

**TITLE**

Using multiple resources and technology to research a common topic

**VISION (ASPIRATION AND AIMS)**

- to help teachers create collaborative resources
- to provide evidence for teachers on the value of using technology alongside other resources in the classroom
- to develop students' skills of evaluating material

**BACKGROUND MOTIVATION STATEMENT**

There is a danger that the internet will be taken as the sole resource by students for gathering information – despite the many other sources available. A key 21<sup>st</sup> century skill is recognising what resource is appropriate and valid and when it should be used.

**NARRATIVE**

I have set up a class project around the history of the school. This acts as an introduction to research as well as allowing for the inclusion of required transversal skills such as learning to learn and cultural awareness. We have access to physical documents about the school, the original title deeds, boards of achievements, old photographs of sports days etc. There is also online information around the changes in school size, the boundaries for accepting students, and past exam performance, as well as more generic information such as satellite pictures and census information for the area.

The project begins with a discussion of what information we have and what other information is available. The class is then divided into small groups that are tasked with gathering data from the various resources identified. Thus one group looks at previous pupils and staff. Several parents and grandparents attended the school and they are asked for any old school reports. Where possible the students also conduct interviews with these adults and teachers who can be traced through school records. Another group looks at the building and tracks changes in the school layout. They take photos similar in perspective to existing images and consider how and why the school has evolved in that way. They decide to use old newspaper records and the internet to see if the changes correspond to external events. A third looks at the subjects taught and how they have changed; comparing it to other schools in the region and the requirements of local industry.

Once the data is gathered it is reviewed. The students identify discrepancies between the recollections of teachers and pupils and between these stories and the dates found in the school records. This leads to a discussion of validity of information, using memories, records and material on the internet which initially came from similar sources. It also allows me to introduce the ideas of metadata and tagging of data. This leads to the class generating a set of tags describing content and source for their information that would allow it to be easily searched by others.

Using the generic online template for research information, we input our researched information. This site is structured so that material can easily be uploaded and tagged as well as providing functionality such as printing posters from selected material or creating timelines. Next year I hope my new students will add to the site.

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### TREND/S

#### Enthusiasm does not come cheap

In many European countries teachers and other public sector workers are experiencing salary cuts, tax increases, higher cost of living. Overall, living standards for many educators are being challenged, and so is their enthusiasm and their willingness to innovate.

#### 21st century skills in practice

Teachers are increasingly expected to incorporate the so called 21st century skills in daily teaching. These include media and ICT literacy, communication, problem solving and collaboration.

### KEY CONCEPTS

Source evaluation, collaboration, media literacy, interactive teaching, child-centred

### ENVIRONMENT

- classroom (with internet access)
- local community around the school for interviews, picture records etc
- online space for uploading information

### PEOPLE & ROLES

- teacher as coordinator of overall activity, instructor of research methods, facilitator of research process
- student as researcher
- local community, past teachers and others for interviews and sources

### INTERACTIONS (INCL. PEDAGOGIES)

- enquiry-based learning
- working in small groups and coordinating between groups

### ACTIVITIES

- interviewing
- researching using various methods and sources
- analysing data from multiple sources

### RESOURCES (INCL. TECHNOLOGIES)

- voice recorders, cameras
- internet access
- generic template for research information that has tagging facility
- paper resources – in this case school history and local records