessed our products and those of their partners		
	Students provided feedback to the partners		
	Students received feedback from the partners		

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1) Analyzing eTwinning

After accessing the site, we noted that eTwinning is the community of schools in Europe[6]. It provides teachers from participating European countries a free and secure platform for communication, collaboration, project development and exchange of information, i.e. a space in which they feel they are part of an educational community in Europe. It promotes school collaboration in Europe through information and communication technologies (ICT), providing support, tools, and services for schools. eTwinning portal[7] is central to meeting and working. The portal offers

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[6] http://www.etwinning.net/ro/pub/discover/what_is_etwinning.htm

[7] www.etwinning.net

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teachers online tools by which they may seek partners, can initiate projects, can exchange ideas and best practices and can start work immediately on eTwinning platform because of the broad range of customizable tools. eTwinning Central Support Office is run by European Schoolnet, an international partnership consisting of 31 European ministries of education, which conceives learning tools for schools, teachers and students in Europe. It has the support of 35 national helpdesks. At national level, in Romania, eTwinning programme National Support Office is run by the Institute of Education Sciences (ISE).

Teachers who wish to participate in the program can analyze existing projects on the platform and check if their school is registered. If they want to start a project, they can see kits and modules section, where there are ideas and recommendations. They can find training opportunities, with eTwinning groups, can collaborate and find assistance, can contact the National Office for more information.

If the teacher is part of the platform, he or she can access the collaboration tools in TwinSpace, as well as the eTwinning Certificate that can be printed and displayed in school. eTwinning platform provides teachers with a range of tools that can help them search partners, can contact them on the control panel, can collaborate and communicate within the virtual space of the project and many more. The platform is structured on three levels and each level has its own tools: Level 1 - public portal (information tools, for inspiration, for enrolment, for assistance); Level 2 - Control panel (social tools, communication, search partners, project management, professional development, health); Level 3 - cyberspace project (tools for project planning, collaboration, communication, support, dissemination). To keep updated with the development of the project activities, the teacher can publish articles in the project journal. Evaluation of an eTwinning project is done according to the following criteria[8]: pedagogical innovation and creativity, curriculum integration, creative use of ICT, collaboration between partners, durability and transfer, results and benefits. Based on these criteria, we developed the assessment projects tool in Table 1.

2) Analyzing the approach for designing eTwinning projects

Inclusion of the teacher in the eTwinning platform. Teachers who wish to join the platform can create their own profile by completing an eTwinning form. Once enrolled, the teacher can access the eTwinning control panel with an own username and password, can contact other eTwinning community members to exchange ideas, to learn together and plan activities together. I discovered eTwinning on April 1, 2008, I made an account on the platform out of curiosity and I started looking for partners to exchange practices and experiences.

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[8] http://www.britishcouncil.org/etwinning-quality-label-application-guidance.htm

Search and selection of partners (or partner). If the teacher wants to start a project, looks for partners guided by the criteria: similar objectives; interest in a topic; availability for regular and open communication; similar number of pupils of the same age and similar language skills; access to ICT equipment at school to facilitate collaboration. If the teacher is ready for an eTwinning project, once a partner is found and the theme of the project is set, he or she can begin designing it.

In the first project, "Cultural Feast: Turda, Romania", in October 2010, I joined some projects that had founding partners from Turkey (Leyla Tekin Olcasoz) and Spain (Maria Jose Barrios) in order to learn how to develop a project on TwinSpace platform. After accumulating the necessary experience, we designed and realized projects with students and I chose partners from the teachers with whom I worked in eTwinning virtual learning laboratories. In this project, the partner from Turkey invited the students from "Andrei Şaguna" school to participate in the project. Students posted activities on the wiki workspace that the Turkish partner created. We conducted a Wikispaces wiki[9] site and invited partners to visit and comment on the work of the team.

