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Developing key competences through eTwinning

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Abstract

The thesis is concerned with key competences as the major goal of today's education. It examines their development in foreign language learning and teaching through eTwinning, an Internet framework for international collaboration among schools. Firstly, key competences are briefly introduced. Then foreign language and eTwinning are analysed in terms of key competences development. Secondly, five existing eTwinning projects are described and discussed in order to show that learners have developed their key competences when carrying out the projects. Finally, an eTwinning project is devised and analysed from the perspective of key competences development. The thesis concludes that teaching foreign language through eTwinning is an efficient way of developing learners' key competences.

Abstrakt

Práce se zabývá klíčovými kompetencemi, které jsou hlavním cílem dnešního vzdělávání. Zkoumá jejich rozvoj při vyučování a učení se cizímu jazyku pomocí programu eTwinning, což je internetový rámec pro mezinárodní spolupráci škol. Klíčové kompetence jsou nejprve stručně představeny. Dále se vzhledem k rozvoji klíčových kompetencí analyzuje cizí jazyk a eTwinning. Poté je popsáno pět existujících projektů v programu eTwinning, které jsou diskutovány s cílem ukázat, že při jejich realizaci došlo k rozvoji klíčových kompetencí žáků. Na konec je navržen projekt, který je zkoumán z pohledu rozvoje klíčových kompetencí. Práce dochází k závěru, že eTwinning je účinný způsob rozvoje klíčových kompetencí žáků.

Key words

Key competences, eTwinning, project method, Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Klíčová slova

Klíčové kompetence, eTwinning, projektová metoda, Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání, Společný evropský referenční rámec pro jazyky

I hereby declare that this diploma thesis is completely my own work and that I used only the cited sources.

Prague, 24th November 2006   Iva Očenášková

Contents

List of Tables

1 Introduction

1.1 Contextual background

During the last decades of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century, Europe has witnessed radical social and economic change. Scientific and technological progress has brought new opportunities and economic and social well-being. Rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT) has facilitated international communication and cooperation. Also, inventions and discoveries in science have supplied us with massive amount of information. The spread of ICT has made the amount of information accessible to everyone. Information and knowledge have therefore become the crucial terms to describe the contemporary society.

Moreover, European integration, increased labour mobility, immediate and easy access to information in different languages on the Internet, and widely used electronic means of communication are only some of the reasons why we have started to see languages from a broader perspective. No longer do they represent a set of grammatical rules and an amount of vocabulary an individual needs to learn in order to pass a test or satisfy the requirements of a language course. Today, languages are viewed from the perspective of the prime function they have and that is communication. People need to and want to communicate in more than just their mother tongue. They have various reasons for communication in other languages, being it work, leisure, travel or studies, and the common goal of such communication is to get the message across, to be understood and to understand what the others say or write.

Clearly, the present situation described above poses some challenges for the society. In order to promote personal and social welfare and economic growth, efficient ways of dealing with information and knowledge need to be explored. During the Lisbon European Council in 2000, the European Union (EU) tackled this by recognizing knowledge and skills as the most important concepts in pursuing the goal. Moreover, being able to gain and apply knowledge, and to develop and harness skills, and being able to put them to meaningful use has been termed as 'a competence'. Several key competences have been identified and defined as those necessary to succeed in personal,

public and professional lives. Language and ICT skills have been particularly stressed. As a consequence, the EU authorities have recommended member states to reform their national curricula in accordance with the EU policy on education.

The Czech Republic, as a member state of the EU, has adopted the EU education policy and has recognized key competences and their development as the primary educational objective. The reforms have been implemented in pre-school, primary and lower secondary education so far. Moreover, schools have been given the right to create their own educational programmes, in which they should design their own syllabus, teaching strategies and methods they consider appropriate in order to achieve the objective.

Clearly, there are a number of educational tools for schools to choose from in the process of designing their educational programmes. Therefore the purpose of this final thesis is to draw attention to a new teaching method, or rather a framework of methods, and to show that it is suitable for developing key competences. eTwinning, as is the framework called, is run by the EU and is based on a partnership between schools from different European countries. The twinned schools work on a common project using ICT and communicate in a European language, mostly English. To be able to prove that eTwinning is an appropriate method of developing key competences, I have set myself several aims, which will be described in the following section.

1.2 The aims of the final thesis

As suggested above, key competences and their development have become the crucial concepts in the reforms of national curricula in the EU countries. Thus, it is essential to find ways of developing key competences and helping students to mature in personal, public and professional spheres. In the Czech Republic, it is teachers who have become the last but most important link in the chain of curriculum reforms. They should try to do their best in order to implement the reforms into everyday school life by carefully considering what to teach and how so as to develop pupils' key competences. This matter is of personal interest to me, because as an English teacher at an eight-year grammar school, I will be responsible for organizing my pupils' learning so that they will develop the key competences. However, this situation is fairly new not only to me,

2

but, as far as I know, to other teachers, too. Moreover, the impression that I get from the media and from talking to other people is that the curriculum reform and the key competences have not been received well by the public, including teachers. Nevertheless, I believe that the focus on key competences is a good way forward in education and I would like to show this in my thesis.

Moreover, every day I become more aware of the fact that computers and particularly the Internet have become inherent parts of children's and teenagers' everyday lives. I think that such a change in the society should be reflected in the teacher's choice of teaching methods. A method that combines using computers and the Internet and also provides much opportunity to develop key competences has been noted above. I believe that eTwinning has also great potential to develop pupils' foreign language, as it enables them to use the language for real communication. In my opinion, the combination of ICT and international cooperation should be an attractive and motivating way of learning for pupils.

For all the reasons stated above, I would like to focus on key competences and their development through eTwinning. Thus I would like to provide help not only for myself, but also for anyone who would be interested in tackling the issues of key competences and in employing new teaching methods. I will therefore:

• provide a more detailed definition of the term 'key competence', to describe key competences as they have been identified by the EU and the Czech education authorities and to look at the position key competences have in the curriculum reform;

• look at the role a foreign language, as a curriculum subject, has in developing the key competences;

• introduce eTwinning as a framework for schools to cooperate with partner schools on the Internet;

• describe principles of project collaboration between partner schools and to explore and identify those aspects of such collaboration that lead to development of the key competences;

• gather a collection of eTwinning projects that have been carried out by Czech schools and their partner schools and which focus mainly on the English language, to describe

3

them and, most importantly, to discuss which key competences they have developed and how;

• devise an eTwinning project in order to develop students' English and key competences.

I will be particularly interested in the key competences development in the Czech educational context. However, the Czech Republic is a member state of the EU and the Czech educational policies are affected by those of the EU. As a consequence, it is necessary to look at both areas, Czech and European.

Also, in my final thesis I will consider the development of key competences with lower secondary school students aged 11 to 15 because the curriculum reforms in the Czech Republic were officially implemented only in basic and lower secondary education by issuing the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education in 2004. Another and perhaps even more important reason is that I teach students of those ages.

It is important to point out that as an English teacher I will confine myself to eTwinning projects where English is not only the language of communication but also the content of the projects. Moreover, by 'foreign language' I will mostly mean the English language.

In accordance with the Czech educational system, I will use the term 'basic school', which is typical for the Czech Republic and by which I mean learners aged 6 to 15, and the term 'lower-secondary', by which I mean learners aged 11 to 15, who study at an eight-year grammar school which includes also upper-secondary students (aged 15 to 19).

In accordance with the terminology used in the Czech Republic and applied on the web pages of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, I will use the title 'Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education' and its shortened versions 'Framework Educational Programme' and 'Framework' in the thesis interchangeably.

Moreover, it is important for this final thesis to subdivide the key competences into smaller units. For each such unit, I will use the term 'partial competence'.

So far it may seem that the topic I have chosen for my final thesis is far from teaching English as a foreign language. Indeed, I will deal with key competences that do not relate specifically to the English language. Also, I will describe eTwinning as a

method that has not been designed only for teaching English. Therefore, the relationship between key competences, eTwinning and English must be made clear: on the one hand, eTwinning provides much opportunity to teach English in an effective way; on the other hand, eTwinning helps to develop learners' key competences. The conclusion may be that by teaching English through eTwinning, learners' key competences will be developed.

2 Key competences as the core of education

In this chapter, 'key competence' will be defined as a concept and the background of its origin will be given. Firstly, key competences will be looked at in the European context and an overview of the key competences will be provided, as they were identified by the EU. Secondly, key competences will be discussed in the Czech educational context. The place key competences have in the Czech curriculum reform will be specified and then key competences will be presented as they are identified and defined with respect to the local circumstances and the purpose of this final thesis.

2.1 The concept of key competences in the European context: origin, definition and identification

In March 2000, the presidents and prime ministers of the Member States of the EU, known as the European Council, met in Lisbon to analyse successes and failures of the EU in the previous period and to look at strengths and weaknesses for the future. Even though the economic situation was found good, "globalisation and knowledge-driven economy" (http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00100-rl.en0.htm) were identified as serious challenges for Europe. Therefore the European Council agreed that it was important to become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00100-rl.en0.htm). In other words, establishing full employment and improving its quality and level were declared priorities. As a consequence, it was suggested that Europe's education should adapt to the demands of knowledge-driven society and should provide European citizens with new skills. The new skills should be defined in a European Reference Framework in the areas considered to be crucial to employability: "IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills" (http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00100-rl.en0.htm). In 2001, a working group on key competences was established and its objectives were "to identify and define what the new skills are and how these skills could be better integrated into curricula, maintained and learned

through life" (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/basicframe.pdf). Firstly, the working group recognized the necessity to give an adequate definition of the term 'key competence', because until that time there was no commonly used definition of this concept as the survey on key competences by Eurydice shows (Key Competencies. A developing concept in general compulsory education. 2002). It was agreed, however, that a key competence must be "necessary and beneficial to any individual and to society as a whole" (Key Competencies. A developing concept in general compulsory education 2002, 14). Moreover, it must enable an individual to integrate successfully into society, to cope with both familiar and new situations and to upgrade their skills and knowledge, as the development in society requires. Having this in mind, the working group have come up with an overall definition of 'key competence' stating that: "Key competences represent a transferable, multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment. These should have been developed by the end of compulsory schooling or training, and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of lifelong learning."(http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies /2010/doc/basicframe.pdf) This definition implies that key competences should be usable in many contexts and should help to solve different kinds of problems and to accomplish various tasks.

The working group has identified eight key competences considered necessary for everyone in the society that is based on knowledge and information. Six of them have been found important for this final thesis and are shown in Table 1. At this point it is obvious that the first two competences in Table 1 – communication in a foreign language and digital competence - relate directly to the topic of the thesis. The relationship of the remaining four competences to the thesis can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, which show the overview of the Czech key competences, and further on in Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, which show how the key competences can be developed by using a foreign language, and in Table 10, where the contribution of eTwinning to the development of the key competence is being discussed.

The definitions of the key competences in Table 1 are produced verbatim from the following www document (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc /basicframe.pdf). However, some parts of the definitions have been left out, because

they have been found irrelevant to the topic of this thesis. Also, the order of the key competences has been changed in order to suit the needs of this thesis (again see Tables 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

Table 1. Overview of the European key competences

Competence	Definition
Communication in a foreign language	It is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret thoughts, feelings and facts in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal contexts –work, home, leisure, education, training. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding.
Digital competence	Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of electronic media for work, leisure and communication. At the most basic level, ICT skills comprise the use of multi-media technology to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in networks via the Internet.
Interpersonal and civic competences	Interpersonal competences comprise all forms of behaviour that must be mastered in order for an individual to be able to participate in an efficient and constructive way in social life, and to resolve conflict. Interpersonal skills are necessary for effective interaction on a one-to-one basis or in groups.
Learning-to-learn	Learning-to-learn comprises the disposition and ability to organize and regulate one's own learning, both individually and in groups. It includes the ability to manage one's time effectively, to solve problems, to acquire, process, evaluate and assimilate new knowledge, and to apply new knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts.
Entrepreneurship	It comprises both the propensity to induce changes oneself and the ability to welcome, support and adapt to innovation brought about by external factors. Entrepreneurship involves taking responsibility for one's actions, developing a strategic vision, setting objectives and meeting them, and being motivated to succeed.
Cultural expression	Cultural expression comprises an appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media.

