



Newsletter: The Testing Phases of the „eSchool4S“

No. 5/September 2016

The implementation of web-based classrooms from the perspective of organizers, teachers and students

“I am sure the course has helped my students to realize the importance of each everyday activity for the future of our planet”, said one of the participant teachers. We invite you to read more about the testing phases of the eSchool4S in this newsletter.

Project information: E-School for Sustainability in the Danube Region (eSchool4S)

[More...](#)

Content of this newsletter:

The implementation of the web-based classrooms - our recipe for success!

[More...](#)

eSchool4S courses in practice - my experience as a teacher...

[More...](#)

...and what other students and teachers think about eSchool4S...

[More...](#)

Upcoming events: 3rd Annual Conference of eSchool4S in Stuttgart

[More...](#)

Project information:

eSchool4S - a transnational e-learning platform for collaborative learning

The network-project E-School for Sustainability in the Danube Region (eSchool4S) unites ten partners from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Each partner is specialized in different relevant fields of expertise. They were brought together to pursue a common goal – bring Sustainable Development and European Integration to schools.

eSchool4S designs an operational e-learning-platform for cooperation and exchange of information and experiences in the field of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). It develops interactive web-based teaching and learning concepts to cover cross-border issues in the fields of sustainable development and European integration. The approach brings together decision-makers, (in-service) teacher training institutions, schools, and students across the Danube Region to raise their ecological awareness and to promote inclusion of these issues into the school curricula of secondary schools. Students and teachers learn to which extent there is interdependence between social, economic, environmental, and political development of a country. Hence, afterwards they know why the balanced interplay of the development dimensions is a condition for sustainable development at the national, regional and European level. They improve their computer skills, cognitive competences, communication as well as soft skills.

The eSchool4S is a project within the framework of the EU program "Lifelong Learning Programme" (LLP), Comenius-Multilateral Networks. It was recognized as an official project in the Priority Area nine "Investing in people and skills", within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

Project data

Duration: 1st January 2014 – 31st December 2016

Target Group: students between the ages of 15 and 18

Project Lead: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Stuttgart

Internet: <http://eschool4s.eu>

Moodle platform: <http://moodle.eschool4s.eu>



The implementation of the web-based classrooms - our recipe for success!

1. The why and what of the testing phases of the eSchool4S

The first testing phase represented the prototype of our eSchool4S-moodle-platform. Each country provided a teacher to test the courses with their classes. It served us as first step into teaching sustainability via an online platform linked to the Danube region and its culture. Being an unproven set-up of template lessons, the platform was revised and adjusted to the needs and demands of teachers and students according to its content evaluation after the first testing phase.

The second testing phase then concentrated more on the usability and effectiveness of the platform in practice with students and teachers. A minimum of three teachers per country with their classes tested our revised moodle platform. Our focus laid on the user-friendliness of the classrooms and lessons such as the handling and the comprehensibility of the applied language (level and complexity of English) on the one side. On the other side, the students' learning experience played a big role in the later evaluation of the second testing phase: attracting attention, arising interest, adding learning value were our buzz words.

2. The participants of the second testing phase

As the eSchool4S-moodle-platform after its revision was not any longer just a prototype, we invited more teachers with their classes to test our online lessons: 16 teachers and approximately 170 students from 9 different countries took part in the second testing phase and gave valuable feedback on our lessons.

3. The organisation of a testing phase – proceedings and consideration

The chronological proceedings foresee that – first of all – the test object must be fully ready for testing. This includes an internal pretesting of all functions and contents that will be published. If the contents prove to be ready for the launch, the testing period is set and the access und participation information (e.g. contents, person in charge, trouble shooting, etc.) are forwarded to the testers. The invited testers (here teachers) are requested to give their full name and e-mail address as well as the choice of course they plan to test. After the first (two) week(s) the testers will receive an e-mail with a (brief) interims questionnaire to make sure the testing is successful and to troubleshoot any occurring problems.

After the testing period, the courses will be evaluated by all testers (teachers and students) and a report will be generated including suggestions and measures for improvement.

eSchool4S courses in practice - my experience as a teacher...



It all began with the 1st Annual Conference of the eSchool4s network at the Landesakademie Esslingen in Germany. I was invited as a teacher facing topics around sustainable development. In addition to this, I try to use modern media in my lessons and have a course of bilingual learning students with international focus. We are a secondary school upper level and the class has the profile international economy.

