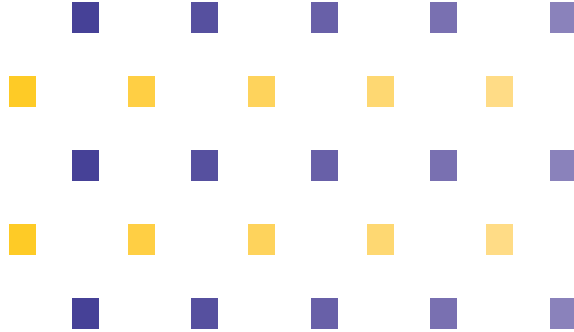


The Meaning of eTwinning



The
Meaning of
eTwinning

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Foreward

If you ask eTwinners what eTwinning means to them, the response would be: eTwinning has changed my life!

We are proud to present to you a broad range of experiences, opinions and reflections of teachers committed to eTwinning who epitomise the programme in Poland. They are the ones who care and whose attitudes and actions influence and shape the programme.

We would like you to embark on a journey through eTwinning. In this publication, you can find a number of stories told from different perspectives and covering various topics and contexts relating to education, teaching and learning. You can also find out more about eTwinners and read about their programme-related experiences.

Obviously, you can meet here only some of them as it is simply impossible to present all of them in just one publication. There are more than 35,000 eTwinners in Poland who consistently implement top quality projects and win numerous awards and recognition in the international arena.

eTwinners are that special sort of teachers who make sure that learning never stops. With eTwinning, they drive performance and gain new insights and a fresh perspective. In addition, the professional development portfolio offered to them by the programme is designed for individuals who face new challenges, demand high performance and recognise the need for new paradigms in education and learning.

Join the group of more than 400,000 fellow teachers from across Europe and beyond, connect, share, give and take - let the eTwinning community inspire your thinking and help you improve your professional performance.

How did Polish teachers join eTwinning? What were they driven by? How did they benefit from the programme? What are their reflections when they look back on the experience? Just turn the page and find out for yourself...

Enjoy your reading! ■



Barbara Milewska
eTwinning National Support
Service Poland

What is eTwinning?

For the past 10 years, eTwinning has been the source of my continuing professional development. Thanks to the teachers I have met and experience exchanges I have been discovering and applying more and more interesting teaching methods. I have to admit that participation in courses, workshops and training sessions has greatly improved my teaching skills. During my chartered teacher traineeship, my participation in the eTwinning programme made all the difference. When I was taking my examination, the oral interview concentrated on the influence of eTwinning on the development of the school. The implementation of international projects scored a lot of points: the result of the examination was very good.

Anna Szczepaniak, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 9, Dzierżoniów

I participated in an eTwinning programme when I was a primary school pupil. I remember this as great fun. We were able to do something as a class. We prepared a video clip, some of us sang... Everyone of us was important, regardless of what they were responsible for. Everyone of us was a small cog in the machine. I would like to take part in a similar programme again.

Kasia Pawłowicz, pupil, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Bogatynia

Everybody wanted to join the project, be present on the web portal and help, everyone came up with interesting ideas and solutions. Students suggested topics, teachers of other subjects also got involved in project work – visual artists, musicians... that is why our topics were more and more attractive, it was because of their interesting visual setting and background music. Even parents asked how they could help their children to get a better understanding of the issue. Everybody agreed that participating in that kind of project was a wonderful opportunity to learn through play.

Monika Winkler, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 17, Chorzów

At the beginning of my adventure with eTwinning only myself and my friend, also an English teacher, participated in the programme. But then we have infected the remaining teachers from our school with a passion for looking for contacts. Now, there are twelve of them, out of whom many are very active and join already existing projects or prepare new ones. We are aware that parents are satisfied: they confirm that owing to our involvement the Internet has become truly useful to their children, as it broadens their horizons and helps to improve their language skills.

Agnieszka Stepaniuk, Gimnazjum nr 3 im. Papieża Jana Pawła II, Zamość

By participating in the eTwinning programme teachers discover tools helping them face the most important challenge that modern education presents them with, which is the introduction of students into the world of science by way of activities. By taking active part in eTwinning projects students are given the opportunity to establish direct contacts with their peers from other countries, discover their culture and customs and develop their own language and IT skills. All those opportunities offered by eTwinning make it an excellent programme that not only effectively supports the learning/teaching process, but also lets teachers from different countries cooperate freely, with no time or financial limitations.

Aneta Wilk, Szkoła Podstawowa, Lubenia

In its very broad sense digitalisation at school is easier and more interesting when you make use of the eTwinning programme. This refers not only to students, but also to teaching staff. An establishment implementing unconventional educational projects is bound to be a greater educational success and is better perceived by the local environment...

Mariola Chodakowska-Malkiewicz, Warmińsko-Mazurski Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli, Elbląg

Teachers' cooperation within a project and during courses is just as interesting. I could paraphrase Forrest Gump by saying: eTwinning is like a box of chocolates – you never know what you're gonna get. To elaborate on this idea, I should add that this is about human resources. So far all the people I have met during my courses – instructors, participants and those I am working with on the project – have been motivating me to keep on delving into that enormously vast box. And the chocolates are very tasty J.

Barbara Jedynek, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Kąty Wrocławskie

At the snap of the fingers, from somebody not quite computer-literate I turned into an expert on the implementation of various ICT tools.

Małgorzata Łaska, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 114, Warszawa

I would recommend the eTwinning programme to anybody who likes new challenges. I have given an A to eTwinning – for the programme taken as a whole, for the opportunities that it offers to teachers, for training, for assistance, for everything J.

Agata Sędek, Przedszkole nr 181 Wesołe Nutki, Warszawa

The eTwinning programme offers great educational opportunities, which are not only accepted, but also deemed fascinating by students. As a result, students are motivated to act. eTwinning stimulates imagination, arouses curiosity for the world and makes students want to do things. Working with such students is many teachers' dream. I think that participation in the eTwinning programme is the means of achieving success not only by students but also by teachers. I am already promoting the eTwinning programme in my commune, in the town where I live and in the county.

Anna Krawniak-Gralak, Szkoła Podstawowa, Marianów

eTwinning projects taught me how to implement the core curriculum in a nice, easy and gratifying way!

Beata Kossowska, Przedszkole nr 48 z Oddziałami Integrycyjnymi, Zabrze

I do not want to but I have to – that is what I said to my daughter when I was given the task to create my own blog during an e-learning course. I admitted helplessly that I was not up to the task and she said that anyone could do it and suggested we got down to it together and tamed the beast. Today, the blog is my nicest workplace. I keep convincing my colleagues that this is the only way in which to present their achievements in the most effective and stunning way! The blog is great fun for students and teachers; this is a tool that is easy to use and that inspires young people to get involved. Moreover, this is a brilliant way of showing parents what is happening at school!

Otylia Kocik, Zespół Szkół z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi nr 3, Poznań

At the beginning, I was not convinced that I would be able to contribute to eTwinning in any way and I was quite reluctant. But the first lot of information, the first contact and my partner's assistance helped me to overcome my fears. And that is how it started. Today I cannot imagine a school year without my carrying out at least one small eTwinning project.

Agnieszka Środecka, Gimnazjum z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi im. Jana Pawła II, Przytoczna

I have certainly more opportunities of participating in e-learning training, I allow my students to use online dictionaries at school, which is why they are more willing to be active during my classes.

Iwona Peregrym, Gimnazjum, Ropa

My project partner from Spain proved the biggest surprise. It seems unlikely that an elderly gentleman who did not speak English (the language of the project) was the most contributing and effective member of our project. Using a translator, he was able to communicate with us and perform each task previously set. Working with him I understood that there was no point in fearing that I would not cope. You have to give it a try. We plead language and psychological barriers needlessly. Motivation and an open mind willing to learn new things will overcome any obstacle.

Jolanta Maciejewska, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 25 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi im. Hansa Christiana Andersena, Olsztyn

This platform is free from cultural or religious barriers. This is one of the best functioning feedback modules in the world.

Sylvia Ćwirzeń, Publiczne Przedszkole nr 12, Piła

After a videoconference during which a student of mine had the opportunity to talk to his friend from Crete, he said that it had been the lesson of his lifetime.

Magdalena Goc, Zespół Szkół, Pobiedziska

The eTwinning programme is open to anybody, to young teachers that begin their career and to those experienced who can discover here something interesting. Students love taking part in projects and get in touch with young people from all over the world, they only need to be given an opportunity for comprehensive development. I recommend eTwinning to anyone, let it be an inspiration for further work and for the implementation of projects.

Anna Smusz-Waberska, Powiatowy Zespół Szkół nr 2, Pszczyna

eTwinning is a programme that broadens teachers' and students' horizons. It is a way of learning and playing at the same time. You have to find some time to take part in eTwinning projects, but the effects are fantastic! After each project you want more and more. eTwinning is addictive and moreish like chocolate.

Jadwiga Szendera, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 6, Żory

Some weeks ago I noticed that project participants kept on using Facebook as a contact platform, that they posted comments on snaps and exchanged opinions – and that’s a year after the end of the project!

Piotr Jendrzaj, Publiczna Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Kolonowskie

Our projects involve small groups of pupils because of technical reasons. There are four computers for pupils in the library, so only a few children can work on them at the same time. A total of about 300 pupils have participated in our projects over the past 6 years. They are keen on participating in projects making extensive use of modern information technologies. Those who begin a project rarely drop out and at the beginning of each school year they are the first ones at the school library, frequently bringing a friend. Owing to the eTwinning programme, the library has become a place attracting pupils. Our teachers are more and more frequently interested in the programme. I particularly like cooperating with an English teacher. Together we are now implementing our second project.

Teresa Prokowska, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Bolesławiec

eTwinning is a wonderful motivator helping you to develop your own personality, it (re)invigorates your classwork with children. I recommend it to any teacher, to the one who is looking for inspiration as a beginner and to the one who has achieved a certain stage of development but lacks ideas, to the one who wishes to share their experiences and – lastly – to the one to whom each day at work is dull as dishwater!

Dagmara Szczecińska, Publiczne Przedszkole nr 2, Nowa Sól

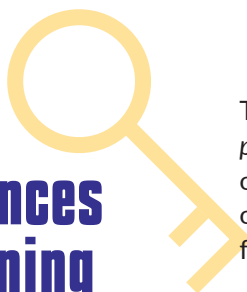
By sheer accident, when looking something up on the Internet, I came across the eTwinning webpage. This portal became my favourite education site almost a year ago. Thanks to the A week with... courses I have learnt lots of programmes and ICT applications, which have made my life easier and helped me prepare interesting classes. Owing to being accepted as a participant in a seminar in Riga, I travelled by plane for the first time. I had the fright of my life. Now I am no longer afraid just like I am not afraid of TwinSpace.

Joanna Duroł, Gminny Zespól Szkolno-Przedszkolny, Czarny Bór

I cannot imagine my school without eTwinning, which is a fantastic experience. We never forget what we learn with pleasure. A famous wise man wrote: “Tell me, I’ll forget. Show me, I’ll remember. Involve me, I’ll understand”. eTwinning means involvement. And I repeat after Henryk Dyk, a well-known pedagogue: “This activity gives students and teachers an opportunity to work and play, as well as to look for something more – to look up – at the stars”.

Bożena Kraj, Gimnazjum im. Jana Pawła II, Daleszyce

Key competences in eTwinning projects



The first eTwinning projects were registered in January 2005, and *Young people's search for personal identity from psychological to cultural one* developed by Ewa Groszek of I Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Mysłowice was one of them. The project focused on the search for identity by young people from historical, regional and cultural perspective.

In accordance with the decision of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union of 2006, the list of key competences, which should be taken into account in the process of teaching includes the following skills:

- communication in the mother tongue,
- communication in foreign languages,
- mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology,
- digital competence,
- learning to learn,
- social and civic competences,
- sense of initiative and entrepreneurship,
- cultural awareness and expression.

Ten years of the eTwinning programme have proven that the implementation of each eTwinning project brings improvement of pupils' skills in the areas listed by the European institutions. eTwinning projects are often interdisciplinary (they combine topics pertaining to several subjects), so they develop several key competences at the same time, e.g.: mathematical competence, communication in the mother tongue, learning to learn and the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.

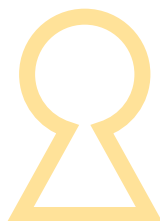
All projects and project activities described in this section have been carried out in cooperation with organisations operating abroad, so obviously they must have developed cultural awareness and expression. Thanks to

contacts with peers from all over Europe, participants from Poland could easily discover cultural similarities and differences, and what is more, they could enjoy them!

