

## **'The Design Club': Art Students Develop Resources to Support the Young Learners' Language Skills**

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### **Abstract**

The Design Club started five years ago with the application of a master-disciple learning partnership within an extracurricular book illustration activity at the Carmen Sylva Art School in Ploiesti, Romania. If the beginning was rather painful, with difficult twists in creating the Renaissance-style effective relationship between an expert teacher and the novices, the following steps brought about remarkable progress towards autonomous learning. Nowadays, the members of the Club manage orders from the educational book market and the teacher only offers online coaching.

Our paper will firstly contrast two perspectives: the art school and curricula that value individualism, isolation and a submissive student; and a new approach that highlights a broader, integrated perspective in the Facebook era where students naturally – and virtually - interact for learning, explore other types of beauty and discover connections between the verbal and the visual codes. Secondly, we will present results from the Design Club activity that relate to various educational projects in which the Art students manage to understand the communication needs of younger students and consequently develop innovative materials to sustain the quality language learning of the latter. Thirdly, we will draw conclusions on how our transdisciplinary initiative changed the students' focus, gave them confidence to pursue a career in book illustration, brought meaning to their learning and opened them to reflect on how communication and learning are stimulated on a page.

Last but not least, our paper shows how ICT allowed the members of the Club to share experiences, to promote their work and to become increasingly autonomous.

Key words: learning partnership, verbal and visual communication, autonomous learning