Evaluation report in English

FINLAND: ART

The Finnish partner school has had a special visual arts section for about a decade and offers also drama courses which are open for everyone. Thus the idea to see how art could contribute to language learning. The meeting program contained activities of different kinds of art, some by the school's own teachers (drama, graffiti drawing, music, sports), others by experts from various institutes (drama training to teachers, kinesthesia).

The concept of art in foreign language classroom was familiar to most Finns, Italians and Portuguese whereas the Belgian and German pupils were not familiar with it. About half of the pupils familiar with the concept had used it before the meeting and most pupils found art in foreign language classroom interesting or very interesting despite the fact if they knew the method or not. The same amount thought that the method was favourable to their linguistic skills whereas about half of the pupils considered the method to improve their digital skills, other half disagreed. After the meeting the Belgian, Italian and Portuguese pupils were in favour of the method being used in their own school. The Finns and Germans had mixed feelings since only half of them would have liked the method being introduced in their classrooms. When asked about the advantages of art in foreign language classroom, the pupils mentioned the following:

- It's fun to learn by moving
- Offers various ways to learn and thus makes learning easier
- It's easier to learn to know the other pupils and communicate with them
- Easy to adapt
- Easy and motivating
- Favours teamwork
- Creativity
- It's easier to remember things through art

All the teachers were familiar with the idea of art in foreign language classroom and had used it in their teaching. Furthermore, they found the concept interesting or very interesting. The duration of the training (different workshops, one of them being drama workshop just for teachers) seemed adequate to 90% of the teachers and all the teachers had felt comfortable during it. The presented documents seemed relevant to 70% of the teachers and 80% of the teachers found the formation motivating and efficient.

According to the teachers art in foreign language learning was favourable to pupils' linguistic skills but less to their digital skills. Everyone had learned new things during the formation and felt motivated to bring these in their teaching. Almost all the teachers found that they would not have difficulties explaining the method to their colleagues but applying the method would be difficult for the Portuguese and Belgians since they lack appropriate space to do, for example, drama nor did they feel that they'd have enough creativity. Sometimes pupils think more about the form than linguistic aspects and thus, the learning part might be secondary. The Germans and Finns didn't find it difficult to put in practice, in the Finnish school, art is used in many ways in language classes but could be used even more. The Germans had got a lot of new ideas and thought that the younger pupils might like to work this way.

The activities of the meeting were in harmony with the different training sessions, according to the teachers. A higher motivation to learn foreign languages could be noticed among the Italian, Belgian and Portuguese pupils but less among the Germans and Finns. The teachers found that the material used during the meeting was favourable to the pupils' language skills but not so much to their digital skills.

In addition, the workshops were found useful to the teachers: a Finnish teacher was positively surprised by the variety of possibilities offered by art, especially the dance/movement workshop had been interesting. An Italian teacher was also impressed by the same workshop and how active and engaged the pupils were. A Belgian teacher noticed that pupils can overcome their shyness with drama and that dance increases the co-operation between body and mind. It's easier to learn to know other people and also a language. The most interesting aspects of art in foreign language classroom are the following:

- Bringing together the movement and the language
- More co-operation between different subjects and teachers

The teachers also thought of some negative aspects:

- A big space is needed to do drama
- Specific technological tools can be needed
- The activities take a lot of time
- It's not always possible to have a specialist's (for example music teacher) assistance
- Some pupils are not capable of drawing
- The language loses importance when the form gets more attention

The teachers had a few ideas of how to make the activities more suitable to their teaching. Firstly, the learners' age and level have to be taken into consideration when planning the activities. Secondly, the presentation of some artworks could be elaborated: the pupils could speak and write about their observations at a museum. Bringing different art forms into classroom could be helpful when learning some vocabulary basics. Shyer pupils might not be very eager to do drama practices. More "traditional" teachers might be sceptical about art practices. In conclusion, the teachers mentioned that art in foreign language classroom is an amusing, attractive and motivating method which can be used from time to time.

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