Each eTwinning initiative is carried out via the Internet, so naturally it shapes digital competences of project participants. The process of shaping these competences takes place in passing, when performing such tasks as preparing multimedia presentations, searching for information online, blogging, running a web page or communicating online with partners from other European schools. Another skill – communication in foreign languages – is improved due to the fact that pupils' or teachers' collaboration as part of a project most often requires using a foreign language (partner institutions usually are from different countries). The main skills that participants practice is listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. Quite often, participation in the project serves as an impulse to overcome language barrier.

Joining an eTwinning project is also an opportunity for shaping social and civic competences. Collaboration forms the basis for these competences and you cannot implement a quality eTwinning project without it.

eTwinning offers a lot of benefits, and not only to students. The programme also allows teachers to develop their competences in the scope of international cooperation, exchange of experiences, use of different forms of training (e.g. online courses, discussion groups, conferences, seminars and workshops). ■



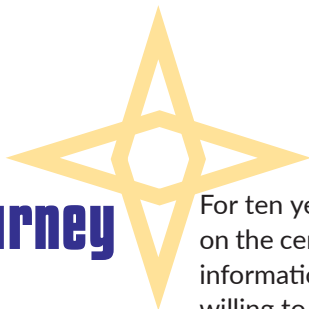
What eTwinners say:



Thanks to participation in the courses, I have learnt about many possibilities for the use of ICT tools. As a result, my students and I can present our ideas, achievements and work to the partner school in an original way. I suggested that students test new software and it proved to be a big motivation for them.

Alina Szornack, Zespół Kształcenia Podstawowego i Gimnazjalnego nr 13, Gdańsk

Virtual journey to the real world



For ten years, eTwinning has offered to teachers both traditional training on the central and regional level and e-learning courses. Training provides information about the programme and opportunities it offers to schools willing to start international cooperation using ICT tools.

With the help of a National Support Service, teachers can also participate in international workshops, which form an important element of in-service training. For future eTwinning project coordinators, it is an opportunity to exchange experiences with colleagues from abroad, to become familiar with project method of teaching, to improve language skills and to use ICT tools. For persons already involved in eTwinning partnerships, trips abroad serve as an opportunity to expand teaching skills, thanks to learning about new technologies, and to look at the project method through the eyes of teachers from other European countries.

Teachers who appreciate the benefits resulting from the implementation of eTwinning projects can draw on the experience of regional representatives and be infected with their enthusiasm during regional conferences they organise or during their visits to individual schools, where they participate in teachers' meetings.

Ambassadors and trainers form a community of practitioners who have gained experience in European cooperation projects using ICT tools. Each Thursday (also during holidays), the National Support Service in Poland organises brief workshops, during which NSS staff shares knowledge and infects with their enthusiasm growing numbers of eTwinners. This activity has been so successful that not only e-Thursdays, but also e-Tuesdays and e-Wednesdays are organised, which has resulted in fast development of the programme in the country and larger numbers of concluded partnerships. ■



Katarzyna Sopolńska

Szkoła Podstawowa nr 11,
Inowrocław

Being a teacher involves continuing professional development, as we are expected to respond to changes and observe professional standards resulting from them, and most of all, to meet the needs of our students.

Being a learning teacher

There are many opportunities and forms of raising qualifications: courses, seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. We are all familiar with that and we often use these opportunities. And there is no reason to limit yourself to domestic offers, especially if using just one opportunity would stand for meeting your and your students' educational needs. It is about implementing national and international projects involving cooperation of educational circles, which contributes to raising professional, social, cultural and personal competences and allows for offering the same to the students. Forming an important element of Erasmus+, eTwinning presents such an offer to educational communities.

As a teacher, and for the past ten years, a consultant of the English language and European Education, I have implemented many educational projects and have used a rich training offer presented by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System as part of subsequent EU programmes.

Over these years, eTwinning has become an important part of my work and my interests. It plays an important role in the context of in-service training of teachers, as it meets our basic needs. Attending online courses, workshops and implementing collaboration projects using ICT makes us become modern teachers at up-to-the-minute, digital schools. Thanks to them, in-service training and career progression have become easier. The acquired skills are helpful in every day work and make us gain students' respect. ■



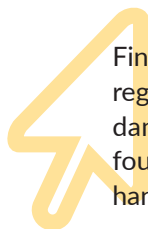
Mariola Chodakowska-Malkiewicz
Warmińsko-Mazurski Ośrodek
Doskonalenia Nauczycieli
Warmia and Mazury Teacher
Training Centre, Elbląg

Just a click away



Paulina Kuźmo-Biwan

Katolickie Gimnazjum
im. św. S. Kostki, Szczecin



Finding a partner for collaboration as part of the eTwinning programme, registering the project and gaining access to TwinSpace are three fundamental steps necessary to start working on a project. Without this foundation, all you can expect is a ramshackle structure. On the other hand, the foundation alone needs to be built on, improved and modified.

It goes without saying that a project implemented over the Internet, in which cooperation is conducted via the TwinSpace platform requires the ability to use ICT tools. This is why the National Support Service in Poland has come up to expectations of teachers registered in the programme and soon after the first projects appeared on the statistics map it offered a 10-week online course entitled *How to get involved in eTwinning?*

The first training course developed by Elżbieta Gajek, Phd, Eng. thoroughly prepared teachers for developing good projects and for communicating in a foreign language. The training gave room for exchange of good practices and paved the way for short- and long-term projects implemented with foreign partners. Thousands of teachers have attended the training. Yet, when summing up their experiences, they often pointed to the need to develop training courses for those who already implement projects. This is why another 10-week training course entitled *How to implement a quality eTwinning project* has been offered. Ewa Kurzak, Halina Bednarz and Anna Pławecka are the authors of the training course. As part of the training, teachers are to perform tasks, which required ingenuity and commitment. Emphasis is placed on shaping the skill of project development, starting from planning, through effective cooperation with coordinators, to work evaluation. A lot of attention is paid to information and communication technologies, which can be used when developing materials to be uploaded on the TwinSpace platform.

The 10-week courses were characterised by transparent structure and modularity. As part of the course, each week, participants were supposed to complete a set of tasks. With time, the programme has evolved. TwinSpace has been modified on a few occasions, more teachers have implemented

projects and their IT competences have improved. This is why the introduction of more intensive one-week e-learning training courses has proven an excellent solution.

Ambassadors of the eTwinning programme, who are also trainers, are the authors of these training courses. At present, teachers can choose from 45 short courses devoted to selected ICT tools and rules concerning work as part of the eTwinning programme. The training offer is expanded, as training participants tell the trainers what tools they would like to learn and what they need to give their projects a boost.

Online training is provided on the Moodle e-learning platform. Each course is divided into three stages (either modules or blocks), and at each one of them participants need to complete a task or several tasks consisting in the development of materials, which are sent to the trainer for assessment. As part of some of the trainers courses, instructors provide feedback on the work of teachers and in some other they give marks (expressed in the form of percentage points). Course participants have at their disposal detailed instructions developed by the instructor (in the form of documents or instruction videos), forum for the exchange of opinions and materials and, in some cases, examples of materials prepared by trainer or other teachers. Most courses allow for the use of the so-called training TwinSpace, so after the task is completed you can upload it to the platform for cooperation with partners.

Course topics focus mainly on the materials that can be uploaded to TwinSpace. In projects implemented by foreign partners, introductory presentations and creating conditions for getting to know one another are often the first steps. So for a start, you can pick up a training course on photo editing or online image editors, learn how to add audio to images, format photos or create collages. Many courses focus on diverse software to create interesting dynamic presentations.

What eTwinners say:



Participation in conferences, seminars or online courses is conducive for establishing contacts with creative people who are full of energy, have lots of ideas and are a little crazy. These events always serve as a great opportunity to exchange experiences. Meetings of eTwinners, regardless of whether held online or in the real life, always make me feel optimistic, restore my conviction that it is worth being a teacher and motivate me to be active professionally.

Katarzyna Zawita-Dudzik, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 4, Czechowice-Dziedzice

What eTwinners say:



I have been the first teacher to promote eTwinning at our school. Today, four teachers are registered and two other follow courses during mid-term breaks. Many of the one-week courses I have completed over a short span of time provided me with knowledge, which I would have accumulated for months or years. I have truly impressed an education inspectorate committee when during my interview I played a screencast about my work. And I have learnt to do that as part of an eTwinning training course.

Agnieszka Domagała, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 16, Warszawa

Apart from advanced PowerPoint features, teachers can also practice creating interactive posters with Glogster, brief animated videos with PowToon or broad presentations with Prezi.

If project partners intend to record and publish videos, they should consider taking a course devoted to subtitling with Amara, video editing with Windows Movie Maker and audio recording with Audacity. Those who would like to go beyond TwinSpace and publish their materials also on web pages or blogs are recommended to take courses devoted to WordPress, blogosphere and WIX. Some of the courses are devoted to various tools and apps, which can be easily used in communication with partners or to present the results of activities. Such courses include Web 2.0 training, mind mapping, comic book making and ICT for the youngest (i.e. pre-schoolers and primary school pupils).

Courses devoted to computing cloud, communication in projects, Tricider, VoiceThread and RealTimeBoard can prove useful in cooperation with partners. In order to successfully implement an eTwinning project, it is worth to complete the course entitled *A week for a project, A week with TwinSpace and A week with eTwinning*. The course entitled *A week for feedback* may prove handy for the evaluation of individual project stages and for presenting comments and feedback to tasks completed by students. Following the recent trend in education, which is teaching programming, the National Support Service has also offered a course on coding with Scratch.

The skills gained during these courses can be productively used during your classes. Games and quizzes created using LearningApps, Kahoot and Hot Potatoes are simply fun. To implement maths and science projects, you can use GeoGebra, Microsoft Excel or tools presented in the course *A week with entrepreneurship*, to name a few. There are many names, multiple applications and diversified software and you can learn it all in just one week (each). What is more, you do not need to pay for that, as is the case with other e-learning courses.

According to course participants, the courses' biggest advantage is such that the tasks can be performed at a time that is convenient to them (in late afternoons, evenings or at weekends). And you can frequently contact the course trainer who will not only suggest changes in the materials, comment on the tasks and respond to questions from course participants, but also offer support when you encounter problems with ICT tools or an eTwinning project implementation.

Communication with the trainer and other teachers participating in the course may be synchronous (chat is available as part of the courses) or asynchronous (e.g. take the form of messages posted on a forum). Quite often, the exchanges during a course are so intensive, that apart from the tools discussed there, teachers share experiences related to the use of other software and applications. Virtual world breaks down communication barriers and allows teachers with less advanced IT skills to try their hand at any software, step by step, without hurry or pressure from observers. What is more, varied and extensive course offer caters for the needs of teachers of various subjects and working at different levels of education.

At a time when teacher training is simply indispensable, in the scope of project method of teaching or this devoted to fast developing information and communication technologies, courses offered by the National Support Service are simply a perfect solution. They help to build autonomy of teachers and allow them to improve competences in the area of their choice, as they are not limited by a predefined training programme. These courses are brief, effective and professionally-made. And they are just a click away. ■



What eTwinners say:



Each workshop and online course I have attended have motivated me to take up new challenges. Learning new methods, mastering ICT skills and meeting other teachers, all these have contributed to the development of new ideas and projects.

Anna Szczepaniak, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 9, Dzierżoniów

The fact that I can use online resources and attend free online training without being obliged to implement projects has warmed me to eTwinning.

Alina Wujcik, Przedszkole Miejskie nr 97, Łódź

If you have trouble, try an eTwinning course!

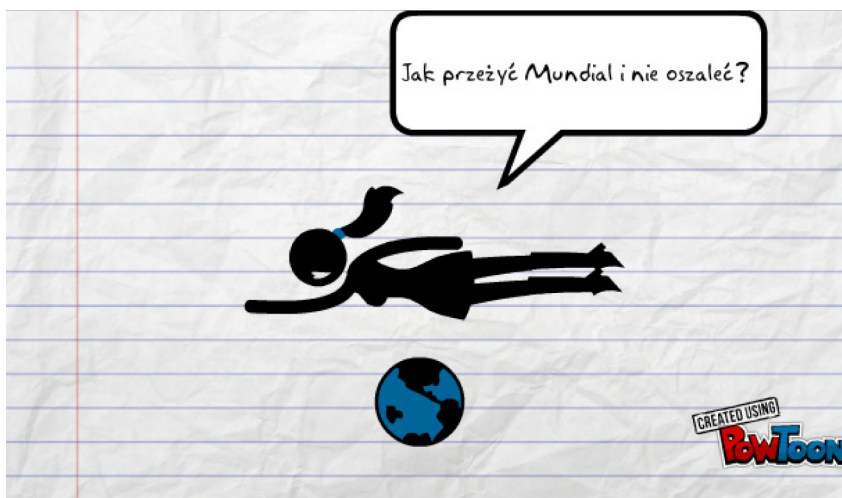


Katarzyna Sopolńska
Szkoła Podstawowa nr 11,
Inowrocław

As a trainer teaching online courses, I have many fond memories of tasks performed during training. Several course participants become frequent visitors to the platform. I have noticed that teachers are willing to share their experiences.

