

## An International Teacher Training Project: Integrating Subject Content, Communicative and Digital Competences in Didactic Materials

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**Abstract:** The European intTT project “An Integral Teacher Training for Developing Digital and Communicative Competences and Subject Content Learning at Schools” deals with initial teacher training in primary and secondary School. The general objective of the project is to train future school teachers in order to improve the development of communicative and digital competences in pupils, using model materials which meld language and information technology with scientific and humanistic content across different subjects of the primary and secondary school curriculum.

**Key words:** teacher training, subject content, communicative and digital competences, didactic materials

### 1. Introduction

It seems convenient to start this article with a brief description of the project concerning the Consortium, the aims and outputs, and the target groups involved in the project. We think the project title “An Integral Teacher Training for Developing Digital and Communicative Competencies and Subject Learning at Schools” can give a clear idea of its main aim, as it intends to train student teachers through a methodology that favours pupils’ acquisition of subject content learning, digital and communicative competences. The Consortium consists of six Universities, Alcalá (Spain), Coordinator University, Comenius of Bratislava (Slovakia), Leicester (United Kingdom), Lisbon (Portugal), Helsinki (Finland) and Karadeniz Technical University of Trabzon (Turkey). The project partners are experts in ICT, Teacher Training, Language, Applied Linguistics, Sciences and Humanities and have been working together in different European projects. The project, financed by the European Commission, started in November 2009 and will finish in October 2012.

The expected outputs are:

- A methodology integrating communicative and digital competences with subject content learning fostering significant use of different digital tools.
- Materials: didactic activities and suggestions to develop subject content learning in pupils, communicative and digital competences. Both didactic activities and suggestions are included in six CDs (one per partner).
- Mobility of student teachers in April 2012.
- Evaluation plan to ensure quality which has been planned in two levels: external and internal.
- Research and dissemination at national and international levels to spread project impact through:
  - ♦ Project web-site <http://www.helsinki.fi/integralteacher/index.html>.

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- ♦ Research and dissemination activities such as: meetings, seminars, papers and posters in Conferences, articles in Conference *Proceedings, Journals, etc.*

Three target groups are identified with different level of involvement in the project:

- High: student teachers are supposed to be the most important group, as the project is addressed to them. Also tutors and mentors, highly involved in student teachers' training, especially in the implementation of the CDs and in the mobility plan.
- Medium: pupils, teachers, schools, educational community and authorities, as the CDs are implemented at schools.
- Low: other universities, schools, authorities and long life learning teachers. These groups have got in touch with the project through dissemination activities done by partners.

## **2. Project Approach**

The project develops a methodology which combines communicative and digital competences and subject content to improve the acquisition of both competences and content learning at the same time. This integrated methodology is supposed to make some changes in the approach and attitude of student teachers as future teachers. The question is why the partners of the project have decided to design this methodology. The answer is that project partners are convinced of the need of training teachers with an integrated methodology that takes into account a good command of language to improve communicative competence, the use of technology and digital tools to command ICT and the learning of subject content as something global and not apart, and this is due to several reasons:

- digital and communicative competences have been identified as key competences for lifelong learning,
- they are closely related to subject content learning, and also to personal and professional development in today's society,
- and, consequently, a good achievement of digital and communicative competences are needed for all areas of employment, then their acquisition should start in compulsory education.

So, the role of teachers is changing, and initial teacher training should be adapted trying to improve traditional practice in teaching. If we consider the results of the different International Research Projects PISA, they have been showing that the acquisition of subject content and digital and communicative competences of pre-university students from several European countries is not very successful.

