

Erasmus + project **Enhancing Cultural Literacy Through Innovative Practice and Skills in Europe (ECLIPSE)**

**Seminar on Cultural Literacy - Meeting in Vallbona d’Anoia, Spain**

**2nd June 2016**

Mr Engin Öztürk, Ph.D. has been the researcher interpreting the data of the surveys carried out at the six partner schools in the ECLIPSE project. As he describes himself in his *Linkedin* profile,

*Engin is an experienced educator with excellent teaching skills, a marketer with high convincing potential, and a leader with outstanding social, intercultural and interpersonal skills, and a novice researcher. His widespread work and education background from engineering to economics, journalism to food vending made him understand interdisciplinary studies as well as the postmodern paradigm, "qualitative structure of life" and value of education better. Therefore he thinks intercultural understanding is the key to the global peace, sustainable development and business growth.*

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The surveys have been filled in by a representative number of participating students, their parents, attending teachers and school administrators. See Table A below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Partner schools | N. of surveys for school administrators | N. of surveys for attending teachers | N. of surveys for attending students | N. of surveys for parents |
| Small Heath School in Birmingham (U.K.) | 4 | 13 | 13 | 4 |
| Sec d’INS Vallbona d’Anoia in Vallbona d’Anoia (Spain) | 2 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| Mustafa Asım Cula Ortaokulu in Antalya (Turkey) | 2 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| Istituto Secondario di P. G. Mazzini in Livorno (Italy) | 2 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| Vikesa Skule in Vikesa (Norway) | 2 |  |  |  |
| Osnovna Ŝola Breg in Ptuj (Slovenia) | 2 |  |  |  |

Table A

Some schools like Istituto di P. G. Massini in Livorno, Italy, and Mustafa Asım Cula Ortaokulu in Antalya, Turkey, recorded the interviews, transcribed them, translated them from their first language (L1) into English and sent them to the researcher. Other schools sent the surveys online and asked the participants to fill them out, either in English or in their mother tongue language, and later the project coordinator translated the surveys from their L1 to English as is the case for Sec d’INS Vallbona d’Anoia, Spain. Other schools like Small Heath School in Birmingham, UK, did either email the surveys or give hard copies to the respondents.

Initially, the main goals of the survey were as follows:

1) To produce comparisons between students’ perception in partner countries of cultural, historical and artistic obstacles encountered to facilitate understanding of text and reading materials.

2) To understand the relationship between culture and literacy.

3) To inform and influence future planning and curriculum design to enable students to have access to innovative teaching methods and creative materials.

Partners started preparing the task questions in the first TPM meeting in Antalya from 25th to 30th October 2015, and made a corpus of about 100 closed-ended and open-ended questions for the CL Survey.

Eventually, by following the suggestions of Mr Engin Öztürk, Ph.D. the survey became qualitative with open-ended questions and although the focus seemed to be on assessing students’ cultural literacy, what the survey pretended was to understand where our students and families were in this subject, so that we could conduct this project in a way to enhance and enrich their cultural understanding, post-modern point of view, and ultimately having them show interest in intercultural and multicultural issues, thus leading them to cultural literacy.

The survey intends to:

1. Measure communication
2. between school administrators and project coordinator.
3. between project coordinator and teachers.
4. between project coordinator and students.
5. between parents and children.
6. between parents and project coordinator.
7. To measure the understanding of the project’s implementation and outcomes
8. of school administrators
9. of attending teachers
10. of attending students
11. of parents
12. To know the expectations of school administrations, teachers, students and families on the benefits of participating in the project.
13. To measure the degree of cultural understanding and intercultural education of administrators, teachers, students and their families.
14. To know the degree of maturity of students to resolve cultural issues peacefully according to students and according to their families.

The eventual qualitative questions in the surveys provided by Mr. Öztürk were different according to the targeted group in our educative communities, i.e. school administrators, attending teachers, attending students and parents. The surveys conducted in the six partner schools consisted of the following questions.

