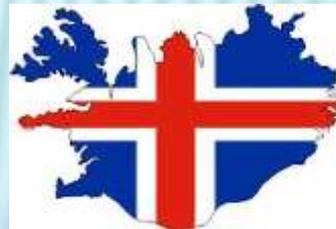




Erasmus + KA2

“Developing competencies of teaching team to developing creativity of the children and adolescents”

1 September 2015 - 1 March 2018



Our school is participating on an Erasmus + KA2 project titled “**Developing competencies of teaching team to developing creativity of the children and adolescents**”.

The duration of the project ranges between 1 September 2015 and 1 March 2018.

The leading country is Poland with the project coordinator and representative Mrs Emilia Wojdyła.

The participating partners are:

1. The A' Technical School of Limassol, Cyprus
2. “Agios Spyridonas” Special School, Larnaka, Cyprus
3. Istituto Comprensivo Via F.S. Nitti, Rome, Italy
4. Fristundamidstodin Midberg, Iceland
5. The board of Education in Kielce, Poland
6. Niepubliczny Młodzieżowy Ośrodek Wychowawczy w Wegrzynowie, Poland

The main **Objective** of the project is to strengthen the professional capacity of teachers and others working with children and youth.

- ❖ The **first part** of the project involved implementation of the **coaching method** of **promoting the development of children and youth**.
- ❖ After the first meeting of the project in Poland we were in charge of researching on the above mentioned method and implementing it in our school curriculum.
- ❖ At first we informed all the staff about the philosophy of the project and the future steps to be followed.
- ❖ After that we decided on each colleague's specialty involvement in the project.
- ❖ A common decision was taken for a holistic implementation of these practices
- ❖ We also put on display, in our hallway, the Erasmus+ logo along with our partners.



- ❖ We organized staff and parents meetings where all the steps and stages of the project were discussed thoroughly. The same was done with representatives of the Ministry of Education.
- ❖ We clarified that the first step involved the use and implementation of the **GROW** model which is one of the most currently used models to format coaching or mentoring.



- ❖ Having this model in mind we had to clarify that in our case according to the Law of Special Education 1999 and 2001 the Individualized Education Program (IEP) is compulsory and part of each educator's duties.
- ❖ In order to implement any educational model in the spectrum of Special Education in Cyprus an IEP must be prepared for every individual student. The IEP is created through a team effort and reviewed at least twice a year.
- ❖ Based on the philosophy of **GROW model** and **Coaching** and as part of the IEP of our students and the fundamental goals of their educational plan we selected the Peer-to-peer learning ,an educational practice in which students interact with other students to attain educational goals.
- ❖ Other contemporary views position Peer-to-peer learning as a mode of "learning for everyone, by everyone, about almost anything." Whether it takes place in a formal or informal learning context, in small groups or online, peer learning manifests aspects of self-organisation that are mostly absent from pedagogical models of teaching and learning.
- ❖ Referring to our practices this method is being carried out by cooperating with High Schools and Vocational Schools in the public and private sector in our district and nearby cities.

- ❖ To be more specific, in the program named <APODOHI> which means <acceptance> in Greek, students of our school along the students of St. George Lyceum had regular communication and cooperation and were involved in common educational and social activities such as **drama exercises, photography, sports and outdoor recreational activities, arts and crafts, music and dance**. Both schools are located nearby each other.
- ❖ The outcome of such cooperation was a joint theatrical performance where students from both schools co acted on stage transmitting humanitarian messages not only to all school communities but to the broader local society. Such a project has proved that disability is not an obstacle of coexistence in terms of learning and development.
- ❖ Moreover, the students of both schools through the photography workshops have organized a photo exhibition for the public in cooperation of the culture services of Larnaca Municipality.
- ❖ Regarding the sports activities, a Sports Day was arranged where parents and friends were invited to participate along.
- ❖ As far as Art was concerned, the students had the chance to create their artistic skills together and then exhibited their products.

Summing up, after the final assessment of the program implementation this **peer-to-peer learning** method has proven that peer learning is undoubtedly an effective way to transmit knowledge and educational experiences in a wide range of student groups from different educational and social backgrounds.



❖ Another implementation of **Peer-to-Peer Learning** was when our students met and cooperated with the students of **The A' Technical School of Limassol** who also are partners in the same project. The students of the Technical school, Fine Arts Department, acting as mentors, cooperated on an Art & Design activity with our students.