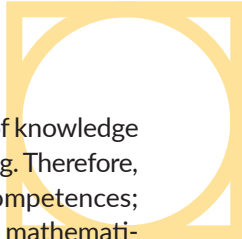
I remember June 2014 when Football World Cup was held and teachers were active online only in late evenings. That course was devoted to the latest ICT that could be used for presentation making and project dissemination. One of course participants made a presentation with PowTOon, which even today could be used for advertising eTwinning course, and which was relevant not only during the World Cup.

The fact that teachers use eTwinning training opportunities not only during the school year, but also during the holidays is testimony to the high quality of training and the incredible atmosphere during the courses, which is thanks to the commitment, openness and competences of the trainers. ■



<http://www.powtoon.com/p/dhVrrxaK0ml/>

Author of the presentation: Anna Wojdowicz



eTwinning online courses place emphasis on the development of knowledge and skills, understanding of processes, values and attitude shaping. Therefore, they have a significant impact on the improvement of key competences; communication in the mother tongue and in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression.

Over the past ten years, more than 12,000 participants completed online courses offered by eTwinning National Support Service in Poland. They have posted 200,000 messages on the Moodle platform. It is obvious that eTwinning online courses develop digital competence, as majority of them is devoted to the use of specific online tools. But having in mind that key competences are interrelated, it is hard to say that a given course develops only one specific competence. Usually, the courses focus on two or three of them and at the same time contribute to the improvement of some other. Also month-long courses for beginner and advanced eTwinners have been prepared with the observance of similar rules.

All the online courses currently available, and there are almost 50 of them, aim to develop critical thinking, creativity, sense of initiative, problem solving and risk assessment skills, and contribute to taking informed decisions as a result. They are conducive to more effective self-learning of teachers, improved quality of teaching and lead to better projects and classes at schools.

While working on eTwinning projects, teachers who have completed e-learning courses, develop their competences in culturally diversified communities, where each participant is involved in active learning in situations similar to those observed in everyday life. Such a holistic approach allows to undertake interdisciplinary topics, which help students understand the world as a whole. ■

Holistic approach



Adam Stępiński
Liceum Ogólnokształcące,
Tarnobrzeg

eTwinning is addictive



Małgorzata Łaska
Szkoła Podstawowa
nr 114, Warszawa

Well, I am addicted to eTwinning, I guess.

It all started quite normally. In September 2012, I started to work as a teacher of English at Szkoła Podstawowa nr 114 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi im. Jędrzeja Cierniaka in Warsaw. The headmaster suggested that I should become interested in international cooperation and project work under the eTwinning programme. And as you cannot say no to the headmaster, I had to give it a try.

At that point, my knowledge about this program was less than rudimentary. In February 2013, I registered for a 10-week online course for beginners offered on the Moodle platform. I was supposed to become familiar with the eTwinning programme and perhaps join a project starting from the next school year. But this is not what actually happened. Katarzyna Sopolińska, the course trainer, effectively infected me with her enthusiasm for project implementation. Already after three weeks, I registered the first project entitled *Traditions of spring*.

Having noticed the benefits my students derived from the project, I have committed myself to further international initiatives, which we have implemented with fourth, fifth and sixth-graders. After three months, I completed three projects, and each one of them has been awarded with a Quality Label.

Today, I have six projects on my scorecard, for which I have been awarded six National Quality Labels and three European ones. At present, I am working with my students on two year-long projects. And two years ago I was clueless about eTwinning.

How do my students react to this form of work?

- they definitely like project work method;
- they see the point of learning English;
- they learn to use new ICT tools.

How do I profit as a teacher:

- I have a sense of continuing development (I am doing something good for the students/the school/myself);

-
- I have something interesting to fill my development plan with;
 - I meet fantastic and enthusiastic teachers;
 - I am overcome with joy and feel satisfaction when I see the students' emotions accompanying their Skype conversations and email exchanges;
 - I do not get bored;
 - parents and school management appreciate my work.

Thanks to the project work, I consistently develop my skills. I detest humdrum, so I keep looking for new solutions/tools and online courses offered on the Moodle platform are just perfect for me. I have completed 28 of them.

It is thanks to these online courses that I have been transformed from the person who barely used ICT tools, as I was not familiar with them, to a buff who often provides support to project partners.

I use the knowledge gained during the courses not only when implementing projects, but also in everyday work of a teacher. Examples? Thanks to the *Week with LearningApps* I have learnt how to prepare quizzes for students. On my blog, I post revision exercises for my students. *The Week with Kahoot* was a bell ringer. We all know that children love computer games, so I prepare quizzes and make them compete against one another. The technology is progressing so fast that teachers need to work hard to come up to students' expectations. Each method of motivating pupils is good, but the best is the one that is effective. And wise games are effective! *The Week with comic book* making was great fun (and learning) for students.

Each course brings something new and inspiring. When I look at the first projects I implemented two years ago and compare them to the ones I am working on now, I can see progress made by the students and myself.

Yes, I must admit, I am addicted. And what is worse, this addiction is spreading. I was the first to implement eTwinning projects at my school, and today three other teachers are involved in the programme. I am afraid this addiction is untreatable – and that's OK. What do I need treatment for if eTwinning brings benefits only. ■

What eTwinners say:



Initially, I planned that I would take a course or two, read something, talk to people and then think about the projects. Meanwhile, when taking the first course, I was obliged to become actively involved in an eTwinning project. What is more, by mistake I joined two projects at one go. I was thrown in at the deep end!

Maria Okoń, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Puławy

Something great for everyone



Marzena Zabiegała

Kuratorium Oświaty
Education Inspectorate,
Katowice

It is December 15, 2005. Along with other representatives of education inspectorates, I attend a conference organised by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System to promote a newly launched EU programme. Its Director presents the eTwinning programme and conference participants find it hard to imagine virtual tools, which are to be used for real collaboration. At that time, I wrote down 15 pages of notes (and I still have them today!). I noted down everything: click here, open this, add that. After the conference, I came back to work in a state of total confusion – *What shall I do? How am I to present it to teachers?* But I had to get down to work. Already in April 2006, I organised the first conference in the Śląskie Province.

And this is how it all started. Since 2006, I have been the eTwinning coordinator for the Śląskie Province. Along the way, I have met fantastic people; programme ambassadors and teachers who could share their practical skills. Together, we have organised numerous workshops. In comfortable computer labs, we have presented the programme platform and tools. In brief, we show what eTwinning is all about. We have managed to win over quite a big circle of teachers who have also loved eTwinning.

At least once in every school year, I organise a conference devoted to the implementation of the eTwinning programme in our province. It is an opportunity to encourage new people to try eTwinning, and also a great way to promote the programme with the help of active eTwinners who talk about their projects, which have been recognised in Polish and European competitions. And we have a lot to boast about. Each year, many schools and other education establishments operating in the Śląskie Province are awarded prizes.

Meetings with teachers are very inspiring, because these people of their free will undergo training, cooperate with other teachers, and develop their skills. And the meeting rooms are always fully packed. It is great that



project activities have become an inherent part of core curriculum. During workshops, we encourage teachers to allow their students to present ideas for projects and to compliment them on activities taken at the school.

The eTwinning programme is an excellent opportunity for cooperation with schools from abroad without the need to leave the classroom. What's fascinating about eTwinning is that it keeps evolving – now we have eTwinning Plus, Polish-Polish projects, and a lot is happening in teacher training. I recommend becoming acquainted with the programme to all teachers. Everyone will find something for themselves there. ■

What eTwinners say:



When acting as an eTwinning ambassador, I offered training, during which I talked to teachers about online courses. So it occurred to me that I should know what I was talking about. As a result, I have completed almost all eTwinning courses. Thanks to carrying out projects and taking online courses, I have quickly learnt to use new ICT tools, which prove handy in project work. Together with my students, we have developed materials, which we presented in an attractive form on TwinSpace for our partner schools to see.

Danuta Bartkowiak-Siekańska, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 84, Poznań

eTwinning friends



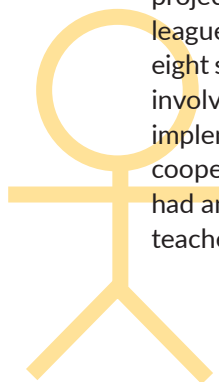
Magdalena Madej
Zespół Szkół nr 3,
Dąbrowa Górnicza

My adventure with eTwinning began about eight years ago. Together with my students, we have carried out several fantastic projects. eTwinning not only allows students to improve linguistic skills, but also serves as an excellent opportunity for teachers to meet colleagues from other countries who are passionate about their job. In the course of project work, we have formed friendships, built trust and formed a bond, which, if nurtured, will last long.

In 2014, I had an opportunity to make new eTwinning friends. I owe it to two extraordinary events; a contact seminar in Armenia as part of eTwinning Plus and annual eTwinning conference in Rome.

In May 2014, I attended the eTwinning Plus contact seminar organised in Armenia. Apart from participants from Poland, it was attended by teachers from Italy, France, Cyprus, Malta, and of course Armenia. During the seminar, teachers from different countries talked about their eTwinning experiences. I was also one of the speakers, as at that time, I had already carried out several projects, which were awarded National and European Quality Labels.

But the main goal of the seminar was to attract new partners to cooperation and register a new project. And we succeeded in that. Soon, I found a group of people who were willing to work with me. We developed a project entitled *Different cities – one family*, which was registered by a colleague from Italy. One school from Poland, Italy, Cyprus and France and eight schools from Armenia joined the project. So there were five countries involved in it. We planned activities for subsequent months of project implementation, we shared responsibilities and in September we started cooperation. Today, I can say that this project is very special to me. I have had an opportunity to meet project partners in person. They are amazing teachers, full of passion and ideas. It is a great pleasure to work with them.





What eTwinners say:



It was only after a contact seminar that I have become actively involved in international projects. During the seminar, I met many teachers from other countries. I saw examples of interesting projects that can be implemented in virtual world and these were not only initiatives related to IT or technology. Now I know that eTwinning projects work well with physical education classes, too...

Magda Dudziak, Gimnazjum nr 18, Wrocław

In November 2014, I went to Rome to attend an annual eTwinning conference. I met there a lot of teachers from all over Europe who are truly committed to their work, creative and who love what they do. The conference was a very well organised event. The programme included integration activities, workshops and presentations. During the conference, I presented our project *Different cities – one family* as an example of cooperation with eTwinning Plus countries. Also during the conference, I met fantastic teachers who inspire others to action.

Participation in eTwinning seminars is the only event of its kind. It shows that there is no shortage of teachers with a passion in European schools. It provides the opportunity to share experiences, exchange ideas and, at the same time, is great fun. ■



The road to success




Elżbieta Gajek, PhD, Eng.
University of Warsaw

The first *Nasz projekt eTwinning* (Our eTwinning Project) competition was held in Poland in 2005 and its results were announced in 2006. For the second time, the best Polish eTwinning projects were awarded prizes during a ceremony held in Warsaw in June 2006. Since that time, subsequent prize award ceremonies have been held in late spring. Initially, the projects entered for the competition, then called partnerships, related to seven topic areas:

- the culture of everyday life, the culture of the school;
- history and traditions, the local culture of the region;
- the environment;
- arts and music;
- subject knowledge;
- multilingual and multicultural cooperation;
- subjects outside the curriculum, but with the possibility of integration with the curriculum.

At that time, mainly projects related to culture and literature were implemented. They were very popular among language teachers. It was mainly lower secondary school students who implemented the projects, as they were the ones who were computer literate.

In the summary to the assessment of the 2006 competition projects, I wrote: “teachers and students who started partnerships in 2005 proved that the 19th c. limitations of education involving four walls of the classroom, two covers of a textbook and five days of work a week can be easily circumvented without causing any harm to the education system as a whole. Those teachers have got rid of routine practices and mundane exercises and replaced them with socially and emotionally meaningful communication tasks, which introduce students to multilingual and multicultural world. Their autonomy and creativity in the teaching practice, coupled with efficiency in negotiations with partners, form added value, which can be of use to students and can serve as a basis for the development of life skills”. Ten years later, these words still refer to each one of the 14,000 eTwinning projects, regardless of the fact whether they were entered for the competition or not.



With each year, more and more projects entered for the competition focussed on cross-curricular contents and reflected growing intercultural competences of their authors. The projects have also been more advanced in terms of methodology and technology. Also with each year, the number of projects implemented by primary schools and preschools has grown. Initially, projects implemented by preschools generated controversy. Those who had not appreciated pre-schoolers and questioned their capability for project implementation when assisted by extremely skilful preschool and early school education teachers asked: What do young children need international cooperation implemented with the use of ICT for?