Once the key competences were identified and defined, it was recommended that the member states of the EU adopt the concept of key competences and undertake research on national levels in which they identify and define those key competences that will describe the wants and needs of their population best. Moreover, in Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/keyrec_en.pdf) the member states were recommended to ensure that everyone has a chance to develop and update the key competences to a level that is sufficient to live and work in the contemporary society. Also, the member states were recommended to refer to Key Competences for Lifelong Learning - A European Reference Framework (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/basicframe.pdf) when carrying out the recommendations.

2.2 Key competences in Czech education

2.2.1 Key competences and its position in the curriculum reform

The Czech Republic recognized the necessity to adjust its educational system to the needs of the knowledge-driven society already in 2001 by issuing National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 2001). It has become a binding governmental document on the development of education because it explains general educational goals for pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary and adult education with respect to changes in society, integration into the EU and Czech educational context.

The White Paper, as it is usually referred to, closely corresponds to the educational policy of the EU, which has been already introduced. It also recognizes the greater demands developments in technology and science have placed on an individual. It acknowledges that education and vocational training occupy crucial role in meeting those demands, and puts emphasis on acquiring new skills termed as 'key competences'. To be more specific, the chapter on pre-school, basic and secondary education includes three major aims to be pursued.

Firstly, a "system of multi-level educational programmes" should be introduced as the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic suggests (http://www.msmt.cz/files/pdf/whitepaper.pdf). The state educational programme represents the highest level and should specify general educational goals of the government, national curriculum policy and general requirements. The next level, framework educational programmes, should specify generally binding requirements for different levels of education. The Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education will be discussed in more detail in 2.2.2. Both kinds of programmes are to be prepared centrally. However, not the state but individual schools will prepare the third and lowest level of the system, the so called school educational programmes, and will teach in harmony with them. It is at this level that teachers will be expected to analyse the curriculum content and teaching methods in order to create such situations in which pupils will achieve the desired educational outcomes.

This leads us to the second aim expressed in the White Paper, which is acquisition and development of key competences. The following table (Table 2) is a verbatim summary of the areas of key competences as stated in the White Paper (http://www.msmt.cz/files/pdf/whitepaper.pdf). Again, what has been found irrelevant in the descriptions of the areas has been left out. However, unlike the key competences defined by the EU and presented in Table 1, the key competences in the White Paper are described very briefly. That is because the aim is just to provide an overview of how education should be orientated. A more detailed and final classification of the Czech key competences was carried out later on and can be seen in Table 3. Also, it is important to point out that the EU identified and defined the key competences in the form as shown in Table 1 in 2004 as the final outcome of the discussion on key competences. Nevertheless, Table 2 presents an overview of the discussion on key competences as early as in 2001 in the Czech Republic. It also suggests how it should continue. For these reasons, it is difficult to compare Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 2. Description of areas of key competences in National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic (2001, 40)

Area of the key competence	Description of the skills in the area
To learn how to know	Managing methods of learning, using information and communication technologies, being able to think and assess critically.
To learn how to act and live together	To be able to work both independently and in teams, to communicate openly with others, to manage conflicts, to respect different views, to understand mutual interdependence.
To learn to be	To know how to solve problems, to act more independently, on the basis of one's own judgement but in accordance with moral standards, and to become conscious of one's responsibility and to accept it.

Thirdly, foreign language teaching and ICT skills are strongly emphasized and new topics such as European integration, multicultural education, environmental education and education about healthy life-style will be introduced. Moreover, it is recommended that a cross-curricular approach is taken and links between subjects are established. Consequently, new teaching methods will be employed, namely project work and teamwork, and international cooperation will be promoted. As can be seen, the White Paper has, in its effort to give Czech education clear directions for the future, created ideal conditions for using eTwinning by highlighting foreign language teaching, ICT skills, European integration, project and teamwork and international cooperation (see also chapter 4).

All the measures that have been proposed in the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic are aimed at providing an individual with knowledge, skills and attitudes that will suit their needs in personal, professional and civic lives. However, these goals are explained rather generally and therefore a document describing the changes in more detail, especially with regards to the curriculum content, has been produced. The Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education emphasizes key competences - in accordance with National Programme for Development of Education in the Czech Republic - as the expected outcomes an individual should have achieved by the end of basic education. The

Framework has become a binding educational document for basic and lower secondary schools and schools will proceed in accordance with it from 1st September 2007. The document is therefore very important for this thesis, whose aim is to introduce eTwinning as an effective way of developing key competences, and will be discussed in the following section.

2.2.2 Key competences in the Framework Educational Programme as a result of the curriculum reform

The Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (2005) forms the second level of the system of multi-level educational programmes as proposed in the National Programme for Development of Education in the Czech Republic and mentioned in 2.1.1. It is produced by the state and it implements the state educational policy in basic education. It sets out the aims and specifies the results to be achieved by the end of basic education. In other words, it adopts a competence-based approach, because it aims at acquisition and development of key competences, which are considered the desired final educational outcome. Key competences are defined as a "package of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and values important for an individual's personal development and inclusion in society" (Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání 2005, 14), which is similar to the EU definition of key competences (see 2.1). To fit the definition, six areas of key competences have been identified in accordance with the European approach to key competences and with the National Programme for Development of Education in the Czech Republic. They are "the competence to learn, the competence to solve problems, the communicative competence, the personal and social competence, the civic competence, and the occupational competence" (Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání 2005, 14). If we compare these competences to those defined by the EU, then the correspondence between the key competences will be evident.

Table 3 provides a survey of the key competences and of the partial competences each key competence consists of. The definitions in Table 3 are literal translations of the Framework (the translation is done by Očenášková). Although the translation is done word by word, the order of the competences is changed from the perspective of the

thesis. As Table 3 is intended only to list the key competences, see Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 where the analysis of how the following key competences can be developed has been carried out.

Table 3. Description of the key competences in the Framework Educational Programme (2005)

1 Communicative competence
At the end of basic education the learner is able to:
1.1 express one's thoughts and opinions in a logical order, concisely and clearly in both oral and written form.
1.2 listen to and to understand other people's messages and to react appropriately to them, to take part in discussion, to argue for one's opinion in a suitable and convincing way.
1.3 understand different types of texts, recordings, visual materials, common gestures, sounds and other means of communication, to think about them, to react to them and to use them in a creative way in order to enhance one's own development and active participation in society.
1.4 use information and communication technology in order to communicate effectively with other people.
1.5 use the acquired communication skills in order to build relationships that are essential to live and cooperate with other people. Ability to select and use effective methods and strategies in order to learn, to plan and organize one's own learning; willingness to learn throughout one's life.

2 Personal and social competence
At the end of basic education the learner is able to:
2.1 work efficiently as a part of a team, to participate in establishing teamwork rules and to cooperate with teachers, to improve the quality of teamwork after having accepted or recognized the new role in the team.
2.2 partake in creating a pleasant atmosphere in the team, to strengthen good interpersonal relationships by showing respect and courtesy to other people and to offer help or ask for help when needed.
2.3 contribute to a group discussion as well as to a debate of the whole class, to understand the need to cooperate effectively when solving a problem, to appreciate other people's experience, to respect different points of view and to learn from what other people think and say.
2.4 create a positive image of oneself that increases one's self-confidence and promotes one's development, to control one's behaviour in order to reach self-respect and feel satisfaction.

3 Competence to learn
At the end of basic education the learner is able to:
3.1 select and use effective methods and strategies in order to learn, to plan and organize one's own learning; willingness to learn throughout one's life.
3.2 seek and process information, to evaluate the information and to apply the information to learning and everyday life.
3.3 understand and use general terms and symbols, to show relations between facts and to interpret the facts with respect to different educational domains, to create a more complex view on cultural, social, natural and mathematical phenomena.
3.4 experiment independently, to analyse the experiment results and to draw conclusions for their future usage.
3.5 develop the sense of learning and to recognize the aim of learning, to form a positive relationship to learning, to judge one's own progress and to identify one's learning difficulties and to plan ways of overcoming the difficulties and of improving one's learning.

4 Competence to solve problems
At the end of basic education the learner is able to:
4.1 perceive and recognize problems at school as well as outside of school, to think about the problems and their causes, to look for and plan the ways of solving the problems by using one's own judgement and experience.
4.2 look for information which is needed in order to solve the problem and to analyse it, to use the acquired knowledge and skills in order to propose different solutions to the problem, to persist in finding the final solution no matter what the difficulties are.
4.3 solve the problem independently and to choose appropriate ways of solving it, to use logical, mathematical and empirical methods when solving the problem.
4.4 verify the correctness of the solutions, to apply the effective and tested ways to solve a new, similar problem, to observe one's own progress in problem-solving.
4.5 apply critical thinking and to arrive at rational decisions, to defend the decisions, to accept one's responsibility for the decisions, to evaluate the results of one's decisions

5 Civic competence
At the end of basic education the learner is able to:
5.1 respect opinions and values of others, to develop empathy for other people's situations, to deny cruel treatment, to take on the moral duty to condemn and fight any acts of violence.
5.2 understand basic principles that underlie the law and social norms, knowledge of one's rights and duties at and outside of school.
5.3 decide and act according to what the situation is, to provide help within one's capabilities, to act responsibly in emergencies and in situations causing harm to health and life.
5.4 respect, protect and appreciate our traditions and cultural and historical heritage, to take a positive attitude towards works of art, to be aware of culture and creativity, to participate actively in sports and cultural activities.
5.5 understand ecological context and environmental problems, to acknowledge the need for healthy environment, to behave in order to maintain health and to sustain economic growth.

6 Occupational competence
At the end of basic education the learner is able to:
6.1 use materials, tools and equipment in a safe and efficient way, to obey the established rules of conduct, to meet obligations and carry out duties, to adapt to changes of working conditions.
6.2 view the results of one's work with respect to their quality, utility, economy and social importance, one's own and other people's health, protection of the environment and of the cultural and social values.
6.3 use the acquired knowledge in order to promote one's development and to prepare oneself for the future, to decide sensibly on one's future education and training.
6.4 recognize the activities needed in order to go into business, of the principles, goals and risks of business, ability to develop business thinking.

It is clear that the key competences are of cross-curricular nature and therefore can and should be developed in all subjects of the basic curriculum. Therefore, it is necessary to point out that the Framework Educational Programme divides the curriculum into nine educational domains, each domain consisting of one or more subjects that are closely related. Each domain contributes to the acquisition and development of the key competences in a different way. Moreover, it equips an individual with specific subject-related competences.

With respect to the aims of this thesis, it is essential to discuss the domain of language and language communication in more detail. In particular, it is important to consider what role foreign language plays in curriculum, how it is related to the key competences and what are the specific competences to be achieved by the end of basic education. This topic will be treated in the next chapter.

3 Foreign language learning: its position in the curriculum reform and relationship to the key competences

In the previous chapter, foreign language learning has been introduced as one of the priorities in education in the EU and in the Czech Republic. Another priority of today's education is that everyone acquires and develops key competences, as described above. This chapter will therefore try to connect those two priorities and come up with what they have in common. The treatment of a foreign language in the Framework will be described and special attention will be paid to the requirements that have been imposed on a learner in the domain of language and language communication. The requirements are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). For this reason, the document will be looked at in considerable detail having, however, the development of the key competences in mind. In this chapter, we will proceed from the Czech context represented by the Framework to the European context represented by the Council's of Europe Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

3.1 The Czech approach in the Framework Educational Programme

Foreign language and the Czech language form one of the nine educational domains in the Framework Educational Programme. The domain is called Language and language communication and occupies "a fundamental position in the educational process" (Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání 2005, 20). The aim of foreign language teaching is to provide the learners with such knowledge, skills and abilities that will enable them to communicate effectively in the foreign language.