In the case of the project "The Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy", I collaborated with my friend and partner from Turkey, Belgin Saka Ustunel, that I met in an eTwinning project called "A Letter for Natural Disaster in Japan". The project "The Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy"[10] was based on an older project, U4energy type that we created the previous year (2011). The Turkish founder appreciated my and my children's work and considered that the idea should be developed in an eTwinning project. She found that the weak point of the old project is collaboration. I chose as partners the colleagues I had in the list of partners, some of whom were eTwinning ambassadors and old collaborators in the projects I coordinated (e.g. Cristina Nicolăiţă from "GH. Magheru" School, Caracal) and I invited the newly registered teacher on the eTwinning platform (eTwinning Plus). In "the Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy", I invited a colleague from the Republic of Moldova, Beregoi Elena, with whom I participated afterwards to a Romania-Moldova bilateral seminar in Botoşani, in June 2013. The Turkish founder invited ten other project partners from Italy, Macedonia, Norway, Finland, Poland, and the Netherlands.

The project had 14 partners from nine different countries: Camelia Stavre - Liceul de Artă "Dinu Lipatti", Piteşti, Romania; Cristina Nicolăiţă- Scoala Gimnaziala "Gheorghe Magheru", Caracal, Romania; Danuta Bartkowiak-Siekańska- Szkoła Podstawowa no. 84 im. Tadeusza Kościuszki, Poznań, Poland; Drs. Adriaan C. Postma-RSG Tromp Meesters, Steenwijk, Netherlands; Dumitra Balan- Şcoala Gimnazială no. 5 Giurgiu, Romania; Elena Beregoi - Liceul Teoretic Mihail Kogălniceanu, Chişinău, Republic of

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[9] http://culturalfeastturdaromania.wikispaces.com/

[10] http://www.etwinning.net/es/pub/profile.cfm?f=2&l=en&n=83925

Moldova; Elizabeta Filipova-Primary school Tode Hadzi-Tefov, Kavadarci, Macedonia; Funda Gulenser- Büyükçiğli İlkokulu, Izmir, Turkey; Gabriela Ileana Crişan (founder)- Şcoala Gimnazială "Avram Iancu", Turda, Romania; Hilde Øen- Spetalen Skole, Saltnes, Norway; K.Belgin Saka Üstünel (founder)-Yeni Turan İlkokulu, Ankara, Turkey; Massimo Presciutti- ICS "Centro Storico-Pestalozzi" di Firenze, Firenze, Italy; Rocco Spano- ICS "P. Borsellino" di Mazara del Vallo - Plesso Secondaria di I Grado, Mazara del Vallo, Italy, and Tiina Sarisalmi- Oriveden Keskuskoulu, Orivesi, Finland.

In the design process, several phases were covered.

We focused on and analyzed the general education objectives specified in the Law of National Education (2011)[11], the general and specific skills in the primary education curriculum[12], and the students' educational needs. In accordance with these overall objectives, we selected the themes of the projects (Table 2). For each theme, we chose from the official documents the competencies we wanted to form and develop in our students.

Table 2. Themes, projects and targeted competencies to be developed in students

The Objectives of project	The Objectives of project
"*Cultural Feast: Turda, Romania*"	"The Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy"
Objective 1: To identify the visible elements of the close geographic space	**Objective 1**: To identify ways of saving energy
Descriptor 1: To make a list of items that they think should be included in the wiki	*Descriptor 1:* To make up a list of the most important energy sources
Descriptor 2: To group such items by categories	*Descriptor 2:* To seek information about each power source separately
Objective 2: To describe some realities based on images	**Objective 2**: To describe reality based on images
Descriptor 3: To search for information about each category	*Descriptor 3:* To organize information into categories
Descriptor 4: To complete the wiki's pages using Web 2.0 tools	*Descriptor 4:* To complete the wiki's pages using Web 2.0 tools

For the first project, I selected the content: the most important cultural sights in Turda, my students' hometown. We established several themes, each of them corresponding to a project page: Turda - an ancient settlement, The Salt Mine (dating back in the Roman times), the Roman Fortress, churches, The Princes' Hall - temporary residence of the princes of

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[11] http://www.edu.ro/index.php/legaldocs/14847

[12] http://programe.ise.ro/Programescolareinvigoare.aspx

Transylvania, and other tourist attractions. A page was dedicated to the presentation of the first class, and one for the school presentation.

