

E-Learning from Nature: a great project in the Erasmus+ Programme

- Data di pubblicazione 22 marzo 2017 - **LinkedIn**

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The project 'E-Learning from Nature' is funded by the European Commission and the Italian National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme and is carried out by a partnership composed by I.I.S. 'F. Enriques' (Castelfiorentino - Italy) promoter, and Inforef (Belgium), Limerick Institute of Technology (EIRE), EuroEd (Romania), Epimorfotiki Kilkis (Greece), Trakai Education Assistance Authority (Lithuania), Instituto Politécnico de Bragança (Portugal), in collaboration with Pixel (Florence).

In line with the key priorities of the European policies, the project addresses the problem related to secondary school students underachievements in basic skills as far as scientific issues are concerned as to answer to the Council conclusions on increasing the level of basic skills in the context of European cooperation on schools for the 21st century, identifying in a "solid grasp of the basic principles of the natural world and of fundamental scientific concepts" a fundamental "basis for the acquisition of key competences for lifelong learning".

The aim of the project is promote the knowledge of scientific subjects, through a problem and inquiry based teaching approach, based on challenging students with building their own learning process starting from the real world.

Students will therefore learn the basic skills of different scientific subjects, starting from the collection of information about the natural and environmental heritage of their local territory, its analysis from different science related point of view and its description through the use of ICT.

Students will learn more about their own territory, will be the main actors of their own learning process, and will personally experience the value of science in order to understand and analyze the main features of the surrounding area they live in.

This will motivate students in learning scientific issues by providing them with the teaching materials developed and made available by exploiting the communicative potential of new technologies without losing a strong reference to their local context, and allowing them to acquire a basic knowledge in science, overcoming the perception of distance from everyday life which is often associated with scientific issues.

In order to achieve the shared aims, the members of the partnership have planned to:

- create a transnational network of secondary schools that will be directly involved in the project activities as associated partners. The schools will actively be involved in the research activity and the production of the deliverables to be compared at transnational level. The schools will be encouraged to continue the activity also beyond the E-Learning from Nature project, in the framework of eTwinning projects that will possibly start as it already happened in the framework of previous European projects with schools in which the partnership was and is involved;
- collect information sheets, direct sources (photos, videos, drawings etc. available in digital format) about the flora, the fauna, the natural elements and any other human intervention of scientific interest of a specific environmental area;
- related small lessons aimed at identifying the connection between the above mentioned natural elements with school scientific curricular activities and the related basic skills to be acquired;
- collection of video lessons on different science related topics, physics, chemistry, biology and natural sciences produced by secondary school students and addressed to their fellows at European level;
- a teacher's guide containing suggestions for teachers on how to:
 - adopt new methods and tools based on collaborative and innovative practices to strengthen science education performances at secondary school level;
 - address low achievement in science basic skills through the promotion of problem-based and real life learning scenarios;
 - implement innovative approaches to science teaching and learning through an aware use of ICT with the objective to guide students in learning science through an interactive and proactive approach

- promote a learner centred pedagogical approach to science teaching and learning by using innovative learning by teaching experiences

Information, photos and descriptions related to the project can be obtained and looked up on the dedicated web-site, <http://enature.pixel-online.org/index.php>

The promoter, I.I.S. 'F. Enriques, has also a space dedicated to the project on its web-site, <http://www.isisenriques.gov.it/elearning-eng.htm>