

## Teacher Training: the Relevance of Art in an Integrated Methodology

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### Abstract

*PISA results [1] have been showing that the acquisition of subject content and digital and communicative competences of pre-university students from several European countries is not very successful. When using digital tools, most pupils, and sometimes students at the University, just copy and paste, which cannot help in the learning of significant content in any subject, on the contrary bad habits are favoured in learning such as copying without reasoning. On the other hand communicative competence is extremely poor in young people, so lecturers and researchers from six Universities, -Alcalá University (Spain), Comenius University of Bratislava (Slovakia), Leicester University (United Kingdom), Lisbon University (Portugal), Helsinki University (Finland), and Karadeniz Technical University (Turkey)- have worked in a European project 'An INTEgral Teacher Training for Developing Digital and Communicative Competences and Subject Content Learning at Schools (intTT)', financed by the European Commission.. The project intended to improve subject content learning, communicative and digital competences in an integrated methodology used at primary and secondary schools, consequently the project was addressed to teacher training students in Universities, and didactic materials were designed to develop both competences and, at the same time, to foster subject content acquisition in school pupils.*

*This paper will briefly describe project aims and didactic materials, focussing on some of the materials dealing with Art, addressed to school teachers, student teachers and pupils. Criteria on the design, pedagogical properties, subject content accuracy and implementation of the materials at schools will also be remarked in this paper. Examples of the materials will be shown and commented too.*

### 1. Didactic Materials

#### 1.1. Description and Pedagogical Criteria to Elaborate Didactic Materials

Didactic materials were presented in six CDs one per participating University, each CD consists of two modules one in mother tongue, and the other in English to allow the transference across cultures. Another format was a web platform, 'on line development platform for Master CDs'. In fact, CDs and the platform followed the same pattern, including didactic activities, addressed to school pupils, plus didactic suggestions, addressed to student teachers.

Then, the didactic activities, based on the methodology of the project, combined language strategies and digital tools, which assist the development of digital and communicative competences across scientific and humanistic subjects in the primary and secondary school curriculum, with the object of provoking the acquisition of subject content and, at the same time, fostering pupils' acquisition of both competences. CDs and the web platform also included another chapter, the so called 'didactic suggestions' providing student teachers with ideas and recommendations for the implementation of information technology and digital tools (Internet, video, TV, cinema, mobile, i-pods, videoconference, wiki, blog, e-portfolio, etc.). The 'didactic suggestions' chapter also dealt with pedagogical discussions, comparing the benefits and drawbacks of the different digital tools used in the didactic materials, as well as those of the linguistic strategies and techniques appearing in the didactic activities .

Moreover, the pedagogical properties of the basic materials were also considered, as a first step, the project team agreed about a general rule in order to select the initial material/sources which were the base to elaborate the didactic materials, and this was to use authentic materials from Internet, web pages, television, films, video clips, newspaper, books, etc. Then, some criteria were established about content, pedagogical properties and usability of these sources.

As far as content was concerned, some aspects were taken into account such as curricula relevance, subject content accuracy, reliability of the information given in these sources, subject content related to other

subject content, suitability of conceptual level, motivation, prompts for discussions, writings, further studies, etc. Another important fact to be examined was linguistic suitability which meant that language should be adequate for primary and secondary school pupils. Furthermore, the team also studied the usability of these resources, for instance, that access and navigation were easy, easy to be learnt, easy to be related to other materials, pleasant to be used, and links with other related sites.

## 1.2. Subject Content Approach

Didactic activities deal with several subject contents interconnecting every activity with all the subjects and contents appearing in the respective module, so subjects and topics are not isolated they are integrated with other subjects. It is also relevant for the team that pupils can learn about these contents but, at the same time, they can develop abilities and skills that help them to acquire content knowledge, so, we expect pupils can be aware of subject concepts (in our case in Literature, Geography, Art, History, Culture, Political and Social Concerns) establishing relationships among different concepts and being able to compare them, interpreting data or graphical information: image interpretation; inferring and predicting information; formulating hypothesis; leading to conclusions; using language precisely, etc.