For the second project, as a founder, I proposed the project plan and I selected the content: making the students aware of the vital importance of the environment protection by finding ways of saving different types of energy. The founders developed the project plan and the partners completed and adapted it to the curriculum of the participating countries. Each partner made his own presentation. We performed together the project logo. We have chosen themes as: The Story of Little Light Bulb; The Importance of Energy, Bulb History, Saving Energy, Did you know?, Dialogue between generations, other ecology- related elements.

For both projects, we designed learning activities in which students were involved. We designed front and group activities. Those activities were to be organized in the classroom and outdoors, during visits and school trips. Some activities were proposed to be held during school classes, while others, after the school program.

3) Analyzing approach for achieving eTwinning projects

Projects development. In the first project, each partner created his own presentation of the most important aspects of his own town. Having learnt about the objectives and competencies needed to be developed during the project, the students in my school shared ideas and decided the way in which they were going to perform their tasks and duties. They formed groups according to interests and skills. Photographers group (those living in the proximity of tourist sights) took some photos of the sights (most being taken during a thematic trip around the town – on 1st June). Researchers group collected and processed information about the town of Turda. Artists group made town advertising, interviews and folk songs interpretation. Computer Scientists group uploaded all the materials and posted them on the platform. Each team presented their outcomes, received feedback from peers and teacher in the form of comments and suggestions.

In the second project, each of the four partners developed their products for each theme. Students in our school grouped in four teams. Each team did some research and wrote a text on the received subject, inserted scientific terms into the text, did suggestive drawings, created books with stories, concrete plans for energy saving (with mathematical calculations denoting anticipation, and design skills). Each team presented orally and in writing what they worked at. The other teams and teachers gave them feedback as comments, suggestions and questions, which allowed them to improve their texts and presentations. Students then improved the products.

Organizing learning activities in collaboration with partners. In the first project, the collaboration materialized in inviting partners from Poland, Jadwiga Prawdzik, Italy, Andrea Menella and Greece, Iraclis Lampadariou.

As members of the wiki, they can edit and comment on our posts. The project plan was drafted by the Polish colleague, Jadwiga Prawdzik. This plan was the source of inspiration for us. I adapted it to the Romanian curriculum by introducing some themes: Advertising, Interview and Folk song.

In the second project, we worked with four partners. As founder of the project, I proposed the project plan and my partners contributed with their own suggestions and ideas. By consultation and negotiation with partners, we modified and improved the plan, according to the curriculum of each level and country.

In these projects, students developed the competence to work in teams, to be in charge of given tasks, to be responsible of the team' s collective duties and tasks, to properly use given feedback so as to improve their products. Participating students collaborated very well in the "Did You Know?" chapter of the project "The Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy", performed by Lino tool, similar to a wall wisher that children worked with before, in eTwinning projects, and in which, images, written text, video, or links can be inserted. In 2013, together with the fellow teachers from "Gh. Magheru School" of Caracal, we elaborated and presented a paper on the project at the International Symposium, "MathExperience".

The work on the platform. In the first project, the students in my school created a wiki site. They used Web 2.0 tools suitable for young ages. They posted the website address of the wiki in the project workspace to make it known to all project partners. They posted photos and video clips that were used in creating presentations and posters in slide.com, photo peach, glogster and subtitled films in Universal subtitles. They visited project workspace guided by the project coordinator and they shared ideas and experiences with the project partners by viewing and commenting on their posts. The students came to know each other in the presentations and photos.

In the second project, the story books of the Little Light Bulb were made by using Calameo. Besides the language typical to a story, scientific terms were inserted. We presented the functioning of a wind turbine by Photobucket.