**SURVEY FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

1. Why did you want /agree for your school to join the project?

2. How do you imagine this project working? How do you think you will personally benefit from the project?

3. What benefit do you think your school will receive through participation in the project?

4. What benefit do you think your attending students will receive through participation in the project?

5. What benefit do you think your non-attending students will receive through participation in the project?

6. How do you think it will impact upon the culture of your school?

7. How would you use this project to enhance and enrich the culture of your school?

8. Give an example of a thing that you think this project could be likened to. E.g. a thing, a living thing, etc.? Why? Please give your reasons (we need metaphors here)

**SURVEY FOR ATTENDING TEACHERS**

1. Why did you want / agree to join the project?

2. How do you imagine this project working?

3. How do you think you will personally benefit from the project?

4. What benefit do you think your students will receive through participation in this

project?

5. Give an example of a thing that you think this project could be likened to. A thing, a

living thing, etc.? Why? Please give your reasons (we need metaphors here)

**SURVEY FOR ATTENDING STUDENTS**

1. Why did you want / agree to join the project?

2. How do you imagine this project working?

3. What benefit do you think you will receive through participating in the project?

4. Which country is the best in the world? Why do you think so?

5. If you could have chosen, in which country would you have chosen to have been born?

6. Assume you have friends from other attending countries visiting you. Some of their behaviour is not considered acceptable (or is even considered rude) within your culture, despite being considered acceptable within their own culture. What would you do under these circumstances? (In order to make this question more understandable for the students, we can exemplify it through reference to cultural artefacts and values [food, music, martyrs, etc.] Since I am not aware of all of the attending countries’ cultures, I think those best placed to exemplify are you, the teachers.)

7. If it was your behaviour that was considered unacceptable (or even rude), and you received the same reaction as that you gave in question 6, how would you respond?

8. If you knew that this kind of behavior was unacceptable (or rude) in your friend’s culture, would you still do it? Why / why not?

9. Give an example of a thing that you think this project could be likened to - a thing, a living thing, etc.? Why? Please give your reasons (we need metaphors here).

**SURVEY FOR PARENTS**

1. Why did you want/agree for your child to join the project?

2. How do you imagine this project working?

3. How do you think it will affect the culture of your family?

4. Your child is likely to experience culturally unfamiliar situations during his/her mobility.

How do you think he/she will act when encountering such situations?

5. Give an example of a thing that you think this project could be likened to - a thing, a

living thing, etc.? Why? Please give your reasons (we need metaphors here)

Mr. Engin’s report and analysis of the six partner schools is entitled “Erasmus+ ECLIPSE Project Musltiple Case Study Data and Analysis”. It has two main parts, i.e. a larger one describing the current situation or baseline data (sections 1, 2, 3 and 4, “current situation according to the data”, and “current issues according to the data”), and a shorter one providing recommendations and strategies for intervention (“suggested actions about the above mentioned issues”)

***ERASMUS+ ECLIPSE PROJECT MULTIPLE CASE STUDY DATA AND ANALYSIS***

***NOTE TO THE READER****: This report has not been prepared in a form of article to be published in a scientific magazine. Therefore it does not include sections such as abstract, introduction, methodology, data gathering, findings, analysis, or conclusion. Nor it includes citation, and nor an academic language has been preferred for the report. This report is prepared for information purposes, and the layout and the content should be evaluated accordingly. The data has been evaluated in sections of stakeholders as administrators, students, parents, and teachers. Each section has been evaluated according to the sub-sections of each country, Britain, Spain, Turkey, Italy, and Norway, except teachers section. Since a significant amount of the teachers’ data has been obtained from the teachers in the project team, and the team has been working together for a significant amount of time, it has been considered that making a direct evaluation on teachers’ data would yield to better results.*