Concerning communicative competence, we think that language and communication can open pupils' minds to understand subject content and reality, so communicative competence should be a relevant aim in the lesson of Mathematics, Physics, Geography, History, Art, etc. as it is in a lesson of Language, this is why we defend a change of attitude in teachers and we try to design didactic materials containing linguistic strategies to improve communicative competence. These are the typical strategies employed by Language teachers in their lessons but these strategies are not normally incorporated in other subjects at schools, on the contrary teachers are constrained by the syllabus whatever the subject is, and they have no time to know whether their pupils understand the concepts they explain to them or not. It seems obvious that pupils need to follow teachers' explanations in any lesson or when reading a text they need to understand the main and secondary ideas appearing in there or in a problem statement they should catch what it is expressed in order to solve the problem. Furthermore, communicative competence is usually very poor in young people due to several reasons: reading has been

forgotten in favour of a visual world, thus pupils have difficulties in expression and their lexis is extremely reduced too, however a good command in more than one language is required to face the competitive world of work in today's complex and global society. The same applies to digital media, though most students and pupils are familiar with ICT, they are usually limited to copy and paste, which provokes bad habits in learning and no benefits in the acquisition of significant content in any subject.

As far as subject content is concerned, there are several reasons why pupils fail in acquiring content knowledge, one is their linguistic poverty, as it has been said, but there are some others that can affect the teaching learning process, for example, the dissociation between reality and subject content or, sometimes, prejudice against some scientific subjects as most pupils think that Mathematics, Physics or Chemistry are more difficult than other subjects in the area of Humanities. These facts have also been confirmed by PISA reports. So, this project tries to palliate these problems by means of presenting an integral formative teacher training.

Considering the above mentioned aspects, the intTT project designs an integral methodology which includes the:

- significant use of digital media,
- use of digital media and tools both as objective of learning and as communication tools,
- ability to use digital media and tools for the implementation of materials,
- development of critical analysis by pupil's so as to drive significant learning,
- development of linguistic strategies which improve communicative competence both in mother tongue and in foreign language,
- acquisition of subject content in different areas in Science and Humanities.

Following this methodology, and as ICT is essential in the project it has been agreed that the University of Alcalá will work with Internet, video, blog and e-portfolio, however other Universities will also employ wiki, videoconference, moodle, etc. Concerning subject content, there has been a similar agreement, and the University of Alcalá has selected Spanish as mother tongue, English as a foreign language, Literature, Art, History, Geography, Culture, Political and Social Concerns.

### **3. Didactic Materials (CDs)**

CDs are one of the most relevant outcomes of the project, they consist of two modules one in mother tongue, and the other in English to allow for transference across cultures, so we will present the CD designed by the University of Alcalá following the criteria agreed in partners' meetings. Then in our CD, module I, in English, presents didactic activities addressed to secondary school pupils while, module II, in Spanish, is addressed to primary school pupils. Both modules include didactic suggestions and recommendations to help student teachers in the implementation and exploitation of the activities at schools.

The activities will not be only used in initial teacher training courses where they will be presented and discussed, but obviously we will not have the real context, so they will be implemented in real lessons at primary and secondary schools under the supervision of mentors and university tutors. This implementation is also designed as an evaluation strategy of the methodological approach and the didactic materials (CDs) that have been produced. A first master CD is elaborated and once it is implemented it can be modified according to evaluation results, and after the required modifications, if any, the final CD is achieved.

Furthermore, mobility programme, which will be held in April 2012, can also be an assessment tool as student teachers from every University travel to the other partner countries to attend, observe and, in some cases,

give lessons at schools, supervised by mentors. This programme, held during two weeks, can be a good test to implement the activities at schools and to compare, check and evaluate their suitability and viability. In this article, we intend to focus on the didactic activities addressed to pupils to show how subject content, communicative and digital competences are integrated, and we will dedicate especial attention to module I as it is in English.

### **3.1 Didactic Activities Addressed to Pupils**

The didactic activities, based on the project methodology intend, in an integrated way, to:

- improve communicative competence of the pupils developing the following communicative components:
  - ♦ the four linguistic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing,
  - ♦ linguistic knowledge and use of rule governed language (lexis, syntax and pronunciation),
  - ♦ sociolinguistic cultural appropriateness in context, and
  - ♦ discourse structure: cohesion and coherence.
- develop digital competence:
  - ♦ provoking a significant use of digital competence in student teachers and pupils,
  - ♦ provoking a change of attitude in student teachers and pupils:
    - \* making them aware that digital competence is an essential resource for learning,
    - \* avoiding the weak use of digital competence as copy and paste.
- achieve subject content through digital competence tools:
  - ♦ identifying and reflecting on the relation of the subject content with other subjects,
  - ♦ relating subject content to daily life, experiences, other contexts,
  - ♦ raising pupils' awareness of the uses of subject content, and
  - ♦ acquiring the basic terminology needed in the subject content.

