



Photo from the Erasmus+ iYouth project

The UBL (Un-teachables but Learnables) initiatives

THE FIRST STEPS

The present paper is concerned with identifying the most relevant topics for the new 2019 Erasmus+ applications and identifying the key drivers of these initiatives.

[Please read carefully ☺]



THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE IN SHORT

The Unteachables but Learnables (working title) initiative is based on the Erasmus+ The Unteachables project 2018-20, coordinated by the Absalon University College in Denmark.

The overall mission of the project - and the strategic initiative - is to help teacher students and secondary school teachers turn increasingly “unteachable” young students into “learnables.”

This can only happen through radical innovation of what we know as “education”.

The strategy’s radical approach is based on the common platform below and inspired by as different players as the European Commission, MIT Media Lab and Marc Prensky.

The strategic initiative aims to produce a higher level European initiative in 2020+, and to reach that point the UBL network needs to submit at least 4 new Erasmus+ applications in 2019 and additional 4 in 2020 - to get 2 new projects granted 2019 and 2 new in 2020.

The Unteachables project 2018-20 is the first step; the second step is the 2 x 2 new Erasmus+ projects, exploring various aspects of “unteachables but learnables”, and the final step is the higher level European project 2020+ leading to European leadership in the field addressed.



A COMMON PLATFORM

We would like to propose to the UBL network partners that the new applications 2019 and 2020 builds on the common platform below - taking into consideration, of course, that the platform needs to be adjusted to the concrete projects to submit.

Missions

The core concept is student teams working in missions.

“Missions” is similar to “projects”, indicating intention, creating something useful for the community and accomplishing something important through community collaboration and alliances.

The word “mission” also refers to the logic of good video games, in which you need to stepwise build up resources and powers to succeed.

Missions are based on student teams’ analysis of what the community needs, what does not work well - or what new resources the community might benefit from.

The missions might last from some weeks to an entire school year or more, depending on the nature of the missions.

In the European projects it is also possible for a student teams to engage in virtual missions as long as the mission is in line with the fundamental mission principles.

No teaching, no teachers

There is no teaching in the missions, and no teachers.

The needed learning takes place on the flight, when needed and when relevant and meaningful to the students and to the missions.

The teachers work in the missions as coaches and guides, and facilitators of the student teams' collaboration with the teams from the other participating countries.

Mostly, the teachers are involved in the missions at the same level as the students: the relation between students and teachers change dramatically. In most missions teachers need to learn alongside the students: and that makes them the best coaches!

Missions selected by the students

The missions are defined by the student teams.

The first step is to research the community, talk to people, investigate and conclude: what will be our mission to accomplish something important benefitting the community, or part of the community.

A student team might work through several missions along a 2 year European project - or immersively in one very important and powerful project.

Working with the community

All missions or projects are devoted to create something useful in the community: new technology or support to old people, whatever.

The missions always need to be carried through in collaboration with community resources: parents, politicians, experts, end-users - or other young people.

The student teams need to create alliances with powerful community resources and negotiate their way to accomplishing the mission.

We sometimes use the expression "mission brokers" about the young people's community negotiations.

Accomplishments are celebrated in the community, in the project and in the social networks.

Real-life and real-time

The missions can never be artificial or made-up, but must be real-life and real-time missions.

This means that the student teams engage in problems, challenges and needs in today's community - including anticipating near-future opportunities for the community.

Working in real-life and real-time missions requires much attention, patience and focus from the students.

Team based accomplishing

The students work in teams, never individually.

Students always state that this kind of teamwork is very complicated and demanding, but they also state, after some time, that they would prefer to work that way in the normal school activities.

From time to time a student team of 5-6 students might wish to split up and go in different directions.

Story-telling

The student teams are requested to tell the stories from the mission: to the other students in the school, to the other teams in the European project, to the parents - and to the community.

The form of documentation used in these projects is creative story-telling using creative media.

The story-telling helps the students reflect on and evaluate their accomplishment - what went well and what did not.

The stories are published in the European projects for all to comment on and enjoy.

Evaluation and assessment is always based on this story-telling - and in some projects the story-telling is integrated in a portfolio of accomplishments.

Transnational collaboration

A great challenge for the student teams is the collaboration between students from different countries. Language is an initial barrier, but they often overcome this barrier in creative ways, mixing languages - or even inventing their own language!

