TITLE:

Multiliteracies through MST

KEY CONCEPTS

Inclusion, communication, MST, flexibility, literacy

TREND/S

Inclusion in practice
Many classes in European schools are now culturally and ethnically diverse. Teachers are becoming increasingly experienced in dealing with diversity and know how to recognise and address inclusion issues when these arise.

Demographics shifts owing to immigration
While the European Union's overall population is projected to increase slightly between 2005 and 2030, the bulk of that increase will come from net immigration. As a consequence, inclusion (of minorities, immigrants, but also with those with special needs and disabilities) is being recognised as a political priority in many countries.

Enhanced professional development
There is a trend of increased emphasis on teacher professional development, in which the use of technology plays an important part. For example, technology is used to create collaborative platforms and communities of practice to bring life to the "hard to teach" and "hard to understand" areas of the curriculum, like MST (Mathematics, Science and Technology), thus engaging students with such crucial subjects.

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Annabel is a mathematics teacher in Germany with Polish and Turkish students. A few of them cannot communicate fluently in German. She wants to use maths and numeracy as a vehicle to improve communication in the classroom. She focuses on two topics which have many real life applications: fractions and percentages. The students' task is to investigate differences and similarities in how fractions and percentages are used in different social situations in Poland, Turkey and Germany.

Annabel creates teams with a mix of students, and emphasises they have to draw on each other's cultures and language skills to successfully complete the task. She has contacted other teachers in Poland and Turkey adding them to her professional social network and establishing an "always on" link between her classroom and theirs. Students can now make immediate connections using video conference and a shared system of wikis and micro-blogging to ask questions and interact. The project lasts one month, and at the end all teams present their findings in German using different tools and media (avoiding PowerPoint). One group creates a short documentary, which uses extracts from interviews with parents and students in the other countries (recorded video-conference extracts).

VISION (ASPIRATIONS & AIMS)

- to develop a common multi-literacy promoting inclusive and multicultural classrooms

ENVIRONMENT

- the classroom connected to the network of schools and experts
- students can access the network from their homes, individually or as they discuss the project with their parents

PEOPLE & ROLES

- students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the same classroom as collaborators and co-investigators
- students and teachers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in classrooms across Europe – as a resource
- parents – as an expert resource when required

INTERACTIONS (INCL. PEDAGOGIES)

- focus on communication through MST
- MST literacy
- emphasis on the richness of cultural diversity
- enquiry-based and project-based learning
- active guidance from the teacher
- peer-based learning

ACTIVITIES

- dialogue
- discussions
- research
- evidence gathering
- tele-conferencing
- "always-on" communication

RESOURCES (INCL. TECHNOLOGIES)

- network of teachers, experts and classrooms, always on and easily customisable and expandable
- teleconferencing
- micro-blogging
- digital media creation and editing