The Framework Educational Programme gives the pupils an opportunity to develop two foreign languages during basic education. It is compulsory to learn one foreign language and optional, but strongly recommended, to learn another foreign

language. It is worth pointing out that English must be one of the two foreign languages a pupil can develop during basic education.

Obviously, the learners acquire different levels of proficiency in the two languages. The Framework Educational Programme, in compliance with the recommendation of the European Council expressed in its Press release (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/ DOC.69170.htm), specifies the levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF 2001). The learners who learn the language as their first foreign language should reach the A2 level. Those who learn a second foreign language should reach the A1 level. Table 4 shows the general description of the two levels verbatim as presented in the CEF (2001, 24). It should be pointed out that the CEF and the A1 and A2 levels will be examined in greater detail in the 3.2.

Table 4. A global scale of A1 and A2 in the CEF

A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Another aim of foreign language teaching, as stated in the Framework Educational Programme, is to contribute to the development of the key competences, which have been described in Table 3. The six key competences are cross-curricular in nature, none of them relating directly to foreign language learning and teaching. Nevertheless, if we think of the situations a foreign language is needed for, the functions it has, or the activities a language learner engages in, and if we compare these to the key competences in Table 3, we may come to the conclusion that foreign language learning and teaching has great potential for developing learners' key competences. The

comparison of the key competences with what foreign language learning encompasses will be carried out in the next section. As already mentioned, the Framework expects the learners to reach A1 and A2 levels, which have been described in the CEF in a very detailed and comprehensive way. Therefore the CEF will be referred to when making the comparison.

3.2 The foreign language and the key competences

3.2.1 The Common European Framework of Reference: brief introduction

The CEF is a seminal document on foreign languages, and an important document for this thesis. Therefore, it will be shortly introduced and special attention will be paid to those parts of the CEF that are of some relevance for this final thesis.

The aim of the CEF is to provide common description of knowledge and skills a language learner has to develop in order to use the foreign language for effective communication. The CEF has thus attempted to provide a unified view of learning, teaching and assessment of foreign languages. To be more specific, it has identified and described six levels of language proficiency, ranging from "basic user" (levels A1 and A2) to "independent user" (levels B1 and B2) and "proficient user" (levels C1 and C2) (CEF 2001, 23). Again, it should be mentioned that for the needs of the thesis I will be concerned only with A1 and A2 levels (see Table 4).

Like this thesis and other documents referred to in the thesis, the CEF also uses the term 'competence'. The CEF defines a competence as "the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions" (2001, 9). If we compare this definition with the definitions of key competences defined by the EU (see 2.1) and by the Framework (see 2.2.2), we will conclude that all three are quite similar as they all have been defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes (the EU, the Framework) or characteristics (the CEF). However, what distinguishes the competences in the CEF from the European and Czech key competences is that they are viewed from the perspective of a language learner and user. In other words, the CEF describes only

those competences that the language user and learner need in order to use and learn the foreign language.

If we look at the competences more carefully, we discover that for language learning we need "general competences" (CEF 2001). These are competences that are not specific to language, but are displayed in everyday life when performing actions, which usually requires the use of language. It would be of no use to list all the partial competences that the general competences consist of, because only few have been found relevant from the perspective of the thesis. These are "intercultural awareness" (CEF 2001), which could be described as the awareness of the similarities and differences between the world of the learner's mother tongue and the world of the learner's second language; "intercultural skills and know how" (CEF 2001, 104), which consist of abilities that help a person to act effectively in situations where two cultures meet; and "study skills" (CEF 2001, 107), which consist of abilities that help the learner to deal with new experiences and knowledge. How these general competences help to develop the key competences can be seen in 3.2.2 in Tables 7 and 9.

Clearly, having the general competences is not enough if a person wants to learn and use a foreign language. To use the foreign language in a meaningful way, one should acquire and develop "communicative language competences" (CEF 2001). They are language-specific and comprise "linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic" (CEF 2001) competences. For the purpose of the thesis, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences will be of major importance, as can be seen in 3.2.2 in Tables 5, 6 and 8. At this point it will only be explained that sociolinguistic competence deals with the "social dimension of language use" (CEF 2001, 118) and pragmatic competence deals with the principles underlying communication.

Moreover, foreign language learning and teaching and the consequent development of the competences are realized through several dimensions. First of all, an individual's communicative language competences are activated "in the performance of the various language activities, involving reception, production, interaction or mediation" (CEF 2001, 14). Again, the analysis of the language activities with respect to the development of the key competences can be seen in Tables 5, 6 and 8. Secondly, the various language activities are contextualised within "domains" (CEF 2001), which are classified as "public", "personal", "occupational" and "educational" (CEF 2001).

These four domains comprise situations every person is very likely to encounter and relationships and activities every person is very likely to engage in. Furthermore, if a person learns or uses the language, he/she performs various tasks and employs strategies in order to accomplish the tasks. This is especially important, because the aim of the thesis is to discuss development of the key competences through eTwinning. As a project-based method, eTwinning requires task performance. In order to carry out the tasks, foreign language may be used (see chapter 4).

Now we shall confine to the discussion of how foreign language contributes to the development of the key competences. It has already been pointed out that a foreign language learner should have reached the levels A1 or A2 by the end of his/her basic education. In other words, at the end of basic education the learner should possess abilities and skills and demonstrate knowledge and attitudes that will enable him/her to use the foreign language for communication with respect to the A1 and A2 levels as they were defined in the CEF. It seems to be likely to believe that by acquiring, having and demonstrating the abilities, skills, knowledge and attitudes, the learner has developed the key competences described in Table 3. To support this view, the following subsection will aim at providing supporting evidence.

3.2.2 Discussion of the key competences from the point of view of the CEF

The previous subsection introduced the Common European Framework of Reference with regards to what in the CEF is important and relevant for the thesis. Still, one significant feature that characterizes the CEF and mainly its reference levels needs to be introduced. The CEF has described its reference levels using so-called " 'Can do' decriptors" (CEF 2001), which have been provided for communicative activities, strategies and communicative language competences, and have been compiled into "scales of illustrative descriptors" (CEF 2001). Such treatment is very useful as it allows the reader to see what a language learner and user can do at a particular level. More specifically, it allows us to see what the language learner at the A1 and A2 levels can do, or, in other words, what are the abilities, skills, knowledge and attitudes he/she has. Thus while reading the appropriate descriptors of the A1 and A2 levels, it is natural to

compare the descriptors to the key competences described in Table 3 and analyse if, by having for example the ability described in the descriptor, the learner has developed a key competence, and which key competence he/she has developed.

The CEF has not provided scales of illustrative descriptors for general competences and for some areas of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. It has, nonetheless, described what the language learner and user should know and be able to do without referring to any particular reference level. Such descriptions have proved relevant for the development of the key competences too, as will be shown further on in Tables 6, 7, 9 and 9.

As suggested above, the CEF, particularly the descriptors of the A1 and A2 levels and the descriptions of the general and communicative language competences, have been analysed in order to find relationships between the learner's abilities, skills, knowledge and attitudes expressed in the CEF and the key competences presented in Table 3. The analysis has been done in the order, which, in my opinion, reflects the natural order of how learners develop the key competences. That is by learning the language and using it in particular situations and for particular purposes, they also develop the key competences. Not the other way round, which would mean that by developing the key competences they learn the language. For the sake of clarity, the findings of the analysis have been classified into Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Each table shows one key competence and lists the A1 or A2 descriptors and/or the descriptions for all levels verbatim from the CEF. Also in these tables, some words or phrases might have been left out, because they have not been found relevant for the purposes of the thesis.

Moreover, even though we are primarily interested in the A1 and A2 levels, the tables sometimes show also the A2+ level, which is a level beyond A2 but below B1 level. The level A2+ is presented here because the label A2+ indicates that the level is closer to A2 than B1. Also, the learners' performance may reach the A2+ level, especially if we consider lower-secondary students.

Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 follow the treatment of the level descriptors in the CEF scales, that is the lowest level (A1) is presented at the bottom and the highest level, in the case of this final thesis, A2+ is presented at the top. Moreover, there are a few cases, in which the descriptor of a particular level is missing in the table. In such cases, the

level descriptor has neither been provided for the particular level and scale nor found relevant with respect to the particular key competence.

In 3.2.1 when introducing the CEF, intercultural awareness, intercultural skills and know how, and study skills have been stressed for their contribution to the development of the key competences. For the same reason, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences have been highlighted. If we consider the communicative language activities, then production, reception and interaction deserves the attention too. However, their contribution can be best seen in the Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The first column in the tables shows which competence or language activity in the CEF develops the key competence and the page number is given (CEF 2001). The second column specifies the reference level. If the level is A1, A2 or A2+, a CEF descriptor for that level is provided. However, if the level in the second column is referred to as 'all', then a description that is not level specific is given. The fourth column lists the partial competence that has been developed (cf. Table 3) within one key competence. However, a partial competence of another key competence may be listed there too, because the descriptor or description may have been found relevant to development of more key competences.

Finally, the key competences are arranged in the descending order of how many descriptors and descriptions have been found relevant to the development of the particular key competence. Using and learning a foreign language develops the communicative competence the most on the one hand, while on the other, it does not seem to develop the occupational competence at all if we follow the definitions of the key competences in Table 3. For these reasons, the table dealing with the communicative competence has been put in the first place and a table dealing with the occupational competence has not been included at all. It should also be pointed out that the order of the key competences in Table 3 was based on the following arrangement.

Table 5. Communicative competence

Competence/ Language activity	CEF level	CEF level descriptor/description for all levels	Partial compe- tence deve- loped
Coherence (p.29)	A2	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.	1.1
	A1	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like 'and' or 'then'.	
Oral production: Addressing audiences (p. 60)	A2+	Can give a short, rehearsed presentation on a topic pertinent to his/her everyday life, briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions. Can cope with a limited number of straightforward follow up questions.	1.1
	A2	Can give a short, rehearsed, basic presentation on a familiar subject. Can answer straightforward follow up questions of he/she can ask for repetition and if some help with formulation of hid/her reply is possible.	
	A1	Can read a very short, rehearsed statement – e.g. to introduce a speaker, propose a toast.	
Written production: Creative writing (p. 61)	A2+	Can write about everyday aspects of his/her environment, e.g. people, places in linked sentences. Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences.	1.1
	A2	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions. Can write short, simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.	
		Can write simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do.	
Written interaction: Correspond- ence (p. 83)	A2	Can write very simple personal letters.	1.1
	A1	Can write a short simple postcard.	1.5

Spoken interaction: Interviewing and being interviewed. (p. 82)	A2+	Can make him/herself understood in an interview and communicate ideas on familiar topics, provided he/she can ask for clarification and is given some help to express what he/she wants.	1.1 1.2
	A2	Can answer simple questions and respond to simple statements in an interview.	
	A1	Can reply in an interview to simple direct questions spoken very slowly and clearly in direct non-idiomatic speech about personal details.	
Pragmatic competence: Thematic develop-ment (p. 125)	A2	Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.	1.1
Aural reception: Overall listening compre-hension (p. 66)	A2+	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.	1.2
	A2	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.	
	A1	Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.	

Spoken interaction: Overall spoken interaction (p. 74)	A2+	Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.	1.2 2.2
	A2	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with free time. Can manage very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	
	A1	Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependant on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	
Spoken interaction: Informal discussion (p. 77)	A2+	Can generally identify the topics of discussion around him/her when conducted slowly and clearly. Can make and respond to suggestions. Can agree and disagree with others.	1.1 1.2 2.3
	A2	Can discuss everyday practical issues in a simple way when addressed clearly, slowly and directly. Can discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet.	
Spoken interaction: Formal discussion and meetings (p. 78)	A2+	Can exchange relevant information and give his/her opinion on practical problems when asked directly, provided he/she receives some help with formulation and can ask for repetition of key points if necessary.	1.1 1.2 2.3
	A2	Can say what he/she thinks when addressed directly in a formal meeting, provided he/she can ask for repetition of key points if necessary.	

