



Projektdokumentation

zum Projekt:

How does online schooling affect the ability to learn and the feelings of teenagers from different countries?

angefertigt im Rahmen von CertiLingua®

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1.0 My motivation

1.1 My personal interest in intercultural projects

Intercultural connections have always been important to me. Therefore I decided to visit a bilingual class in the fifth grade. In the beginning, we had civic education in English and later also history. Now, being in the twelfth grade, I still have social sciences in English and it is one of my favourite subjects. These subjects made it possible for me to have a wide range of vocabulary and to communicate with people from other countries. In the tenth grade it was the first time that I heard from the CertiLingua excellence label. Teachers and older students explained the conditions and advantages of participating in this project. I was directly enthusiastic and decided to participate. So, let the journey begin!

Unfortunately, due to the Corona pandemic everything turned out differently than expected. However, I am really grateful that we had the possibility to communicate with people from other countries in a digital way. Actually, in 2020 the exchange with our french partner school in Millau should take place, but due to the pandemic it was cancelled. However, we had the possibility to participate in a digital way. The project was called „Voyage numérique“. I was full of hope, but unfortunately I was disappointed. The exchange started in June 2020 and my exchange partner was Lilou and she seemed really nice. First of all, we chatted via e-mail and then we exchanged our phone numbers in order to chat via WhatsApp. It started really well and I asked her if she wants to video chat, because we we're supposed to present our results of our project, which was about prejudices against France and Germany, to the other students of the exchange. Lilou answered that she was on vacation and due to this I asked her if we could do it afterwards, but she never answered. I wrote to her several times, but nothing came back. I asked my French teacher if she could ask the teacher from Millau if everything was fine with Lilou, but she did not want to participate anymore and unfortunately there were no other exchange students left. I was really sad and disappointed. Moreover, I was annoyed that the exchange was just online and that I could not talk to Lilou in person. However, I still wanted to learn something about the French culture and the people. That is why I decided to connect with one of my friend's

exchange partners from France. His name was Hugo and when my friend agreed, I chatted with him via Instagram. He was really nice and he always answered. However, he was busy with his actual exchange partner and due to this reason, I did not get that much information. All in all, this exchange was rather a failure for me. But that is the way it is with an exchange, either it is going well or not. In any case, one should always make the best of the situation. That is why I did not let it get me down and took part in another exchange.

On the 27th November 2020 I heard that there was going to be a digital exchange with Italy next year and I was very happy, because I saw it as a new opportunity. Our exchange school was the „Istituto statale di Istruzione superiore ITE-LL Gadda – Rosselli“ in Gallarate. In the beginning, we were supposed to make short videos of ourselves to get to know each other better. I had so much fun watching the videos, because there were so many new impressions from so many different people.

In order to meet each other for the first time on the 18th of March, we used the platform Google Classroom and everything worked out. It was not like a typical exchange, that everyone was assigned a partner, because we were split in teams, which was a good idea in my opinion. I was in a team with Sophia, Alessia and Giorgia, and they were all very nice and talkative. First of all, we got to know each other better and talked about the current Corona situation. Moreover, we introduced our hometowns and learned about the other countryside. The theme of the project was the Italian and German mentality in connection to prejudices. On the 30th April 2021 we had a project day at which we had time to design a survey about the mentality of the other country. It was really nice to have more time with the Italians and we have learned that the penchant for pizza is not just a prejudice, but true and also the expression “mamma mia“ is used often. Furthermore, they love spending time with their family and are really talkative. The digital exchange nearly stretched over three months and it was a great experience. I met so many nice people and I am still in contact with them. I am very grateful that we had this opportunity despite Corona. Moreover, in October 2021 we got the message that the exchange was going to take place next year in person. Unfortunately I am not visiting school anymore, but I am glad that a bit of normality is coming back.

Since I did not have the opportunity to visit another country, I decided to take part in as many projects as possible.

For this reason I also participated in the MUN club. Normally, this club prepares students to take part in the model United Nations. However, the MUN was also cancelled due to the pandemic. We still wanted to connect with another country, that is why we worked with a school in Philadelphia in the US.

In December 2020 we introduced each other with short videos. I learned about five new girls from the US and they all seemed very likable. In February we decided to design a mural together with the girls from Philadelphia. This mural was supposed to contain information about the two cultures and represent the importance of connection between different countries. In order to plan the mural we had meetings on Zoom and everything worked out really well. In May a package from the US arrived with pieces of fabric in it. We designed those pieces with connective hand letterings and symbols that connect the two countries. After that we sent the pieces of fabric back and the girls from the US sewed everything together and sent us a picture. The mural looked great and was called „Tapestry of Community and Connection“. It was a really cool project and even there is such a long distance between those two countries everything worked out and we could connect without visiting each other.

