

Introducing the Winning Project by the Philo Club

Well done, Everybody!

At the eTwinning Conference, which took place at Linz in Austria 13th -15th January 2006, the Sèvres Philo Club Project "Education Europe Ecole" took First Prize for Pedagogic Innovation. This is a major triumph!

The project, for those who do not yet know about it, is the brainchild of Czeslaw Michalewski, a philosophy teacher at the lycée de Sèvres, and it unites teams of pupils from schools in Lithuania, Hungary, Czech Republik, Slovakia, Poland, Greece and Italy, who regularly prepare and exchange, on-line with our pupils, questions and topics for live internet debates, which are open to everyone in the world!

Three times a year, in January, March and May, debates take place, led by recognised authorities, on such themes as "The development of a European Consciousness" or "School and secularism". These debates are held physically in the lycée and are attended by our pupils, but, with the help of the CRDP at Versailles, they are hosted on-line by the Versailles Academy server and relayed over the internet, so that other schools can participate in real time.

The judges cited the significance of this project's possibilities for creating collaborative learning and for focusing on the crucial questions of how schools (both teachers and pupils) should be approaching such fundamental questions as what Europe means, and how education should be involved in forging the future of Europe.

One might say that the project itself provides an answer to these very questions, since it points the way forward itself to new ways of conceiving of collaborative learning, thus breaking down barriers between teachers and taught, cultures and countries, languages and levels. This prize and this project marks a new step forward in pedagogical co-operation, and one from which there is now no turning back.

It is to be hoped that the project itself will receive a new impetus and that more disciplines will participate (History-Geography, Languages etc.) and that the project itself will in turn reflect the diversity of cultures and languages represented, particularly English, which has become the major medium of exchanges in Europe.

But, beyond this, it is also to be hoped that other projects will now find the courage to launch themselves under the umbrella of eTwinning, which seems set to provide a technological and administrative back-up to new ventures. These are exciting times and we must build on such success, particularly with the help that the Academy, too, is able and willing to offer.

Paddy Salmon
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<http://lyc-sevres.ac-versailles.fr/>
<http://lyc-sevres.ac-versailles.fr/projet-eee.php>