And it should be emphasised that eTwinning competitions have attracted a group of innovative and enthusiastic teachers who thanks to consistent improving of their skills have become European elite. The quality of Polish initiatives has been best proven by the fact that many of the projects awarded in the Polish competition have also been recognised on the international arena and awarded European Prizes.

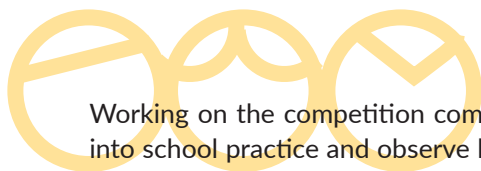
As I have been a member of the competition committee in each edition of Polish competitions, I would like to take liberty and present some reflections as concluding remarks. Reading the applications, getting insight into the results of teaching and the records of the whole process is always a great pleasure for me. Discussions held by the competition committee reveal the benefits and value of projects, as each of its members look at them from a slightly different angle. I am ravished by projects implemented in three categories: maths and science (which integrate languages and ICT with maths, physics and chemistry), projects implemented by preschools and these implemented by primary and lower secondary schools in rural and socially and economically disadvantaged areas, as thanks to them, the latter move to the educational centre of Europe and their students are offered new development opportunities. Each competition project shows that languages and information and communication technologies are the tools with which important educational goals can be achieved. This is why when the work of the competition committee comes to an end we feel unsatisfied, as we would like to award more prizes than the competition rules allow. ■

In 2006, EACEA adopted recommendations for the competitions, which provided for: more partnerships with the participation of primary school pupils and pre-schoolers; focus on different topics; introduction of more advanced techniques; cross-cultural contents excluding basic facts and simple comparisons; the role of media in societies; involving a larger number of teachers and students in each school; attracting more participants from rural and less privileged regions; cooperation of students on one product rather than preparing many products for the partners; cooperation between language teachers and teachers of other subjects who participate in the same project at a given school to develop teaching skills needed for CLIL; and more universal work results, which in the future can be used by other students and teachers.

A growing number of digital citizens



Iwona Moczydłowska
Mazowieckie Samorządowe
Centrum Doskonalenia
Zawodowego Nauczycieli
Mazovia Local Government
Teacher Training Centre,
Siedlce



Working on the competition committee is a unique opportunity to look into school practice and observe how technology is used in the teaching of individual subjects. Reading the competition entries is a pleasure, but what I like most is to see the projects online.

I must admit that the quality of submitted projects is consistently improving. Participants in the subsequent editions of the competition gain experience and projects as an undertaking and a method of teaching have become a part and parcel of the teaching practice at schools. Also teachers are becoming more skilful in relating eTwinning projects to specific requirements of core curricula. It is a pity though that the majority of projects is implemented outside school hours, as part of school clubs, extracurricular activities and additional contact hours. A perfect situation, and also a practice in many European countries as well as in preschools and grades 1-3 of primary schools in Poland, is such that eTwinning projects are implemented during regular classes.

Thanks to the latest technologies that schools avail of, cooperation between project partners is more intensive. The technology itself can significantly facilitate communication, but it does not replace the mechanisms for effective cooperation. As shown by good practices, neither age nor language proficiency are indispensable for effective cooperation, as even pre-schoolers are capable of working in international groups.

However, the benefits related to programme participation are most visible in the case of teachers. The projects they implement involve increasingly better methodologies and are more and more student-oriented and technologically advanced. This is a result of experience gained, peer learning and participation in online and traditional training sessions. Teachers implementing eTwinning projects are open-minded and gaining confidence to try new teaching methods. They prove that you can teach maths not only

in a traditional way, but also combine it with English, thanks to the use of the CLIL method. They are not afraid of research projects, as part of which pupils and pre-schoolers gain knowledge in the process of experimenting, formulating hypotheses and verifying them.

Over the past few years, teachers have been increasingly aware of the significance of copyright. They not only monitor students' works from this angle, but also include media literacy in their projects. Thanks to these efforts, digital natives implementing eTwinning projects are slowly being transformed into digital citizens. Last but not least, evaluation has been appreciated as an integral element of project work. Only few other initiatives implemented at schools can equal with projects implemented as part of eTwinning programme in terms of their contribution to the shaping of key competences – at any stage of education. The projects dovetail with the latest trends in education and set the direction for changes at Polish schools

If I could award a Grand Prix, it would go to: LYPS, 2014; a project implemented by Szkoła Podstawowa nr 4 in Zambrów. This is a good practice in terms of activation of pupils and fulfilling their potential. The value of this project stems from the fact that it is a coherent set of well-thought-out and carefully developed multi-stage activities that are challenging to pupils. Thanks to clear instructions and using diversified Web 2.0 tools, pupils can achieve ambitious goals while performing tasks that are attractive for them. The project stands out from others thanks to the method of work organisation (international teams of pupils work under the supervision of a teacher from one of partner countries) and embedded mechanisms for sharing responsibility for the result of work (one partner assumes responsibility for one task and is replaced by another one during the implementation of the next task). Respect for copyright and specific actions taken in order to develop this competence in pupils are especially praiseworthy there. Last, but not least, it includes excellent description and evaluation. ■

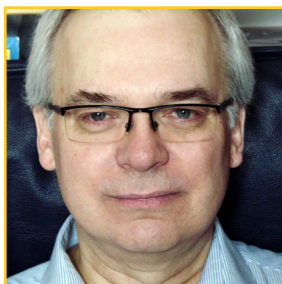
What eTwinners say:



The participation in a seminar in Latvia made me willing to start cooperation with other schools. A few other teachers liked my project entitled Tastes, shapes and aromas of autumn. The project got approval and we could start cooperation. We were all new to eTwinning. We were not familiar with TwinSpace and we could not communicate online. The project did not work out, but I did not give up. I have undergone training and now I know how to use TwinSpace. I have joined a Polish project, during which I felt a surge of energy, willingness to act and collaborate. Once again, I have been convinced that it is worth to work with others and that we can do more in a group...

Joanna Duroł, Gminny Zespół Szkolno-Przedszkolny, Czarny Bór

Perfection



Leszek Rudak, PhD
University of Warsaw

6

Six is a perfect number (it is the sum of its positive divisors excluding the number itself) and I have been a member of the eTwinning competition committee responsible for the assessment of maths and science teachers for six years now. This means that for the past six years I have sought perfection.

I remember one project from the first year of my work in the competition committee (*Maths and Earth*, coordinator: Urszula Utnicka, 2009). This was an example of excellent cooperation between schools from different countries, and this project could not have been implemented without the help of people living in geographically distant places. The pupils' task was to measure the circumference of earth – not directly, but by making calculations using maths (that at last proved to be of use there!), which they learnt at school, and by making measurements using the Eratosthenes' method, which has been known for more than 2000 years. The result of the circumference calculation obtained in this experiment by students from Poland and France differed only by about 1.5% from the results of professional measurements made using modern methods!

Over the past ten years, the total of 206 projects have been awarded in Our eTwinning Project competition. A few years later, I assessed a project, in which students threw stones in the class – under the supervision of a teacher and under strictly controlled conditions, yet they did throw stones (*Fly me to the Moon*, coordinator: Małgorzata Pawlik-Podgórska, 2013). The strict supervision was much needed, as they examined the impact of the size and speed of meteors bombarding the surface of the Moon on the size of thus created craters (stones were to 'simulate' meteors). Conclusions backed by calculations could be related to astronomical observations. How much better did project participants understand the Moon, when they discovered how the dark spots or 'storm oceans' on its surface appeared – after they themselves created their models in laboratory conditions.

These two examples could suggest that eTwinning projects have been perfect for a long time and still remain as such, but on the other hand, this would mean that there is no progress and that the projects do not evolve. This conclusion, however, would be surprising, having in mind the fact that eTwinning is based on computer technology, which is progressing with lightning speed. So should we be worried that the progress is owed to the latest technologies?

No, to the contrary, we should be pleased. In my opinion, this is a proof that “the leading role in eTwinning is not played by a computer with all its powers hidden in the latest software and internet resources. The fact that we’re talking in a foreign language is also of secondary importance. What really matters, however, is the footprint of our – teachers’ and students’ – personality that shows in the projects.” The apparent lack of development shows that humans are the most important; their ideas (brilliant, crazy and... not so bad), creations, as well as errors and mistakes.

You may say that you cannot see evolution, but only in the conceptual part of the projects. However, progress is visible in implementation. Polish students with a growing ease communicate with peers from distant countries. The English language, the basis of communication in most projects, is no longer intimidating to anyone in Poland. Project participants simply communicate, without paying attention to the fact that they use a foreign language. Similarly, students’ attitudes to computer technology are changing. They use it because they have grown up using a computer and with a mobile phone in their pocket. They can use these devices and use them without getting overly excited about the technology or screen resolutions. This is their world. ■

What eTwinners say:



In November 2014, I participated in a contact seminar in Sopot. This meeting was very well organised. All information indispensable for beginner eTwinners was provided during lectures. During the seminar, we were to find a twin organisation and develop an unmatched project. It was a very motivating task and my first step into the wonderful world of cyberspace...

Katarzyna Stępczyńska, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 8, Elbląg

eTwinning projects for maths and science teachers

- from competition juror's perspective



Sławomir Wronka, PhD, Eng.
National Centre for Nuclear
Research, Świerk

On several occasions, I have been faced with a difficult task of selecting the best eTwinning projects in the maths and science category. I am very pleased to observe the evolution of projects submitted to the subsequent editions of the programme and raising standards, which makes the work of a competition committee member even more difficult and interesting.

When assessing maths and science projects, you can clearly see what a valuable tool eTwinning is and that it promotes the use of innovative teaching methods. Limitations, such as not enough time and abridged curriculum, are no longer an issue. All that matters is passion.

When using the latest technologies, which are attractive to pupils, and applying absorbing motivation and project management methods that have been taken from the world of business, teachers pass on to students important curricular content and in an interdisciplinary manner, too. Teachers become guides taking pupils on fascinating journeys to discover laws of nature, mathematical rules and definitions, as well as chemical reactions.

Preschool and early school education teachers deserve special praise here. Linguistic and conceptual limitations observed in young children make the challenge increase twofold, yet the project partners show indigence in coping with it. On the other hand, the potential, independence and natural mastery of ICT that older pupils and secondary school students display, can be easily used. Projects implemented at later stages of education can encourage students to continue learning. Maths and science projects allow them to make observations, measurements and experiments and to meet scientists, not necessarily only during classes or at school.

A very important feature of eTwinning projects is the need to cooperate with other schools in partner countries. This precondition poses a challenge, as you need to tend to day to day cooperation between project participants (students), and not only to incidental sharing of work results on a school website. However, what poses a challenge, serves as an inspiration for interesting initiatives, such as the creation of independent international student teams performing specific tasks.

As a competition committee member, I receive a big boost of energy, when I see the enthusiasm of teachers and magnificent results of their cooperation with other colleagues and students. State borders, cultural differences and foreign languages are no longer an issue. And the biggest prize to project participants is the glint of joy in their eyes and knowing wink when saying goodbye (just for now), because they mean until the next time! ■

What eTwinners say:



I learnt about eTwinning during a training organised by the Warmia and Mazury In-Service Teacher Training Centre in Elbląg. Then I browsed the programme's website, saw the results of other teachers' work and simply envied them such opportunities for development and collaboration. So I decided to join the programme. During a contact seminar in Sopot, which I attended in September 2014, I established contact with teachers from other European countries, especially former USSR states, as I wanted to find Russian speaking partners. It turned out well.

Tomasz Rozenbajgier, Zespół Szkół, Pastęk

What eTwinners say:

I heard about eTwinning during a regional conference in Katowice, to which I was sent by the director of our preschool. The director thought it was an interesting initiative and just right for someone like me who combined the willingness to carry out non-standard activities with linguistic skills and who could do that as part of the traineeship for the next grade as a teacher. It was 2006 and eTwinning was fledgling, but that was it for me. I heard about international projects that were open even to pre-schoolers, about simple registration procedures, about freedom of the selection of topics for the projects and of planning activities with project partners. This freedom of choice and action was adequate incentive to me. What is more, during the conference break I was offered the tastiest cake ever (please forgive me Grandma!). I just thought that the whole eTwinning was worth tasting! So this is how it started. From one cake to another – or rather from a conference to workshop – over the past nine years I have got strong liking for eTwinning and I hope I will savour it until retirement. I no longer like it for delicacies, but for its unique character, as it stimulates creativity and teamwork (between partners, pupils, parents...). It opens you up to other cultures and lets you spread your wings. It shows how to teach in a modern

way and it is conducive for making friends. I could go on and on like that. I should thank those who sent me to the conference, those who told me about eTwinning and definitely those who made that delicious cake.