Moreover, it is also intended those pupils:

- Develop/acquire the following attitudes:
  - ♦ their autonomy as learners,
  - ♦ responsibility for their own learning,
  - ♦ collaboration with other pupils,
  - ♦ communication with other pupils different from those of their school, and
  - ♦ use of digital tools as a communicative tool.
- Develop/acquire the following transferable skills:
  - ♦ ability to locate information with digital tools,
  - ♦ searching, selecting and organizing information,
  - ♦ analysis and argumentation,
  - ♦ inference,
  - ♦ prediction,
  - ♦ critical thinking,
  - ♦ making decisions, and
  - ♦ solving problems.

### **3.2 Main Points Taken into Account to Design Didactic Activities**

Following the criteria approved in the team meeting held in Comenius University of Bratislava (Slovakia), in March 2010, we have considered several main points to design the didactic activities. We have:

- used authentic materials as the base of the activities, most of them taken from Internet (film, video clips, images, maps, web page texts, etc.), though being fond of eclectic methods, we have used other sources, for instance in the case of module I, excerpts and quotations from *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), the novel written by Muriel Spark. We have not limited to Language and Literature, moreover, we have used material sources dealing with other subject content, Art, Geography, History, Cultural, Political and Social Matters,
- integrated activities within a real context which can be literary, geographical, historical, cultural, political or social context,
- integrated language strategies and techniques with digital tools to develop digital and communicative competences and subject content,
- intended that language strategies are used in every lesson not only in language lessons, as it is the general rule, as we think that this methodology can favour the acquisition of subject content, and a good command in language ensuring a better understanding of subject concepts, and a better expression of the content which has been assimilated,
- designed activities to favour group or team work,
- designed activities to foster the acquisition of transferable skills,
- designed activities to enhance personal attitudes in pupils to improve personal human qualities and to improve the process of learning at the same time.

We have also considered the pedagogical properties of the basic materials, for instance: subject content accuracy, reliability of the information provided and their relation to other subject content and to reality. Moreover, we have been careful with motivational aspects, in our view, these sources should be pleasant and not difficult to be used, which implies easy access and navigation and links with other related sites.

Concerning subject content, our didactic activities deal with several subject contents, not in an isolated way but interconnecting every activity with all the subjects and contents appearing in the respective module, then it is important for us: curricula relevance, subject content related to other subject content and to the real world, suitability of conceptual level, suitable language for school pupils, prompts for discussion, writings, further research, links to other information, sites and materials and motivational aspects. We also intend that pupils develop a series of abilities and skills at the same time they acquire content knowledge, so, we expect pupils can be aware of subject concepts (in our case in Literature, Geography, Art, History, Culture, Political and Social Concerns) establishing relationships among different concepts and comparing them; interpreting data or graphical information: image interpretation; inferring and predicting information; formulating hypothesis; leading to conclusions; using language precisely, etc.

These points, above mentioned, also apply for module II in Spanish, though the examples shown in this article correspond to module I as it has been said. In both modules, a lot of activities are presented but this does not mean that teachers at school should exploit all the activities appearing in the CD during their lessons. On the contrary, we have created a great deal of activities to provide a wide material so that teachers can select those which are more suitable and adequate for their pupils, subjects or contexts at their schools. Furthermore, as the difficulty of activities varies, this allows teachers to choose activities for more advanced pupils, and some others can be selected for those with a lower level of language or subject content knowledge. Another important purpose of these activities is to ensure the transferability of the project. In the case of module I, as the activities are in English, they can be used in Mobility action in other schools in the countries that are members of the project, and

they can be adapted to several contexts and levels at these schools. Moreover, these activities in English can be used in other European countries thanks to dissemination of the project, and they can sustain the life of the project after November 2012 when the project ends.