Other presentations of project activities. We presented other project activities performed by means of Smilebox, Youtube, Speechable. We used all these Web 2.0 tools according to the particularities of the students' age and copyrights. We performed the evaluation with Studystack tool through games and presentations for state projects, through materials posted on Youtube. The teachers posted on TwinSpace (the project's platform) photos and texts written by students, and students posted on their own wiki in Wikispaces (a Web 2.0 tool like blog). The teachers always communicated via/through chat, email, forum, blogs, and sent feedback to posts. During project implementation, we analyzed the activities of the project and discussed the issues that needed improvement. Some posts that did not

subject to the rules of the project were deleted after warning /informing the issuer. For example, a new folder for activities that had already been included on the platform was created. That would have meant posting them again, which was not necessary.

Provide feedback to partners' posts. Platforms offered the facility to vote partners postings in the "Like" system. By voting logo and our posts, we encouraged and motivated each other to continue.

4) Analysis of the eTwinning developed projects

Self assessment of the project by the students according to evaluation criteria. We evaluated our projects with the students throughout the performance. We took into account the evaluation criteria. We analyzed each team's performance throughout the project and talked about the work done and the results obtained.

Peer projects evaluation by partners, teachers, and students according to evaluation criteria. The projects were evaluated using the feedback posted by students. We chose the best materials made and we voted by the voting system existing on the platform. Each team had the right to vote once.

Project evaluation by eTwinning assessors. In Romania, the eTwinning project evaluation takes place twice a year, in January-February and September-October. European quality labels are awarded once a year, in October, by the Central Bureau of Support (CSS). The first project was awarded a National[13] and a European[14] quality label. The second project was rewarded also a National[15] and European[16] quality label. eTwinning evaluators appreciated our work in these projects. The Central Support Service feedback was as follows:

"Congratulations! Your school has been awarded the European Quality label for outstanding results achieved in the eTwinning project "The Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy". Thus, your efforts, the students and the school were recognized at the highest European level.

As a result, you will receive a certificate that you can display on your website and also prominently display in the school. In addition, your project will be exhibited in a special section of the European portal www.etwinning.net.

[13] http://culturalfeastturdaromania.wikispaces.com/Prizes+won++by+this+project

[14] http://culturalfeastturdaromania.wikispaces.com/Prizes+won++by+this+project

[15] http://new-twinspace.etwinning.net/c/portal/layout?p_l_id=23489549

[16] http://new-twinspace.etwinning.net/c/portal/layout?p_l_id=23489549

Once again, congratulations on your success and we hope we can meet at one of this year's eTwinning events.

Regards,

eTwinning Team"[17]

The analysis of the project approach with the students. Even if very young, the students learnt how to plan activities, meet deadlines, work in collaboration, organize data, track activities based on some criteria throughout the project development, and self-assess their own activities and results, as well as those of the partners. The activities in both projects were pupil centred, built on the idea of imagining new, creative means of learning about the local environment and energy in ways that students find both attractive and fun. Through these activities we guided our students to move to a higher level of thinking on Solo taxonomy. This allowed them to understand and improve their learning journey, enhancing complex thinking processes as reflection, theorizing, creating, abstract thinking, and generalization. The projects were interesting and exciting for all those involved, the results were useful for the next generations that can either improve, or turn them into Comenius projects. The undertaken projects were complex and demanding, involving much hard work, so our partners' appraisal contributed to carrying out the tasks of learning.

The students of our school participated in the International Applied Mathematics "MathExperience" contest with this project and posted a video in which they explained how they developed the project activities.