The two main sources of Module I (the one in English) are the novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961) [3] by Muriel Spark and the film with the same title, based on this book and loyal to the plot and dialogues though with slight variations as it always happens in adapted cinema versions. The film (1969) [4] was directed by Ronald Neame. The novel is very rich and permits the study of several subjects, consequently practical activities have been created in order to acquire subject content of various subjects: Language and Literature, and then, linking Language and Literature with Geography, Art, History and Cultural, Political and Social Concerns. Thus, it is also intended that our student teachers realize that content knowledge is not apart from reality, then, they can teach their pupils different subjects involved in a real context, and in this way pupils can see that subject contents can be connected to real life.

Didactic activities have been organized in three sections:

- Section I: Language and Literature,
- Section II. Language, Literature, Geography, Art, History, Culture, Political and Social Concerns.
- Section III. Design and create e-portfolios.

Every section has subsections including content and self-evaluating e-portfolios. Digital competence especially appeared in the third section however this competence as well as communicative competence are also practiced in activities in every section. The technological support are Internet, video, blog and e-portfolio as tools to search and share information, to discuss and argue, to lead to conclusions, etc. Moreover e-portfolio, in the case of Alcalá University, is used with a double purpose: as a tool for pupils' self-assessment and as a tool to collect the most relevant information concerning content to be summarized by pupils in a final e-portfolio.

## 2. The Teaching of Art: Example

Following the project methodology, the teaching and learning of Art is always connected to other topics and subjects in the didactic activities, sometimes the topic of Art is the main one in the activity, but it can also be a secondary topic, anyhow there always exists interrelation with other topics and subjects. We are presenting an example in which the teaching of Art is related to the two main sources of Module I: the novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* by Muriel Spark and the film by Ronald Neame though other authentic materials (videos, maps, photos, etc.) taken from internet are also used. So, the teaching of Art in this example is mainly interconnected with Literature, History, Geography and Culture, and, of course, Language. Some of the works of art shown in the example are the Roman Forum and the Coliseum and artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo are mentioned in the videos, then Italy, Florence and Rome are directly connected to Miss Brodie, the protagonist of Spark's novel, a teacher in an Edinburgh school for girls belonging to the upper social classes. Miss Brodie deeply admires Italy and Art, when she travels from Edinburgh to the continent, she usually spends her holidays in Italy, especially in her beloved Florence. Secondary school pupils also know this as Miss Brodie has previously shown the beautiful *Ponte Vecchio* to her pupils in the novel, this has appeared in a different didactic activity and introduces the first listening of this activity linking it to the previous activity. Furthermore, *Beatrice* is also quoted, so Dante's presence can



be guessed here and he has already been studied in another activity, furthermore his name reappears in the second video, thus Italian Art is related to British and Italian/Universal Literature.

Pupils have to look for more information about these topics, select the most relevant one, organize it, argue about it establishing interrelations among artists and works of art, History, Geography and Culture, and summarize the most important points using a blog and an e-portfolio. Then, historical and cultural aspects are also dealt with, the Coliseum and Roman Forum took pupils back to the Roman Empire and many other cultural topics are contrasted in the didactic activity, just as an example the historical and artistic Florence is compared to the modern town full of tourists. Pupils should locate Rome and Florence in a map, so Geography is also concerned.

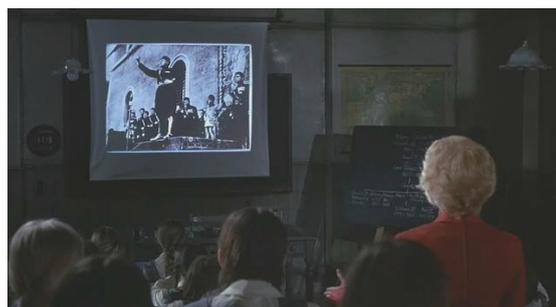
As we can see in table 1 below, not only subject content has been touched in this didactic activity, Language and linguistic strategies to develop the four skills in communicative competence have been deeply practised, digital tools are also used trying to improve digital competence, and transference skills and attitudes are also fostered, thus the activity tries to highlight the importance of autonomy in learning, group work and communication with other colleagues as transferable attitudes which can facilitate pupils' significant learning. The activity includes several exercises where pupils are autonomous to search information, decide whether this information is relevant or not, organize it, argue about it, and make the decision of selecting the most relevant one to be kept in the e-portfolio.

