



Comenius Project Overview

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The Comenius Network is named after Jan Amos Kaminski (Latinised to Comenius) born on 28 March 1592, in Moravia, now part of the Czech Republic. He is considered appropriate for the values for which he stood: internationalism, the importance of high quality education for all, languages and practical experience underpinning learning, innovation, and intercultural understanding.

The objectives of Comenius are to enhance the quality and reinforce the European dimension of school education, in particular by encouraging trans-national cooperation between schools and contributing to improved professional development of staff directly involved in the school education sector, and to promote the learning of languages and intercultural awareness.*

*http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/overview/comenius_overview.htm#objectives

Comenius is divided into three actions:

Comenius 1: school partnerships

Comenius 2: training of teachers and other school education staff

Comenius 3: development of the networks

Sunfield is participating in Comenius 1 - school partnerships. That is to say, to engage in school development projects, give school managers and teachers from at least three establishments from three (or more) participating countries the opportunity to exchange experience and exchange information on teaching methods, organisation and management of themes of common interest.

Students with special educational needs face specific limitations regarding language that hinder communication. Therefore, the teaching process must engage methods, techniques and programmes of alternative and augmentative communication. These

pedagogical approaches will be compared measured and refined through the work of the partnership.

The objectives of this particular project are to:

- Increase the quantity and quality of meaningful interactions of students with their environment
- Improve their social and communication skills
- Improve their self-esteem
- Improve their self-help skills
- Motivate their interests
- Enhance the integration of students in the social web

Teachers and other staff will be given the possibility to exchange experiences, to investigate aspects of European education and cultural diversity, to explore alternative and augmentative methods for the facilitation of communication and improve their use of a foreign language.

This specific project is led by colleagues from Greece with contingents from schools in Romania, Sweden, Spain and England (Sunfield). The inaugural meeting was held at Sunfield between 3 & 7 December 2007 and over the course of a week working relationships were formed between like minded professionals and a course of action decided upon. It was determined that each group should put forward a draft proposal for a tool which would attempt to address the objectives above and that they should together form a protocol for communication that might be used in each and every country. The title for the project is 'Communication across Borders'.

Sunfield's contribution is a pilot evaluation of the SCERTS® (Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional Support) model currently being trialled within the school. Outcomes will be presented to participating members and a final decision for insertion into the final protocol made. Several meetings are planned over the next two years in each of the schools concerned where best practice may be observed, discussed and, if necessary, modified for local use.

Compiled by Chris Parsons, Advanced Skills Teacher.