School piloting report and analysis

(Small Scale Piloting)

Deliverable No. 20

Introduction

The PopuLLar project, in its first year, developed a full set of teacher and students guides, videos and materials to motivate students to learn languages through music complemented by ICT.

The main areas of the PopuLLar project innovation are:

- Using the primary interest area of secondary students (music) as a motivational tool for them to engage with language learning.
- Utilizing the understanding that music is personal thus students engagement is at a personal level. Students are strongly involved.
- Including LWULT languages as a basic component of the project.
- Singing, shown to be an excellent tool to promote language learning and retention, is the PopuLLar's core activity.
- Bringing European collaborative level into the project.

Overall, PopuLLar is about to enhance the ability of young European students

to apply creative thinking, curiosity and enquiry, social and communications skills, confidence and practicality to develop opportunities and achieve positive change through innovative approaches to teaching.

The PopuLLar materials, created by the partners, explains the project both to teachers and students, in digital format including a video guide that explains step by step how to develop the project.

They clearly explained that the students have the 'ownership' of the project. The students are invited to freely explore their music and create their own lyrics. The resulting video performances show their creativity and commitment as well as their effort to translate their song into another language, therefore adapting the translation to the melody of the song by delving into a different language.

The small scale piloting intended to test the project methodology and materials and verify if these answered the need for motivating secondary school students to learn languages, focus digital competences and be creative.

The challenge

Does the PopuLLar project offer a key to unlock students' spontaneity and interest towards new languages? Does the PopuLLar method help language learning?

Are the students capable of 'owing' the project and develop the suggested practices mostly on their own?

Are the produced set of teacher and student guides engaging and clear enough to allow autonomous use by the students?

Did the produced materials help the students to free their creativity? Did they help them to write and translate their songs?

Did the produced materials support the students in the technical endeavour

Key issue

The pedagogic materials created by the partners are the base of the sustainability of the PopuLLar project. They were conceived as theoretical and practical tools to allow autonomous participation by students (and teachers) across Europe and beyond, once tested, perfected and made available on the PopuLLar website as an open resource.

The materials to test

The materials to test were created in the previous project work packages and were inspired by the partners' expertise in the field and by research on connections between music and language learning.
They comprise materials created for student and teacher use.

Student Materials:

Student Step Guide

- Introduction
- Steps into PopULLar
- PopuLLar by Steps
- Phase 1: Creating and recording a song
- Step1 Select a song
- Step 2 Rewrite the lyrics in your native language
- Step 3 Translate the lyrics into the target language
- Step 4 Record singing audio and video
- Step 5 Upload and share
- Phase 2 Share Across Europe
- Step 1 Select songs made by other students
- Step 2 Translate into your native language
- Step 3 Record singing audio and video
- Step 4 Upload and share
- Conclusion

Student Supporting Materials

- Before starting
- Five PopuLLar warm-up activities
- Steps to help students succeed in writing and translating lyrics
- Lost in translation: tricks and suggestions
- Why use multimedia to support your music project
- Using Audio Recordings
- Using Video Recordings
- How to make an audio recording
- How to make your own class video
- Class recording equipment
- Get organized! Setting tasks
- Camera! Production time!
- Editing your classroom video
- Three different possible approaches
- Don´t forget
- Sharing what you´ve done
- Benefits of sharing work
- Project level sharing
- Why YouTube and a Wiki?
- Starting a class choir

The piloting process

Six groups of high school students in the partner countries have been paired to text the PopuLLar activities.

The students in the UK with the students in Turkey, those in Czech Republic with the German ones, those in Spain with the Italian ones.

They followed the following steps, after having been introduced to the project and its guides by the local project partner and the teacher and after compiling the online pre-piloting questionnaire:

Step 1 Collaboratively chose a song to work with

Step 2 Creatively and collaboratively they wrote their own lyrics to their chosen song

Step 3 They translated their lyrics into their target language and adapted to the song's melody

and into their target language.

Step 5 They shared their videos, with transcripts of the two language versions of their lyrics, on the project community space.

Step 6 They translated the lyrics written by the group of students with whom they were paired into their own language, adapt, rehearsed, videoed, and uploaded for sharing, included the text of the translated lyrics .

In each pair there was a LWULT language and the students had the opportunity to hear authentic use of the language.

The teacher was involved as a facilitator and to check that the students had observed the rules explained in the *PopuLLar* Guide, but the students had the 'ownership' of the project and in some cases even performed the project activities in places different from the school in extra-curricular hours.