So, the project eSchool4S was really interesting for me and I took the chance to be part of the testing phase of the e-learning-moodle-platform with my students. My moodle skills were already fine. Therefore, I was able to start with the work without much help how to use moodle. I realized that within the project there was a great support for teachers being not so used to work with moodle. So, in my opinion everybody was well prepared for the testing phase even without having had moodle knowledge at the beginning.

First of all, I checked the learning material of the platform. There was a huge amount of information about the Danube region and sustainability. I also found the tools for teachers and the teacher's corner very helpful to get into the practical realization. But most of the learning material is self-explaining and it was easy to implement in my lessons. I worked with the students two hours a week on computers with the web-based classrooms. Since I started early with the testing phase, students could take a look at nearly every topic of the platform.



Strategies for regional integration

The EU and the states of the Danube Region have identified 4 strategies for development:
Connecting the region, protecting the environment, strengthening the activities should be developed with urgency.



<http://www.danube-region.eu/about/priorities>

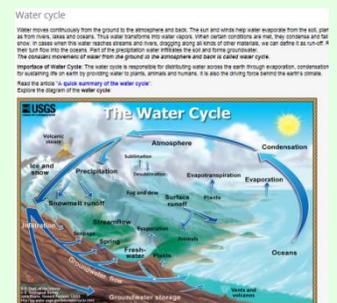
In my case, the role of the teacher was different compared to "normal" lessons because the students were able to work independently. I was working like a tutor giving support, if needed and giving the students the opportunity to explore and work with the material by themselves. A great opportunity to fascinate students for learning is given by the interactivity of the tasks contained in the different courses of the platform. Students really enjoyed this modern learning method. A very special thing for them and for me was the fact that you

are a part of a multi-cultural project where different countries come together to learn something about the Danube region and sustainable development. I realized that my students became more aware of the need to act sustainably and of the responsibility we all have. They got so many helpful information how their everyday behavior could be changed for example by producing less waste or becoming more aware of their consumption. This is so important because small things can change a lot, if they are practiced by many people.

At the end of the testing phase of the eSchool4S, the students were happy to be part of it and they definitely want to have more e-learning in the future. Their horizon is growing and they liked this international taste of the project. We all hope to work together with different countries to learn further from each other.

Jörg Müller

Berufliches Schulzentrum Leonberg, Germany



...and what other students and teachers think about eSchool4S...

Students

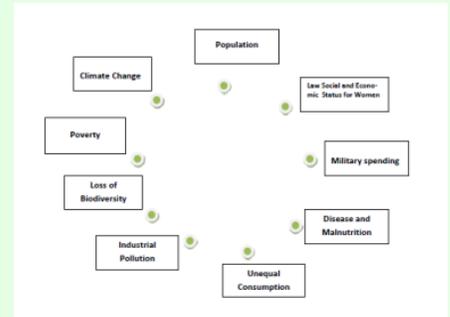
"It's a great website to learn something about the given topics. I guess I will also use it in the future."

"Thanks to this site I have learned a lot about the nature."

"Keep encouraging people to protect the environment."

"I don't want to add anything because the course was perfect."

"The information given there was intriguing and the vital facts about the climate change were sinister. We should take them into consideration in order not to destroy our planet."



Teachers



"I am sure the course has helped my students to realize the importance of each everyday activity for the future of our planet."

"I would like more students to get involved in such activities."

"The course is useful for the students to form their correct thinking about the future."

"So, for me as a teacher and for my students, attending this course was a pleasure, an interesting experience, accumulation of knowledge, and we have completed the known things. Congratulations!"

Upcoming events

3rd Annual Conference of eSchool4S

Date: Thursday, 17th of November 2016, 9:30 am – 17:00 pm

Venue: Hotel Steinberger, Arnulf-Klett-Platz 7, 70173 Stuttgart

The 3rd Annual Conference will be held in November in Stuttgart. During the 3rd Annual Conference and based on the experience gained during implementation the eSchool4S project partners want to discuss educational challenges related to sustainable development and European integration in the Danube region but also provide concrete and operational solutions to tackle them. In this context, the official launch and further dissemination of the main project's contribution - an innovative E-Learning-Moodle-Platform on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for the Danube Region - is of particular relevance.

[BACK TO THE TOP](#)



This project is co-funded by the
Lifelong Learning Programme of
the European Union



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.