## 2.1. Practical Example and Summary Table

### Activity II.2 Language, Literature, Geography, and Art: Florence and Rome

#### II.2.1 Listening for Gist

Look at the video which will add some extra information about Italy and Art, *Beatrice* and *Ponte Vecchio*. Answer these questions:



- What does Miss Brodie say about *Beatrice*?
- Can you identify the important monuments appearing in the video? Where are they?

#### II.2.2 Searching and Selecting Information in Internet, Using your Blog: Writing



You have a photo of the Coliseum and another of the Roman Forum, as you know both monuments are in Rome.

- Can you find some information in Internet about these monuments?
- Select the most relevant one, and write ten lines about these monuments in your blog.
- Keep the information for your e-portfolio.

#### II.2.3 Organizing Information, Using your Blog: Writing

Look for a map of Italy in Internet and find Florence and Rome in the map.



- Once you have found them, look for information in Internet about these towns (images, videos, texts, etc.)
- Select the most important information concerning Geography, Art, History and Culture
- Organize this information and add it to your blog
- Write about 30/50 words for each town
- Keep this information for your e-portfolio

## II.2.4 Listening for the Main Ideas and Oral Expression



Listen to this video about Florence, and try to understand the main ideas. Then, read these statements, and according to the video, decide whether these statements are true or false. Justify your answers, and in case they are false, make them true.

- There are a lot of museums in Florence
- There are a lot of masterpieces in architecture everywhere in Florence
- Florence is situated in the Alp (valleys)
- Florence streets are full with tourists
- Dante, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci were the most prodigious men working in Florence.

*Table 1. Summary Table*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Subject content:</b> Language, Literature, Art, History, Geography, Culture.</li> <li>- <b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Main topic:</b> Art in Rome and Florence</li> <li>- <b>Related to other topics:</b> Muriel Spark, Dante</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>Content abilities:</b> Establishing interrelation among artists and works of art, connecting Art with Literature, History and Culture.</li> <li>- <b>Communicative competence/skills:</b> Listening, speaking, reading, writing.</li> <li>- <b>Linguistic strategies:</b> Listening for gist and for the main ideas, distinguishing main ideas from specific ones, answering oral questions, discussing, skimming and scanning, inferring information, summarizing, writing compositions.</li> <li>- <b>Digital Competence:</b> Using internet to search information, using the blog, constructing acquired content with relevant selected information, using e-portfolio to keep acquired content.</li> <li>- <b>Transferable skills:</b> Interpreting maps, locating places in maps, observing and inferring, arguing, selecting, searching and organizing information, making decisions, giving information, sharing information, leading to conclusions, use of digital tools.</li> <li>- <b>Transferable attitudes:</b> Autonomy in learning, collaborative work, group work, communication with other colleagues.</li> </ul>
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## 3. Conclusion

As a conclusion, we could say that this integrated methodology can promote the development of ICT using digital media, and tools can facilitate significant learning in school pupils. The project fosters digital education at school and a change in attitude and practice among student teachers through initial teacher training which will be very positive for their future lessons, moreover using language strategies and techniques during lessons mean another tool for student teachers or teachers to be sure that concepts, ideas, knowledge in the different subjects of the curriculum have been understood and acquired by pupils, which implies that this methodology can favour subject content learning. Teachers and student teachers have also appreciated the linguistic strategies and tasks and incorporation of digital tools which, in their views, can improve understanding of concepts in their subjects.



## References

[1] PISA, <http://www.pisa.oecd.org>

[2] <http://www.helsinki.fi/integralteacher/index.html>

[3] Spark, M. (1961), *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, rpt. 1971. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.

[4] Neame, R. (1969), *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (film)