Aural reception: Listening to announce-ments and instructions (p. 67)	A2	Can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements. Can understand simple directions related to how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport.	1.3
	A1	Can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions.	
Aural reception: Listening to audio media and recordings (p. 68)	A2	Can understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are delivered relatively slowly and clearly.	1.3
Visual reception: Overall reading compre-hension (p. 69)	A2+	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday language.	1.3
	A2	Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.	
	A1	Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.	
Visual reception: Reading correspond-ence (p. 69)	A2+	Can understand basic types of standard routine letters (enquiries, orders, letters of confirmation etc.) and faxes on familiar topics.	1.3 1.5
	A2	Can understand short, simple personal letters.	
	A1	Can understand short, simple messages or postcards.	

Visual reception: Reading for orientation (p. 70)	A2	Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables. Can understand everyday signs and notices.	1.3
	A1	Can recognize familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.	
Visual reception: Reading instructions (p. 71)	A2+	Can understand regulations, for example safety, when expressed in simple language.	1.3
	A2	Can understand simple instructions on equipment, encountered in everyday life – such as public telephone.	
	A1	Can follow short, simple written directions.	
Audio-visual reception: Watching TV and film (p. 71)	A2+	Can identify the main points of TV news items reporting events, where the visual supports the commentary.	1.3
	A2	Can follow changes of topic of factual TV news items, and form the main idea of the main content.	1.3
Spoken interaction: Conversa-tion (p. 76)	A2+	Can establish social contact: greetings and farewells; introductions; giving thanks. Can generally understand clear, standard speech on familiar matters. Can participate in short conversations. Can express how he/she feels.	1.5
	A2	Can handle very short social exchanges. Can use simple everyday polite forms of greeting and address. Can respond to invitations, suggestions and apologies. Can say what he/she likes and dislikes.	
	A1	Can make an introduction and use basic greeting and leave-taking expressions. Can ask how people are. Can understand everyday expressions aimed at satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type.	

Spoken interaction: Goal-oriented cooperation (p. 79)	A2+	Can understand enough to manage simple, routine tasks. Can discuss what to do next, making and responding to suggestions, asking for and giving directions,	1.5
	A2	Can indicate when he/she is following and can be made to understand when necessary. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks using simple phrases.	
Spoken interaction: Transactions to obtain goods and services (p. 80)	A2+	Can deal with common aspects of everyday living such as travel, lodgings, eating and shopping. Can get all the information needed from the tourist office.	1.5
	A2	Can ask for and provide for everyday goods and services. Can get simple information about travel and use public transport. Can ask about things and make simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks. Can give and receive information about quantities, numbers, and prices. Can make simple purchases.	
	A1	Can ask people for things and give people things. Can handle numbers, quantities, cost and time.	
Spoken interaction: Information exchange (p. 81)	A2+	Can understand enough to manage simple routine exchanges without undue effort. Can ask and answer questions about habits and routines, about pastimes and past activities. Can give and follow simple directions and instructions.	1.5
	A2	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks. Can exchange limited information on familiar matters. Can ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time. Can ask for and give directions referring to a map or plan. Can ask for and provide personal information.	
	A1	Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly and follow short, simple directions. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements. Can ask and answer questions about themselves and other people, where they live, people they know, things they have. Can indicate time by such phrases as next week, last Friday, etc.	

Socio-linguistic competence: Socio-linguistic appro-priateness (p. 122)	A2+	Can perform and respond to basic language functions, such as information exchange and requests and express opinions and attitudes in a simple way. Can socialize simply but effectively using the simplest common expressions and following basic routines.	1.5 2.2
	A2	Can handle very short social exchanges, using everyday polite forms of greeting and address. Can make and respond to invitations, suggestions, apologies, etc.	
	A1	Can establish basic social contact by using the simplest everyday polite forms of: greetings and farewells; introductions; saying please, thank you, sorry, etc.	

Table 6. Social and personal competence.

Competence/ Language activity	CEF level	CEF level descriptor/description for all levels	Partial competence developed
Pragmatic competence: Interaction schemata (p. 127)	All	Language is used as necessary to form the working group and establish relations among participants and agree roles in carrying out the action.	2.1
Spoken interaction: Overall spoken interaction (p. 74)	A2+	Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.	2.2 1.2
	A2	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with free time. Can manage very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	
	A1	Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependant on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	

Socio-linguistic competence: Socio-linguistic appropriateness (p. 122)	A2+	Can perform and respond to basic language functions, such as information exchange and requests and express opinions and attitudes in a simple way. Can socialize simply but effectively using the simplest common expressions and following basic routines.	2.2 1.5
	A2	Can handle very short social exchanges, using everyday polite forms of greeting and address. Can make and respond to invitations, suggestions, apologies, etc.	
	A1	Can establish basic social contact by using the simplest everyday polite forms of: greetings and farewells; introductions; saying please, thank you, sorry, etc.	
Spoken interaction: Informal discussion (p. 77)	A2+	Can generally identify the topics of discussion around him/her when conducted slowly and clearly. Can make and respond to suggestions. Can agree and disagree with others.	2.3 1.1 1.2
	A2	Can discuss everyday practical issues in a simple way when addressed clearly, slowly and directly. Can discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet.	
Spoken Interaction: Formal discussion and meetings (p. 78)	A2+	Can exchange relevant information and give his/her opinion on practical problems when asked directly, provided he/she receives some help with formulation and can ask for repetition of key points if necessary.	2.3 1.1 1.2
	A2	Can say what he/she things when addressed directly in a formal meeting, provided he/she can ask for repetition of key points if necessary.	
Interaction strategies: Taking the floor (p. 86)	A2+	Can use simple techniques to start, maintain, or end a short conversation. Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation.	2.3
	A2	Can ask for attention.	

Table 7. Competences to learn

Competence/ Language activity	CEF level	CEF level descriptor/description for all levels	Partial competence developed
Study skills (p. 108)	All	Ability to identify one's own needs and goals. Ability to organize one's own strategies and procedures to pursue these goals.	3.1
Study skills (p. 108)	All	Ability to organize and use materials for self-directed learning. Ability to find, understand and convey new information. Ability to use new technologies.	3.2
Texts: Processing text (p. 96)	A2+	Can pick out and reproduce key words and phrases or short sentences from a short text within the learner's limited competence and experience.	3.2
Study skills (p. 108)	All	Ability to learn effectively from direct observation of and participation in communication events by the cultivation of perceptual, analytical and heuristic skills.	3.4
Study skills (p. 108)	All	Awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses as a learner.	3.5

Table 8. Competence to solve problems

Competence/ Language activity	CEF Level	CEF level descriptor/description for all levels	Partial competence developed
Pragmatic competence: Interaction schemata (p. 127)	All	Language is used in order to establish common knowledge of the relevant features of the current situation and arrive at a common reading. Language is used in order to manage the practical actions by identifying and dealing with problems which arise.	4.1

Pragmatic competence: Interaction schemata (p. 127)	All	Language is used in order to identify what could and ought to be changed.	4.2
Reception strategies: Identifying cues and inferring (p. 72)	A2	Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words form the context.	4.2
Pragmatic competence: Turntaking (p. 124)	A2+	Can adapt well rehearsed memorized simple phrases to particular circumstances through limited lexical substitution.	4.3
	A2	Can expand learned phrases through simple recombinations of their elements.	

Table 9. Civic competence

Competence/ Language activity	CEF level	CEF level descriptor/description for all levels	Partial competence developed
Intercultural awareness (p. 103)	All	Awareness of regional and social diversity in both worlds (the 'world of origin' and the 'world of the target community').	5.1
Intercultural skills and know-how (p. 104, p. 105)	All	Ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other. Cultural sensitivity and ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures. Ability to overcome stereotyped relationships.	5.4

As can be seen from the Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, the learner who is able to use the foreign language at the A1 and A2 levels has especially developed the communicative

competence and the social and personal competence. It could have been expected, because by using language we communicate and establish social contacts. Also, it is worth pointing out that it is the learner's involvement in productive, receptive and interactive activities that enables the development of the communicative competence, and partly the development of the social and personal competence. On the other hand, the competence to learn and, above all, the civic competence seem not to be developed by using the language itself. Still, study skills and the intercultural dimension inherently accompany the processes of the foreign language learning and thus develop the competence to learn and the civic competence. Similarly, the competence to solve problems, as can be seen in Table 8, can be developed by using the language for situations that require dealing with problems.

The analysis of the CEF from the perspective of the development of the key competences has been performed in order to draw attention to the potential foreign language learning and teaching has for developing these key competences. With respect to the topic of the thesis, the analysis will prove useful for the discussion of eTwinning projects further on, in chapters 4 and 5. While working on the projects, the learners may carry out tasks that would require using some of the skills or abilities described in the above tables, for example the ability "to understand short, simple personal letters" (CEF 2001, 69) in Table 5.

4 Developing key competences through eTwinning projects

In the two previous chapters, key competences have been introduced as a set of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that will ensure success in an individual's personal and professional lives. In addition, the key competences have been described both generally, with respect to no subject, and with respect to foreign language learning and teaching. Also, the need to develop key competences has been pronounced a major goal of education. The aim of this chapter is therefore to discuss how the key competences can be developed through eTwinning projects. First of all, eTwinning will be introduced as a framework for cooperation between schools. Then eTwinnnig projects will be discussed from the point of view of the key competences and their development.

4.1 What is eTwinning?

eTwinning is a part of the European Commission's eLearning Programme. The main objective of eTwinning is to help to establish partnerships among European schools and develop various forms of collaboration among the schools using information and communication technologies (ICT). eTwinning is an innovative way of teaching that is aimed at improving the quality of education. It develops ICT skills, communication skills, usually in a foreign language and collaboration. It also addresses European dimension and, last but not least, it realizes curriculum content. For all these reasons eTwinning seems to be a good method of satisfying the educational objectives declared by the EU (see 2.1) and the Czech Republic (see 2.2.1), namely the development of ICT skills and foreign language use.

The eTwinning initiative was launched in January 2005. All primary and secondary schools in the EU, Norway and Iceland were thus given the opportunity to participate in international projects. To assist schools, a European eTwinning portal www.etwinning.net was established. Schools can register here, look for partners or ask

for help. In each country, there is also a National Support Service, which is prepared to help, too.

Collaboration among schools is carried out through using ICT. To be more specific, teachers and students can use the simplest forms of online communication such as emails or chats. Or they can use more advanced tools such as online bulletin boards, "on which students post questions and ideas for discussion" (Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects 2006, 12). They can also participate in online "voice and video discussions using tools such as MSN, Jahoo Messenger, Skype or Google Talk" (Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects 2006, 13). Creating their own web pages and blogs can be another way of collaboration and sharing information. Moreover, other ICT activities include producing a text using word processors, e.g. Microsoft Word, making a presentation using for example Microsoft PowerPoint, or using digital cameras to take photographs or films. In order to help teachers and students to communicate and work on the project, an environment for online collaboration has been created. TwinSpace, as it is called, is assigned to the teachers whose pupils work on the project. Teachers can learn how to use TwinSpace in an online article Jak využívat prostředí TwinSpace, (http://www.etwinning.net/shared/data/etwinning/general/TwinSpace_guidelines_cz. pdf). Thus the teachers become administers of their TwinSpace, can post articles written by their pupils and make use of tools such as forum, mailbox, bulletin board and chat for communication with their partner schools.

eTwinning collaboration among schools is realized using eTwinning projects that can be carried out within any subject. However, the choice of the project topic must be in compliance with national curricula in all countries participating in the project. Moreover, the ratio between the ICT usage and other class activities must be reasonably balanced as the Internet article Více o programu eTwinning suggests (http://www.etwinning.cz/article.php?story=20041130144335450).

