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## Introduction

How can we enable pupils to handle the media messages they absorb daily better? How can we develop structures which promote the growing together of people from different cultures? These two questions are the centre of our EU project "Television News on Europe" and illustrate the subject area with which the project engages. It is an attempt to bring together the areas of media education and intercultural education.

Within media education we concentrate mainly on practical media work - a joint production of video programmes. The students should learn how to produce media messages, but also how they can at the same time *analyse* them. Our wish is, that pupils begin to look more behind the constructions of the media world:

- Which contents and ideas are constructed by the media?
- Which reality is represented?

If we apply these questions to the area of intercultural education we find that other issues for discussion emerge:

- *Which* cultures are represented in the media?
- Which cultures are present in my surroundings?
- *How* are cultures represented in the media?
- To what extent do these ideas agree with my own?
- Which prejudices exist? In what way are these reinforced by the media?
- In what way can such prejudices be reduced by using practical media work?

All these questions form the thematic background of our project. Our wish is that answers to some of these questions are found, and that these answers can become suggestions for the curriculum development for primary school. The following summaries describe the development of the project and the first conclusions.



## Brief Task 1 "News from the School"

### Production 'News from the School'

- *Collecting Ideas:*
  - which subjects could we choose?
    - special events, class, staff, school building, problems, ....
  - get into groups, each group produces its own report
- *Recording Images:*
  - what could be recorded?
    - record footage for each article
- *Writing:*
  - what comments/text would we need for each report?
    - each group writes one short report to go with the recorded footage
- *Studio: (or classroom)*
  - who will be the presenter/operate camera/..
    - each group records their short text
- *Editing:*
  - what would we use for our first programme?
    - select the material for the first programme (tape number, timecode, length of the sequence)
  - The programmes will be edited in Berlin (max. 10 min. each)

### First Task:

Produce a news programme 'News from the School'

### Distribution of the tapes

- *Transmission*
  - Programmes broadcast at the Open Channel Berlin
- *Exchange*
  - Video tapes exchanged with all partners

### Evaluation

- *Discuss the programmes in the class*
  - how have the other children done their programme?
    - what do we share with them?
      - in the way we made the news?
    - what is different?
      - why didn't we do it like they did it?
- *Ideas for next task*
  - what could we do better the next time?



## Evaluation Task 1 "News from the School"

December 1999 - March 2000

**Task:** To produce a school news programme

**Main focus of contents:** Construction of school reality

At our first project meeting in Berlin in autumn 1999 we discussed at length how to begin our project. We agreed that we didn't want a long introduction, forcing the pupils into a particular direction. Instead we wanted the goals of the project to develop through continuous practical work which would be continually reflected upon. As a first task we decided on 'school news'. For the teachers involved this was a comprehensible subject. Each partner class had the task to produce a ten minute programme with news from the school.

The project teachers introduced the framework of the first task to the pupils, who in turn collected ideas for the programme. The pupils organised themselves into productions groups (mostly four pupils in a group) and then selected a subject for a contribution (see internet). A short production schedule was made and then the groups began their work with the camera: Interviews with classmates and teachers, presenting the school, recording the activities and discussing problems in the school.

The use of the video technology was not explicitly taught - the pupils discovered how the camera worked simply by using it themselves. This led of course to disappointments about lack of sound, about the wind which disturbed the interview, or about recordings which were inadvertent deleted. However, with the help of the TV in the classroom mistakes could be quickly identified and corrected. After completing the news texts and designing the studio backgrounds they began recording the news programme. Each group presented the material they had prepared. In Berlin the recording took place in the Offener Kanal studio, whereas the partners in England and Spain created a simple television studio in the classroom.

In order not to overload the partners with the editing, in the first year all the programmes were edited by the project coordinator. The pupils however selected the material and decided the order themselves. Subtitles in all three languages helped communication between partners. The results were then transmitted in the Open Channel Berlin, via Satellite (Europe by Satellite) and in a livestream in the internet (see internet).

### Evaluating the task

If we want to analyse media messages in 'real' television, then it is only logical, to do this also with our own programmes. When watching the programmes one could think that all three classes simply represented their own school with its characteristics. This is of course correct - the decisive factor though is *how* the school was represented. Which elements were



shown, which were not made? Each class constructed an individual impression of their school - *their* impression. At this point it is important to begin to ask questions: How is our school represented? What other impression could we have made? What do our classmates think about it, do they have the same opinion? How would they have done it?