In module II, we have chosen the cultural traditional popular local feast of Saint Isidro in Madrid, held the 15th of May every year since the sixteenth century, and from this topic we have touched Geography, History, Art, Culture, Mathematics and, of course, Spanish as mother tongue trying to improve the communicative competence of primary school pupils as well as their digital competence using the same tools we have employed in module I.

However in module I, subjects and topics are related to the main source which is the novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961) by Muriel Spark. The film with the same title, based on this book, directed by Ronald Neame (1969), is also another basic authentic material. All subjects and topics appear integrated in this masterpiece written by Spark, moreover Ronald Neame is loyal to the novelist and the book, especially to dialogues, though there are some variations in the film, as it usually happens when literary works are adapted to the cinema. The novel is so rich that permits the study of several subjects, and that is why we have selected it as the main source. Practical activities have been developed in order to acquire subject content of various subjects: Language and Literature, and then, linking Language and Literature with Geography, Art, History and Cultural, Political and Social Concerns. As we have said, we foster integration of subject content, as reality is global, and Literature, History, Geography, Art, Politics, Cultural and Social Aspects, are not isolated tiles of a mosaic. Thus, we want our student teachers realize that content knowledge is not apart from reality so that they can teach their pupils different subjects immersed in a real context, and in this way pupils may be aware that subject contents are interrelated and connected to real life.

Furthermore, as didactic activities also try to develop communicative and digital competences, the activities are a fusion of linguistic strategies, digital tools and strategies for learning subject content. The technological support of these activities are Internet, video, blog and e-portfolio as tools to search and share information, to discuss and argue, to summarize ideas, conclusions, etc. Moreover e-portfolio has been designed as a tool for pupils' self-assessment and as a tool to collect the most relevant information concerning content, thus, we can find orders in the activities to encourage pupils to select and keep the important information in a final e-portfolio. Below, we can see in Section III that pupils are asked to create an e-portfolio with acquired content, this will be a guided task which is supervised by the teacher.

Didactic activities have been organized in three sections, with their subsections including content and self-evaluating e-portfolios. The last section is dedicated to digital competence, though this competence is also practiced in activities in every section.

Section I Language and Literature

- I.1 Muriel Spark, the writer and the woman
- I.2 Muriel Spark and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961)
- I.3 Literary and cultural information: Marcia Blaine School
- I.4 Literary information and Social Concerns
- I.5 Progress e-portfolio for self-evaluation of pupils' learning process
- I.6 Literary information about Robert Louis Stevenson and Dante
- I.7 Progress e-portfolio for self-evaluation of pupils' learning process

Section II Language, Literature, Geography, Art, History, Culture, Political and Social Concerns

- II.1 Language, Literature and Geography: Italy
- II.2 Language, Literature, Geography, and Art: Florence and Rome
- II.3 Language, Literature and Art: Giotto
- II.4 Progress e-portfolio for self-evaluation of pupils' learning process
- II.5 Language, Literature, Geography, Culture and Social Concerns: Scotland

- II.6 Language, Literature, History, Culture, Political and Social Concerns: Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots
- II.7 Language, Literature, History and Culture: Calvinism
- II.8 Progress e-portfolio for self-evaluation of pupils' learning process
- II.9 Language, Literature and History: Spanish Civil War
- II.10 Progress e-portfolio for self-evaluation of pupils' learning process

Section III Design and Create E-Portfolios

- III.1 Design and create an e-portfolio with acquired content
- III.2 Design and create a self-evaluation e-portfolio

### 3.3 Examples of Didactic Activities

Now, we will show three examples of didactic activities addressed to secondary school pupils aged 16–18.

#### 3.3.1 Example 1: Information about Dante

##### A. Didactic Activities

##### (1) Oral Expression: Describing Images

Here, you have two photos that show:

- The house where Dante was born in Florence (Italy) in 1265.
- His tomb in Ravenna (Italy), Dante died in 1321.