1.2 My personal interest in my project

It is noticeable that the Corona pandemic surrounds our life at the moment. But it is still something that differentiates the last two years from the previous ones. Due to this reason I decided that I want to make a project about the pandemic. However, I wanted to have a topic, which especially affects and includes young people. And then I had the idea that I could make a project about homeschooling, because I knew that this is something that connects teenagers from all over the world. I also wanted to include some personal aspects and aspects, where I could imagine to receive different and individual recognitions. I ended up with the question: “How does online schooling affect the ability to learn and the feelings of teenagers from different countries?“. This question seemed really interesting to me, because I noticed a change in my mental health and struggled many days during this time. There were so many new impressions and my own life was suddenly completely changed. At some point this

new daily routine became a boring rut and every day looked the same. I wanted to know whether online schooling is the same in other countries.

1.3 The planning and implementation of my project

I was still in contact with Sophia from the Italy exchange and Mo from the project with Philadelphia. Mo and Sophia are really different, which is in my opinion really good to get a comprehensive result. I was interested in a question regarding feelings in the pandemic, because in my opinion this time was really hard and difficult. Being separated from my friends and hobbies was really challenging and nerve-racking for me. Due to this reason, I wanted to know if teenagers from other countries had the same problems.

In June 2021 I started working on my project, since we had online schooling for a long time. In the beginning, I evaluated questions, that seemed interesting to me. I separated between the questions about the ability to learn and questions regarding feelings and emotions. In the first step, I answered the questions for myself and I recognized that this time was very formative for me and how much I missed going to school. After that, I got in closer contact with Sophia again. We chatted and had many video calls. We talked about what bothered us during that time and what we would like to improve in the future. Over the past seven months we phoned and chatted again and again. It felt good to hear that teenagers from other countries also struggled and felt overstrained during the time of online schooling. Moreover, I have sent my survey to some of the other girls from the exchange with Italy to get a more reliable result.

In the end of summer I contacted Mo and wrote with her about my question. It was really nice to chat with her. However, it was a bit difficult, because she sometimes needs weeks to answer, but she was still very nice and probably just busy. Over time I developed a closer connection and friendship to Sophia, because we chatted more often. But that was okay, because I still had the experience with teenagers from two different countries.

1.4 The importance of the encounter

Of course, it would have been nicer to travel to the countries and to interview the people personally, however it is impressive that we have digital opportunities to

connect within seconds. This gives us the opportunity to talk to people from all over the world in a very sustainable way. It was really important for me to have many video calls with Mo and Sophia, because that is the only way to see how a person behaves and how they feel. Especially for my project it was essential, because I was interested in their emotions and expressions.

1.5 My personal expectations of the project

I chose exactly this question, because it contains psychological and emotional aspects. Mental health plays an increasingly important role nowadays and I think it was extremely important to talk about it, because when you realize that many people have similar problems, you do not feel so alone anymore. I was curious how open Mo and Sophia are, to talk about such a personal topic. I expected that teenagers from different countries also struggled during this, but I was excited if they had the same problems and I wondered to what extent their ability to learn was reduced or enhanced. Furthermore, I asked myself if they were interested in my topic and whether their answers were as I expected them to be. I expected to hear that they learned less during this time and that the use of new platforms and new ways of communication was difficult for them and that their mental health suffered, because they had many tasks and missed the contact to their friends. However, it would be very refreshing to hear something contrary. Particularly, I hope that they can retrace my questions and this project connects us even more. Moreover, this project is in great importance in an intercultural context, because especially talking about problems is really connective and I think that it is important to connect in order to help each other. Maybe their way of online schooling had some positive aspects that I struggled about and that I could facilitate my life, if we are going to be online schooled again. In addition, talking online about online schooling with students from different countries shows that there are also other ways to educate myself.

1.6 Connection of the encounter project to the educational context

Of course, this topic somehow accompanied us in all subjects, because we had online lessons in every subject and the ability to learn was either positively or negatively influenced in each way. The topic Corona was particularly picked up in the subject

biology, since we were informed about the vaccination. In social sciences we talked about different measures that were taken regarding the pandemic. Moreover, in the exchange with Italy and the US I have learned that you can connect with other countries despite a pandemic and that it is important to exchange ideas with other countries in order to maintain international connections. However, in the future I would like to see more attention being paid to mental health. Maybe the school could offer subjects like psychology or in general more support for students, when they need to be online schooled again. Corona is a topic that is currently following us everywhere and everytime and precisely for this reason it is important that neither education nor mental health suffers as a result.