We tried to set such a process of inquiry in motion in the partner schools using questionnaires, class discussions, video interviews and essay reports. Here are a few answers from the pupils in Berlin about their own programme:

**Did we represent our school realistically?**

"Yes, it's always like that."

"Kind of."

"We didn't show everything, but I think so."

**What could be different in other German schools?**

"Maybe a different playground and different classrooms."

"That they don't have their own television show."

"Every school has problems, we have lots of pupils, hmm, it's different."

"I don't know."

As the pupils' answers show (which maybe was to be expected) the critical reflection on their own programme proved difficult. The next step which considered the programmes from the partner schools was already easier:

**What did you notice (about the Spanish programme)?**

"They had subtitles."

"They talk very fast."

"They had only a few subjects."

"They do a lot of performances."

"That they put a lot of effort into it."

"That the school is smaller."

**What did you notice (about the English programme)?**

"That they used a lot of sign language."

"They were wearing school uniform."

"That they put a lot of effort into it."

"Nothing."

"They showed us a lot of projects."



**Do you imagine an English school to be like this?**

"I have never been in an English school, so I don't know."

"Yes."

"I have never been to England."

"Yes, of course."

"No."

Of course the pupils perceived individual messages but found it difficult to recognise these within an overall construction. One group of girls from England tried however to interpret the German programme: they thought it was brave of the class to report about fighting during break and not to simply give a positive general impression of the school.

Altogether we discovered that the task-conception of three individual programmes had rather more a divisive than unifying effect. During class discussions in Berlin generalisations about the representations of the partner schools often came up. This was the opposite of our intention (e.g. reducing prejudices): "That is typically Spanish," or "that's how I imagine England to be." The pupils' own film was quickly put in the foreground. Furthermore we observed rather self opinionated attitudes, which the statement of a Berlin pupil, among others, illustrates: "Anyway we are the best."

Similar remarks came from some boys in Spain who understood the whole project as a competition rather like European football.



## Brief Task 2 "Friendship"

### Production

- *Task:*
  - Produce an article in groups about 'Friendship' (maximum length 5 minutes per article)
    - it could include interviews, documentaries, plays, paintings, poems, ...
- *Planning:*
  - collect material from both of these areas:
    - a) my own experience with friendship (personal)
      - my friends (past & present), friendship in other people's lives - what do you understand about these?
    - b) representation in the media about friendship
      - friendship in music, soap operas, books (dictionaries, ..), public opinion, sayings, proverbs, ...
- *Recording:*
  - each group records their material
- *Editing:*
  - what would we use for our article?
    - select the material for the article (tape number, timecode, length of the sequence)
  - editing of the programmes (Armin will do this again)
    - this time the articles from the different schools will be put together in several programmes (max. 10 min. per programme)

### Second

### Task:

Produce an article for a programme about 'Friendship'

### Distribution of the tapes

- *Transmission*
- Programmes broadcast at the Open Channel Berlin
- *Exchange*
- video tapes exchanged with all partners

### Evaluation

- *Discuss the programmes in the class*
  - how have the other children done their programme?
    - what do we share with them?
      - in the way we made the programme?
    - what is different?
      - why didn't we do it like they did it?
- *Ideas for next task*
  - what could we do better the next time?



## Evaluation Task 2 "Friendship"

April - June 2000

**Task:** To produce a contribution on the subject "Friendship"

**Main focus of contents:** Practical methods which bring different cultures together

After our experience with the task "School News" we considered how to deal with the elements which had created distance. "Friendship" was the suggestion for a new subject. We consciously left the concept of News and the presentation of the school and the pupils. We wanted the new task to be more personal and more individual, with less possibility to create simplified generalisations ("that's how it is in England .."). Furthermore we decided to edit the contributions into *one* programme to emphasize again our common interest.

It was also important to us that the process of media production continued. One pupil commented "Yes, but if there is a second time I can be even better." If we want that pupils can deal competently with media messages they need to have more than one chance at production. Only through repeating the process can a competent, reflective attitude develop towards ones own media texts (and hopefully in the long term to those of others).

Due to the varying summer holidays the time given for the second task was very short and therefore less structured. Nevertheless it was possible to produce a programme of 12 minutes with contributions from each country. Additionally there were two short contributions from a primary school in Israel. This proved to expand the project partners' horizon (the contents of the programme can be seen as a storyboard in the internet).

The partner classes designed the task differently. Each class used short interviews on subjects related to friendship ("What is friendship?", "who is your best friend?", ...). The next step were some sketches which representing situations involved in friendship (trust, finding friends, ...). Pupils from the Spanish class also showed friendship visually: playing together, football, dancing. These uncommented pictures worked especially strongly.

