On the way to intercultural competence

Based on our knowledge, we can give the following tips and advice:

1. Intercultural competence at school can only be achieved and developed by international educational projects (e.g. Erasmus+, eTwinning).

2. The adjustment of the international school project to the curriculum and its integration into the educational programme of the class or the group of students make it possible to realize the project, at the same time realizing the curriculum and facilitating the work of the teacher with his students.

3. Long-lasting and regular online work (e.g. on the educational platform eTwinning) is as important and necessary as one-week long direct international project meetings. Both aspects should be considered during the planning of an international school project.

4. Foreign languages are a good tool for international school projects and the development of intercultural competence. But this does not mean that such international projects can only be realized in foreign language classes. They should be interdisciplinary and implemented in many different subjects. This depends of course widely on the topic of the project.

5. Topics of projects dealing with relevant and important questions in the lives of young people arouse their interest to a bigger extent and stimulate them to act themenselves.

6. Practical knowledge and actions are the basis of good projects.

a) Meetings with specialists in certain fields and visits in specialised institutions as well as workshops and project work in international student groups are more successful than merely theoretical speeches in a school auditorium based on information from the internet.

b) Lessons given by students serve as the best way of disseminating project results among their school-friends. Campaigns focused on certain classes are more effective than those focused on the whole school community.

7. For teachers it is advantageous to get accustomed to the project description and project contract before starting work with their students.

8. Exactly defined rules of communication and cooperation and their carrying out by all participants enable an undisturbed project progress.

9. It is advisable, at the beginning of the project, to talk about and clarify in detail all the things connected with the project among the participating teachers: conditions and aims, methods of working, deadlines and expected results. In the course of the project they should also be constantly and punctually informed about all rules, decisions and changes.

10. For all agreements the points of view of all teachers and coordinators and the regulatory framework of each partner school should be taken into consideration.

11. The deliberate acquisition of intercultural competence guarantees better results; that is why students should be made aware of its meaning and usefulness at the beginning of the project.

12. The level of the acquired intercultural competence depends on the commitment of each participating team, because it is highly motivating for the others and thus determines their possibilities of action and their chances to acquire intercultural competence themselves.

13. It is recommended to distribute the project tasks among/with your students in such a way that each of them has got the opportunity to experience all aspects of intercultural competence and achieve all its levels.

14. To achieve good project results it is necessary that the teacher controls and leads the work of his team but he should give his students enough freedom by always supporting them.

15. Marks for written articles and comments or other works produced by the students could be motivating.

16. Students and teachers should be prepared for each international project meeting by precisely formulating their tasks, the recommended behaviour and the expected benefits.

17. An international buffet, national costumes, folk songs and folk dances as well as other concrete forms of self-presentation make it possible to get to know other cultures and better understand the value of cultural variety.

18. The lesson in the native language at international project meetings enjoys great popularity among the participants and encourages them to learn new foreign languages.

19. When dividing the teams in the international class being formed at each international project meeting the linguistic competences of each student and teacher should be taken into consideration. The groups should be put together in the best way possible.

20. It is also recommended to pay regular attention to private contacts, which also reinforce the cooperation and team spirit in the project.

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