Try to describe these images, you can prepare the discussion in groups.



##### (2) Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary

Here you have a brief paragraph to give you some information about Dante one of the most universal writers. Please, read the text. You can see there are three words in Italian, find the meaning of two of them in English.

The *Divine Comedy* was written by Dante Alighieri between 1308 and his death in 1321. It is widely considered the most important and famous work of Italian Literature and one of the greatest works of world Literature. It is an imaginative and allegorical vision of the Christian afterlife. It is divided into three parts, *the Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*.

Could you explain the meaning of *allegorical*?

##### (3) Searching and Giving Literary Information

Think of the names of two other universal authors, one is English and the other is Spanish, and give the title of one work by each author.

Look for some information in Internet about their life and work, select, organize, and summarize this information in 10 lines for each author. Then, add this information to your blog.

**(4) Observing, Reading and Oral Expression**

Look at this painting, and read this brief quotation from the novel by Muriel Spark.



“Here is a picture of Dante meeting Beatrice — it is pronounced Beatrichay in Italian which makes the noun very beautiful — on the Ponte Vecchio.” (46)<sup>1</sup>

Then answer these questions:

- Who do you think pronounced these words in the novel?
- Do you remember the title of the famous work written by Dante?
- Who was Beatrice?

**(5) Searching and Giving Information, Using your Blog**

Now go further, here you have the names of several protagonists of novels and plays written by British and Spanish authors, please produce a table with the name of the protagonist, the title of novel/play, and the name of author.

Discuss in groups, if you need help, look for it in Internet. Then, add this table to the blog, please use italics for titles of books as they are always written in *italics*

Hamlet, Sancho Panza, Pedro Crespo (the Mayor of Zalamea), Romeo, Juliet, David Copperfield, Ophelia, Dulcinea, Don Juan Tenorio, Oliver Twist.

| Protagonist | Novel or Play | Title of Book | Name of Author      |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Hamlet      | Play          | <i>Hamlet</i> | William Shakespeare |
|             |               |               |                     |
|             |               |               |                     |
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|             |               |               |                     |

<sup>1</sup> To avoid repetition of footnotes, we would like to inform that the numbers appearing between brackets in texts correspond to the page in Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961) rpt.; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1971 where quotations have been taken from.

**B. Comments**

These activities can help to develop subject content, communicative and digital competences in pupils.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Subject content:</b><br/>Language, Literature.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Topics:</b><br/>(a) main topic: Dante.<br/>(b) related to other topics: Muriel Spark, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Dickens, Zorrilla, Calderón de la Barca.</p>                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Content abilities:</b><br/>Establishing interrelation among writers, connecting writers, their works and characters.</p>                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Communicative competence/skills:</b><br/>Oral expression, listening, reading comprehension, writing, lexis.</p>                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>Linguistic strategies:</b><br/>Oral description, discussion, skimming and scanning, summarizing, guessing the meaning of words from the context and explaining the meaning of words.</p>                                                              |
| <p><b>Digital Competence:</b><br/>Using the blog and internet, constructing acquired content e-portfolio with relevant selected information.</p>                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Transferable skills:</b><br/>Interpreting images, giving information, making hypothesis, observing and inferring information, selecting, searching and organizing information, sharing information, leading to conclusions, use of digital tools.</p> |
| <p><b>Transferable attitudes:</b><br/>Autonomy in learning, collaborative work, group work, communication with other colleagues.</p>                                                                                                                        |