Small screenshots of each participating pupil were combined into an introduction and also all the names of the pupils were inserted at the end as credits (the names from the different classes being mixed up). This was to reinforce the common identity of the programme through the editing.

Only after the summer holidays were we able to evaluate the programmes. We realised quickly that the method of using a common programme and the subject we had chosen came nearer to our goals. Other people not involved in the project also confirmed this. We were surprised how much a common identity of the whole group was created through editing the contributions together.



We think that the subject "friendship" offers more potential. The subject "friendship in the media" for example was taken up only by the class in Berlin. Maybe it is possible to return to that later.



## Brief Task 3 "Hallo, Hello, ¡Hola!"

October - December 2000

### We introduce ourselves

Last school year we produced a video introduction with the three schools involved in our project. This was, however a task that ran parallel to the School News. With task 3 we are making the introductions our main subject.

The task is intended as an introductory one. We won't produce a programme like we did with the two previous tasks (although there may be a final edit at the end). Rather, we will exchange and evaluate individual sequences with each other. The main content is therefore determined by the subject "Introductions", although each class can interpret this in its own way.

### New Elements

In task 3 we want to include two new elements. Firstly we want to use the internet in addition to videos as a medium of introduction. The pupils can present themselves on internet pages, or via email or create a project diary. Secondly, we want to develop the area of language. In the first project year we concentrated on each of the mother languages and used English as a common language. There are however three deaf pupils in the new partner class from England, and we want therefore to do an introduction in sign language.

### Goals of the new task

What happens when we communicate using only these media instead of meeting face to face? In our new handbook (which will be out in November 2000) Alfonso Gutiérrez explains the difference between direct and mediated communication. We want to consider these thoughts in the third task.

But we don't want to simply present ourselves using video and internet but also examine what happens, when we use these mediated methods of communication. How is it, when you present yourself on a video cassette, when we see pictures of one another but never meet the people? What impressions do the words or the gestures create? If we want to use the media as a bridge between cultures then we need to progress in this area of our project. It is important to consider the individual elements of communication (eyes, words, images - see handbook).

In the following you will find a plan of the third task and a list of questions to be used in lessons.

Have fun trying it out!



## Concrete tasks

### Exchange through Videocassettes

To observe a development of the task itself it is useful to exchange several cassettes (always only copies - don't send the original cassettes).

- Presentation of each pupil using his/her own language (still shots from this will also be printed and exchanged)
- Presentation of each pupil using sign language (information sheets from Martin Holmes)
- Additional material (more about the pupil, the school) in the mother language, English or sign language

### Exchange via Internet

The internet exchange can be continuous:

- Introduction of each pupil on the school or the project web site
- Communication between pupils via email (in English)
- Creation of a project diary in the mother language (this would be translated later)
- Internet conference (if this becomes technically possible for us)



## Questions for lessons

Below are questions that can be used in 'Media education'.

### Video and Communication

- How is it, when I introduce myself using a video camera?
  - What comes across well, what is missing?
  - How could I have done the recording differently/better?
  - How would I like to present myself?
    - What impressions do the pupils in the partner schools get of me:
      - through eye contact? (see handbook)
      - through images (see handbook)
      - through words? (see handbook)
    - What will they not learn about me?
- What comes across about the pupils from the partner schools?
  - What impression do I get of the individual pupils?
  - How do I imagine the pupils be?
  - How would that be, if I could meet that pupil?
- How is it, when we see other people in TV?
  - What comes across well, what is missing?
  - How would that be, if we met that person face to face?

### Internet and Communication

- How is that compared to a video exchange?
  - How does my video presentation come across, compared to my internet presentation?

### Language and Communication

- How is that for me, when I communicate using sign language?
- How is that when I use my own/a foreign language?
- How difficult is it to understand the pupils from the partner schools?



### Evaluation Task 3 "Hallo, Hello, ¡Hola!"

October - December 2000

<b>Task:</b>	Introduce each other
<b>Main focus of contents:</b>	Looking at how the children represent themselves in different media

The third task has tried to continue the search for answers to our two main issues (see introduction) -helping children to be more competent with media messages and finding structures which help children of different cultures to communicate with understanding. As well as an introductory exercise we incorporated two new elements: the use of the internet and the introduction of sign language. Additionally we introduced video editing with the children, although this happened six months later and only in Berlin (the editing will be evaluated separately).