Anna Krzyżanowska, Przedszkole nr 48 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi, Zabrze

In January 2007, I took an online course entitled "How to get involved in eTwinning?" Our task as part of Module 5 was to establish contact with another teacher, preferably from abroad. Two teachers responded to my post on the eTwinning forum; one from Italy and one from Norway. Both were interested in starting cooperation in the next school year. Enrica (from Italy) had already had some eTwinning experience and was my guide on TwinSpace. Our project had several stages, and we started to use new tools with new groups. I taught Enrica (via the Internet) how to create a glog and she trained me in using Prezi. We have been awarded a European Quality Label for our project. Cooperation with Linda (Norway) continues to this day. We have implemented one eTwinning and two STF (Scholarship and Training Fund) projects, which involved student exchanges. We use eTwinning as a communication platform in our projects.

Joanna Stefańska, Gimnazjum nr 18, Wrocławskie Centrum Doskonalenia Nauczycieli, Wrocław

Before I became an eTwinner, I used a computer as a communication tool and a typewriter. eTwinning has opened the door to comprehensive development in the field of ICT to me. The programme offers many forms of in-service training, especially numerous online courses. I have completed the two longer courses offered by the National Support Service and a few shorter workshops. I have also learnt from other eTwinners and looked for tutorials on the Internet. I have taught my students what I have learnt and we have used these skills in the projects we have implemented. Being a methodology consultant and eTwinning programme promoter, I have conducted training and workshops and shared my knowledge with a few hundreds of teachers. Many of them implement successful projects, and win labels and prizes in numerous competitions. I have inspired a big circle of people to attend training offered by the programme, including contact seminars. Students implementing the projects have been motivated to raise language competences and have improved their communication and team work skills. For our school, eTwinning was a starting point for the implementation of projects as part of Comenius, STF and the Visegrad Fund. It was on the eTwinning forum that I met future partners in all our projects.

**Joanna Stefańska, Gimnazjum nr 18,
Wrocławskie Centrum Doskonalenia
Nauczycieli, Wrocław**

Activities taken as part of eTwinning have shown students that you can learn a language in a more fun way than just by using a textbook and exercise book. When carrying out the project, students used different sources of information and contacted on the platform, which contributed to their integration.

**Alina Szornack, Zespół Kształcenia
Podstawowego i Gimnazjalnego nr 13,
Gdańsk**

In September 2013, Zespół Szkół Miejskich nr 5 in Kędzierzyn-Koźle started the implementation of an international school project in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme, school partnerships, which was scheduled for two years. The project is implemented together with partners from Italy, Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Greece. Students and teachers implement different health promoting activities, which are included in the project name: "move@at.eu". In brief, the name includes two major project watchwords; move and eat (healthy). So the project name can be interpreted as: Practice sports and eat healthy! In our project, we use TwinSpace tools available on the eTwinning portal. This allows us to share experiences and present all products developed within the framework of international cooperation.

**Remigiusz Wójcik, Zespół Szkół Miejskich
nr 5, Kędzierzyn-Koźle**

I joined the programme after the completion of an online course entitled How to get involved in eTwinning? This was a good starting point. The atmosphere and cooperation spirit during the training were excellent and I established contact with a Polish-speaking teacher from France. This contact has resulted in my first project. Later, I have taken several courses devoted to individual tools, which I strongly recommend.

**Teresa Prokowska, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1,
Bolesławiec**



The best among diverse competitions



The format of the European eTwinning Prizes has undergone some changes resulting from the development of the programme. What has remained unchanged is the fact that the selection of the best projects for the purposes of those European competitions is always about bringing out the following values: pedagogical innovation, providing conditions for the development of student creativity, curricular integration, communication, exchange and collaboration between partner schools, creative use of IT and high quality results.



Elżbieta Gajek, PhD, Eng.
University of Warsaw

On the one hand, Europe's cultural diversity is its treasure, but on the other hand, it determines the slightly different ways in which individual countries perceive and define values that lie at the heart of the education system. These values result from tradition and are part of the culture and social practice of each of those countries. Therefore, identifying two best projects implemented in Europe is an immensely difficult task for a large team of experts, the more so that all projects entered into such European competitions are excellent. The ones to receive the prize must embody common and unquestionable values.

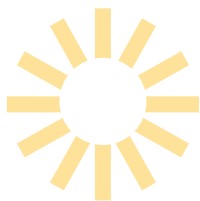
There are three rounds in the process of the best project selection:

- national experts evaluate projects which involve the participation of schools from their country and which have been awarded the European Quality Label. Until recently, Polish experts were allowed to evaluate only projects entered by Polish schools. Now, however, they may select the best of all projects involving the participation of Polish schools. The number of projects qualifying for the second round of the selection process depends on the number of projects entered into the competition by a given country, which usually amounts to 10% of all entries. Experts justify their decisions in writing and may also give their opinion on projects which they have not nominated. One project may be nominated by various countries;

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- three-strong international evaluator panels apply strictly defined criteria to evaluate projects. Each team evaluates 10-12 projects. Experts are selected in such a way as to prevent them from evaluating projects with the participation of schools from their country. After each expert's individual evaluation of each project, two best projects to go to the third round are selected during an audio- or videoconference. Experts give reasons for their joint opinion;
 - the grand jury selects two best projects from all projects indicated by all evaluating teams in the second round. These two nominees emerge as the winner and the runner-up. Although the prize goes to the winner only, the selection and presentation of the runner-up project at European level is also rewarding.

Since the competition began, at least one Polish institution has made it to the finals every year. Polish schools set a magnificent example to Europe in the field of ICT-based international cooperation. The projects that have been awarded reflect the fundamental values of European education: the meaning of identity shaped by literature and art, references to things in common and not to those which divide, rationalism, mathematical thinking and the role of science. These values are evident in everyday school practice.

The anniversary of the programme is a good opportunity to congratulate all previous finalists. May the future bring all eTwinners lots of joy derived from taking up and implementing projects which will enjoy recognition at European level. ■



What eTwinners say:



The beginning of my admiration for eTwinning was at a conference presenting award-winning projects. I realised that I could also try to get involved with my pre-schoolers. During the break I spoke to the teachers who had implemented the projects discussed at the conference and they dispelled my fears saying that the programme created lots of opportunities to improve skills (participation in competitions, training, conferences). I decided to try and now I cannot imagine working without eTwinning.

Agata Sędek, Przedszkole nr 181
"Wesołe Nutki", Warszawa

In honour of Maria Sktodowska - Curie



Sławomir Wronka PhD, Eng.
National Centre for Nuclear
Research, Świerk

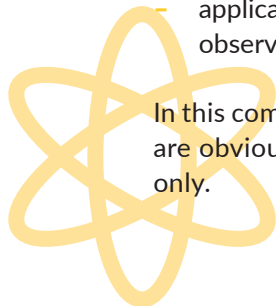
The European special category prize – the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Prize – is slightly different from other competition categories in which eTwinning projects receive nominations. The category has been established in honour of the life and work of the great Polish female scientist, winner of the Nobel Prize on two occasions for both Physics and Chemistry. Marie Skłodowska-Curie is the only woman to win it twice.

The patron of the competition dreamt about using radioactivity-related research findings for the benefit of mankind as a whole. It is for this reason that the competition particularly emphasises additional aspects of projects, however, the basic eTwinning characteristics must be preserved: partner collaboration, curricular integration, jointly achieved results and jointly developed materials, level and method of using ICT tools, project evaluation.

The above mentioned additional aspects taken into consideration by Maria Skłodowska-Curie competition jurors include:

- use of research, scientific or educational tools and methods to address important social issues (e.g.: protection of environment or natural resources);
- promotion of science among children and young people – this could be by way of cooperation with a local HEI or a research institute, a trip or hosting a meeting with members of the scientific community;
- application of methods used in professional scientific research, e.g.: observation, experiments, measurements.

In this competition, projects based on mathematics and natural sciences are obvious candidates. The competition rules provide for one winner only. ■



Since March 2005, I have been the eTwinning coordinator for the Opolskie Province. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the eTwinning programme, I have decided to share a few reflections.

As we all know, the programme aims at:

- development of international cooperation of schools,
- shaping technical, linguistic and intercultural competences in students and teachers,
- adding European dimension to curriculum,
- promotion of in-service teacher training.

From the very beginning, the programme has enjoyed great interest on the part of education establishments in our province. On many occasions, schools from our region have ranked high in competitions and have been awarded Polish and European Quality Labels.

A good practice example I would like to mention is the project entitled *Sky over my city*, which was implemented in the school year 2007/2008 by Zespół Szkół Zawodowych im. Stanisława Staszica in Opole (coordinators: Izabela Kołodziejczyk and Ilona Olchawa). The project took the second place in the Poland-wide competition *Nasz projekt eTwinning 2008* in the 16-19 age category. The project was carried out together with a school in Portugal, and the Opole University also contributed to it. Students not only focused on topics related to the project (made observations of the sky, searched for information, developed a professional project website), but also broadened

The National Support Service in Poland has appointed regional representatives of the eTwinning programme, namely ambassadors and coordinators. Ambassadors are experienced teachers and employees of teachers training centres who offer training to teachers during conferences, seminars and workshops. They are also trainers running eTwinning online courses. Coordinators are employees of education inspectorates who as part of their duties promote the eTwinning programme and cooperate with ambassadors in the regions.

eTwinning opens the door to innovativeness



Halina Pilarz
Kuratorium Oświaty
Educational Inspectorate,
Opole

What eTwinners say:



Thanks to mobilities organised as part of the eTwinning programme, I realised that I wanted to become a member of eTwinner community. The enthusiasm of other teachers, their belief in their pupils and in the success of their activities made me realise that thanks to eTwinning I can make my and my pupils' dreams come true...

Anna Ryrych, Przedszkole nr 48
z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi, Zabrze

their knowledge in astronomy, physics, mathematics, history, mother tongue, geography, English and information technology. A statement by one of the coordinators can be used as a clear-cut summary for the *Sky over my city* project: We have found common space – without borders, customs officers, for all: SKY OVER OUR HEADS, which looks almost the same to all of us.

It is also worth mentioning activities taken as part of the programme by Szkoła Podstawowa nr 8 in Opole, which has carried out many projects, also with younger pupils. As Ewa Górnicka and Bronisława Niespor, programme coordinators at the school emphasise: “Boosting motivation for the acquisition of knowledge was an important element of the projects. Children learnt to use various sources of knowledge. Thanks to project implementation, pupils improved in an attractive way their reading comprehension skills, discovered the customs of the partner country, become acquainted with various communication tools available in the contemporary world, learnt how to operate in information society and use multimedia software”.

Another interesting project is the *Rainbow Village* implemented in the school year 2011/2012 at the Zespół Szkół in Dąbrowa, which won a prize in 2013 in the 12-15 years category. Project coordinators said about the project: “It aimed at the creation of a virtual village, which is founded on mutual deference, tolerance, and respect for equal rights of all citizens. Thanks to project activities, students not only expanded their knowledge about partner countries and became acquainted with their culture, but also improved their linguistic and ICT competences by using them in practice.”

A teacher of English working at Publiczna Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1 in Kolonowskie who implemented the project *We enjoy learning English*, which became an element of pedagogical innovation, has accurately judged the sustainability of eTwinning projects: “The most significant aspect of eTwinning projects is the fact that after the completion of project activities students may stay in touch with partners and use the language in real life situations outside the realm of school. Each project has a goal and a foreign language is only a tool for realising it.”

Another important aspect is the implementation of education projects from the perspective of education law. In accordance with core curriculum, preparing students for living in information society forms an important task of the school at the third and fourth educational stage. Teachers should ensure conditions for the acquisitions by students of such skills as searching for, putting in order and using information coming from various sources with the use of information and communication technologies and as part of different school subjects.

The implementation of eTwinning projects fits well this task of the school, as project work shapes such skills in students as proficient use of the latest ICT tools, ability to select and critically analyse information and working in a team. Safety of Internet use as part of the eTwinning programme, which is appreciated by headmasters and teachers, should also be mentioned here.

To sum up: eTwinning is a great incentive for learning languages and other subjects, depending on the project topic. It allows for establishing cooperation by schools from different European countries without incurring any costs. All you need to join a project is a computer room with Internet access. Other great advantages of the programme include annual competitions, in which attractive prizes are awarded, workshop opportunities for headmasters and teachers, as well as contact seminars and international conferences.