1. ***ADMINISTRATORS***
   1. *BRITAIN*

* *The administrators agree that the project is expected to be positive in terms of gaining life experience to the attending students and school. However the administrators do not have clear opinions about how to let non-attending students benefit from the project.*
* *The administrators perceive mobility and cultural exchange as exciting and beneficial for students and school, as well as themselves.*
* *It could be argued that there is some certain amount of lack of understanding about the Erasmus+ programs, or some lack of communication between the administrators. This lack could be because of the administrators having changed after the project has started. Administrators may have thought that it would be inappropriate to intervene a running project, and have opted for continuing delegating the duties. In any case, it could be stated that there is lack of communication.*
* *Participants have good understanding on the pathway of cultural exchange.* 
  1. *SPAIN*
* *The administrators agree that the project is expected to be positive in terms of gaining life experience to the attending students and school. However the administrators do not have clear opinions about how to let non-attending students benefit from the project.*
* *The administrators perceive mobility and cultural exchange as exciting and beneficial for students and school.*
* *There is a perfect understanding of how the project would be run. This implies high level of communication between the administrators and the project’s responsible person.*
* *Participants have a high level of understanding on the pathway of cultural exchange.* 
  1. *TURKEY*
* *The administrators agree that the project is expected to be positive in terms of gaining life experience to the attending students and school. They also partially hope to adopt some good practices in some European countries to their own school. However the administrators do not have clear opinions about how to let non-attending students benefit from the project.*
* *The administrators perceive mobility and cultural exchange as exciting and beneficial for students and school, as well as (partially) themselves.*
* *It could be argued that there is some lack of understanding about the nature of Erasmus+ programs to some extent, as well as possible lack of communication between the administrators. On the other hand, the evidence still stays weak, as both participants still keep cooperating according to the answers.*
* *Participants have limited understanding on the pathway of cultural exchange.*

* 1. *ITALY*
* *The administrators agree that the project is expected to be positive in terms of gaining life experience to the attending students and school. However the administrators do not have clear opinions about how to let non-attending students benefit from the project.*
* *Since the administrators have previously experienced similar projects, their experience may help running the project more smoothly.*
* *The administrators perceive mobility and cultural exchange as exciting and beneficial for students and school, as well as (partially) themselves.*
* *Administrators have some opinions how to let non-attending students benefit from the project as well as attending students.*
* *Participants have understanding on the pathway of cultural exchange.* 
  1. *NORWAY*
* *The administrators agree that the project is expected to be positive in terms of gaining life experience to the attending students and school. However the administrators do not have clear opinions about how to let non-attending students benefit from the project.*
* *The administrators perceive mobility and cultural exchange as exciting and beneficial for students and school, as well as (partially) themselves.*
* *It could be argued that there is lack of understanding about the nature of Erasmus+ programs at some extent, as well as possible lack of communication between the administrators. Moreover, there is weak evidence that the decision to attend the project has not been made by the consent of all administrators. On the other hand, the evidence still stays weak, as both participants still keep cooperating according to the answers.*
  1. *SLOVENIA*

*N/A*

1. ***STUDENTS***
   1. *BRITAIN*

* *The students agree that this project would benefit them in various ways such as making them more independent experienced.*
* *Some of the students may need some help to resolve cultural conflicts peacefully, while some other students have clear opinions on how to resolve them.*
* *The students perceive the project positively.*
  1. *SPAIN*
* *The students expect to discover other cultures and develop their English skills with this project.*
* *The students agree that this project would benefit them in various ways, including developing their English language skills and providing them cultural exchange, as well as a new friendship network.*
* *The students have partial information about other cultures. Some of them may perceptions about economic issues (related with either their families or their country). They are ready to explain their culture and lifestyles to the others.*
* *The students are ready to resolve cultural conflicts peacefully. Therefore they are ready to understand the values of other cultures.*
* *The students perceive the project very positively according to their metaphors. Therefore it could be argued that they are open to benefit and let others benefit from the project.*
  1. *TURKEY*
* *The students do not have clear expectations on how this project would run. This could mean that more explanations on how the project would run might be necessary.*
* *The students agree that this project would benefit them in various ways, including developing their English language skills and providing them cultural exchange, together with a new friendship network.*
* *While some students are proud of their culture and country, some others have information about other cultures and are ready to experience new cultures.*
* *The students are ready to resolve cultural conflicts peacefully. Therefore they are ready to understand the values of other cultures.*
* *The students perceive the project very positively according to their metaphors. Therefore it could be argued that they are excited and open to benefit and let others benefit from the project*
  1. *ITALY*
* *The students state that they have received a high amount of information from their teachers and they feel like they understand the project. This could mean there is good and health communication between the students and the teachers.*
* *The students agree that this project would benefit them mainly in developing their English language skills and providing them cultural exchange.*
* *The students do not insist on dominancy of their culture or country. Some of the even see other countries as more livable than their own countries. Therefore they are ready to understand other cultures and lifestyles.*
* *The students are ready to resolve cultural conflicts peacefully to some extent. Therefore they are partially ready to understand the values of other cultures.*
* *The students perceive the project as an opportunity for networking. Therefore it could be argued that they are open to benefit and let others benefit from the project.*
  1. *NORWAY*
* *The students expect this project to be interesting and fun. Therefore, the activities need to be designed in a way to meet the students’ expectations in order to meet the objectives.*
* *The students agree that this project would benefit them in various ways, including developing their English language skills and providing them cultural exchange.*
* *The students are proud of their culture and country. Therefore they are ready to explain their culture and lifestyles to the others.*
* *The students are ready to resolve cultural conflicts peacefully. Therefore they are ready to understand the values of other cultures.*
* *The students perceive the project very positively according to their metaphors. Therefore it could be argued that they are open to benefit and let others benefit from the project.*
  1. *SLOVENIA*
* *The students agree that this project would benefit them in various ways, including developing their English language skills and providing them cultural exchange as well as an opportunity to travel.*
* *The students have scattered opinions on where they would prefer to live or be born, and they do not insist on dominancy of their culture or country. Some of the even see other countries as more livable than their own countries. Therefore they are ready to understand other cultures and lifestyles.*
* *The students are ready to resolve cultural conflicts peacefully. Therefore they are ready to understand the values of other cultures.*
* *Metaphors about the project are usually about travel and mobility. This could mean that the students manly perceive the project as mobility activity only. Other dimensions of the project should be emphasized on.*