The internet workshop happened alongside the project work. Nearly all participating children (and our friends from Israel and America) created a page with their own photo, text (often in different languages) and sometimes additional graphics. Five children were not allowed by their parents to publish their pages – these children created a page which was not published. The children designed and produced the pages themselves, there was some input from the teachers concerning some technical details. All pages were published on the project website. The Spanish class kept their pages on their school server to be able to update them whenever they wanted to. Those pages are linked with the project site.

With the exception of the class in England all children had access to the internet in the school. They were able to look at the pages from the other children, explore the pages from the children from the other countries. We motivated them to contact the partner children via email, looking for similar interests, asking each other about other issues. This has failed, mainly because the schools didn't have email addresses for the children. A few did this through their computer at home. Our Israeli friends were very enthusiastic to communicate and wrote a questionnaire which was then sent to the other classes.

The video introductions followed the same format we had used in the beginning of the first year. The children recorded themselves in front of the video camera. They spoke in their own language, other project languages and sign language. The material was collected in Berlin and then again sent to all the partners. The children in Berlin produced a live show where they presented the project and some of the material of the partners. Felix and Christian edited a ten minute programme using sequences of all of the video material (roughly two hours of source material). They tried to select an equal amount of material of all five participating schools (the EU partners plus the friends from Israel and America) and added titles and music.



Using sign language was new to most of the children apart from our English partner school. Thorn Grove Primary School has a small group of deaf children who are partly integrated into the classes. The children there were familiar with sign language - this is part of their school life. The other children learned basic expressions (the alphabet and some common words) to communicate with each other. All the children recorded introductions using sign language.

As with the other tasks we tried to stimulate the children to engage critically with what they did. The theme of representation was again (as in task 1) central many of the discussions. The children in Berlin answered a series of questions before they started their first recordings: "What would you like to say? Which language would you use? Which facial expression would you use? What impression would you like to create with your introductions?". The results of the web pages and the video interviews were discussed. We asked the children what they thought other children (who hadn't have met them) would make of them and how they felt when they were recorded. Was it embarrassing?

We examined the raw footage as well as later examining the finished programme. This was particularly worthwhile because the pace of the sequences was a lot slower and there were no additional layers (sound, titles, image overlays). In Berlin we tried to strip the layers off the finished programme. We looked at an introduction of one deaf girl, Hannah, from Cheadle Hulme on three different levels:

- 1. Introduction with no sound (only sign language)
- 2. Introduction with English soundtrack (another child commentated Hannah's hands)
- 3. Introduction with soundtrack and German subtitles

With each introduction the children had to write down what they understood. We then discussed what happened during each round and how the overall impression changed. Each layer revealed more information, from very general ('this is a deaf girl who wants to communicate with us') to specific ideas ('she likes cycling'). We discussed how it would be if we couldn't hear anything, what we would miss. Finally the children were asked to write a short message to Hannah. The sign language exercises were generally received with a lot of interest from the children. Most of them learned the letters very quickly. The deaf children in England appreciated the efforts very much.

The third task proved to be worthwhile although it was planned rather as an informal exercise. The design of the introductions could have been more creative. There were further ideas of presenting someone else (for example someone I would like to be). The personal elements of the internet pages have been very positive and have helped to build relationships (continuing the goals from the second task), more than just a video exchange. The children were able to access information about the other children at their own choosing rather than a single viewing of a video sent by a class.



## Brief Task 4 "Environment"

### Introduction

The new task continues on from task 3. The interpersonal communication between the children and the developing relationships between schools and partners has been very encouraging and we hope to keep them alive. Whereas task 3 focussed more on general introductions, task 4 will concentrate more specifically on the theme 'environment', one of the goals being to create a joint video programme.

The environment itself is a very broad subject and it is probably useful to first discuss with the children what we understand by this word. This might include not only physical (and especially ecological) issues but could also include a human dimension (local and global relationships, understandings, identities).

We want to keep the task open for the children's ideas - the children should choose the themes themselves. A theme could be a local issue or a part of a global issue which the children are interested in. It could be something the children are particularly enthusiastic about or it could be a problem which they would like to investigate.

If we choose to focus on a 'problem' in the environment then it is necessary to be realistic about chances to influence or change anything. Is there something we can do or are we rather stirring emotions? How can we tell other people (for example other children in the school) about our problem? How can we motivate other people to do something about it?