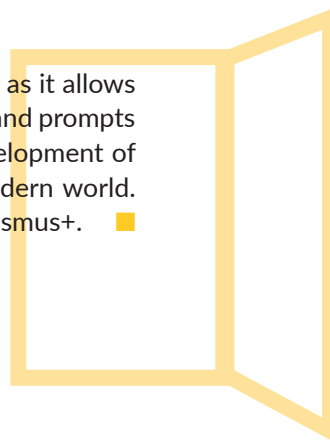
We encourage all teachers to join the eTwinning programme, as it allows for making your teaching more varied, promotes innovations and prompts students to become more active. It is conducive for the development of ICT and linguistic competences, which are crucial in the modern world. And last but not least, eTwinning is only a step away from Erasmus+. ■

What eTwinners say:



I started my eTwinning adventure after taking an online course, which encouraged me to join a project. Then I participated in another course, got involved in another project and then in another one... When I was third in "Our eTwinning Project" national competition I felt even stronger urge to establish international cooperation. The participation in the European eTwinning Conference allowed me to meet my project partners and many other people thanks to whom my fascination with eTwinning has reached a higher level

Jadwiga Szendera, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 6, Żory



From the first computer to trainer



Anna Pławecka

II Liceum Ogólnokształcące,
Jaworzno

In Poland, today's students are Europe's conscious citizens cured of inferiority complex towards their Western peers and busy striving towards their goals. Thanks to meeting the educational requirements that they are faced with they reach for the highest professional and social positions later in life, they are people of consequence in the country and abroad. Today's teachers are pedagogues equipped with the latest ICT tools, able to prepare their students for the challenges that the modern world has in store for them. However, it was not always like that.

The beginnings

The year was 1999. Parents bought their first computer complete with software and additional equipment. They put it on their writing desk (which was nothing like computer stations available today), plugged their "marvel" in and did not quite know what to do next. The thing was supposed to speed up and facilitate their work, but how? That's when Kasia who was back from her preschool entered the room and exclaimed: "Oh, enter!" She showed them how to switch the computer on, how to use Microsoft Paint and Word. Her dad – a businessman – and her mum – a comprehensive upper secondary school teacher – were absolutely delighted with their daughter's enthusiasm and skills gained during her preschool computer classes. However, they felt quite embarrassed about their ignorance compared with their daughter's computer literacy.

The age of computers

Kasia's mother, a language specialist, decided that neither her students at school nor her own children at home should surpass her in ICT skills. After several successful or less than successful attempts to learn how to use the computer, undertaken on her own or with a little help from her friends, she enrolled for a postgraduate programme entitled "IT and computer science at school". Kasia's dad – the businessman – joined suitable courses. As a result, they were soon able to surf the web in a safe and – more importantly – conscious way and make use of software available on the market. They were no strangers to subsequent programme updates and upgrades having found out what they were, and keeping up with novelties appearing on the Internet soon became their habit.

2005 – the advent of eTwinning

At the beginning of the 21st century methodical conferences with the participation of English language users specialising in various domains were neither frequent nor easily accessible. The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language offered their members an opportunity not to stay behind and to develop their own teaching skills. Moreover, as a pioneering organisation in this field it introduced CALL – ICT assisted English language learning – in Poland. The members of the Association were divided into SIGs (Special Interest Groups) with the CALL SIG being one of them. In 2005 Elżbieta Gajek PhD, Eng. was invited to a conference in Poznań to talk to the participants about the idea of new educational technologies such as e-learning courses and eTwinning itself, which were only just emerging in Poland. These things were new, unknown and difficult to grasp. The Internet was not so accessible as it is now, not to mention its speed and transfer. However, Dr. Gajek managed to get the participants interested to the extent that Kasia's mother, present at the conference, started searching for school twinning – a term that sounded quite strange at the time.

The first e-learning courses

Elżbieta Gajek PhD, Eng. published the first in Poland (and as it later transpired, also the first in Europe) online course whose subject was work with eTwinning projects, entitled *How to get involved with the eTwinning programme*. This e-learning course proved to be quite a challenge to the comprehensive upper secondary school teacher despite her Master's degree in English Studies and her ICT postgraduate programme, not to mention various certificates she had obtained on completion of courses, workshops, training and conferences. Therefore, the first objective set for Kasia's mother was to complete a distant learning course for beginners.

Her appointment to act in the capacity of an eTwinning trainer during the dynamic development of the programme in 2005-2006 was another quite unexpected challenge. Then she moved on to the implementation of her first project with a German school. That is how eTwinning transformed her from an inhibited person of no consequence, getting away from the dreary

What eTwinners say:



As in the saying: Give him an inch and he will take a mile, right after the completion of the first course I wanted to take the next one. Now, I am doing my eighth course, I think, and I have two more to go.

Alicja Szulc, Zespół Szkół nr 1, Stolno

When taking the online courses, the biggest challenge to me was the completion of tasks, as every day I needed to find extra time to do them and I couldn't be bothered. Fortunately, the willingness to acquire new skills was stronger than my laziness and I still take new courses.

Bożena Pędzik, Przedszkole nr 48 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi, Zabrze

What eTwinners say:



I attended a conference in Sopot, which was a bell ringer. These two days of intensive but pleasant work has brought results in the form of a new eTwinning project.

The conference was professionally prepared in every respect, to mention the provision of information, experience sharing and presentation of work results.

Danuta Pacek, Przedszkole nr 8, Elbląg

reality of a post-communist country, into a conscious European teacher knowing her worth on the education market, whose skills matched those of teachers from Scandinavia, Germany, France or Spain. It is owing to projects that Polish teachers realise that despite our “ever so slightly” delayed start we have not been left behind. What’s more, at the moment we are probably ahead, as Polish teachers have always been very ambitious.

Comprehensive development opportunity offered by eTwinning

Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2015, eTwinning continues to offer vast opportunities for Polish students and teachers. Young people educated in today’s Europe meet their European (and since 2013 also Asian and African) peers as early as at the beginning of their education. Statistical data relating to e-learning in-service teacher training workshops organised as part of Polish eTwinning reflect the record-breaking number of Polish teachers who have undergone training, and the courses that they have completed translate into the number of projects in progress. Thanks to being able to exchange ideas with teachers from other countries and to discuss our everyday problems we realise that Polish teachers are neither alone nor left to their own devices. Europe is a continent of people and countries who and which are very much alike despite their cultures and traditions, which are so distinct and diverse.

Continuing development

The typical Polish teacher mentioned at the beginning has been an eTwinning instructor since 2006. She is pleased with the growing number of pedagogues trained by her. Thanks to eTwinning ambassador meetings, she keeps getting new stimuli to improve her skills. Today she is the co-author of an advanced course entitled “*How to implement a good eTwinning project*” and of two one-week courses.

Nowadays eTwinning has a very extensive offer of online training related to the eTwinning programme and other ICT tools. It is fortunate that the enthusiasm of pedagogues feeling like incorporating technological novelties in their work has not weakened and that they are an occupational group wishing to keep on raising their qualifications. Despite numerous

attempts to deprecate the profession, Polish teachers continue to show commitment fuelled by the growing awareness of the fact that at the moment there is no difference between them and their foreign colleagues when it comes to willingness to instil respect for otherness in students, to teach them to accept multiculturalism and promote ideas opposing discrimination on any ground.

Life Long Learning (LLL)

eTwinning disseminates the idea of LLL – lifelong learning – among students and teachers. The proof of its effectiveness is tremendous interest in online training in various issues, above all in those involving CALL and ICT. It is evident that Polish teachers want to continue to expand their knowledge. Polish trainers and teachers have lots of opportunities to participate in conferences abroad which favour their comprehensive development by giving them a chance of working in international teams. In the course of such training sessions their participants discover the latest trends in education. Let's take the BYOD method – meaning Bring Your Own Device – which is an example of thinking outside the box and which breaks with common tradition as it allows students to use their own resources. All tools discovered and exercises done have greatly changed the perception of ICT in education and made us realise that there are new trends and ever-increasing use of mobile devices and ICT not only in the classroom environment but also wherever we are and can connect to the Internet.

The little girl called little Kasia is now 18 years old. English and German are the languages she uses to talk on Skype to her European peers, Facebook serves her to exchange ideas and experiences. She is unable to imagine her education without CALL and ICT. She has participated in an eTwinning project that received a European Quality Label. The girl knows her worth and is aware of the potential that she will offer as a graduate to Europe's labour market of the 21st century. Her mum – a teacher and eTwinning trainer – will not age soon because she knows that there is so much more to learn. The years to come are our time for learning – lifelong learning. ■

What eTwinners say:



After the conference I saw my pre-school from a different perspective. Suddenly, it seemed to have a lot of scope. I started to work on a project. A lot is going on, but I find it difficult to involve my colleagues in it. I guess, I must send them to a conference. There, they will be bitten by eTwinning bug and start working on the projects.

Elżbieta Strzałkowska, Przedszkole nr 24, Gdynia

eTwinning or ten out of ten




Paulina Kuźmo-Biwan
Katolickie Gimnazjum
im. św. S. Kostki, Szczecin

I am going to start this text from three tens: eTwinning is celebrating its 10th anniversary. I have worked at school (the same and yet not the same) for 10 years. During that time my students and I have implemented 10 eTwinning projects.

In the first year of the programme, a history teacher from my school and I were crazy enough (it was definitely not the voice of reason that guided us) to look up some information about the programme that was completely new at the time. We looked for it not only on the web. We set off for the National Support Service in Warsaw to get some information straight from the horse's mouth. It paid off as we gained more knowledge, were given posters and, above all, were full of immense enthusiasm which later translated into the first project. A few months later, I found it really hard to believe that of all projects it was our project that was selected as one of those which I was able to present to other European countries at a conference in Linz, Austria. That was a tremendous reward but also a kind of commitment as it meant that from that moment on each of our projects should be better from the previous ones.

In the following school year, together with a group of enthusiastic students, we invented and developed things able to change the world. Let me paraphrase what an astronaut said when he first stepped on the Moon: that's a small step for my school, one giant leap for myself. The project *Improving the world* won the first prize in the national competition *Our eTwinning project* and soon afterwards an interactive whiteboard was installed in the classroom. This tool made me change the way of thinking about using ICT during English classes. It also motivated me to undergo in-service training. At the same time, I was made an eTwinning ambassador and later on – an e-learning course trainer. Providing courses to teachers was tremendous motivation. I kept looking for training sessions, workshops or mobilities where I would be able to improve my knowledge of that developing technology. Then I transformed that knowledge into instructions and tutorials posted on Moodle.



Every year brought new courses, teachers were becoming more and more active and more and more technologically advanced which, in turn, mobilised me to continue my search and self-development.

TwinSpace kept changing over the period of project work so little by little I had to give up the creation of Internet pages as the place where I would post my materials, the web page evolved as well, and the platform was filled with more and more new applications... It was as if several dozens of teachers well acquainted with each other from the beginning of the programme, having previously drifted on eTwinning rafts, suddenly got on cruise ships barely capable to hold countless project titles, experiences, ideas and internal sparks setting motors in motion.

When new students arrived at school, each of them had the opportunity to participate not in one project but in three annual projects during their three-year course in our lower-secondary school. Their question was no longer: "Will there be a project implemented?", but "What will we be doing during the next project?" and that's something that has not changed. I may sound bombastic but I will take that risk and say that eTwinning has changed my approach to teaching. When I am in regular contact with my students (TwinSpace chats, emails written because: "The application won't start and the HTML code is a link and, Miss, what do I do now?") I cannot build a relationship of subordination or reduce them to a mere number in the class register. My projects would not have been created without my students and I am saying this with gratitude which is not something they are shown often enough. There is a reason for the word "twin" in eTwinning. Our twins are not only foreign partners but also students and as such they are a teacher's mirror reflecting motivation, involvement and boundless creativity.

I started this sentimental journey from three tens. There are two more tens to add: my students and I have given the eTwinning adventure 10 out of 10! ■

What eTwinners say:



A few years ago, during a major conference in Zakopane I met many teachers who were so enthusiastic about their project work that they inspired me to give it a try. And I have no regrets!

**Marcin Stanowski, XXVII Liceum
Ogólnokształcące, Warszawa**

Opening up to Europe



Izabela Krzak-Borkowska
Zespół Szkół Społecznych,
Kielce

“eTwinning? Yes, I have heard about that but what is it?” – such was my reaction almost three years ago, when Bożena Stachura, Programme Ambassador operating in the Świętokrzyskie Province, suggested that I should get involved in programme-promoting activities and in the implementation of international projects.

I am an English language specialist by education and I like challenges, therefore, I did not need too much persuasion. And that’s how it started.

Today’s school offers so much more than just tests, exams or the core curriculum. The modern school issues new challenges to students and teachers which are aimed at learning how to live and function in new reality. For example, nowadays all young people should know not only their country but also other European countries because that is where they might live one day.

With our changing realities in mind I started activities promoting eTwinning among teachers from the Świętokrzyskie Province. I am a working teacher and I am perfectly aware of the fact that too many additional tasks and responsibilities may discourage people from extra activities. However, it is thanks to the incessant development of technologies and opening up to Europe that more and more colleagues are gradually beginning to take interest in eTwinning.

My talks with the heads of schools situated in the Province of Świętokrzyskie and the fact that for five years I had been employed by the Świętokrzyskie In-service Teacher Training Centre made the promotion of the eTwinning idea much easier. During training sessions or when presenting European projects, I explained to teachers why it was worthwhile to get involved. I argued that the core curriculum might be implemented in cooperation with foreign partners in the course of project activities.