4.2 eTwinning projects

4.2.1 Project method and its contribution to the development of the key competences

This subsection deals with 'traditional' projects, even though we are primarily interested in the projects carried out through eTwinning. It is, however, believed that the description of 'traditional' project method is needed because its principles apply to eTwinning projects, too. In this thesis, eTwinning projects are viewed as 'traditional' projects that have been given another dimension. Therefore, it is important to understand how 'traditional' project method works before we proceed to the description and analysis of eTwinning projects.

If we look at the main characteristics of project methodology, we find that it wants to enhance the quality of learning and teaching by emphasizing students' own experience during the educational process (Skalková 1995). Students actively participate in solving a problem, the teacher being rather an assistant to provide help. Identification of the problem should arise from students' practical needs and should address questions that students may be concerned with (Kalhous, Obst 2002). Also, as Kašová (1995) highlights, project method is a way of opening schools towards the student, the world and learning.

Kasíková (1997, 50-51) provides a summary of the main principles underlying projects. Firstly, projects attempt to meet "the child's needs and interests" such as the need for experiencing new things and learning. Secondly, projects should tackle real and actual problems that can be described in the terms of "here and now". Thirdly, projects build bridges across the curriculum and allow students to look at problems from many points of view. Fourthly, it is mainly students who plan and carry out the tasks in the project. Thus they manage and regulate their own learning. Fifthly, projects are product oriented and therefore the products of learning have to be well documented and presented to the public. Sixthly, projects rely heavily on teamwork and cooperation. Students can cooperate within one or more classes, schools and countries. Lastly, projects can come up with solutions to acute problems and therefore can be very useful for the society. The solutions can serve as impulses for the wider society to deal with

the problems itself. Moreover, work on projects can bring people in and out of school together.

A project is usually carried out in several steps. Killpatrick's classification of the steps is mentioned here (in Valenta 1993, 6). Even though his classification may be considered as too general, it has been found very useful for the discussion of how eTwinning projects develop the key competences (see Table 10), mainly because the classification can be applied to most projects. The first step is called "purposing" and it is described as the impulse for project work given either by pupils or teachers. During the next phase, which is called "planning", pupils set project objectives, identify key questions to be answered or topics to be discussed, plan activities, assign tasks and roles and design a timetable for the work. The teacher monitors, motivates and provides pupils with help if needed. Then comes "executing". In this phase, pupils work on the project according to the plan and the teacher again monitors pupils' progress towards achieving the objectives. However, the teacher starts to play a more active role if pupils' work requires it. Lastly, both pupils and the teacher(s) evaluate the project execution and results, think of other ways of solving the problem and present their work to other people. This stage is called "judging" (Killpatrick, in Valenta 1993, 6).

If we look at projects dealing with the foreign language learning, or to be more specific, with the English language learning, we will discover other major features of the project method. In the first place, project work "helps to integrate the foreign language into the network of the learner's own communicative competence" (Hutchinson 1992, 12). When solving a problem in a foreign language context, learners need to use knowledge of the foreign language as well as knowledge of their own world. Connecting these two spheres enables them to communicate in a purposeful way, because they use the language in order to fulfil a project task that they identify with. According to Hedge, projects have been promoted in English language teaching because learners' use of language is "determined by genuine communicative needs" (Hedge 2000, 364), for example when they negotiate plans, interpret and discuss information or ideas. Moreover, project work can be a means of reconciling the language the students are taught with the language they need. Project work therefore helps to "make the language more relevant to learners' actual needs" (Hutchinson 1992, 13) or to "bridge the gap" (Fried-Booth 1994, 5) between the language the students are taught and the

language they require. This is a consequence of the students' activity especially during the first two stages of a project, namely during "purposing" and "planning". Usually, students suggest the problem to be dealt with in the project and decide on ways of resolving the problem. Thus they significantly influence the choice of language they will develop during the project work. In addition, project work makes communication between the learner's world and the English-speaking world much easier. Learning a foreign language means not only learning about other cultures, but also making other people aware of one's own culture. As Hutchinson suggests, there is a two-way relationship (Hutchinson, 1992). Also, project work provides a good opportunity for integrating the four basic skills – speaking, listening, reading, writing. Fried-Booth (1994, 8) argues, however, that at different stages of a project, the skills may be of different prominence. For example, while the "purposing" stage, in Fried-Booth's terminology "stimulus", may require more speaking and listening, during the following stages students may combine the four skills simultaneously. She suggests that students may perform interviews and thus employ speaking and listening skills, at the same time they may need to take notes, and read for some background information such as pre-prepared questions or some brochure.

Fried-Booth (1994, 9-10) describes eight stages of development of a language project. Her treatment will serve as a basis for designing an eTwinning project in chapter 5. The stages are:

1. "Stimulus", during which students discuss and comment on the initial idea.
2. "Definition of the project objective". Again, students discuss, negotiate, suggest and argue in order to define the project objective and to plan the project.
3. "Practice of language skills" is a stage when students practise and rehearse the language they need or they feel they need in order to carry out the project.
4. "Design of written materials" includes reading and writing questionnaires, grids, tables etc. needed for data collection or some other work on the project.
5. "Group activities". Students work in groups, pairs or individually in order to gather information (interviews, surveys).
6. "Collating information" means analysis, explanation and discussion of the collected data.

7. "Organization of materials". During this stage, students develop the end-product of the project.

8. "Final presentation" is the final stage, during which students present their end-product.

Fried-Booth concludes that "the scheme can, of course, be adapted to suit the requirements of individual projects" (1994, 10) Also if we compare her eight stages with Killpatrick's four steps described above (in Valenta 1993, 6), we will find out that there is a correspondence between "stimulus" and "purposing", "definition of the project objectives" and "planning", between stages 3 through to 7 and "executing", and between "final presentation" and "judging".

Even though the project method has been described briefly, it is obvious that its contribution to the development of the key competences is manifold. If we start with the competence to learn, then students may develop them by choosing the project topic and by identifying the problem they will deal with. Also, if they plan the project work, think of activities and tasks they should undertake and methods and strategies they should employ in order to pursue the project goals, they may develop their competence to learn. Moreover, data collection and analysis and their use for further work on the project, successful completion of tasks and dealing with problems that arise make learners responsible for their learning, providing them with skills of managing their own learning. Similarly, project method develops the competence to solve problems, because problems form the core of the majority of projects. If learners carry out projects, they must understand what the problem is, why it is here and what ways of solving it there are. Furthermore, as projects should meet learners' needs and interests, learners should be more motivated to resolve the problems and less discouraged to give up if they do not succeed immediately. Project work also provides learners with opportunities to present their results, compare different ways of producing them and thus defend their opinions. In order to present their results, learners might be asked to introduce their main points in oral or written form. Such a production or reception of the key points, usually followed by discussion, contributes to the development of their communicative competence. Of course, the same is very true about group work or pair work when learners use the language in order to establish good working and personal relationships. As a result, they also learn group work and pair work rules and realize that pleasant

41

atmosphere in the team is essential in order to succeed in solving a problem or accomplishing a task. Thus they develop their social and personal competence. The remaining two key competences, namely civic competences and occupational competences, do not appear to be developed through project work. However, they may be developed by selecting a suitable topic or problem to be dealt with in the project.

To sum up, project methodology appears to be a good method of developing most of the key competences. It is also important to point out that those key competences developed through projects do not develop separately but rather as an interconnected whole. One activity, or in this context one stage of a project, may develop more key competences at the same time as can be seen in Table 10, which provides an organized summary of what has been written above.

4.2.2 eTwinning projects: project methodology enriched by eTwinning

Most of what has been written in the previous section about projects is true about eTwinning projects. Indeed, eTwinning projects are just a new form of project work and therefore maintain the characteristics of project methodology. However, unlike projects, which can be carried out within one class or one school, eTwinning projects are always based on collaboration of two or more schools from different European countries. The schools collaborate by using ICT.

Let us now consider, which aspects of project work can be enriched by eTwinning. The Pedagogical Advisory Group, which was set up in order to analyse, reflect and comment on eTwinning activities and develop theoretical background for eTwinning, have identified five areas of added value to education through eTwinning projects in a study called Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects (2006).

First, "authentic learning" (Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects 2006, 18) is an area that has already been mentioned in relation to project method. By authentic learning the authors mean that the pupils deal with problems and questions they also identify with and therefore feel the need to solve and answer them. The ICT dimension in eTwinning projects enables pupils to participate in authentic learning by, for example, "writing an email or chatting online to

students in the country of study, practicing a foreign language with a native speaker over the video or telephone conference" (Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects 2006, 18). Moreover, the authentic surroundings make it easier and more natural for the pupils to practice a foreign language.

Second, through collaboration, which is the main feature of eTwinning projects, pupils improve not only their teamwork skills, but also their learning results. Moreover, international project collaboration, which "goes by communication, making plans and agreements, making choices and decisions together, by reasoning and making compromises" (Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects 2006, 21), gives pupils the opportunity to experience work that is very close to real life.

Third, eTwinning enriches projects with European dimension either "by bringing pupils and teachers into mutual contact" (Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects 2006, 21) or by choosing such topics that contain European questions. What is more, the European dimension in eTwinning projects helps pupils to learn tolerance and to develop understanding.

Fourth, eTwinning projects actively promote ICT in education. By using emails, chats, the Internet, blogs, web pages or videoconferencing for communication, both pupils and teachers acquire and use ICT skills in a "relevant and natural way" (Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects, 22). Thus they explore and appreciate various opportunities, especially to send letters and photographs.

Fifth and last, the study recognizes professional development of teachers as another important feature of eTwinning projects. Even though it is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth mentioning that teachers who participate in an eTwinning project cooperate and share knowledge and ideas with other teachers involved in the project. Also, they plan the project and discuss how the objectives of the project will be achieved using ICT. Thus they improve their ICT skills and communication skills, and broaden their knowledge of teaching methods.

Other major benefits that eTwinning projects bring to students have not been mentioned previously. The Pedagogical Advisory Group has realized that eTwinning

43

projects make learning more effective by providing the opportunity for combination of formal and informal learning. Also, the work on international projects is often "motivating and fun" (Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects 2006, 24). Being in contact with pupils from different countries, having established friendships and learning about what the habits, points of view and cultural characteristics of those countries are, provides all pupils involved in the project with "realistic intercultural learning situations" (Collaboration and eTwinning - Enrichment and Added Value of eTwinning projects 2006, 24). eTwinning collaboration gives pupils confidence and develops their personality. Contacts between pupils from different countries may also lead to business contacts in the future.

Similar debates have taken place in the Czech Republic, too, the subjects being mainly the development of the key competences. During the second national eTwinning conference in 2006, Czech teachers and educational researchers tackled the issues of how eTwinning develops pupils' and students' key competences. They concluded that all but one key competence could be developed through eTwinning. Firstly, by working on an eTwinning project, pupils are motivated to learn, employ their skills in tasks that are close to real life and look for and analyse information. Thus they develop their competences to learn. Secondly, competences to solve problems can be developed by producing and applying ideas, by working towards an effective solution and by giving and receiving feedback. Thirdly, communicative competences such as communicating using ICT, identifying and observing the rules of communication, and written and oral presentation are fostered through eTwinning. Fourthly, eTwinning projects develop international collaboration, multiculturalism, solidarity and help to overcome prejudices and stereotypes, all of which form civic competences. Lastly, they concluded that the work on projects develops pupils' teamwork skills and empathy, and helps them to become personally mature. In other words, it develops social and personal competences (eTwinning v České republice 2006, 19).