3.3.2 Example 2: Edinburgh

A. Didactic Activities

(1) Edinburgh and other Important Capitals: Finding Information in a Map, Oral Expression, Searching Information. Using your Blog

|  <p>The map shows the United Kingdom and Ireland. Major cities marked include London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol, Southampton, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Falmouth, Newcastle upon Tyne, Middlesbrough, Kingston upon Hull, and Dover. It also shows the North Atlantic Ocean, North Sea, Irish Sea, English Channel, and the Channel Tunnel. A scale bar at the bottom indicates distances in kilometers and miles.</p> | <p>Look at the map and find Edinburgh. Is it just a town or is it the capital of Scotland?</p> <p>Look at the map and find London, Cardiff and Belfast.</p> <p>Look at the table and match column A with column B</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">A</th> <th style="width: 40%;"></th> <th style="width: 20%;">B</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>London</td> <td></td> <td>Scotland</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Edinburgh</td> <td></td> <td>Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cardiff</td> <td>is the capital of</td> <td>England</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belfast</td> <td></td> <td>Northern Ireland</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Look at the map and find, at least, two other important towns of the United Kingdom, present some information about them to share it with your classmates. You can find this information in Internet. Once the most relevant information is selected and organized, add it to your blog.</p> | A                |  | B | London |  | Scotland | Edinburgh |  | Wales | Cardiff | is the capital of | England | Belfast |  | Northern Ireland |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--|---|--------|--|----------|-----------|--|-------|---------|-------------------|---------|---------|--|------------------|
| A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | B                |  |   |        |  |          |           |  |       |         |                   |         |         |  |                  |
| London                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Scotland         |  |   |        |  |          |           |  |       |         |                   |         |         |  |                  |
| Edinburgh                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Wales            |  |   |        |  |          |           |  |       |         |                   |         |         |  |                  |
| Cardiff                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | is the capital of                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | England          |  |   |        |  |          |           |  |       |         |                   |         |         |  |                  |
| Belfast                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Northern Ireland |  |   |        |  |          |           |  |       |         |                   |         |         |  |                  |

## (2) Reading Comprehension and Oral Expression

Muriel Spark presents Miss Brodie and her pupils walking along Edinburgh. Here you have three short texts with quotations from the novel by Muriel Spark. Read them and answer these questions to help you to understand the texts.

“They approached the Old Town which none of the girls had properly seen before, because none of their parents was so historically minded as to be moved and conduct their young into the reeking network of slums which the Old Town constituted in those years. The Cannongate, The Grassmarket, The Lawnmarket, were names which betokened a misty region of crime and desperation; ‘Lawnmarket Man Jailed’. Only Eunice Gardiner and Monica Douglas had already traversed the High Street on foot on the Royal Mile from the Castle or Holyrood” (32).

“They had come to the end of Lauriston Place, past the fire station, where they were to get on a tram-car to go to tea with Miss Brodie in her flat at Churchill. A very long queue of men lined this part of the street. They were without collars, in shabby suits. They were talking and spitting and smoking little bits of cigarette held between middle finger and thumb ... ‘You must all pray for the Unemployed ... You all know what the dole is’ ‘Eunice Gardiner had not heard of it’, and Miss Brodie says: ‘It is the weekly payment made by the State for the relief of the Unemployed and their families. Sometimes they go and spend their dole on drink before they go home, and their children starve’” (39).

Sandy, Miss Brodie’s favourite pupil, escapes to wander through “they certainly forbidden quarters of Edinburgh to look at the blackened monuments and hear the unbelievable curses of drunken men and women ...” (109).

Questions to be answered during the lesson:

- Which parts of Edinburgh do Miss Brodie and her pupils visit?
- Where is High Street?
- Did they discover any important monuments along their walk?
- Where does Miss Brodie live?
- How were the unemployed men dressed
- What is the meaning of the word dole?
- Which districts does Sandy visit on her own?

## (3) Literary Criticism, Oral Expression, Writing, Add Conclusions to your Blog.

Re-read the 3 texts of A.2. to compare them, and discuss these statements:

- Muriel Spark enjoys describing the city and tells us of the many outings made by Miss Brodie’s pupils.
- Spark not only describes the beauty of Edinburgh but also tells us about the way people live in this beautiful city.
- The girls of these wealthy Scottish families also see the other world, men without work who survive with difficulty in this elegant town.
- Spark uses Edinburgh as a microcosm to portray Scottish/British society.

Add your agreements and conclusions to your blog.

## (4) Social Concerns and Oral Debate.

Points to be discussed

- Do you have unemployment in your respective countries?
- Do you think governments in Europe try to take the suitable measures to solve this problem?
- Do you think Muriel Spark expresses social and political views in this part of the novel?