An interesting discovery is:

While most students are fluent communicators in their global social and gaming networks, they are not, in the beginning, able to communicate in the educational setting. They freeze, so to speak...

They strongly feel the burden of the educational setting and find it difficult to act in virtual environments structured by... the school.

Therefore our projects increasingly invite the student teams to decide in whatever ways they would like to communicate with their peers from the other countries.

In all the projects, in which young student teams are involved, the project organizes one or two 5 days mobilities in one of the partner countries to allow the young teams to work together face-to-face for 5 days.

In most projects these events are so intense that the young people never forget them.

Sustainability

The projects strongly invite the student teams (and the teachers and community collaborators) to continue the missions, the projects or the development of the new resources in the community beyond the lifetime of the European project.

Such long-term and beyond school engagement can take on many forms and in the last project year the project invites the students to figure out how the projects can be sustained - and to what extent community resources will support this.

It is obviously of great value to the students' capacity to agency to continue the engagement - in or out of school.

The participating schools are, of course, expected to continue working with and expanding Mission Based Learning after the termination of the European project.

Creative technology

Technology does not play a special role in the missions, unless the mission is about technology in the community.

The students are invited to use whatever technology they find appropriate and use available technology as creatively as possible.

Video plays a very big role in the students' story-telling.

In future projects we hope to be able to challenge the students with another way of using technology: *based on the nature of your community project, why not develop precisely the technology you need yourself?*



PROPOSAL FOR THE NEW MARCH 2019 ERASMUS+ INITIATIVES

To be able to create higher level European initiatives from 2020+, we need to create 4 new applications for the March 2019 Call and additional 4 new applications for the March 2020 Call.

We need to submit 4 applications each year to get 2 grants.

All applications should explore different aspects of how to create relevant educational platforms for 21st century students - far beyond adjusting traditional academic education.

Working with Europe proposes to our network partners to create and submit 2019 applications based on 4 out of the 6 concepts briefly indicated below:

[The project titles below are, of course, *working titles*; they indicate a topic and a key challenge]

OPEN SCHOOLING TO RE-ENGAGE 21ST CENTURY STUDENTS

Open schooling is recommended by the European Commission as a way to turn traditional academic teaching into learning with relevance to 21st century young students.

Obviously, secondary schools are not at all prepared for such radical steps.

We only know what open schooling looks like in theory, not at all in practice.

The project will explore in practice what such open schooling might look like and use the practical experience to create valuable guidance on open schooling to secondary schools and teachers.

Obviously, most of the project practice will take place in local and global communities.

The project's open schooling practice will be student-driven and based on the common platform.

The project is an Erasmus+ School project. A higher education, a teacher education or similar should coordinate, an additional knowledge partner should be included - and the partnership should include a number of dedicated secondary schools.

THEY LIVE, THINK AND LEARN DIFFERENTLY!

Most educators and education researchers still believe that our 21st century young students are slightly different from the old generations - and that traditional academic education therefore only needs *pedagogical updating*.

The project will go deep into the profiles of our new young generations and demonstrate that they are not slightly different but *radically different* from former generations of students: they live, think and learn completely different.

The project will, being primarily a *knowledge creation* project, demonstrate that this calls for dramatic educational change, not updating, and the project will point in relevant directions of such dramatic change.

The project will be implemented in full interaction with 12-16 years old students.

The project is an Erasmus+ School or *Higher Education* project. A higher education, a *teacher education* or similar (such as a research body) should coordinate, an additional knowledge partner should be included - and the partnership should include a number of dedicated secondary schools to ensure the direct participation of teachers and students.

MISSION BASED LEARNING

The title of this project is a working title, of course.

The "methodology" of mission based learning results pragmatically from the most useful elements in several innovative learning approaches from across recent decades.

At the same time the word "mission" refers to the basic progression logic of good video games, in which resources and alliances need to be stepwise accumulated and built up to allow the player/student to accomplish the mission.

In mission based learning the students work in teams and in real-life and real-time projects in collaboration with the local and global community.

They work in real missions to be accomplished, and subject-learning is integrated on the flight, when needed and useful.

The outcomes of the projects will be a number best practices of mission based learning to inspire secondary schools and their teachers, and with strong relevance also to teacher educations.