Such discussion about the potential of eTwinning projects for the development of the key competences is vital. Only by careful thinking over how a particular activity or task in the project helps the pupils to develop their competences, we can better understand the whole process of learning through eTwinning projects. Moreover, such analysis may prove to be an invaluable help for the eTwinning project planning.

Therefore, the following section aims at giving an overview of which key competences can be developed through eTwinning projects and how.

4.3 An overview of the development of the key competences through eTwinning

The overview is realized in the form of a table (Table 10) and is based on Killpatrick's classification of the steps that are usually followed when carrying out a project (see 4.2.1). The overview is an analysis of the activities the learner might be engaged in when carrying out an eTwinning project and is done from the perspective of the development of the key competences, which have been defined in Table 3. To be more specific, Table 10 lists the activities that are likely to be undertaken during each of the steps and shows which key competences the activities develop. Of course, the overview is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of how the key competences can be developed. However, it attempts to summarize and systemize what has been written in 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

The steps in Killpatrick's classification (in Valenta 1993, 6) have been numbered – purposing (1), planning (2), executing (3) and judging (4) - and presented as numbers for space reasons in Table 10.

Table 10. An overview of the development of the key competences through eTwinning

Step	Activity the learner undertakes	Competence developed
1	Discussing the topic of the project and how the project will be carried out.	Communicative competence
	Identifying with the problems and questions of the project, which ensures greater likelihood of not giving up solving the problem. Producing and applying ideas.	Competence to solve problems
	Choosing a suitable topic of projects, e.g. the approach to ecological problems in both countries or pupil's approach to a healthy life style.	Civic competence

	Choosing suitable topics of projects, e.g. comparison of entrepreneurship possibilities in participating countries or running a fictitious travel agency.	Occupational competence
2	Identifying the project objectives. Planning of the project (activities, methods, strategies, timetable).	Competence to learn
	Recognizing and understanding the problem behind a project. Suggesting and planning ways of solving the problem.	Competence to solve problems
3	Writing emails, using chats, participating in videoconferencing in order to communicate and perform tasks. Data and information collection from different sources (e.g. the Internet, newspapers, emails, photographs, films).	Communicative competence
	Working on the project in real or virtual groups in order to achieve common goals.	Social and personal competence
	Data collection and analysis and their use or nonuse for further work on the project. Completing a task successfully, and dealing with problems that are likely to arise while carrying out the task.	Competence to learn
	Carrying tasks on his/her own, such as writing emails. Being provided the opportunity to carry out some tasks (e.g. email writing) several times and thus being allowed to learn from the mistakes and successes he/she has made in the particular activity. Being responsible for his/her own learning and also for establishing contact with pupils from abroad. Collecting and analysing data and information relevant to the task objective.	Competence to solve problems
	Carrying out the tasks in a creative way.	Civic competence

4	Presenting the solution of a problem or a task to other pupils and teachers involved in the project, both in an oral and written form and in a foreign language.	Communicative competence
	Comparing one's own project results to the results of pupils from the partner schools, and learning from those results.	Competence to learn
	Comparing the home country to other countries in the EU, e.g. comparing lifestyles of pupils and drawing conclusions from it. Learning about different cultures, traditions and trying to teach other people about one's own culture and traditions.	Civic competence
	Analysing the results of the work on an international project in terms of its efficiency, quality etc.	Occupational competence
All 1-4	Working in groups, cooperating with people of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Identifying and observing the rules of communication, both in international and national environment, if there is any difference.	Communicative competence
	Combining formal and informal learning, which is motivating and fun and creates a pleasant atmosphere. Working on the project in real or virtual groups in order to achieve common goals. Writing emails, using chats, participating in videoconferencing in order to establish contacts and make friends. Participating in the project and thus being given the sense of being an important part of something as big and exciting as an eTwinning project is.	Social and personal competence
	Exploring a new way of learning, its benefits, which is motivating for him/her in order to engage in lifelong learning. Employing skills in tasks close to real life. Giving and receiving feedback and drawing conclusions from it. Realizing curriculum content e.g. in foreign language, history, science, communicating in a foreign language and using ICT at the same time.	Competence to learn
	Collaboration on an international level, learning about different countries and cultures. Dealing with European dimension.	Civic competence

	Using computers (desktop computers, laptops, accessory devices), software (operating systems, word processors, media players, web browsers etc.), digital cameras etc. Participate in an international internet project that is very similar to projects that are increasingly being carried out in research, business etc., and using the experience for further studies or employment. Making friends abroad, which may lead to establishing business contacts with them in the future.	Occupational competence

In my opinion, Table 10 provides a convincing evidence that eTwinning is an effective method of developing the learner's key competences. In addition, we must realize that the eTwinning projects discussed in the thesis focus on developing the learner's foreign language, namely English. Consequently, the development of the key competences is twofold. Firstly, we develop the key competences as shown in Table 10, and secondly, we develop them as shown in Table 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

To conclude, in the previous chapters, the theoretical framework for this final thesis has been provided. First of all, the key competences have been introduced in terms of their importance both in the European and Czech Republic. They have also been identified and defined. Special attention has been dedicated to the key competences in the Framework Educational Programme, as the aim of this final thesis is to develop these key competences. Secondly, the definitions of the key competences have been compared to the Common European Framework, especially to the reference level descriptors for A1 and A2 levels and to the descriptions of the competences in the CEF in order to find links between the key competences and foreign language learning. It has been concluded that by learning a foreign language and by using the language at a particular level, the pupil can develop his/her key competences. Thirdly, the key competences development has been looked at in terms of eTwinning projects. The method and its principles have been described both in relation to 'traditional' projects, language projects and eTwinning projects. Finally, and overview of which key competences can be developed through eTwinning projects and how has been provided.

This overview (Table 10) and the discussion of the key competences with respect to the CEF (Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) will be of crucial importance for the following work on this final thesis and will be often referred to.

5 eTwinning projects in the Czech Republic

While the previous chapters have dealt with theoretical background, the aim of the following chapter is to provide examples of practice. This chapter will introduce eTwinning projects that have been realised in collaboration of Czech schools and their partner schools from the European countries. First of all, a few items of basic data on eTwinning in the Czech Republic will be provided. Then, five eTwinning projects that have already been carried out will be described and discussed in terms of how the pupils collaborating on the projects have developed their key competences. However, before doing so, a brief explanation of how the five eTwinning projects were selected will be given. Finally, an eTwinning project will be devised and analysed.

From now on, the term 'eTwinning project' will also be referred to as 'project'.

5.1 A few items of basic data on eTwinning projects

It has already been mentioned that the eTwinning initiative began in January 2005. Since then eTwinning has become popular with many schools in European countries. According to the national statistics on eTwinning (eTwinning v České republice 2006), the number of Czech schools registered in eTwinning grew to 798 in June 2006. The schools registered 196 projects, of which 140 had English as the language of communication. The most popular countries to collaborate with on the projects were Slovakia and Poland with about 100 projects altogether. These countries were followed by Lithuania, Greece, Germany and Italy, each participating in approximately 12 projects.

5.2 Method of selecting the eTwinning projects

In order to find projects that will suit the needs of the thesis best, the following criteria have been established and applied to the project selection.

First of all, the intention is to present examples of good practice in eTwinning collaboration. Therefore, the attention will be devoted to the eTwinning projects that were included in Learning with eTwinning (2006), which is a collection of the best eTwinning projects in Europe, and to the eTwinning projects included in eTwinning

v České republice (2006), which is the collection of the best eTwinning projects in the Czech Republic.

Secondly, out of the projects included in the above-mentioned books, only those in which English is the theme and language of communication will be selected.

Thirdly, in the introduction (see 1.2), it has been specified that eTwinning projects carried out by lower-secondary pupils of the ages 11 to 15 will be looked at. In harmony with this objective, eTwinning projects that have each been carried out by pupils of a different age level, preferably at a grammar school, will be selected.

Lastly, in order to provide a varied collection of eTwinning projects, eTwinning projects realized, with one exception, by different Czech schools and by schools from different countries will be selected.

5.3 Description of the selected eTwinning projects

According to the criteria introduced in the previous section, five eTwinning projects have been selected. Each will be described in a table that will show the name of the project, the schools involved, the names of the teachers/coordinators of the project, the aims and duration of the project, the age of the pupils, the main activities the pupils engaged in and, if available, the websites on which the end-products or more information can be viewed.

The eTwinning projects in Tables 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 have been arranged in ascending order of the age of the pupils. The information about the eTwinning projects in Tables 11, 13, 14 and 15 is a brief summary of the descriptions of these eTwinning projects in eTwinning v České republice (2006). The eTwinning project introduced in Table 12 is a summary of the description of this project in Learning with eTwinning (2006). The websites mentioned in the tables have served as valuable sources of the information about the eTwinning projects too, because they were usually written by the teachers who coordinated the projects.

Table 11. eTwinning project: Thematic Czech-Hungarian-English Dictionary

Name	Thematic Czech-Hungarian-English Dictionary
Schools involved	ZS J.A. Komenského Louny, Czech Republic Orczy István Általános Iskola Szeged, Hungary
Teachers/Coordinators	Jana Tužilová Katalin Nagy-György
Aims	To create a Czech-Hungarian-English dictionary on common themes. To promote the use of different types of dictionaries. To improve pupils' ICT skills. To extend pupils' knowledge of vocabulary.
Duration	From December 2005 to December 2006
Age of pupils	11-12
Project description	The teachers agreed on ten themes that the pupils would deal with in the project such as my family, my house, the season of the year, my school, my classroom, free time, daily meals, my country, my town and travelling and holidays. In groups, the pupils thought of suitable words for each theme, translated them into English and drew pictures. The pupils in the target school translated the words into their mother tongue. Thus the pupils collaborated in creating a thematic dictionary, which they can use for further work and learning. The pupils used ICT tools such as emails and MS Word.
End-products	A CD with the dictionary for each pupil
Internet links to view the results	http://www.etwinning.cz/data/docs/pce/tuzilova_slovnik.ppt

Table 12. eTwinning project: When our relatives were children

Name	When our relatives were children
Schools involved	Gymnázium Česká Lípa, Czech Republic Gimnazjum nr 4, Poland
Teachers/Coordinators	Naděžda Kadlecová Dorota Liebner
Aims	To make the pupils realise how things have changed and how the lives of their grandparents and parents were different from theirs. To make the pupils realise what differences and similarities there were and are between the lives in the Czech Republic and Poland. To practise the past tense (positive/negative statements, questions).
Duration	4 weeks
Age of pupils	12-13
Project description	Before the project itself started, the pupils in the Czech Republic exchanged emails with the Polish pupils to get to know each other. During the first week, the pupils thought of questions they could ask their parents and grandparents (questions about clothes, colours, toys etc.). They translated the collected information into English and sent in emails. During the second week, they asked their parents and grandparents about the schools they went to and how they spent their free time and compared it with the school life and free time pupils have today. During the third week, the pupils arranged an exhibition which showed things from the past, and the Polish pupils organized a fashion show. During the last week, the pupils compared the life of their parents and grandparents in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The pupils communicated via emails. They also used digital cameras.
End-products	Photographs, audiotape, videocassette about the school and the project
Internet links to view the results	http://www.gym-cl.cz/etwinning.htm#

Table 13. eTwinning project: Where we live

Name	Where we live
Schools involved	Gymnázium Děčín, Czech Republic Šetos vidurne mokkyla, Lithuania
Teachers/Coordinators	Svatoslava Hradská Sandra Kilinskyte
Aims	To make a presentation about the place where the pupils live, mainly about its history and tourist attractions.
Duration	6 months
Age of pupils	14
Project description	The schools had collaborated on a different project before, so this project started with the pupils writing emails about what was new in their class and at school. At the beginning, the project work consisted mainly of collecting information and taking photographs. Then the students wrote down all information they gathered on paper. After that they made the final electronic presentation and sent it to the partner school. The pupils worked in groups and used mainly emails to communicate. They also used digital cameras.
End-products	A CD with the project results (a presentation)
Internet links to view the results	www.gymnaziumdc.cz