As well as using our own ideas we want to encourage the children to research their issues. We want to stimulate them to look through the whole range of media, looking for references related to their issue: What can they find in the internet about their issue? Which television programmes include elements about the environment? At the same time we want to try to look behind the information we find: How is this information presented, what are the possible motives behind this information?

Find enclosed a suggested sequence of how task 4 could be implemented.



## Proposed Sequence

### 1. Introduction

- What do we mean with the word 'environment'?"
  - What would a definition include?
  - Where have we heard about the environment?
- What do I like about my environment? (local)
- What problems do we have in our environment? (local)
  - What problems exist in our school, at home, ...?
  - Would children in other countries have the same problems?
- Which problems are there in the world? (global)
  - Are local issues connected with global issues?

### 2. Define a theme

- Which issue would you like to concentrate on?
  - What do we know about it?
  - Where have we heard about it?
  - If your chosen issue is a 'problem' then can you do anything to change it?
    - Is somebody else doing anything to change it?

### 3. Investigation

- What can we find out in the media about the environment?
  - Research in traditional media?  
(television, radio, books, newspapers, ...)
  - Research in the internet?  
(For example: UN Database, Greenpeace, other school sites, ..)
- How is our issue covered in the media?
  - Which arguments, images, sounds are used?
  - Which motives are behind the information?



#### 4. Collect Material

- Collect material from the media (texts, images, video clips, sounds)
- Record your own material with the video camera (interviews, documentations, ...)

#### 5. Design your programme

- Decide on your overall message
- Edit your material according to your message
  - Try to keep your programme short (around 2 minutes)

(as an option you could create a campaign for a particular audience)

#### 6. Exchange and Evaluation

- Exchange of videos and broadcasting in the Open Channel Berlin
- Evaluation of the material (own and material of the partners)
  - What have the partners done?
  - Where have they set their focus?
  - How did they bring across their concerns?

#### **Parallel**

- Communicate with each other through email
- Use the eboard [www.eutask4.eboard.com](http://www.eutask4.eboard.com) to keep up with the development of each others projects
  - password to read: "taskboard"
  - password to edit: "71563"
- Document the task using the video camera



## Evaluation Task 4 "Environment"

March – June 2001

<b>Task:</b>	Produce a short article related to an environmental theme
<b>Main focus of contents:</b>	Introduce investigation of a subject and create a campaign

### Introduction

The design and execution of task 4 sought to continue the work of the previous three tasks. By focussing on the theme of 'the environment' we tried to encourage the participating children to investigate one specific environmental concern and present their ideas in the form of a campaign. We motivated the children to use different media for the presentation of their ideas, to edit their own video material and communicate with each other through an internet board (you can find the detailed brief of task 4 here).

### Description of the task

The final results of all four participating teams have thematically similar contents but show different approaches of how the tasks were undertaken. The teams produced either one long article (Israel and Spain) or a series of shorter articles done by different groups of children (England and Germany):

- Team Haifa/Israel:
  - *Article:* Local environmental issues in Haifa: Littering on the streets, air pollution through traffic and industry, water pollution. Interviews with the local environmental authority, commentaries. School issues: Littering in the school and what could be done about it. Interviews with children and the head teacher.
  - *Advertisement:* "You can also switch them off" - noise pollution through mobile phones
  - *The making of:* Productions shots of the participating children
- Team Segovia/Spain:
  - *Article:* Looking into the littering problem in Pradena. Images of litter on the roads, preparing the project, interviews with a person from the city hall, creating and delivering posters and handouts, interviews on the street.
  - *Advertisement:* (part of the article) "Keep Pradena clean", commercial related to the littering problem



- Team Cheadle Hulme/England:
  - *Article 1:* Litter in the school (showing the litter, clearing the litter, hanging up posters, commentary)
  - *Article 2:* Dog fouling (showing dog dirt, interviewing people and a dog warden)
  - *Article 3:* Noise pollution (measuring the sound levels in different places)
  - *Article 4:* Street littering (images of litter, interviews, clearing the litter)
  - *Article 5:* Street littering (images of litter, collecting litter, putting up a poster)
  - *Article 6:* Park littering (images of litter, collecting litter, putting up posters)
  - *Article 7:* Dog fouling (interviews with people and dog warden, putting up posters)
- Team Berlin/Germany:
  - *Article 1:* Water pollution (measuring the PH level in local waters, interviews)
  - *Article 2:* Food packaging (interviews with shoppers, doing a questionnaire, filming in the back of a shop)
  - *Article 3:* Dirt in the playground and classroom (Interviews with the caretaker, what you can do with waste, images of litter in the school)
  - *Article 4:* Recycling bottles (short sketch about recycling) and school garden (looking at the run down school garden)

The carrying out of the task varied significantly ranging from a straight forward production approach (Germany) to the presentation of a documentative campaign (Spain). In this sense watching the Spanish programme is a worthwhile effort, because we do not only see the final outcome but can take part in the decisions of the children and can observe how they put their campaign into action. Focussing on the specific village audience of Pradena (roughly 400 inhabitants) the children tried to deal with something which was relevant for the local people: the littering of the roads. Some of the English teams included campaign elements as well. Three teams produced posters and hung them up.