The project is an Erasmus+ School project. A higher education, a teacher education or similar should coordinate, an additional knowledge partner should

be included - and the partnership should include a number of dedicated secondary schools.

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN OPEN SCHOOLING

As we well know now, technology will not solve the problem of the new young 21st century “unteachables”.

Other parameters than technological will drive the needed changes, such as an open schooling approach.

However, technology and social networks are indeed expected to play major roles in the dramatically new forms of education, such as open schooling and mission based learning.

The project will explore through practical and student-driven missions and experimentation, in what ways technology and social networks can motivate and support the engagement of the new generations.

The project is an Erasmus+ School or Higher Education project. A higher education, a *teacher education* or similar should coordinate, an additional knowledge partner should be included - and the partnership should include a number of dedicated secondary schools to ensure the direct participation of teachers and students.

AGENCY: FROM OBJECT OF TEACHING TO SUBJECT OF LEARNING - STUDENT-DRIVEN LEARNING

A key word in any relevant educational innovation to engage the new young generations is agency.

In this context agency means young students capacity and will to take action and learn through taking action.

The result of strong agency is empowerment to learn, live and work in the 21st century, and the capacity to change and innovate things in the real world.

Agency is created through dramatically different educational settings than the outdated academic teaching setting.

Agency is created through working in real-life and real-time project in close collaboration with local and global communities - and with intention of accomplishing important missions, important to the students as well as to the communities.

The project will demonstrate how agency is created through various practical experimentations, driven by the students.

The project is an Erasmus+ School project. A higher education, a teacher education or similar should coordinate, an additional knowledge partner should be included - and the partnership should include a number of dedicated secondary schools.

THE NEW ROLE OF SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY

The European Commission boldly announces that schools - to create relevant 21st century alternatives to outdated academic teaching - should assume and capture new roles in the communities - local as well as virtual.

In fact, schools should *drive* new real-life educational resources in the physical and virtual community for students to use as project resources.

This is a completely new role for secondary schools!

The project will, through real-life cases, demonstrate how schools can do this in different ways, and provide inspiration for schools and teachers.

The project is an Erasmus+ School project. A higher education, a teacher education or similar should coordinate, an additional knowledge partner should be included - and the partnership should include a number of dedicated secondary schools.



IDENTIFYING THE DRIVERS

We believe that all the applications should follow this simple progression:

Identifying topics and drivers



Creating the concepts



Building the partnerships



Writing the applications

Driving includes creating the concept, building the partnership and writing the key sections of the application.

The first important step is not to build the partnerships, but to identify qualified and resourceful drivers.

The driver does not need to be the project coordinator. Working with Europe will, for example, drive 2 Erasmus+ applications, but will not be the project coordinator.

So, Working with Europe will be able to produce 2 out of the 4 applications to be submitted March 2019.

We will negotiate with the other drivers which of the 6 applications listed above Working with Europe should drive and produce.

Of course other topics than the ones listed above might also be negotiated.

We therefore need drivers for the 2 other applications, and in total we need to identify 4 coordinators.

A coordinator can submit more than one application as long as we are talking about *different Erasmus+ sub-programs* - such as for example Schools and Higher Education.

The applications should be submitted in such countries considered positive toward the innovation presented in the applications.

There might be countries in which we decide not to submit such applications, for various reasons.

The first step in the Unteachables but Learnables strategy network is therefore to:

- identify the 4 topics
- identify 2 additional drivers and 4 coordinators

Having done that, we can start producing the concepts, partnerships and applications 😊



Of course the partners producing the applications must be rewarded! Therefore we should try to make sure that the application producing partners will participate in all 4 applications - or at least in as many as possible.

Driving and producing one of these applications will therefore be extremely rewarding for the partner.



TIMELINE

Let us roughly indicate what the timeline for the 4 2019 Erasmus+ applications might look like:

October/November 2018
Identifying topics and drivers



November 2018
Creating the concepts



November/December 2018
Building the partnerships



December 2018/March 2019
Writing the applications

We strongly recommend planning to submit a few weeks before the deadline. The idea is that the production of the applications should be coordinated through the network's BaseCamp. It will be possible also to set up special BaseCamps for each of the applications. Working with Europe offers to finance and facilitate these BaseCamps.

[The Unteachables project 2018-20 is coordinated by the Absalon University College in Denmark. Project coordinator is Associate Professor Ove Christensen]

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