1. ***PARENTS***
   1. *BRITAIN*

* *The parents agree that the project would be beneficial to multiple parties, including their children.*
* *Parents’ answers and metaphors reveal that although some parents have good understanding about the project and multiculturalism, some others are not really aware of the meaning of the phrase or the project.*
* *This could be interpreted as either the second type of parents are not aware of the importance of multiculturalism, or as they have internalized multiculturalism in a pluralistic society so much that although they cannot name it, they have been applying it to their lives for a long time. Since the project undertakers know the parents better, they are the ones who would decide which interpretation is more close to the truth.*
  1. *SPAIN*
* *Parents either respect their children’s opinions or encourage them to join this project. This means that there is a healthy communication between the parents and the children.*
* *Parents have some amount of knowledge about how the project would be handled. This implies some certain amount of communication between the parents and the project’s responsible person.*
* *Parents think that English language would be an important asset for the students and this project would improve English language abilities.*
* *Parents think that this mobility project is a good opportunity for intercultural education of their children. They also think that intercultural education is the key to understanding their own culture and values.*
* *They also think that mutual understanding and respect to each other are important subjects, and they expect this project to improve their children’s understanding of these subjects.*
* *Metaphors about this project include positive terms about reaching future and pluralism, which means that parents are aware of the project and there is little ambiguity about the outcomes of the project. They also involve some certain amount of uncertainty; therefore this could mean that parents feel some amount of ambiguity about the project.*
  1. *TURKEY*
* *Parents usually respect their children’s opinions. This means that there is a healthy communication between the parents and the children.*
* *Parents think that English language would be an important asset for the students and this project would improve English language abilities.*
* *Parents think that this mobility project is a good opportunity for intercultural education of their children. However, considering the answers as well as silence, it could be concluded that parents either do not think that the project would affect their family culture, or they do not have any idea of the direction of this affect.*
* *They also think that mutual understanding and respect to each other are important subjects, and they expect this project to improve their children’s understanding of these subjects. Moreover, some parents have already provided some sort of education on mutual understanding to their children; therefore they just expect it to go further.*
* *Metaphors about this project include positive terms about reaching future and education, which means that parents are aware of the project and there is no or very little ambiguity about the outcomes of the project.*
  1. *ITALY*
* *Parents take decisions together with their children. This means that there is a healthy communication between the parents and the children.*
* *Some parents have prior experience about student mobility. This has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include; experience providing better service and comfort to visiting students and teachers as well as better understanding about the project. On the other hand, it might be better to provide chances to other families (and therefore students) to host students in order to spread and expand the project to more families.*
* *Parents think that English language would be an important asset for the students and this project would improve English language abilities.*
* *Parents think that this mobility project is a good opportunity for intercultural education of their children. They also think that intercultural education is the key to understanding their own culture and values.*
* *Parents agree that mutual understanding and respect is important, however their answers partially suggest that they may request more understanding than they need to give. According to the answers, there is some evidence that some parents have already provided some sort of education on mutual understanding to their children, while some parents have not.*
* *Metaphors about this project include positive terms about multiculturalism and networking, which means that parents are partially aware of the project and there is some amount of ambiguity about the outcomes of the project.*
  1. *NORWAY*
* *Parents usually respect their children’s opinions. This means that there is a healthy communication between the parents and the children.*
* *Although they cannot (and they do not have to) name it, parents are well aware of the European dimension in education. Therefore they value cultural differences and they want their children to become aware of cultural differences and appreciate them in early ages.*
* *Parents think that English language would be an important asset for the students and this project would improve English language abilities.*
* *Parents think that this mobility project is a good opportunity for intercultural education of their children. They also think that intercultural education is the key to understanding their own culture and values.*
* *They also think that mutual understanding and respect to each other are important subjects, and they expect this project to improve their children’s understanding of these subjects. Moreover, some parents have already provided some sort of education on mutual understanding to their children; therefore they just expect it to go further. This shows that the parents have already reached a consensus on social pluralism.*
* *Metaphors about this project include positive terms about reaching future and education such as buds turning into flowers and library, which means that parents are aware of the project and there is no or very little ambiguity about the outcomes of the project.*
  1. *SLOVENIA*
* *While some parents have respected their children’s decisions, some parents have encouraged them to attend the project.*
* *Parents have knowledge about how the project would be handled. This implies some certain amount of communication between the parents and the project’s responsible person.*
* *Parents think that experience and cultural exchange are important assets for their children and this project would provide them to the students.*
* *Parents think that the mobility would affect their family culture positively, including providing some networking opportunities to the family.*
* *Parents think that their children can handle cultural differences.*
* *Parents’ metaphors about the project resemble the students’. Therefore it could be concluded that parents’ and students’ understanding of the projects is similar to each other.*