Table 3. eTwinning project benefits for students and teachers

eTwinning benefits	For students	For teachers
The learning competency	- To learn through cooperation - To learn by doing (making) - To learn by processing information	- Information search - To analyse information - To restructure information
The communication competency	- To communicate orally with fellow team members in class with others - To chat, email, conference - To communicate in English	- To communicate orally with students - To communicate in writing with partners messaging, chat, videoconferencing - To communicate in English
The teamwork competency	- To write a text in team - To distribute tasks to group	- To negotiate with partners in achieving the project plan - To work in teams

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[17] http://new-twinspace.etwinning.net/c/portal/layout?p_l_id=23489549

	- To listen to each other	- To provide feedback to partners
	- To provide feedback to their peers	- To receive feedback from partners
		- To adjust the project according to the feedback received
		- To carry out joint activities
ICT skills	- To process photos using Web 2.0 tools	- Use Web 2.0 tools Platform
	- To create a wiki	- To post content on the platform
	- To create educational software in ppt	- To use chat, videoconferencing
	- To use Web 2.0 tools for evaluation and feedback	
Cultural competence	- Exchange of information (history, geography, didactics) with other students and teachers from other countries	- Exchange of information (history, geography, didactics) with other students and teachers from other countries
	- Communication and implementation of projects with students of other religious denominations, other customs, other cultures (Mevlana Prize for Intercultural Understanding)	- Communication and implementation of projects with persons of other religious denominations, other customs, other cultures (Mevlana Prize for Intercultural Understanding)

5) Analyzing how eTwinning projects can be integrated in the geography curriculum

The project theme, "Cultural Feast: Turda, Romania", implies a multidisciplinary approach, subjects completed the theme with specific information, but they remained independent of each other. In the activities in Language and Communication curriculum area, we talked about settlements, schools and countries of the partners involved. Students played the role of reporters and communicated in Romanian and in English. They wrote texts, they asked questions and gave answers. In the Musical Education curriculum area, the students learnt and interpreted songs representative of our folk area. They filmed the activities and posted videos on the project web page. During the Geography and Environmental classes, students located the cities and states of the partners on the map, and discussed about them. They analyzed photos of the partners' localities to identify differences related to urban space planning. In the Technologies curriculum area, they used new technologies: the students entered the media laboratory, uploaded and posted materials in the Twin Space and wiki. In extracurricular activities area, the students visited the town, took photos and filmed the most popular sights in Turda. During History lessons, we discussed about Dacian civilization, about Roman civilization and the approximate area their settlements covered, as well as the spatial

organization of the Roman Castrum, about the further stages in the historical evolution of Turda in the centuries to come.

The project on "The Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy" implied an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. The scientific part of the project was perfected during Science classes. We approached the content and methods of several school subjects in an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary manner: Language and Communication - interview, story text, oral presentation of the project; Mathematics - multiplying and organizing data in tables; Technologies - processing of all pictures taken during other specific activities, search for information in the "Did you Know?"; Practical Skills - wind turbine; Arts - drawings, posters; Geography - thermoelectric and hydropower in Romania; Environment – different types of resources that produce electricity, nonconventional ways of saving energy.

Based on the analysis of the projects posted on the platform, we found that, in terms of the involved partners' educational levels and their approach of the curriculum, there are several types of eTwinning projects curricular approach (Fig. 1). In Table 4, we emphasized the differences in curriculum approach.
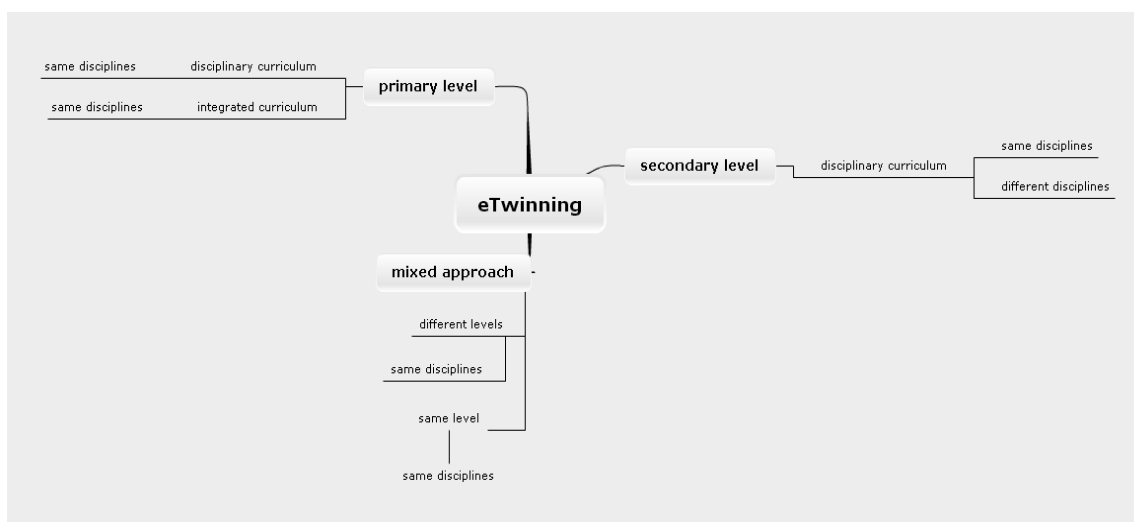