2.0 Implementation of the project

2.1 Description of the project progression

After many video calls, chatting and designing my survey, I sent my survey to several students from Italy and the US. Moreover, I asked some German students to fill it out in order to have more possibilities for a good comparison. I divided it into two themes: the first half dealt with questions about the ability to learn and the second one with questions about feelings and mental health. I wanted to know how their grades developed, what they liked and disliked about online schooling, how they got along with the use of technique, how they felt mentally, if they had self-doubts and many other questions. Surprisingly the surveys came back really fast and to be honest most of the answers were how I expected them to be, however there were some unexpected answers. All students generally prefer not to have online schooling, because they disliked sitting at home all day long and they all missed their friends. Moreover, many students struggled with the use of technics and complained about not working connections. Also the questions regarding the mental health showed that many teenagers suffered during this time, because they felt overwhelmed and exhausted. One difference I noticed between the Italian and American students was, that the American students all answered with “no“ to the question “Have you lost friends because of too less contact due tot he pandemic?“. In contrast the Italians and Germans mostly answered with “yes“, which probably shows that the Americans are better at maintaining friendships. However there is one aspect that really surprised me, because

nearly all students from all countries answered that their grades got better during online schooling. I actually expected that many students were so overstrained that their grades got worse. Maybe it is, because we are far along in our school career and over the time we have learned to organize ourselves. All in all, it is noticeable that it was a hard time for everybody and in most cases the mental health suffered more than the ability to learn. But of course the evaluation of a few questionnaires was not enough for me to get a comprehensive result. Since I was still in contact with Mo and Sophia anyway, I asked them if they wanted to work with me on this project and they both answered that they would love to. On this account we video chatted many times and I could feel it getting more personal each time. We talked about how challenging this time was, not just regarding school, but also other problems that arised from this situation, like quitting hobbies or being annoyed from other family members. Over the last seven month we have chatted and phoned again and again and especially with Sophia I developed a close friendship. Due to this I asked her if she wanted to record a podcast with me and she agreed. Podcasts were also something that accompanied me during online schooling, because I had a lot of time to educate myself in this way and I really enjoyed listening to them and I decided to record my own one. In the following you can find an extract of the episode that I recorded with Sophia.

2.2 Podcast



2.3 Linking the intercultural question with the project progression

On the one hand my question particularly demanded me to proceed sensitively, because talking about feelings and emotions can be very challenging for teenagers. Especially when the person lives in another country and you do not know each other for a long time, it is important to be not too intrusive. On the other hand it is very important that you see the person while talking in order to recognize if they feel comfortable talking about such a personal topic. In the beginning, I wanted to focus more on the ability to learn, but in the end I realized what an important role mental health plays in this issue.

I would be interested in finding out more about norms and values of other countries in order to see where different views and certain problems are rooted. I learned a lot during this project and I think it is important to reflect the encounter and my feelings, because only if you are aware of what you have learned, you can implement it later. Therefore, I decided to make a video in order to express my feelings and emotions.

3.0 Reflection on the encounter project



4.0 Attachment

4.1 Statement of authorship

Ich erkläre, dass ich die Projektdokumentation ohne fremde Hilfe angefertigt und nur die im Literaturverzeichnis angeführten Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe.

4.2 Consent to the publication of the project documentation

Es ist vorgesehen, die Projektdokumentation wissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen und dem CertiLingua Netzwerk durch Veröffentlichung besonders gelungener Praxisbeispiele auf der Homepage zugänglich zu machen. Dies geschieht in anonymisierter Form. Die Zustimmung der Autorin ist dennoch notwendig.

Ich bin mit der anonymen Veröffentlichung meiner Projektarbeit einverstanden.

4.3 CertiLingua (Survey)

1. Did your grades get better or worse during online schooling?
2. What did you like about online schooling? What did you not like?

3. Do you think you have learned more or less during online schooling? Why?
4. Do you think that some students learned less due to worse or missing technical equipment?
5. How did you get along with the use of technique?
6. Do you prefer online or normal schooling? Why?
7. Do you have any ideas to facilitate online schooling?
8. How did you feel mentally during online schooling?
9. Are you a happier person when you are allowed to go to school? Why?
10. Have you lost friends because of too less contact due to the pandemic?
11. Did you have self-doubts during your online schooling time or did you feel overstrained?