❖ What's more, our students acted as mentors when a bowling activity was organized with the Pascal Private High School. Our students, due to their intense training, score high and are in a position to teach others.



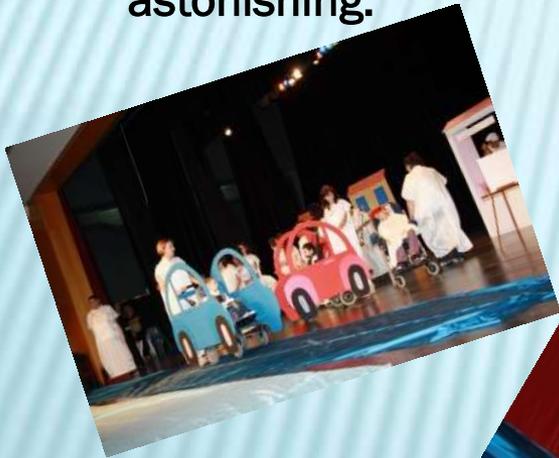
Additional implementation of the **Peer-to-Peer** learning took place in our school when students from **Kalogeras Primary school**, acting as mentors, came and organized a training session for our students on “Safe internet, e-Safety”. The second session took place at their premises. These two sessions were very informative and were designed to help students who are using the Internet to identify and avoid situations that could threaten their safety.

Goals:

- To increase student knowledge of Internet safety
- To aid the student in identifying dangers on the Internet
- To build critical-thinking and decision-making skills relating to computer usage
- To help students protect themselves from inappropriate behavior online

