



Teacher Exchange No. 1 (ITALY)

The first exchange of teachers was held in the town of Stigliano in the Basilicata region of Italy from February 12th to 18th, 2015.

The delegations from the partner schools travelled on Feb 12th and were greeted and taken to the town. Formal activities commenced the following morning with a visit to the school of 'Rocco Montano' in Stigliano. A huge amount of time and effort had been dedicated to preparing a formal welcome. From the presentation of the visitors by a drum corps salute to the performance of the various national and European anthems by the school orchestra. All visiting teachers were overwhelmed by the energy and enthusiasm demonstrated by the students. Teachers visited individual classes to learn about the organisation of the school and curriculum.

In the afternoon each delegation presented their first myth/legend. The stories featured in this first round were:

Ireland - the Salmon of Knowledge

Turkey - the story of Cemsab and Sahmeran

Spain - local myths from the Soto Real area

Italy - Romulus and Remus and the founding of Rome

Poland - Lech, Czech and Rus (the founding of Poland)

The stories were presented in PowerPoint format and explained in detail to the other schools. It had been previously agreed to utilise Slideshare software to put the content on the website but it was found that this limited the interactivity as links and animations could not be utilised. Accordingly it was agreed to leave the content in the original format and allow the presentations to be downloaded from the project website. Participants then discussed the development of literacy activities based on the stories. It was agreed that the Irish school could proofread any activities before they are loaded onto the website. This in itself can be a literacy activity for students in the Irish school.

On Saturday 14th the group travelled to the town of Matera, a UNESCO World heritage site. A guide had been engaged and this meant that the full history of the area could be explained in great detail. This was a highly informative and engaging trip which was greatly enjoyed by all. Participants also visited the Tramontano Castle where they completed a team based activity which allowed them to learn about the history of the town by engaging with local actors playing various historical characters.



On Sunday 15th the group met in the morning to decide on the winners of the project mascot and logo competitions. The winner of the logo completion came from the Turkish school and will be utilised on the website and Twinspace and all formal communications. The mascot was selected with the winning entry coming from the Italian school. The mascot was named 'Pitsi' (an acronym of the first letter of the partner countries) and she will be used to engage students by sending her to a country in advance of an exchange visit. It was decided to use the mascot as a stimulus for creative writing where she will detail her experiences in visiting each of the partner countries in the project.

Participants then had a formal meeting with the Mayor of Stigliano where they were officially welcomed to the town. He stressed the importance of projects such as this in building connections between countries and allowing students to develop as European citizens. In the afternoon participants were given the opportunity to observe the Carnival celebrations in the town square. It was a vibrant affair and a unique cultural experience for the visitors.

On Monday the visiting delegation travelled to the towns of Aliano and Gorgoglione which, along with Stigliano, make up the collective of Italian schools. Again they visited classrooms and engaged with students in a variety of activities. This was followed by visits to a number of local businesses before being formally welcomed by the Mayor of Gorgoglione.

In the afternoon the Irish co-ordinator gave a presentation on the Audacity software which will be used in the presentation of the second myth / legends.

On the final day a Teachmeet was held in the school in Stigliano. The theme was literacy and each individual teacher gave a short presentation (2 or 5 mins) on topics ranging from useful websites, pedagogical techniques to classroom management ideas etc.

Following the teach meet the exchange was officially closed and expressions of thanks were made to the Italian hosts on behalf of all attendees. The mascot was passed to the Polish delegation to help raise awareness in the school prior to the next exchange in April.

On Wednesday 18th the visiting participants returned to their own countries.

John Weir

Project Co-ordinator