Fig. **1**. Curricular approaches of eTwinning projects

Table 3. Characteristics of eTwinning projects approach of school curriculum

	Integrated Curriculum	Disciplinary Curriculum			Mixed Approach	
Level	primary	primary	secondary	secondary	different level	same level
Location of partners	from different countries	from different countries	from different countries	from different countries	from different countries	from different countries

Student's age	at least two classes with children of approximately the same age	at least two classes with children of approximately the same age	at least two classes with children of approximately the same age	at least two classes with children of approximately the same age	at least two classes with children of the different age	at least two classes with children of approximately the same age
Specific skills	common (are identical or similar)	common	common	common	different	different
Disciplines	several disciplines same disciplines at both partners	many disciplines same disciplines	many disciplines same disciplines	many disciplines different disciplines	many disciplines same disciplines	many disciplines same disciplines
Theme	same theme from different curricula, but different locations	same theme, similar contents	same theme, same contents	same theme, different contents	same theme, same contents (but on the other level)	same theme, similar or different contents
Examples of common themes	our living town- Turda	The Adventures of Little Light Bulb through the World of Energy	Hopscotch geo-math	The folk-shirt road	The Old Tree Stories (seasons)	Hopscotch with animals
Time resources	same time resources	same time resources	same time resources	same time resources	same time resources	same time resources

CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this paper, we came to the following conclusions:

1. eTwinning is a way to stimulate the collaboration between European teachers and students, with the ICT help. This program is beneficial for teachers through professional training opportunities offered, but also for students who feel they are part of an European educational community.

2. eTwinning project design approach follows some steps from creating an account on the platform. The teacher page includes specific tools for searching and choosing partners by certain criteria and depending on the experience. Project activities are designed according to the educational aims, the general and specific skills, the students' needs, the curriculum of each country.

3. eTwinning projects are achieved separately in websites, like blog or wiki, and other partners provide feedback as members or in collaboration with partners in a common space. Projects are built after a plan proposed by the founders or by a partner, which, other partners adapt it according to their own curriculum. The project plan can be developed by all partners in cooperation. On the platform, students and teachers posted in the project space using Web 2.0 tools. Communication was achieved through specific instruments like chat, email, forum. Partners always gave feedback using the "Like" button on the platform and commented on each other posts.

4. eTwinning projects were self-assessed, inter-evaluated by students and teachers on the evaluation criteria, and also by eTwinning evaluators who granted the National and European Quality Certificates. Besides the competence to learn, the eTwinning projects developed communication, teamwork, ICT, and cultural competencies.

5. eTwinning projects can be easily integrated into Romanian geography curriculum, as well as in other participating countries curriculum, considering the cycle of education, country, pupils' age, specific skills, content, disciplines involved, theme, available time resources. Time should be optimally organized so that it delivers goals and objectives, to avoid boredom and to maintain students' motivation and interest in learning. Some projects require less time, others a longer time, depending on the theme, goals, objectives, and the partners' experience. Teachers without experience in eTwinning projects may choose to begin with a theme to develop in a short time in order to be able to easily harmonize their countries' curriculum. Knowing the type of curriculum in each partner country is important because the curricular integration steps derive from it. Communication between partners makes it possible.

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