## (5) Simulation: Debating, Writing, Add Conclusions to your Blog

Imagine you are a MP, what will you propose to solve or palliate the problem of unemployment?

- Form two groups, prepare a debate and discuss
- Add your agreements and conclusions to your blog.
- Write about the process of agreement in your discussion. Keep it in your blog for your self-evaluation e-portfolio.

(6) Language Awareness: Grammar

- Look at the second text in activity A.2., underline the tenses appearing there, and identify the type of tense and its function.
- Look at this sentence *You must all pray for the Unemployed ...* in the second text in activity A.2.
- Look at the table, and identify what this modal verb, **must**, expresses here.

|        |            |            |             |         |
|--------|------------|------------|-------------|---------|
| Advice | Obligation | Permission | Possibility | Opinion |
|--------|------------|------------|-------------|---------|

**B. Comments**

These activities can help to develop subject content, communicative and digital competences in pupils.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Subject content:</b><br/>Language, Literature, Geography, Art, Culture, Social Concerns.</p>                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Topics:</b></p> <p>a) main topic:<br/>- Edinburgh.</p> <p>b) related to other topics:<br/>- Muriel Spark, Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, Social Concerns: Unemployment.</p>                       |
| <p><b>Content abilities:</b><br/>Locating information in a map, literary criticism, establishing interrelation among concepts appearing in Literature, Geography, Art, Culture and Social Concerns.</p>       |
| <p><b>Communicative competence/skills:</b><br/>Oral expression, listening, reading comprehension, writing and awareness of language: grammar.</p>                                                             |
| <p><b>Linguistic strategies:</b><br/>Discussing and debating, simulation, answering questions skimming and scanning, summarizing agreements and conclusions, matching function and structure in language.</p> |
| <p><b>Digital Competence:</b><br/>Using the blog and internet.</p>                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Transferable skills:</b><br/>Analyzing and arguing, searching, selecting and organizing information, sharing information, leading to agreements and conclusions, use of digital tools.</p>              |
| <p><b>Transferable attitudes:</b><br/>Autonomy in learning, cooperative work, group work, communication with other pupils.</p>                                                                                |

3.3.3 Example 3: Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots

**A. Didactic Activities**

**(1) Reading and Oral Expression**

Now, that you know a lot about Scotland and Edinburgh thanks to Muriel Spark's novel, and other Internet resources, let us introduce some History. This will be done with a short paragraph with some quotations from the novel:

The positive influence of the history teacher leads Eunice to read historical novels about the life of Mary Stuart. Queen Mary in the novel represents Scotland, a country which is fighting against English domination. Scotland has its own history. Several aspects of Edinburgh, the most famous Scottish town, are shown by Spark. Edinburgh is a historic city full of monuments where, for example, Sandy remembers seeing in Holyrood Castle Queen Mary's rooms "where the Queen had played cards with Rizzio" (32). Edinburgh is the city of ideas, beliefs, culture and literature, and, lastly, it is a city having terrible social differences, wealthy areas and areas of poverty, so different from each other.

Answer these questions:

- Describe the three aspects presented by Muriel Spark about Edinburgh.
- Have you heard of Queen Mary before? Tell what you know, in any case you will learn more about her.
- What does Queen Mary represent in Scotland?

## (2) Observing and Describing

Here you have a portrayal of Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots. Can you describe this portrayal?



## (3) Information about Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots: Reading and Oral Expression. Using your Blog: Summarizing

Now, learn something about Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots

Mary, Queen of Scots was one of the most fascinating and controversial monarchs of 16th century Europe. At one time, she claimed the crowns of four nations — Scotland, France, England and Ireland. Her physical beauty and kind heart were acknowledged even by her enemies. Yet she lacked the political skills to rule successfully in Scotland. Her second marriage was unpopular and ended in murder and scandal; her third was even less popular and ended in forced abdication in favour of her infant son. She fled to England in 1568, hoping for the help of her cousin, Elizabeth I. Her presence was dangerous for the English Queen, who feared Catholic plotting on Mary's behalf. The two Queens never met and Mary remained imprisoned for the next nineteen years. She was executed in 1587, only forty-four years old. By orders of the English government, all of her possessions were burned. In 1603, upon Elizabeth's death, Mary's son became king of England as James I.