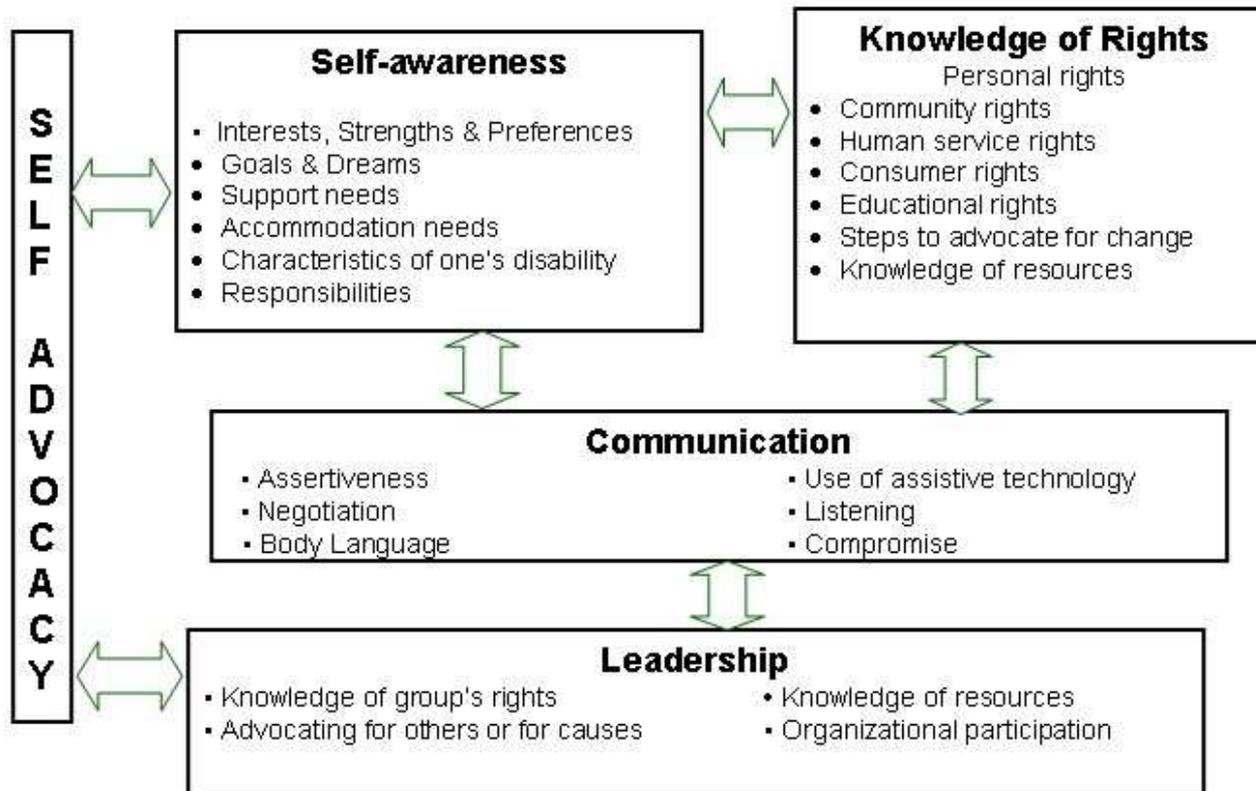


Another good practice based on the philosophy of **COACHING, SELF- ADVOCACY** and **SELF -EMPOWERMENT** in our school is **the Agios Spyridonas Drama Club**. Teachers are called to participate in theatrical workshops of theater pedagogy and adopt principles of the Theatre of the Oppressed (Agusto Boal) – Theatre for personal and Social changes. As an outcome of these workshops our students perform on stage (3 performances per year). In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture our drama club performs on stage inviting students from primary and secondary Education in our district aiming in social change of the stereotype attitudes. The results, the emotions and outcomes are amazing and astonishing.



SELF-ADVOOCACY

Self-Advocacy Characteristics



Another example of coaching is the instruction of **Self-advocacy, Autonomy (self-independence, life skills, social skills, and self-empowerment)**

- ❖ Self-advocacy does not mean “doing it all yourself” without the help of others.
- ❖ Students with disabilities require self-advocacy characteristics and skills for a successful transition from school to the broader society. The process of developin self-advocacy skills should begin while the students still attend school. It is important for students with exceptionalities to be aware of their rights and how to present themselves responsibly.
- ❖ Furthermore, students with disabilities are not exempt from such policies however they will need to learn how to **assertively** advocate for their needs without being aggressive. For these reasons we organize over night trips on a national and international basis where our students are given opportunities to experience self-independence and self-empowerment.



- ❖ Another example of good practices in this particular issue is our cooperation with “The Cyprus Family Planning Association” (CFPA). The CFPA is fully accredited member of the European Network of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (DOOP) with active participation in several European networks and organizations.
- ❖ Vision of CFPA is a world where sexuality is enjoyed and is expressed in freedom, equality, respect and love.
- ❖ That is why the CFPA designs, implements, and evaluates information and education programs young people and young experts, educates parents, teachers and other professionals, and issue valid informative and educational materials about sexuality issues.
- ❖ Based on this philosophy we adopted the program “Keep me Safe” in the realms of Special Education.
- ❖ The aim of the program «KEEP ME SAFE» is the cooperation between European countries in order to exploit best practices, expertise and proven strategies of the most experienced partners to formulate intervention and prevention of sexual abuse and violence programs at Youth with Learning Disabilities.

❖ For the purposes of this program, young people with “Learning Disabilities” (NMMD) are defined as people between ten to twenty (10-25) years of age who have a mental disability (intellectual disability). The 'learning disability' is a broad concept which includes various mental problems including various special cases (such as specific learning difficulties, dyslexia, or developmental disorders e.g. mental retardation, autism, etc.) and problems acquired after birth (e.g. as a result of brain damage).

❖ The Keep me Safe Programme was implemented in three phases



- The first phase included 30 hrs. training for teachers regarding the principles and the priorities of the programme.
- The second phase included 10 hrs. training for parents who embraced the program and the third phase included a yearly program (once a week sessions) for the selected students whose parents approved in writing their participation.
- After assessing and evaluating the programme we produced a relevant code, protocol and policy that deals with:
 - Sexuality issues and rights
 - Self- protection
 - Sex abuse



- Another good practice based on the **philosophy of coaching, self- advocacy and self -empowerment** in our school is the **Agios Spyridonas Drama Club**.
- Teachers are called to participate in theatrical workshops of theater pedagogy and adopt principles of the Theatre of the Oppressed (Agusto Boal) – Theatre for personal and Social changes.
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Pre-vocational training

The role of coaching in vocational education

Coaching in pre-vocational training has been successfully used to develop excellence in many other sectors

Coaching, as part of vocational learning, has the potential to play an important role in promoting excellent workplace performance.