The element of 'investigation' (researching a subject) was another part of task 4 and has been partly integrated by some teams. The Spanish and Israeli teams met with a local expert to find out more about the respective environmental problems. They enjoyed moving out of the school and interacting more with their communities. They hardly did any internet research. Some of the German children looked at material from another school which had done an environmental project.

The use of the internet board hardly happened either. The children and the project partners could leave notes for everyone to see. The Israeli children were the most active there and tried to establish communication but did not get very much response from the other children. This has partly to do with restricted internet access in the schools.

All of the children did some editing. The Berlin children had many different opportunities and



edited all their material themselves. Additionally they produced the summary tape of task 4, selecting and combining clips from all of the partners. The children in Israel and England edited their material with assistance. In Spain there was no time left at the end and our partner finished the editing himself. The kids there edited some other material at the beginning of the task. Most children included their favourite music in the editing.

### **Evaluation of the task**

Task four brings in new issues and questions. This task was the first where the children edited their own video footage. We expected that the children would have no significant problem using the digital technology. What particularly surprised us was the fact, how confident they were in the way they set their 'in' and 'out' points. The German teams, who had lots of opportunities to learn the editing, did all of it themselves. They selected the footage and created their own titles. They brought their own music along and mixed it with the original sounds.

Knowing technically about digital video editing does not mean increased media competence. Bringing in all layers of image and sound increases the complexities and can make it harder to look behind their own creations. The children were highly interested in the use of their own music and forgot sometimes totally what they wanted to say with their article. This is where the only discussions came in during the editing: Which soundtrack should we use now?

During our evaluation meeting we decided to rather use simpler editing exercises. We did a short edit exercise based on material of a park (you will find the shots in the online module) as an introduction to editing. Using the same amount of material each group had to create different final edits of the park with different messages (for example a nice looking park, a horrible looking park). This proved to be a fruitful exercise since the children could a lot more easily analyse what happened.

Most of the articles were rather thin regarding their message and were more carried by the music than by anything else. Maybe this reflects the high amount of commercial television the children consume, the glossy images with no deep discussions. The production itself seemed to be more exciting than the actual message. The German 'water pollution' team for example examined the local water with PH test strips. The results were slightly different. The team therefore concluded that the water with the higher level was more polluted. Discussing their article it became apparent, that they actually did not know what a PH value was and if the higher level meant more contamination or not.

Expanding the task into a campaign was a useful step to take. The whole issue of the audience is vital if we explore the media. The Spanish team produced something for a specific audience but was at the same time part of that audience as well. This proved to be difficult. The children knew most people in the village and were not as critical as they might have liked to be.

It was interesting to see the concern from all the participating children for their local



environment. We hope that seeing similarities in other countries helped to bring different cultures together rather than separating them. Looking at the different tapes provided new insights and raised new questions about environmental issues. For example the German system of recycling bottles was new to most of the other children in Israel, Spain and England. This was a good entry for joint discussion. It would have been interesting as well to discuss more what the children could actually *do* about the problems and what the short video productions could be used for.



## Brief Task 5 "Conflicts"

### Introduction

Many children were very concerned about the terror acts in September 2001. Most of our participating children didn't miss the continuous news pictures. The media presentations of the World Trade Centre bombing and the following months of the 'War on Terror' provide many ideas for further discussion and dialogue and fit well into the framework of our project (read Barry Duncan's comprehensive Bulletin with lots of concrete ideas how the subject can be handled: <http://www.media-awareness.ca/eng/med/class/multilib/oct2001.htm> ).

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> will not be in the centre of the new task but rather in the background. We would like to start the task with the search for conflicts in our immediate surrounding and evaluate them. As a second step we can explore avenues of national and international problems. When we talk about conflicts we also want to explore possible solutions for them.