Table 14. eTwinning project: Where do we come from

Name	Where do we come from
Schools involved	Gymnázium Česká Lípa, Czech Republic Kavasila High School, Greece
Teachers/Coordinators	Naděžda Kadlecová Eleni Kostopoulou
Aims	To learn about history, traditions and customs of the partner country.
Duration	3 months at the beginning, but finally it continued in the following school year
Age of pupils	14-15
Project description	The pupils used emails and TwinSpace tools to communicate with the pupils in the partner country. They exchanged emails about e.g. Christmas, 17th November, food. They also thought of useful phrases for tourists and provided them in three languages: English, Czech and Greek both in written and aural form. The pupils worked in groups using mainly emails and the forum on TwinSpace.
End-products	A CD with a PowerPoint presentation of the project, an audiotape with the recorded conversation phrases. All the end products and articles written by the students have been posted on the TwinSpace of the project and can be seen on the following website.
Internet links to view the results	http://twinspace.etwinning.net/launcher.cfm?lang=en&cid=248 http://et-friendship.blogspot.com

Table 15. eTwinning project: Teenagers' eMagazine

Name	Teenagers' eMagazine
Schools involved	Gymnázium Špitálská, Praha 9 ZSO nr 5, im J. F. Kennedy' ego w Bytomiu, Poland 20 Lyceum of Chaidary, Greece IES Alonso de Madrigal, Spain Lyce Joliot-Currie, France Escola secundária com 3 ciclo de amora, Portugal ITCS Paolo Toscanelli, Italy
Teachers/Coordinators	Pavla Šabatková Barbara Romanowska-Kruszynska Teachers and coordinators from other countries are not specified.
Aims	To create a monthly Teenagers' eMagazine, to which the pupils will write articles on topics young people are concerned with (school, cultural traditions, problems that teenagers encounter etc.) and thus to practice pupils' writing skills. To learn about other cultures in Europe.
Duration	One year
Age of pupils	13-19
Project description	The project work was based on group work. Every group wrote articles for the current issue of the magazine. The group that was responsible for editing the issues read and selected the best articles. These were posted on TwinSpace. At the end, the pupils read articles written by the pupils from other countries, discussed them and reacted to them. In some of the articles, the pupils described their school, described themselves, and wrote about winter in Prague or about Christmas. Specific examples of pupils' work can be seen on the following websites.
End-products	Teenagers' eMagazine posted on TwinSpace. A PowerPoint presentation of the project. Each pupil has created a portfolio of his/her essays.
Internet links to view the results	http://www.gymspit.cz/docs/etwinning1.doc http://www.gymspit.cz/docs/etwinning2.pdf http://www.etwinning.cz/data/docs/pce/sabatkova_magazine.ppt

5.4 Analysis of the selected eTwinning projects in terms of the development of the key competences

In chapters 3 and 4, it has been described how the learner can develop key competences as defined in Table 3 by learning and using the foreign language at the A1, A2 or A2+ levels (see Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) in an eTwinning project (see Table 10). These tables provide a general discussion on the development of the key competences. They are not based on specific eTwinning projects and they are a general overview of learners' competences that can be acquired by an eTwinning project. A potential project should embrace some language activities described in Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 and some activities described in Table 10. The analysis of the eTwinning projects described in Tables 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 will try to show that the selected eTwinning projects develop some of the key competences considerably.

It should be pointed out that when carrying out the analysis, the following two approaches will be combined. Firstly, the activities the pupils were involved in will be looked at from the point of view of language use. The language will be examined in terms of how the pupils developed their key competences by having used the language. When making the analysis, I often refer to Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. E.g. by writing emails the pupils used the language to practice the skill of writing about various topics, to achieve a higher degree of coherence, to improve the thematic development and to communicate with other pupils. Thus they have developed the communicative competence (cf. Table 5). Secondly, the activities will be analysed in terms of eTwinning and how the eTwinning dimension in the activities contributed to the development of the key competences. From this perspective, writing emails could be seen as developing not only the communicative competence, but also the social and personal competence, because the pupils wrote emails in order to communicate and to establish social contacts (cf. Table 10). Obviously, combining these two ways of looking at the activities is natural, because in order to carry out the activities in an eTwinning project, language is needed and the pupils thus develop more key competences at the same time. Therefore the development of various key competences in one activity should be seen as inseparable. Again, the pupils wrote the emails with

the intention to communicate and establish contacts, which necessarily embraces development of the communicative and social and personal competence.

Other activities that the pupils undertook will be examined, paying attention especially to those which had a manifold effect on the development of the key competences or to those which were done in most of the projects. However, it is obvious that the Tables 11 to 15 do not provide evidence of all pupil activities on the project.

In order to carry out the projects objectives, the pupils most often engaged in writing tasks. From the simplest form of writing, when the pupils wrote English vocabulary (see Table 11), to the more advanced form, e.g. essay writing in the project described in Table 15, the pupils have developed their communicative competence. In the project described in Table 11, they learned how to write specific items of English vocabulary. In the remaining projects, the pupils wrote emails or essays on various topics, in which they learned to express what they wanted in a coherent way, using simple conjunctions to link simple phrases and sentences (cf. Table 5). By writing emails they also practised how to exchange personal and other information and learned some of the expressions that are required when writing this type of correspondence (cf. Table 5). The pupils used the language in emails in order to perform and respond to simple social and information exchanges, e.g. getting to know their partners abroad as in 'When our relatives were children' (see Table 12), continuing the relationships they had established with them before as in 'Where we live' (see Table 13) and providing and obtaining information on chosen topics as in all the above-described projects. Thus they have developed their social and personal competence (cf. Table 6). What is more, writing an email in English to a person the pupils hardly knows (see Tables 12, 13 and 14) or an English essay on a particular topic (see Table 15) posed a challenge for the pupils. By having succeeded in responding to the challenge, the pupils developed the competence to solve problems (cf. Table 10). Moreover, writing emails and essays are activities that encourage creative use of ideas (cf. Table 10) and, considering the pupils' levels of English, also creative use of language (cf. Table 5) and thus develop the civic competence.

After having written articles, essays or emails, the pupils read how their partners abroad responded to them. The pupils practised overall reading comprehension by

reading and understanding the texts on particular topics. They also developed understanding of emails as a type of correspondence and of its characteristic features. Thus they have developed the communicative competence (cf. Table 5). And by having read what the pupils abroad wrote e.g. about their parents' lives (see Table 12), the place where they live (see Table 13) and Christmas (see Tables 14 and 15) and having used the information gained from these texts in order to compare their lives to the lives of their partners, they have developed several key competences. Firstly, the intercultural dimension involved in reading the texts written by pupils from other countries led to the development of the civic competence as the pupils developed awareness of cultural and other differences between the nations (cf. Tables 9 and 10). Secondly, comparing and analysing, which were the strategies the pupils used in order to learn about other cultures, and using the findings for their future work on the project led to the development of the competence to learn (cf. Table 10). The pupils' knowledge of and skills at the foreign language were needed when analysing the texts in order to find new or desired information and understand it, thus as well developing the competence to learn (cf. Table 7).

The pupils often worked on the projects in groups and had to communicate with one another in the groups. The pupils developed their social and personal competence as the language was needed in order to work effectively in groups, to establish social contacts and to discuss what to do and how so as to achieve the goals they had in the projects (cf. Table 10). Communication in groups may have required using everyday expressions such as greetings, stating one's opinion and agreeing or disagreeing with others. The pupils were also likely to suggest ways of dealing with a task or problem and to respond to these suggestions. As a consequence, they have developed not only the social and personal competence (cf. Table 6), but also the communicative competence (cf. Table 5).

Moreover, by having worked in groups on e.g. selecting the vocabulary items to be translated in Table 11, preparing an exhibition in Table 12, collecting information about and taking photos of the place where the pupils live in Table 13, thinking of the useful phrases for tourists in Table 14 and selecting the best article in Table 15, the pupils have developed their competence to solve problems. While undertaking these

activities, they used the language in order to identify what to do and how (see Table 8) and suggested and planned ways of dealing with the task (see Table 10).

It should be pointed out that while working in groups the pupils might have communicated in English, Czech or both, thus having developed the communicative competence either in English or in Czech. Obviously, the former is more desirable. However, if the pupils have developed the communicative competence in Czech, it will be easier for them to develop the competence in English.

In all of the above described eTwinning projects, the pupils needed to collect data, find information or conduct research and analyse their findings in order to carry out some of the tasks in the projects. In the project described in Table 11, the pupils used dictionaries as the sources of information when translating vocabulary from Czech into English, or the other way around. In 'When our relatives were children' (see Table 12) the pupils interviewed their parents and grandparents about the past. Their parents and grandparents might have told the pupils exactly what they wanted to know, but more probably they gave them more details and information about other aspects of their lives in the past. The pupils analysed the information in order to fulfil the task. Table 13 describes a project in which the pupils gathered information about the place where they live and took photographs of this place. Again, once they collected useful material for the presentation of the place, they needed to analyse it in terms of e.g. what to include and what not. In the project described in Table 14, the pupils found and analysed information for example about 17th November in order to give a brief but accurate account of what happened. The pupils carrying out the last of the projects described in Table 15 went through a similar process of collecting and analysing material in order to write essays, probably relying also on their own experience. All these activities the pupils engaged in have developed their competence to learn because the pupils organized how they would perform certain tasks and which materials and information they would use (cf. Tables 7 and 10). They have also developed their competence to solve problems by suggesting and planning ways of fulfilling the tasks and carrying them out (cf. Table 10).

When carrying out all the projects, the pupils used computers e.g. to send emails, write texts, download, edit and view digital photographs. Thus they have developed not only their ICT skills but also their occupational competence (cf. Table 10).

The analysis of the eTwinning projects carried out by Czech schools indicated that eTwinning collaboration is an effective way of developing pupils' key competences and of teaching and learning English. Indeed, in the eTwinning projects the students learned new vocabulary (cf. Table 11), learned and practiced the past tense (cf. Table 12), used their knowledge of English to describe the place where they live (cf. Table 13) and to write about Czech traditions and culture (cf. Tables 14, 15) and thus they broadened their knowledge and skills. At the same time, they have developed various key competences.

What is more, participating in an eTwinning project has provided the pupils with opportunities to use the foreign language for real communication among people who speak different languages. It has also helped them to realize how easy and convenient it is to communicate via emails and use other ICT tools.

5.5 Devising an eTwinning project

5.5.1 Aims and general characteristics of the project

An eTwinning project will be devised having two objectives in mind: the primary objective will be to develop pupils' English skills and knowledge and the secondary objective will be to develop pupils' key competences. The project will be designed so as to meet the requirements of an eTwinning project, that is collaboration between the partner schools will be carried out using ICT and the content of the project will fit the curriculum as defined in the Framework (see 3.1) in the educational domain of Language and language communication.

The major aim of the project will be to revise what the pupils have learnt by using the language in real life-tasks and in authentic context of real communication. I will heavily rely on my experience as a grammar school teacher and will devise the project for grammar school pupils aged 12 or 13 who are in their second year as a revision of what was covered in the first year of their studies of the English language. Also, knowing the target age group, I have decided that the project will deal with introducing popular pop and rock bands from the Czech Republic to the partner school and with reading about pop or rock bands from the partner country, because music starts to be an important part of pupils' lives at these ages. The basic idea behind the project is that the

61

pupils will exchange information about their favourite pop or rock groups. Thus they will get to know music from a different country and will also revise language functions such as introducing and describing people, their hobbies, what they do, what they wear and are wearing and what they did in the past. The main language areas to be revised will therefore be the present tenses and the past simple tense and topics such as free time and clothes. Although the project will be designed as a revision, the pupils will also learn new vocabulary and language structures needed in order to perform the language tasks on the project. The duration of the project will be one month.