Answer these questions:

- Explain some of the features that make Queen Mary so fascinating.
- How many Kingdoms did she claim?
- Where did she think she could have shelter and protection and why?
- Was she really a refugee in England?
- Do you think she was betrayed by her cousin, Elizabeth I? Give reasons why or why not.
- Why do you think she was imprisoned in England?
- Who inherited the English throne after Queen Elizabeth's death?
- Can you remember when England and Scotland were united?
- Summarize the main ideas in the text, add them to the blog. Keep this information for your e-portfolio.

**ROLE PLAY:** Imagine a short dialogue among both Queens. Prepare this dialogue in two groups. Then, two girls play the role of Mary, Queen of the Scots and Queen Elizabeth I. The rest of the group act as the audience in a theatre.

**(4) History, Political and Social Concerns: Reading and Debating. Using your Blog: Writing**

Here, you have a text with quotations from the novel where you can see Muriel Spark's views about nationalism.

Politically, Spark does not defend the views of extreme nationalism. She is a European: "We are Europeans" (33), Miss Brodie says. In Chapter III, Spark distinguishes Jean Brodie from her colleagues in Marcia Blaine School by describing her as a European in contrast to the others who are Scottish Nationalists: "Some assisted in the Scottish Nationalist Movement; others, like Miss Brodie called themselves Europeans and Edinburgh a European capital" (43).

Now you can discuss about the topic of nationalism, and add your conclusions to your blog.

Points to be discussed:

- Nationalism in your own country
- Pros and cons of nationalism
- Nationalism has not a place in our global world

**B. Comments**

These activities can help to develop subject content, communicative and digital competences in pupils.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Subject content:</b><br/>Language, Literature. History, Culture, Political and Social Concerns.</p>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b>Topics:</b><br/>c) main topic:<br/>- Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots.<br/>d) related to other topics:<br/>- Muriel Spark, Scotland, England, Edinburgh, nationalism.</p>                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Content abilities:</b><br/>Literary criticism, establishing interrelation among concepts appearing in Literature, History, Culture and Political and Social Concerns.</p>                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Communicative competence/skills:</b><br/>Oral expression, listening, reading comprehension, writing.</p>                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Linguistic strategies:</b><br/>Describing, discussing and debating, answering questions, role-play, skimming and scanning, summarizing, writing agreements and conclusions.</p>                                                                                             |
| <p><b>Digital Competence:</b><br/>Using the blog and internet, constructing the e-portfolio with relevant selected information.</p>                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>Transferable skills:</b><br/>Observing images and inferring information, inferring symbolism, analyzing, arguing, making hypotheses, searching, selecting and organizing information, sharing information, leading to agreements and conclusions, use of digital tools.</p> |
| <p><b>Transferable attitudes:</b><br/>Autonomy in learning, collaborative work, group work, communication with other pupils.</p>                                                                                                                                                  |

**4. Conclusion**

As it has been seen in the didactic activities presented in this article, we could conclude that the innovative pedagogical side of this project lies in the integration of subject content and communicative and digital competences, and in considering language and technology main tools to facilitate the learning of subject content. Language strategies and techniques improve communicative competence in English and in mother tongue,

promoting, at the same time, linguistic diversity as six languages are involved in the project, moreover these linguistic strategies used during lessons can be a tool for student teachers or teachers to be sure that concepts, ideas, knowledge in the different subjects of the curriculum have been understood and acquired by pupils. Another added value is the incorporation of ICT in everyday life at schools and in the university facilitating metacognitive and significant learning which will help pupils and student teachers to face the future. The project didactic materials foster digital education at school, and promotes a change in attitude and practice among student teachers through initial teacher training so that they are capable of implementing this methodology in their future lessons.

**References:**

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