Some of you may remember task 1 'School News' with an article by Max (from the Berlin class) about 'conflicts and resolution of conflicts'. The article concentrated on fights in the playground. The publication of the article provoked a lot of interest in the school and raised in particular one question: Were the fights we saw in the article real? We will go back to that article and discuss it again with the current participating children. You will receive a new copy of the edited article, the original footage and a transcription.

It would be helpful if you can document parts of the task process with the video camera (we discussed this in Berlin and you may remember Javier's excellent documentation of task 4) and encourage the children to reflect on what we do. This might be especially useful in larger classes where only part of the class takes part in class discussions.

Since even a local reference to 'conflicts' can raise highly contradictive and personal issues it is very important that you as the teacher moderate the whole sequence of the task carefully and make sure that we don't create even further conflicts with what we do. It might for example be helpful as if you inform the parents about what you plan to do to avoid misunderstandings.

You will find enclosed several ideas of what could be done in the next months. Take these as possibilities and adapt the sequence according to your situation in the classroom, size of the class and timetable.

Find enclosed a suggested sequence of how task 5 could be implemented.



## Proposed Sequence

### 1. Discussion (record with video camera)

- Conflicts in my environment
  - What is a conflict?
  - Do you have any conflicts?
    - in your environment, at home, in the classroom
  - Can these conflicts be solved? How?
- Conflicts in the 'world'
  - Which conflicts have you seen on television?
    - Are these real conflicts?
    - Are there any resolutions for those conflicts?
  - What did you think about September 11<sup>th</sup>, how did you feel?
- Send selected material to Berlin
- Options
  - Create images (paintings) depicting conflicts
  - Look into songs about war and peace
  - Discuss terrorism, nationalism (e.g. waving flags)

### 2. Case study 'Conflicts - Resolving Conflicts'

- Look at the contents of the article from task 1 (you will get a transcription). You could discuss following statements:
  - "conflicts are something we experience everyday"
  - "every conflict has a solution"
  - "our group found a solution"
  - "you shouldn't feel threatened"
- Look at the form (images, sound, editing) of the article from task 1
  - Compare the article with the original footage
  - Are those 'real' images?
  - Are images in television real?
  - Have you seen any fake images?
  - How could that be done?
- Edit Exercise
  - Reedit the article
    - Use the same material and observe how the result of the article might change with different material
    - Experiment with different soundtracks to see how the result is changed, ask other children how they perceive the different versions you created



- Options
  - Record your own images in your playground
    - Record your own 'real' images (hide the camera, ...)
    - Record your own 'fake' images (stage something, ..)
  - Create your own article about conflicts in the playground

### 3. Taking positive steps

- What can we do as a team in different countries to create a better understanding/divert conflicts?
  - What short (2 minute) video article could we produce?
  - Plan, design and produce your article
- This final piece will be used in the final conference/celebration in Berlin as well
  - Something specific for that?

### 4. Exchange and Evaluation

- Exchange of videos
- Evaluation of the material (your own and the partners material)
  - What have the partners done?
  - Where have they set their focus?
  - How did they bring their concerns across?
- Broadcasting in the Open Channel Berlin

### **During the task**

- Communicate with each other through email
- Document the task using the video camera
- Encourage the children to write about how they did the task (this can be put on the website)



## Evaluation Task 5 "Conflicts"

February – June 2002

**Task:** Produce a short article related to the theme of 'conflicts'  
**Main focus of contents:** Examining conflicts in one's surroundings and in the 'media'

### Introduction

*"Conflicts' was exciting - we learnt not only how they happen but how to solve them." (Isabel, year 3)*

Conflicts are everywhere and they happen at any time. We didn't anticipate further tragic events after September 11<sup>th</sup> so quickly. The school massacre in Erfurt shook the whole of Germany but especially children and teachers in the schools here. Why did such an event happen? Why can a school evoke such horrible feelings of hate and revenge? The Berlin children discussed the Erfurt events for a long time and talked about possible solutions. These might not always be as easy to find as Isabel above believes. Nevertheless - a discussion about conflicts could be a constructive start and may contribute to developing longer term solutions.

The following description and evaluation will give a brief insight into the project work of the four teams looking into what they have done and suggesting avenues for further discussion.