The ICT dimension will be represented by tools that will be easy to use for the pupils. The pupils will most often use Microsoft Word to produce texts. They will also frequently use the Internet as a source of information and for sending and receiving emails and downloading data. They will also make a PowerPoint presentation of the project.

It should be pointed out that I will not devise the project in collaboration with a teacher of a school in a European country and I am fully aware of the disadvantages. The project will reflect only my point of view on the topic, the activities, time planning etc. and will lack the perspective of the partner school on how the project should be carried out. As a result, the project will lack good and useful activities and tasks that would have been designed by the partner school. Nevertheless, such an approach has also its advantages because the project will suit the needs of Czech pupils and will correspond to the educational context of a Czech school. Moreover, if the partner school undertakes different activities from those I have suggested, the results and end products of the project may also be different. This will inevitably encourage interculturality.

5.5.2 The project description and analysis

The project will be described in steps, which can be taken either step by step or with some breaks which can be filled with traditional class work. Either way, the project is designed for approximately 12 lessons.

The steps will be looked at from Fried-Booth's (1994, 9-10) classification of the stages of development of a language project (see 4.2.1). After the steps will be described, the project activities will be analysed from the point of view of the key competences development.

The first step, corresponding to Fried-Booth's "stimulus" (1994), is the initial stage of the project, in which the pupils will become familiar with the project topic and will be asked to think of popular Czech music, their favourite bands and which of these bands the pupils from the partner school may be interested in. The following discussion should lead to selecting four to five bands. Then the students will discuss what they can write about the bands. They should agree that with each band, they will describe the style of music, physical description of the members and the band's history. They might also wish to explain why they like the band. Finally, the pupils will form teams of three or four, each team dealing with one band.

The second step and the following steps correspond in Fried-Booth's terminology to "practice of language skills", "design of written material", "group activities" and "collating information" (1994), because each of the steps is a combination of practising the language, collating information and writing texts in groups. Each pupil will write a personal email to a pupil from the partner school. Firstly, the pupils will suggest what information the emails should include (e.g. their names, school, class, age, where they live, their families and hobbies). Secondly, there will be a revision of the language structures and vocabulary the pupils will need if necessary. Thirdly, expressions typical for emails will be introduced. Then each pupil will write an email. When emails from the partners arrive, the pupils will work in teams. The aim is to practise asking questions about personal details and introducing another person and to apply the language structures to introducing the band. Each pupil will read the email he/she will have received from a pupil from the partner school, extract the main information from it and ask questions in order to find out basic facts about another pupil's pen friend in the team and answer questions. Then each pupil will introduce someone else's pen friend to the rest of the team.

After having introduced the pupils from the partner school, the pupils will take a further step by thinking of ways of introducing the band. In teams, they will search the Internet in order to find useful information about their band and pictures of the band. They will start working on giving basic facts about the band (the band's name, the names and ages of the members, which musical instrument they play etc.) and they will select one picture, which they will describe. They will also use dictionaries if necessary. They might also explain why they like the band, using simple structures such as 'I like

them because ...'. It needs to be pointed out that the pupils are not familiar with the structure and vocabulary, but the activity provides them with an opportunity to learn it. Then the pupils will write a short text in which they will introduce the band. They will insert the picture they chose into the text and will describe it so that the reader will know who is who in the picture. When describing the picture, the pupils will revise and practise the language structures such as 'is wearing', 'has got' and vocabulary sets such as clothes and adjectives describing physical characteristics. The pupils will finish writing the introductory text about the band and will send it via email. Again, when the emails from the partner school arrive, each team will read their email in which the band from the partner country will be introduced and described. Each team will think of questions they would like to ask their partners abroad and will briefly present the foreign band to the rest of the class.

The fourth step will deal with the band's history. The pupils will conduct an Internet search and will choose such facts that they find important and relevant. They will start writing another text about the band, which may be called 'Biography' or 'History'. Thus they will revise the past simple tense and may also learn new vocabulary. They might insert some pictures of the band into the text to illustrate how the band has changed. The pupils might add some questions they want to ask their partners about the band.

After having sent the texts via email comes the fifth step. A discussion about which samples of the band's music the partner school should be provided with and how will be initiated in the teams. Each team will choose one song representative of the band's music. Then the Internet will be searched in order to find web pages on which the songs can be listened to, legally downloaded or bought. The pupils will then give the song background, e.g. they will provide the name of the album, the year it was released and explain why they chose this song. Also, they will listen to the song and will try to write a summary of what the lyrics is about. Or they will translate some key words that frequently occur in the song so that the pupils in the partner school will get an impression of what the song is about. The pupils might also send the whole lyrics in Czech so that the pupils abroad will become familiar with the Czech language. In these activities, the pupils will probably learn new words and will work with dictionaries. They will also send the song either via email or as an Internet link on which the song

can be listened to. Then in teams, the pupils will read emails about the history of the band from the partner school. Again, they might think of questions concerning the band's history and ask these questions in an email.

The pupils will take the further step by preparing a quiz in which they will include questions about all the Czech bands. The answers for these questions should be found in the texts the pupils sent to the partner school. They will send the quiz to their partners who will answer the question during the final presentation. This and the following step can be seen as "organization of materials" in Fried-Booth's classification (1994), because the pupils will develop the end products of the project.

In the seventh step, each team will listen to the song sent by their partners and read the enclosed information about the song. Each pupil will write if he/she likes the song or not. Then the teams will start preparing a short presentation on the band they were getting information about. The presentation should include basic facts about the band, a picture should be shown and a song should be played. The presentation can be carried out using ICT (e.g. a PowerPoint presentation) or the pupils can design their own ways. The pupils should take turns when presenting.

Corresponding to Fried-Booth's (1994) "final presentation", the eighth step will consist of the final presentations of the bands from the partner country. The teams will one after another give presentations about their partners' bands. The rest of the class will listen carefully and take the quiz compiled by the partner school. After all the presentations have taken place, the pupils will discuss the songs, whether they like them or not, compare the music to the Czech music and try to find similarities and differences.

The last step of the project will be evaluation of the project. The pupils will write emails in which they will describe which song they liked the most and why and will thank their partners for the music. They might also ask for more music or information about the bands and may continue in email correspondence, if they want to.

Obviously, while working on the project the pupils will develop mainly the communicative competence and the social and personal competence because they will use the language to carry out almost all the tasks of the project and will collaborate in performing them. As well, the project will help to develop other key competences.

To be more specific, the communicative competence will be developed by writing and reading simple emails, in which the pupils will write simple sentences about themselves, the band, their history and their music linking the sentences to form short and simple texts. They will also read the texts in order to find and extract specific information from them, report it to the members of their team or the whole class and listen to what the others will say. The communicative competence will also be developed by holding discussions and expressing one's opinion (cf. Table 5).

The social and personal competence will be developed by working on the project tasks in teams, which will necessarily require establishing good working relationships and agreeing on roles in the team (cf. Table 10). The pupils will also need to express and accept different points of view and come to an agreement e.g. on what to do and how (cf. Table 6). Moreover, the pupils will develop the social and personal competence by establishing contacts with pupils from a foreign country and exchanging emails with them.

The competence to solve problems will be developed by the pupils participating on the project planning, especially in terms of what to write about in the project. When dealing with individual tasks, the pupils will search for useful information in order to accomplish these tasks (cf. Table 10).

The competence to learn will be developed especially by analysing the information found on the Internet and selecting the relevant items of information with respect to the task objective. The pupils will develop the competence when reading the texts written by the foreign pupils in order to learn about the bands and music in the foreign country and using it for the presentations (cf. Table 10).

The civic competence will be developed throughout the whole project work, because the pupils will be in contact with people from a foreign country, will learn about the music which is popular there, get to know another language by listening to the songs or find out what the hobbies of the pupils from the partner country are (cf. Table 10).

Finally, the occupational competence will be developed by using the computers and the Internet. The pupils will not only learn how to operate computers and software such as a word processor, a media player or a search engine, but they will also realise

what these tools are for and that they can be used for international communication and collaboration (cf. Table 10).

To conclude, even though the analysis is not exhaustive, it is obvious that the eTwinning project will provide a lot of opportunities for the pupils to develop the key competences by learning the foreign language. Also, authentic tasks with clear objectives and real people to communicate with should be motivating for the pupils, giving the activities a sense of purpose. What is more, the theme of music should appeal to pupils and should encourage them to carry out the activities with more enthusiasm. So if the project is compared to what has been written about project methodology in chapter 4, it becomes clear that it will meet the "child's needs and interests" (Kasíková 1997), it will be "determined by genuine communicative needs" (Hedge 2000, 364) and it will integrate all the skills.

6 Conclusion

In the thesis, I have tried to show that eTwinning is an efficient way of developing the key competences, which were identified and defined in the Framework as general, cross-curricular and not pertinent to any particular subject. I have looked at the development of the key competences through eTwinning from the point of view of foreign language learning and teaching.

In my opinion, this aim that has been achieved, because I have performed general analyses of the CEF (2001) in chapter 3 and of the project method combined with eTwinning in chapter 4, both of which have given the overview of activities that, when carried out, develop the key competences. I have then applied this knowledge to existing eTwinning projects and activities pupils engaged in when carrying out the projects. Thus I have shown that some of the activities in the eTwinning projects considerably contributed to the development of the key competences.

Moreover, I have devised a project which meets the criteria of eTwinning projects and I have adopted the same approach to its analysis. The analysis has also proved that by performing the activities in the project, pupils would develop their key competences.

In this thesis, I have come to the conclusion that eTwinning projects provide excellent framework for foreign language teaching and learning. The projects presented here offered great opportunities for presentation, practice and revision of various language structures and sets of vocabulary. The projects invited the pupils to use more than one language skills within one activity, often integrating all the skills. The pupils most often engaged in writing and reading tasks, which should be apparent from frequent communication by emails. Group work or pair work offered opportunities for the speaking and listening practice. What is more, language work was done in authentic settings of using the language for real communication with people who do not speak the same mother tongue. Nevertheless, it may be objected that the thesis has dealt with foreign language teaching and learning less than might have been expected. However, the prime objective of the thesis was not to examine teaching English as a foreign language, but to examine if the key competences can be developed through eTwinning projects in which English will be taught. I have focussed on key competences because I

68

wanted to show that I, an English teacher, can help my pupils to develop the key competences when teaching through eTwinning and thus I can fulfil the objectives of basic education set in the Framework.

Looking at the thesis as at a finished piece of writing, I will also suggest some ways of how the thesis could have been improved. Firstly, in the analyses of the projects I could have been more specific by identifying not only which key competence was developed but also which partial competence was developed in compliance with Table 3. Secondly, the descriptions and analysis of the existing eTwinning projects could have been based on more information, so that both the descriptions and analysis would be more detailed. However, at the time when the thesis was being written, the only sources of information about some of the projects were the collections of eTwinning projects. The web pages of the projects were either non-existent or under construction. Thirdly, had there been time and suitable facilities, the project I devised could have been carried out by my pupils. Then it would be clear if the activities I designed in the project would be efficient, motivating and fun for the pupils and would contribute to the development of the key competences.

Nevertheless, I intend to do the eTwinning project at the school were I teach in the following year. Therefore, it may have been interesting to observe if what has been written about eTwinning projects in this thesis, will be demonstrated in this particular project, which I believe. eTwinning provides other benefits for schools and that is why I would like to introduce it at the school where I teach. For students, it is an appealing and motivating method of learning, which makes them experience learning in almost real-life conditions of communication among their peers from different countries, using a foreign language in order to communicate. For teachers, it is an effective way of meeting some, if not all, requirements and objectives set in the Framework. eTwinning collaboration may also be included in the school educational programme which I and my colleagues are currently developing for the lower-secondary pupils. eTwinning will then become an integral part of education provided by that school. What is more, any international collaboration, eTwinning including, usually gives the school good publicity on the local, national or even international level, which also carries prestige.

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