



My perfect school
Italian-German online collaborative project
by Riccardo Mini

Description: Through a series of activities aimed at promoting entrepreneurial competences, and implemented via the usage of digital educational technology, students increase their awareness of the main features, strengths and weaknesses of the Italian Education System (related to secondary vocational schools), by comparing it with the system of a German partner school. Working collaboratively, they will design a plan for the improvement of the vocational school system, based on some of the best ideas and practices highlighted by the comparison, to be present to the school Principal.

Note: this project was born as a spontaneous result of My Erasmus+ study visit to Ireland, following my encounter with a vocational teacher from Germany.

Topics:

- Promoting European citizenship and entrepreneurship;
- comparing and contrasting the main features of the Italian vs German vocational school systems

Number of students involved: 20 (plus students from partner school)

Author: Riccardo Mini

Aims

- Increase students' awareness of the Italian Education System in comparison to the German one;
- Promoting European citizenship through the use of digital technology as a tool for networking and collaboration between schools of different countries;
- Promoting and reinforcing the following competence areas (with reference to the European Commission reference framework for entrepreneurship - EntreComp conceptual model):



- 1.1 Spotting opportunities
- 1.2 Creativity
- 1.3 Vision
- 1.4 Valuing ideas
- 2.1 Self-awareness and self-efficacy



- 2.4 Mobilizing others
- 3.1 Taking the initiative
- 3.2 Planning and management
- 3.4 Working with others
- 3.5 Learning from experience

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AIMS:

- Reinforcing vocabulary related to school and education
- Reinforcing reading, writing, speaking skills in the following areas (B1 to B2 EFR level):
 - 1) Introducing oneself
 - 2) Presenting your school environment
 - 3) Presenting an opinion and supporting its validity.

Expected Outcomes

Find out/discover(Knowledge): the main features of the German education system

Select(Knowledge): The most relevant features of either school system

Show awareness of(Affective learning outcomes): The differences among the European school systems

Compare (and contrast)(Analysis): the school systems of Italy and Germany

Give arguments for and against(Evaluation): The main features of the school system; their own improving ideas

Criticise(Evaluation): The weak points of the different school systems

Defend(Evaluation): their own opinions and ideas

Teaching-Learning activities

30 CIRCLES CHALLENGE

Produce 15 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

Each student is given a sheet of paper with 30 empty circles printed on it, and has 60 seconds to turn as many of the blank circles as possible into recognizable objects. Results are then presented to the class.

Warming up activity aimed at boosting creativity, spotting opportunities and the ability to look at things from a different perspective.



THE SCHOOL I WOULD LIKE

Discuss 10 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

Teacher asks students to say if they are happy with the school system as it is, and motivate their answers.

Collaborate 40 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

Students are divided in small groups, assigned roles, and asked to imagine the school they would like through a brainstorming session in which they come up with 3 ideas on how to improve the present school.
Results are then presented to the rest of the class using a Mind Map.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE PARTNER SCHOOL

Produce 40 minutes 20 students

The teacher explains that the class is going to work on a collaborative project with another vocational school from Germany. In the course of the project each class will present the school system or their own country, and decide together what makes the perfect school. First step is to introduce yourself to the other school, by using a PADLET created by the teacher.
Each student is asked to post a short description of themselves and a picture.

Read Watch Listen 10 minutes 20 students Tutor is not available

Students read and comment the presentations of the German students.

INTRODUCE YOUR SCHOOL

Produce 60 minutes 20 students Tutor is not available

In groups, and using another padlet, students are asked to briefly introduce their school, by making a short video and/or taking a picture of their favourite spot in the school, and explaining why it is their favourite.

Read Watch Listen 30 minutes 20 students Tutor is not available

Students read and comment the presentations of the German students.

This activity can be done either in class or at home.



COMPARING SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Collaborate 60 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

The students set to work in small groups on TRICIDER, doing an assignment created by the teacher:

Vocational school system in Germany and Italy: Briefly describe the main features of the vocational school system in Italy and Germany.

Just click on ADD IDEA and describe what you consider ONE important feature that you would like to share with the partner school. You can add as many ideas as you like.

Then, working in groups, discuss the ideas presented, in terms of pros and cons.

The "best" ideas/features (i.e. the ones with more positive votes) will be part of the "Perfect School".

Read Watch Listen 10 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

The students read the other school's contributions describing the main features of their own education system.

Discuss 15 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

They discuss pros and cons of the other contributions within their groups.

Produce 30 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

They write down the pros and cons in the tricider's second column.

Read Watch Listen 10 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

They read and discuss the pros and cons created by the partner school.

This activity should necessarily be carried out over the course of different periods, covering a few weeks.

VIDEOCONFERENCE WITH PARTNER SCHOOL

Discuss 60 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

Using Skype or Google Hangout, the students from the two partner schools get to meet each other (virtually) and discuss the results of the survey, each group indicating which features of the other system they find more striking.



MY PERFECT SCHOOL

Discuss 30 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

Using the TRICIDER survey results, the students draw out a list of ideas that could improve the quality of the education environment and its learning outcomes.

Collaborate 30 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

The different groups must negotiate their choices and come up as a class with 10 ideas they are going to focus on.

PROMOTING YOUR IDEA

Produce 120 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

Using a simplified version of the YouthStart Challenge "Grab their attention with a story!", the students start reflecting on how to make their idea more appealing to an external audience.

Collaborate 30 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

The students in groups think of slogans and catchphrases that better communicate their ideas

Produce 30 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

Then they create a motivational poster using <http://bighugelabs.com/motivator.php>

Produce 60 minutes students Tutor is available

They prepare an oral report on the experience and its results, and select three spokespersons.

PRESENTING YOUR IDEA TO AN EXTERNAL AUDIENCE

Produce 60 minutes 20 students Tutor is available

The school Principal and her collaborators are invited to the class, where the students relate the different stages of the project, and present their proposal. Discussion follows