Above all, eTwinning is a chance for students who, by participating in projects, can put their language skills into practice when communicating with young people from abroad. We have computer rooms at schools, we teach our children foreign languages telling them that that is what they need, therefore, right now, when they are still at school, we should show them the practical dimension of the subjects they are taught.

Was every teacher always ready to take up the challenge? Definitely not. Many of them mentioned language barriers and difficulties with finding a partner. However, eTwinning is a programme which does not leave teachers to their own devices. But if there is a will, there is a way and we are able to find a partner school in no time at all.

I have observed that every day nearly 15 new schools wishing to implement projects can be found in the Search eTwinners bookmark. You cannot just fail to find a partner school for your project.

An early education teacher wrote to me after one training session. She said she had begun to implement an eTwinning project despite her poor command of a foreign language. When she writes to her foreign partners, she uses a translator and an English language teacher's support. This shows that if there is a will, there is a way. What our students will be like depends on us, their teachers. If we show them that nothing is impossible to a willing heart, they are bound to become people who are resourceful, open to others and to cooperation.

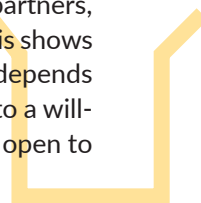
Working as an eTwinning ambassador is the source of true joy. It helps me meet new people, organise new projects and it helps my school open up to Europe. The Świętokrzyskie In-service Teacher Training Centre is soon planning to start activities promoting bilingualism, with eTwinning as one of the components of training. ■

What eTwinners say:



Conferences and workshops have made us realise that eTwinning is not something to be afraid of. It is for everyone and lets us help pupils make something amazing.

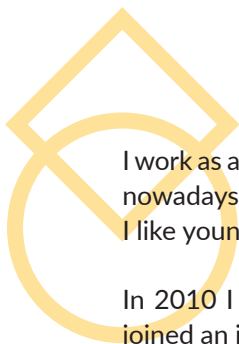
Marlena Leszko, Zespół Szkół nr 3, Białystok



eTwinning rebus



Barbara Maciejewska-N'sir
Gimnazjum nr 23 im. Szarych
Szeregów, Poznań



I work as a teacher of English at a Poznań lower secondary school. Although nowadays it is not easy to be a teacher, I am not ashamed to own up that I like young people and their somewhat original ideas.

In 2010 I got interested in the eTwinning programme and successfully joined an international project, which was a turning point in my career. At the time I did not know that I would be so absorbed in eTwinning and that a few years later I would not only implement international projects but also – as an eTwinning ambassador – pass my enthusiasm onto other teachers.

I have been an eTwinning ambassador for a short time, since 2014. But I can already say that that is why I have become a person that is more self-confident, aware of the power of knowledge sharing and able to learn from other people's experiences. And here are my reflections which I would like to share with you.

My recipe for successful eTwinning programme introductory workshops:

E – is for ENTHUSIASM, both mine, that of training participants and that of always helpful employees at the National Support Service offering assistance to new programme members;

T – is for TREMENDOUS CREATIVITY, innovative ideas, eTwinners' ideas for successful projects and interesting classes or educational activities;

W – is for WONDERFUL COMMON GOAL: introducing children and young people to European values and the culture of non-EU countries (eTwinning Plus and neighbouring countries);

I – is for INSPIRATIONAL OTHERNESS, the diversity of cultures but understood in a good way with constant emphasis on the fact that OTHER does not mean worse;

N – is for NOVELTY because there are always new things on the eTwinning web page, boredom is banned from here: thanks to a wealth of free online courses, online training or discussion panels it is possible to adapt the offer to one's interests;

N – is for NOVELTY-LOVING TEACHERS, a particular group of demanding people who do not wish to limit themselves to one well-proven method of teaching, who want to be able to face the ever growing challenges of the modern world;

I – is for INFORMATION – during workshops I always try to give information in a way that would be intelligible to each workshop participant. I want them to put their new knowledge into practice and – if need be – never hesitate to ask me for help after the workshop;

N – is for NUMEROUS AWARDS for those implementing national and international projects, be it Quality Labels, competition prizes, seminar participation or international workshops, but above all – the feeling of fulfilment and satisfaction;

G – is for GLUTTONS FOR KNOWLEDGE as that is what workshop participants are. Their hunger for knowledge helps teachers to improve their skills and the image of today's teacher who is not afraid to break their teaching routine. ■



What eTwinners say:



The main incentive for joining eTwinning was the fact that a large part of projects implemented under the programme is transformed into real life Comenius and Erasmus+ projects, and this is what we wanted. eTwinning is beneficial both for teachers and students. It offers unlimited possibilities for establishing contacts, even outside Europe.

Piotr Jendrzzej, Publiczna Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Kolonowskie

First of all, benefits for students



Renata Zając

Publiczna Szkoła Podstawowa
nr 3 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi
im. Jana Kochanowskiego,
Kozienice

The eTwinning programme and running online courses are the two things that have changed a lot in my work, obviously on the plus side. eTwinning stands for benefits, not only for me as a teacher, but mainly for my students who are very enthusiastic about and eager to do project work. We usually meet once a week, together determine the work plan and assign the tasks to be performed. Students are truly committed to project implementation. As a result, they more willingly learn German and easily overcome language barrier.

Becoming familiar with other countries and cultures, shaping teamwork and ICT skills are the invaluable advantages of the programme. Students are keen on learning new software, especially this for comic book and cartoon making. They enjoy receiving letters and souvenirs from partner schools. Students participating in eTwinning projects form a tight team, are creative, open and tolerant. Thanks to the projects, they discover and develop their talents and abilities, about which we did not know.

For a few years, I have been a programme ambassador and an online course trainer. This is not only a distinction, but also a very interesting experience for me. Thanks to the courses, I have met great teachers who want to raise their competences in a creative manner and look forward to making their classes and teaching programme more varied. Obviously, their students also benefit, and this is what gives my motivation a big boost. ■

When I started working at school in September 2006 I had no idea that my professional career would be so closely linked to the eTwinning programme. It is present in just about every aspect of my work. I cannot imagine a school year without an eTwinning project, neither can my students. The eTwinning programme was instrumental in my professional development and in shaping my teaching style, not to mention that I fell in love with educational project-based work.

Since May 2014, as an eTwinning ambassador operating in the Śląskie Province, I have had the privilege to infect others with my passion. Meetings with teachers as part of regional workshops are the most interesting aspect of my activities. eTwinners are a unique community of enthusiastic teachers who are keen on sharing their experience, ideas and good energy with others. This is the impression I get during all workshops.

Teachers are said to be the most difficult training group. Despite that, during each workshop I have the pleasure to meet open-minded people interested in eTwinning. Some of them have certain doubts as to their own language skills or IT competencies. But talks about the programme and the presentation of good practices help them overcome their fears and they often provide inspiration for interesting projects. Even after the end of a workshop its participants remain in touch with me. Teachers already implementing the programme approach me to ask questions – they usually need advice on practical matters (looking for a project partner or registering a project). ■

**I love
projects!**



Katarzyna Zawifa-Dudzik
Szkoła Podstawowa nr 4,
Czechowice-Dziedzice

Virtuality turns into reality



Aleksandra Długosz
Erasmus+, School Education
programme, FRSE

Over the ten years of its operations, the eTwinning programme has proven to be a safe platform of cooperation and an important element of work for 305,000 teachers and their students. This is a great success of this virtual programme, which has won recognition and many fans in education circles.

eTwinning community is a very strong group who can make good use of virtual projects and transform them into real life cooperation, to mention this under the former Comenius programme. I truly hope that eTwinning projects are also visible in the new perspective of the Erasmus+ School Education programme. The two programmes are strongly interrelated and address the same target group. Their offer is compatible and every Polish school should use it.

Virtual projects form an excellent basis for international cooperation, which when commenced in this form brings tangible benefits. Experiences gained as part of eTwinning allow for the use of EU funds with greater ease and offer bigger potential, to mention well verified foreign partners.

The teaching profession involves the need to consistently develop and improve teaching and methodology related competences and knowledge of the subject taught. Independent and voluntary taking up such activities by teachers stands for adopting professional attitudes. Thanks to programmes like eTwinning, taking such approaches is possible.

Practical use of information and communication technologies, which develop at a fast tempo, brings splendid results in terms of education policy and practical use of teaching methods and programmes. The acquisition of this competence, valued both on European and national level, results in greater involvement of pupils and students in learning and in improvement of their results, and this is what we strive at.

In the context of the eTwinning programme, we should also mention another competence, which is language learning and ability to communicate in a foreign language. With eTwinning, learning a language is fun and is also very effective. Students know perfectly well what it really means being a member of the European Union and being a European.

I wish the eTwinning team at least ten more as successful years, as they have contributed to improving the quality of education. As a representative of the Erasmus+ School Education programme, I hope that the subsequent years will bring more synergies and contribute to the development of our beneficiaries: students and teachers. ■

What eTwinners say:



eTwinning broadens the horizons. Our school has become more open to projects with partners from abroad and our students can undergo training abroad. Parents are willing to enrol children to a school where a lot is going on!

Anna Smusz-Waberska, Powiatowy Zespół Szkół nr 2, Pszczyna

My five years with eTwinning



Jolanta Okuniewska

Szkoła Podstawowa nr 13,
Olsztyn

I joined eTwinners community when it celebrated the fifth anniversary of the programme. I had heard earlier about eTwinning, but lacked courage to register for it. So after I made up my mind I was very pleased to have my Desktop and set off on a great adventure.

Initially, I groped my way, but was very committed, and cognizance and functionality of actions stepped in during project implementation. The fact that for the past four years I have proudly performed the function of an eTwinning ambassador for the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province is of great help to me.

Thanks to eTwinning I have met active teachers from all over Europe and I keep learning from them. We are friends and treat our projects like setting off on a journey together. I value these friendships, observe new working methods and try to implement them in my educational activity. I have got rid off shyness, become more self-confident and learnt to share my experiences. These are the skills I did not possess in the past. Owing to participation in free training – Learning Events – offered by teachers from different European countries, I have learnt what it means to share knowledge and inspire others. So now I can talk about my experiences to Polish teachers during training and seminars. In this context, I have been very pleased that an opportunity to carry out Polish-Polish projects has appeared. This is a great way of convincing teachers in our country to share knowledge and cooperate. We often lack this skill. And without it, it is hard to teach children how to collaborate and be creative. This is an important competence, which will be much needed by our students in adult life.

My biggest success has been winning the 2013 European eTwinning prize. Since that time so much has been going on that I constantly feel like riding a roller coaster. It is amazing to realise that the work you have done

with your students and partners when implementing a project has been appreciated by many members of European panel of experts and that the project has proven to be a model one. It is staggering when a film crew flies over from London to record a video at your school, and the prize award gala is second only to the Oscars. Such amazing experiences will stay with you for ever, help you build your confidence and motivate you to taking up new challenges. My experiences have been so extraordinary thanks to the brilliant partners; Cornelia Melcu and Maria Dragos from Romania and Alice Mai Neto from Portugal.

Another milestone in my professional career have been the prizes awarded for this European success; Samsung Galaxy 2 Tab 7.0 tablets. Each student participating in the project obtained a tablet and in September 2013 we started work in the classroom using mobile devices. This adventure lasts until today.

Modern technologies are my hobby and the use of tablets in the classwork has allowed me to gain experience in the use of mobile devices in the classroom. My blog www.tableciaki.blogspot.com has served as in inspiration for more tablet assisted classrooms in Poland. I stay in touch with teachers from various parts of Poland who start using tablets in their work with students. I try to support them, and by the way, promote the eTwinning programme. Today, I work at a modern computer room equipped with state of the art tablets. The room is colourful and friendly to young students, and it all started with the prizes won in the European competition.

The eTwinning programme has been my greatest discovery. It inspires interesting work in the classroom, prevents professional burn-out and offers continuing professional development. eTwinning is my reciprocated love. ■

What eTwinners say:



In July 2014 I participated in a workshop on the use of eTwinning tools, which was organised at the headquarters of FRSE in Warsaw. Many years had passed since I ran a Comenius project, in which we used the Internet to communicate with partners (e-mails, videoconferencing) and I wanted to start similar cooperation. During the workshop I learnt about new possibilities offered as part of the eTwinning programme and TwinSpace tools seemed quite simple to use to me, so I decided to join the programme. It took me three weeks since registration on the eTwinning portal to find partners for collaboration. It turned out well! Since September 2014, my colleague, an English teacher, our students and I, together with nine partners from eight countries have implemented a project on healthy lifestyles of young Europeans.

Ewa Łatkowska, Liceum Ogólnokształcące nr II, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski

Networking



Since the spectrum of eTwinning is so broad (ranging from varied student online projects to diversified topics of in-service teacher training), we can easily notice the links of the programme with other educational initiatives.