### Description of the task

The teams mainly followed the proposed sequence of the task 5 brief (see online brief) but placed their own individual focus in their article. The themes of the articles covered three different areas:

- Conflicts in the school
- Conflicts related to the school massacre in Erfurt
- Conflicts in newspapers and television programmes (predominantly about Israel)

The format of the articles was either a short play, an imitation of a TV news programme or a combination of both approaches. The children worked, as in the previous tasks, in groups of three or four and produced the following:

- Team Haifa (Israel):
  - *Article:* A series of street interviews about people's views of the war and possible solutions.
- Team Segovia (Spain):
  - *Article:* 'Coats' – showing a conflict over coat hooks in the classroom (a genuine conflict for the class)



- *Article*: Two interviews concerning conflicts in Israel and Afghanistan using footage from television news programmes.
- *Article*: A documentation about the 'Day of Peace' – 30th January 2002.
- Team Cheadle Hulme (England):
  - *Article*: A series of posters showing a wide range of conflicts, done by the whole class (for the actual words see subtitles)
  - *Article*: Playstation Conflict (children fight over a computer)
  - *Article*: News at Ten (children are not allowed out by their parents)
  - *Article*: Dinner-time News (fighting in the playground)
  - *Article*: Child shouts at Teacher (a conflict while playing football)
  - *Article*: Television Conflict (brother and sister fight over the television)
- Team Berlin (Germany):
  - *Article*: Fight in the classroom (a short play)
  - *Article*: Cheating during an exam (a short play)
  - *Article*: The arrogant child (a short play)
  - *Article*: Conflicts in the newspaper (a short report)
  - *Article*: Conflicts in Israel (looking into television news)
  - *Article*: The massacre in Erfurt (documentation of a conflict workshop)

The brief did not include any internet elements this time although we helped establish an internet community (called 'Us and Them') on the EUN network. Here we brought in our project experiences and displayed some of the results of our project. Most of the articles were edited by the children themselves, a lot of the editing took place in Berlin and Haifa. All of the material was broadcast on the Open Channel Berlin, a local television station in Segovia reported about the project work in the Spanish school (click here for the QuickTime clip).

### **Evaluation of the task**

"In news organisations, conflicts, disputes, disagreements are to be expected and defined as appropriate." (Bantz in Tumber, 134)

Our final task returned to the genre of television news and approached the core of the news industry: the selling of conflicts. News is all about conflicts happening around the viewer, more immediate or further away.

Let us first turn to something which is immediate to all of the children: the conflicts in the school. A simple comparison of the school related articles shows many similarities. Fighting did not only appear in the news programme of the first task but in a lot of articles of this final task: fighting in the playground, in the classroom, over a computer or playstation, during football or over a coat hook. When asked about conflicts fighting was quickly mentioned by most of the children – especially the boys.



It was easy to raise the issue of conflicts, but it became harder when we were dealing with possible solutions of those conflicts. Some quick ideas were displayed in the articles by the children: A 'We are friends again' imposed by the teacher, a telling off or an immediate punishment. The Spanish team discussed this for a longer time, "they also found out that there are some other ways to solve a conflict between themselves instead of 'hard' arguments or fighting" (Javier Coco González). The creation of name labels for their coats hooks was their constructive answer to the fights which happened in the past.

The conflicts in the playground need also further attention - just 'being friends again' isn't necessarily the final step in solving the tension. What ways of communication should we develop between each other? How should we behave towards each other? How can we show respect during the break? How could the playground itself be changed to help children to be less physical with each other?

The Berlin team looked into another possible approach and invited two psychologists for a four day conflict workshop to get external help. The experts introduced lots of short exercises with the goal of encouraging more positive communication between each other: to become more aware of yourself, to talk with somebody you haven't talked before or to look into each others eyes. The Erfurt massacre just incidentally happened during that workshop and the 'conflict experts' tried to engage with the emotions the children were experiencing. What did you feel when you heard the first time about the massacre? What went through your head? Why do you think this happened?

Dealing with the 'distant media' we were intrigued about the amount of information children pick up from news programmes and newspapers although these are not part of their favourite media sources. The children had no first hand experience, but heard about Erfurt only through the media. This could have been another interesting area to consider. How has the incident been shown? What did they show, what didn't they show? One of the Spanish interviews dealt with the conflicts between the Israelis and the Palestinians and they asked each other: "How did you hear about it? - Through the media. .. Did you get information in some other way? - No."

At this point the street interviews from our Israel team were very interesting. There were suddenly images from Israel *not coming* from an institutionalised, globally controlled news programme but images made by children - not showing the cliché fighting shots. These images from the children can help to widen our perspective, although the problem still remains: What do we know apart from what we received from the media?

To examine how different cultures are represented in the media is an important part of intercultural education. 'Conflicts' in that sense has been a worthwhile conclusion to our three year television news project and has kept up our discussion about TV programmes and our relationship to them.



**References**

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