1. ***TEACHERS***

* *The teachers agree upon being beneficial to their students by providing opportunities in the means of language, cultural exchange or motivation.*
* *Teachers have similar imaginations on how the project, therefore it could be stated that the teachers have a common understanding of how to run the project, which could be called as consensus. This consensus shows that there is a health communication between the teachers.*
* *Teachers hope to have professional development from the project. Such professional development also would be reflected to the (future) students, improving their teaching quality. Moreover, increased multicultural understanding would help them understand the needs of the students better, yielding to serving them better.*
* *Teachers think that students are expected to benefit in terms of language, social and cultural exchange, multicultural understanding and international friendship network.*
* *Teachers have positive perceptions and metaphors about the project. Metaphors are generally about either brighter future, or peace and freedom. This may show that teachers expect the project would have positive impact on the future of societies.*

***CURRENT SITUATION ACCORDING TO THE DATA***

* *Administrators perceive the project positively and are eager to help project team as much as they can.*
* *The students are ready, eager and willing to attend the project. Majority of the students have clear opinions on resolving cultural conflicts.*
* *Parents are supportive to their children for the project.*
* *Teachers and project team has good communication within themselves.*

***CURRENT ISSUES ACCORDING TO THE DATA***

* *However recent changes of administrators in some partner schools in might have caused (or might cause) communication issues between the administrators and project team. However these issues are not expected to affect the project significantly, as there is no sign of resistance against the project.*
* *Some administrators in some countries might have insufficient understanding about the project. Therefore more communication could be necessary with the newly appointed administrators.*
* *According to the answers, non-attending students seem to benefit less than expected.*
* *Although parents agree that the project is good for their children, a certain amount of them are unaware of how it will work and how their children would benefit from it.*
* *None of the participants have mentioned IT skills development outcome of the project.*
* *Limited numbers of students do not have enough knowledge on how to resolve cultural conflicts.*