The project partners had the role of introducing the project and being available for any request or help needed by the teachers or the students. They had been offering their support for the whole duration of the piloting. The project partners were observing the process and taking relevant information to compile the Case Study of the piloting happening in their country, as the project work plan required.

Timing

According to the work plan presented in the project application, the small scale piloting should have been completed by the 30th December 2012. Although the necessary procedures to get the results by the specified deadline had been set by all partners, some had to prolong the duration of the piloting due to the fact that Christmas holiday did not allow all students to dedicate the necessary time to complete the project activities. Overall the piloting experience started in September 2012 and ended in February 2013.

The total number of students piloting the PopuLLar methodology and resources was 117. The total number of teachers piloting the PopuLLar methodology and resources was 9.

Students were given pre-questionnaires to elicit their prior experience about and expectations from the proposed new approach to learning. The results of the student pre-questionnaire show that all students love music of many types varying from pop-rap, R&B, jazz, lounge, rock and blues. They were all aware that music was very important for foreign language learning. Almost all students (97%) stated that they use the internet on a daily basis for communication, entertainment and education. Overall, students had highly positive expectations of their participation in the PopuLLar project. They thought that it could help them improve their language skills, be more creative and collaborative.

Students reflected on the results and compared them with their expectations in the post questionnaires. Students (93%) reported that they had enjoyed working autonomously in groups in the process of choosing a song, writing and translating the lyrics and shooting the video. The majority of the students (87%) also said that they used their creativity in writing and translating the lyrics. Thus, the results of the post questionnaire indicate that the students feel that they have gained and improved skills in terms of cooperation, autonomous work and creativity.

As for the difficulties that the students have encountered in the initial phase of the piloting, almost all students (81.5%) agreed that writing and translating the lyrics was the most difficult phase. According to 18.4 % of the students, singing was the most difficult phase. In addition, one student indicated that video-editing was the most difficult. Hence students' reflections regarding the difficulties that they have encountered during the initial piloting process differ from one another.

Results of the piloting have been based not only on the post-questionnaires compiled by the students (not all students completed the questionnaires at the end of the piloting), but on direct observations of the project partners and interviews with the students. Overall, all students showed interest and were curious about the project.

They liked the idea of taking part in the piloting because music and ICT were involved. They also liked the exchange with students in different countries.

They found the PopuLLar materials clear and precise, although in some cases they would have preferred to have also very short instruction (half page / one page). They liked the video guide and used it more often than the guide in text format.

For the students the results of the piloting exceeded their expectations. They enjoyed the process, put a lot of energy into it, had fun but were also aware that their piloting was important for the project. They showed a responsible approach and aimed to cooperate.

The students were creative and were pleased to 'own' the project, showing maturity and capacity of controlling the project steps on their own.

Although difficult, they enjoyed the translating phase of the project and its challenge.

The project incited their interest in learning foreign languages, including LWULT languages.

They think that music can help language learning and hope that projects like PopuLLar can be increasingly included into the school curriculum.

The teachers were pleased by seeing the students very active and eager to reach good results in an almost total autonomous way and dedicating their time even in extra-curricular hours. The teachers found the project materials innovative and stimulating. They are ready to learn more on the connections between music and second language learning and are also ready for more experiences as the PopuLLar one.

The project partners were satisfied with the students' participation and the overall result of the piloting. They found the experience rewarding, with benefits at professional level as individuals and institutions.

Conclusion

The PopuLLar methodology and resources fully respond the need to motivate high school students to learn languages through music and technology. They enable students to unleash their creativity and practice new languages with care and fun. Music is a powerful means for language learning and the project competences, autonomous group collaboration and, most importantly, they understood and heard LWULT languages from other students. As envisaged in the project application, PopuLLar directly answered also the priorities for literacy and transversal key competences - such as learning to learn, sense of initiative, social, civic and cultural competences.

Annex a)

Links to online Questionnaires

Pre-questionnaires for students
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Am99qiZrnXPadHRhWjVCa0E0ZTRQVndsd0twSFZJWmc&usp=sharing
Post questionnaires for students
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Am99qiZrnXPadEhldEJta18yWjNtZGRLdlloRW14Vnc&usp=sharing
Pre-questionnaires for teachers
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Am99qiZrnXPadE1fbVZtV3QzcGZXYXA0d1JLdDNCZ1E&usp=sharing
Post-questionnaires for teachers
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Am99qiZrnXPadFFrQnU5aWN4bDNEbWthWkVEWlNyS3c&usp=sharing