Numerous synergies between eTwinning and the Erasmus+ programme are plain obvious. Activities taken as part of strategic partnerships implemented by schools can be conducted within eTwinning projects. What is more, the European Commission recommends such links. Educational mobility of teachers is one of the components of Erasmus+, which is linked with various forms of eTwinning training. Attending a workshop abroad can be excellent continuation of training (like this offered on the Moodle platform). In addition, such workshop can be a very good opportunity to meet teachers with whom you can submit an application for a future project as part of Erasmus+ or implement an eTwinning project.



Adam Stępiński

Liceum Ogólnokształcące
im. Mikołaja Kopernika,
Tarnobrzeg

Many European SchoolNet projects, both these in humanities (Europeana, KeyCoNet) and in science (inGenious, Scientix, Amgen Teach) are closely related with eTwinning, as they promote learning by exploring and cooperation. In turn, MOOC courses (mass open online courses) by European Schoolnet Academy are the answer to efforts made under eTwinning to raise ICT skills among teachers (online courses, international workshops PDW, Learning Events).

You can also notice similarities between eTwinning and several global initiatives. For example, Global Education in Australia, Two Continents – One Classroom of the Europe-Asia Foundation and Facing History programme carried out in the United States, just like eTwinning, focus on the development of key competences in students, promote project work method and creativity, provide assistance to teachers in the scope of in-service training and offer interesting multimedia materials. ■

*eTwinning made me
start using technological
novelties, now I will not
be behind my students.*

Marta Drabczyk, Powiatowy Zespół nr 1 Szkół Ogólnokształcących im. Stanisława
Konarskiego, Oświęcim

What eTwinners say:

My approach to language teaching has changed. In my work, I often use software, which I learnt to use in eTwinning. As a result, my students are more eager to learn the language. I have become familiar with teaching methods applied by other teachers. We share knowledge and I willingly use new methodology in my work.

Gimnazjum nr 18, Wrocławskie Centrum Doskonalenia Nauczycieli, Wrocław

Thanks to participation in eTwinning and project implementation, our school is well known in the community as an establishment with broader educational offer and taking innovative approach to teaching. Having taken numerous eTwinning courses, I have expanded my knowledge in ICT. I can use the tools I have learnt to implement projects. As a result, consecutive partnerships can be more interesting, up to date and can commit all the participants to intensive work.

Monika Kosiec, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Gilowice

eTwinning projects are an extremely attractive form of teaching: my pupils break away from textbooks and joyfully make friends with peers from other countries.

Aneta Maciejczyk-Rutka, Publiczna Szkoła Podstawowa, Kłonówek

The implementation of eTwinning projects makes me stand out in the county. During the 2009 presentation of educational achievements, being the only teacher from my municipality, I was invited to the Group of teachers with passion and was asked to present my achievements as part of international cooperation. For a long time (since 2006), my school has actively cooperated on international arena. Students willingly participate in the projects and they know that if they wish to earn an A they will be given a specific task to be performed as part of one of the projects.

Anna Szczepaniak, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 9, Dzierżoniów

Parents could finally see that their children used the languages they learnt in practice and that computers and the Internet were used for project work and not idling.

Agnieszka Domagała, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 16, Warszawa

eTwinning has provided me with amazing tools and knowledge indispensable for their use. It has given me courage and confidence in my working methods. The projects help me motivate pupils to real life communication: speaking and writing in English with peers.

Jolanta Maciejewska, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 25 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi, Olsztyn

While implementing the project, students became more curious about the world, tolerant and creative. They are not afraid of otherness of other people and cultures. They are open to technological innovations and know how to use them. They learn how to collaborate in an effective manner. Parents also willingly join the activities. Active participation in the eTwinning programme and successes promote our preschool not only in our town or province but also throughout Poland!

Beata Kossowska, Przedszkole nr 48 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi, Zabrze

Putting it briefly, I simply recommend it!
R is for raising cultural awareness
E is for enthusiasm during the exchange of correspondence
C is for cooperation
O is for openness to otherness
M is for making friends
M is for meaningful creativity
E is for energy and eagerness to act
N is for not just for geeks – anyone can do it
D is for (just) do it!
:-)

Magda Nowacka, Zespół Szkół Katolickich, Złotowo

Students are very keen to carry out project activities. What makes the project work attractive for students? Here are some reasons: (1) performance of tasks requires the use of modern tools (a mobile phone, camera, the Internet) and students like it a lot; (2) contact with a group of students from another school, from a different region of Poland in order to complete common tasks is something new, so far unknown in our school – This contact brings gratification to students. The aim of our work at school is to educate students so that they are able to seize new opportunities for their development and their environment. We help them become aware of their capabilities and feel satisfied with who they are and what they do. With eTwinning, achieving this goal is much easier and more enjoyable. Both teachers, students and their parents notice that. As a result, school headmaster and head of the municipality are pleased. Participation in the eTwinning program simply makes everyone happy.

Anna Krawniak-Gralak, Szkoła Podstawowa, Marianowo

You can see that children are overjoyed with varied tasks performed during classes and with participation in the programme. I keep telling them that they learn to obtain good marks and knowledge and skills will come together with the marks. Children are pleased when they are praised by the teacher, but they are over the moon when their peers from different countries cry them up!

Beata Kossowska, Przedszkole nr 48 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi, Zabrze

I have developed as a teacher and learnt to use many interesting ICT tools and innovative methods of cooperation. Moreover, I have become a more conscious European. I care about values and culture and observe traditions. My students are more aware of their skills and believe in their capabilities. Thanks to cooperation with peers from across Europe, they have developed their wings and have been motivated to learn the language and get to know other cultures.

Monika Kosiec, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Gilowice

BENEFITS

Absolutely, the implementation of an eTwinning project has contributed greatly to my promotion to a chartered teacher. During my interview, the first question the examination board asked me concerned eTwinning. It was something different and interesting to them. I talked about my first steps in the programme, first cooperation project, completed online courses and acquired skills. In my portfolio, I described my participation in a contact seminar in Brussels. During that meeting, I heard a lot about eTwinning. I believe that this programme is very helpful in professional progression, because it allows teachers to raise qualifications, look for something new, promote their schools in the wider environment, and above all, it makes work with children more attractive.

Agnieszka Domagała, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 16, Warszawa

Pupils are eager to build beautiful sentences in English. They are strongly motivated. They impatiently wait for messages from their peers from abroad. Everyone, both parents and school staff, is interested to see pupils' works. Parents have noticed that their children have more enthusiasm for learning English. The community welcomes projects motivating children to learn languages.

Barbara Jedynak, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, Kąty Wrocławskie

Independence, self-confidence, openness, regularity, reliability, breaking stereotypes – these are the features that I have managed to shape in the course of project work. Benefits for children? They have had great fun. Their interest in learning and commitment have increased. They have improved the skill of using ICT tools, learnt to cooperate, accept success and failure. They have planned, carried out and presented activities and their results. Thanks to eTwinning, our preschool has assumed strong identity, become open to parents, expanded its facilities and initiated changes at other establishments. What is more, eTwinning has had impact on other staff and even parents and local community! Now they take up more activities, are more open and willing to cooperate. They are more committed to the life of the preschool. On the one hand they follow the example, and on the other they provide support.

Dagmara Szczecinska, Publiczne Przedszkole nr 2, Nowa Sól

My students are more committed to language learning and more willing to perform additional tasks. The school is known in the community for its innovative ideas and European character.

Barbara Kramek, Zespół Szkół, Poniatowa

I have tried to encourage my colleagues to join in the projects, but I have managed to convince language teachers mainly. I must admit that young teachers are more open to the programme. Elder ones consider language barrier to be a big problem. I hope that by creating projects with Polish schools I will begin my eTwinning adventure.

Iwona Kowalik, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 26, Wrocław

I have used international cooperation as part of eTwinning projects for my professional progression twice. I have just started my traineeship to a chartered teacher and once again I intend to use opportunities offered by eTwinning, such as training and international exchange of experiences.

Agnieszka Majewska, Przedszkole nr 327 Kolorowa Kraina, Warszawa

eTwinning has aroused my interest in e-learning. Now, international cooperation has become a priority for our school. Students like and appreciate eTwinning projects. Some of the candidates choose our school because of international initiatives taken there. I am not only proficient at the Moodle platform, but also train others and show how to administer it.

Agnieszka Domagała, Szkoła Podstawowa nr 16, Warszawa

eTwinning Action has decidedly had impact on my skills and professional career. Thanks to the projects, I have met many fantastic people from across Poland and other countries and I have made friends with them. When implementing projects and taking the courses, I have acquired knowledge and skills in ICT. The programme has helped me discover new interests. I love computer graphics, I am familiar with many software programmes, which in an attractive way support the teaching process and add to school activities. Our projects have been awarded 10 National Quality Labels and 10 European ones. Our School promotes good practices during regional conferences and workshops I organise in the capacity as an eTwinning ambassador. Education Inspectorate in Kielce and the Centre for Education Development (ORE) in Warsaw have considered our activities as a good practice. We have been awarded several prizes and distinctions, to mention a special mention in the EDUinspirations Poland-wide competition and in a competition for a lesson conducted using LDL method (eTwinning). Our projects have been promoted during the National Forum of Innovative Schools and Teachers in Warsaw. This year, we were appraised highly. My knowledge of ICT and eTwinning projects has been appreciated

in the global Microsoft competition: I have been given the title of Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert and I participate in a one-year programme, where I also promote eTwinning by writing articles about Project Based Learning.

Bożena Kraj, Gimnazjum, Daleszyce

When I became a preschool teacher, I did not even dream about such broad professional and personal development prospects, which I have found in eTwinning community. I remember that at the beginning of my 'adventure' all I had was my own PC, rudimentary knowledge of PowerPoint, decent linguistic skills and an urge to do something spectacular. With each year and each project, together with our partners, we have learnt how to successfully cooperate, as to obtain results, you need true commitment on the part of all project teams. We have discovered various applications and software, which allowed us present the works of our students and prepare multimedia teaching tasks. We have learnt to create web pages that are used as project workspace. International contacts, both virtual and real ones, have proven to be excellent and never-ending lesson of a foreign language. Participation in traditional workshops and online courses, as well as the

ability to observe other teachers' work as part of the project brings me a lot of inspiration and new tools to put my ideas into practice. I am still learning something new and discover various educational gems for myself and my pupils. Discussions with partners make me realise that my ideas are not always the best ones, and also make me proud when some of my proposals prove to be a success. Thanks to such exchanges, we learn to respect one another and gain self-confidence. Now, I not only know how I want to teach, but also have tools at my disposal to teach children who are digital natives. Today, the preschool I work at has an interactive whiteboard I dreamt about and many multimedia devices we have won in eTwinning competitions. If I were to sum up my professional path I would say that in the past I used methodology, and today I use methodology and find a use for modern technological developments. I have transformed from a modest, timid preschool teacher to a professional who occasionally turns into an eTwinning star. eTwinning has its ways.

Anna Krzyżanowska, Przedszkole nr 48 z Oddziałami Integracyjnymi, Zabrze

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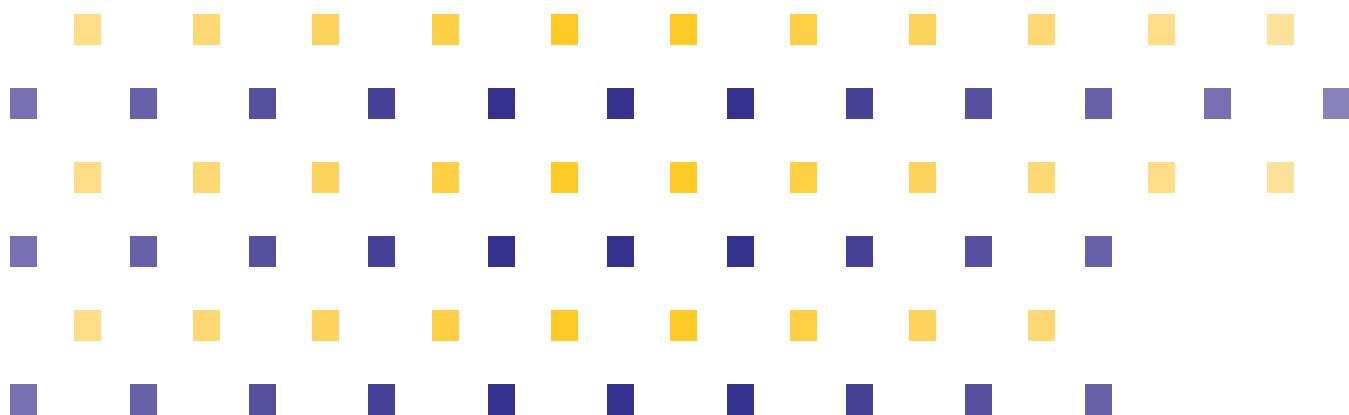
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