***SUGGESTED ACTIONS AGAINST THE ABOVE MENTIONED ISSUES***

* *Organizational change is defined as a temporary period where an organization moves from a current state to a desired future state. It should be kept in mind that Erasmus+ project is actually some kind of planned organizational change, where desired future state of the participating schools are more multicultural, postmodern, respectful and understanding towards other cultures, or shortly, more with European dimension in education, which is defined as “a principle present in education system enhancing understanding of wider European context and educational perspectives, opening horizons of global thinking and intercultural understanding”. Therefore certain principles of change management should be imposed during the project. It is suggested that the project team has a better, clearer, more understandable and more inclusive communication against stakeholders such as school administrators, parents, and students.*
* *Since none of the participants have mentioned about the IT skills development outcome of the project, it is extremely likely that majority of the stakeholders are unaware of this outcome. Therefore more activities emphasizing on this outcome need to be designed. If the project team thinks that there are enough activities for the desired outcome, it could again be a communication error, which requires referral to the above mentioned suggestion about communication.*
* *Few students do not have enough knowledge (or experience) on resolving cultural conflicts, while majority of the students are aware of what to do. It could be a wise decision to call a panel with all attending students and ask the opinions of the students on how to resolve cultural conflicts. This would also provide some peer coaching to the students.*
* *The data and findings suggest that little has been done by the project team (or has been perceived by the stakeholders) about the students who could not attend the project. Therefore it is suggested to design more activities (e.g. student meetings after visits, inclusive activities during mobility, parent conferences).*
* *Some data from British students partially suggests that some students perceive their culture as the dominant culture, or they may feel so because of their language. This is a common situation being faced with North American students in mobility. In order to overcome this, and to make them more open for cultural exchange, British students could be encouraged to learn a few phrases in the language of the country that they will be visiting. This also applies for those students who will be visiting countries other than England (e.g. Turkish students visiting Spain learning a few Spanish phrases). Such an application would also be a great ice breaker between the students who may need time to get to know each other.*
* *Some particular data from British parents could be interpreted as either some parents perceive that multiculturalism is not an important issue, or they have been using it in their daily lives so much that although they cannot name it, it has become an important part of their family culture. This interpretation has been done without considering the conclusion above.*
* *Some of the stakeholders have experience about mobility projects. This kind of experience should be utilized. Parent conferences where experienced parents tell about their opinions or bringing old students to school to share their memories with their juniors could be a few ways to do so. Experience could also be used for feedback purposes to understand what and how went wrong (or right) in past projects. Moreover, it is suggested to the project team that each partner gets an eager colleague from his/her own school who sees, performs and helps on the important steps of the project and documentation in order to let him/her understand Erasmus+ project management for future. Since a similar application “job shadowing” is a part of project, this approach could be called as “project shadowing”.*
* *Since the students would be observing teaching techniques and schools as well as cultural values, they would be comparing some differences and good practices with their own schools, and sharing their opinions with their friends. It is very likely that some parents or students would request similar practices be applied in their schools. Therefore, good practices in the destination schools should be carried out to the original school as much as cultural values, school facilities, school budget, teachers’ abilities, administrators’ mentality, local laws and regulations, and other constrain allow. Since the teachers in the project team would be well aware of these good practices, they are urged to prepare an action plan evaluating the applicability and local constrains of these good practices together with the other teachers who attend the mobility.*

*Engin Öztürk, Ph.D. (c)*

In the seminar of Cultural Literacy, we have focused on Mr. Öztürk’s report describing the current situation and issues according to the data and finally on the suggested actions and strategies for intervention. Mr. Imed Belhouche’s PowerPoint presentation at <http://1217.gvs.arnes.si/eclipse/the-erasmus-eclipse-project/> (from Slide 12 to slide 24) has been of great help because it brilliantly summarises Mr. Engin’s report and analysis of the six partner schools.

Once partners have shared and discussed the findings of the Cultural literacy report, we discuss the strategies to be adopted to improve our students, parents’ and communities’ intercultural understanding (“Suggested actions against the above mentioned issues”).

Partners agree to share the findings within the national Erasmus+ teams and with school administrators and trial at least one of the activities from the Cultural Literacy report and present its impact in the TPM in England in October 2016.