It is:

- ❖ **Relational**, in that it necessarily involves individualised feedback and a strong relationship to be developed.
- ❖ **Dynamic**, in that the coach must react to consistently changing demands.
- ❖ **Co-productive**, in that both the coach and the coachee must be actively engaged in creating the learning experience.
- ❖ **Performance or outcome focused**, in that it necessarily builds on existing skills, rather than developing foundation level skills.

- ❑ With the present implemented pre-vocational education and training in our school we aim to provide a holistic approach for the student's development. This has been on for the last ten years.
- ❑ The students, who possess specific basic abilities or are trainable to this level, have the opportunity to follow a theoretical and a practical pre-vocational training programme. From the age of 13, the training is held within the class environment. After the age of 15, the students are free to apply this knowledge on a real work site, at first with total assistance and coaching, enabling them to gain operational, behavioral and social skills in a real social setting.

The ultimate goal of this program is :

- to integrate the students with special needs in the open work force, gradually allowing them to mature and grow in confidence and self esteem
- to provide Prevocational training in a variety of skills (theoretical training at school premises)
- to provide Specific skills training (theoretical and practical training at school premises)
- to give the opportunity to our students to have practical experience in the workplace (Amalia Factory, Department of Civil Defence, car wash, hair salon) under the supervision of a teacher-coach.





- ❖ The program combines methods of assessment to determine suitability for a particular vocation, orientation depending on the student's interests and talents, familiarity with new technology and the creation of work places which will include students and young adults with special abilities.
- ❖ What has to be kept in mind is that the humanitarian and social responsibility of the school does not end upon the students' graduation but continues after that in an active relation between students, their family and our school



Innovative ways of dealing with difficult relationships coach- student

All the above new innovating teaching ways are designed to help educators create situations of social interaction in order to create new communication ways not always in a formal and traditional way but also in an alternative approach.

- ❖ In Special Education, Social interaction is linked to student achievement and social development. It is also associated to the emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.
- Emotional support refers to the ways teachers help special needs children develop warm, supportive relationships, experience enjoyment and excitement about learning, feel comfortable in the classroom, and experience appropriate levels of autonomy or independence. This includes:
 - ❑ Positive climate — the enjoyment and emotional connection that teachers have with students, as well as the nature of peer interactions.
 - ❑ Negative climate — the level of expressed negativity such as anger, hostility or aggression exhibited by teachers and/or students in the classroom.
 - ❑ Teacher sensitivity — teachers' responsiveness to students' academic and emotional needs; and
 - ❑ Regard for student perspectives — the degree to which teachers' interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view.

- **Classroom organization** refers to the ways teachers help children develop skills to regulate their own behavior, get the most learning out of each school day, and maintain interest in learning activities. This includes:
 - ❑ **Behavior management** — how well teachers monitor, prevent, and redirect misbehavior.
 - ❑ **Productivity** — how well the classroom runs with respect to routines, how well students understand the routine, and the degree to which teachers provide activities and directions so that maximum time can be spent in learning activities; and
 - ❑ **Instructional learning formats** — how teachers engage students in activities and facilitate activities so that learning opportunities are maximized.

- **Instructional support** refers to the ways in which teachers effectively support students' cognitive development and language growth. This includes:
 - ❑ **Concept development** — how teachers use instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and cognition in contrast to a focus on rote instruction.
 - ❑ **Quality of feedback** — how teachers expand participation and learning through feedback to students; And
 - ❑ **Language modeling** — the extent to which teachers stimulate, facilitate, and encourage students' language use.

- ❖ With the above mentioned teaching styles we are struggling to establish a common ground and understanding among students and teachers but at the same time to actively involve the parents and the family environment of the students. For this purpose we organize parents – teachers – students’ workshops all year round (4 times) where parents are invited at school and have the chance to spend a whole day at school participating actively in their child’s scheduled educational activities.
- ❖ This builds up effective communication bridges and understanding as it is fundamental to support student learning. In addition to that we organize outdoor activities with the parents such as bowling day, cycling, a day in the salt lake and field trips.
- ❖ As a consequence of that the main philosophy of the school unit is to share the same dream and goals with the students and their families and all together to appreciate the common social and educational achievements as a result of the common cooperation in a lifelong relationship.

