

LINC

Everyone matters!

HOLISTIC, INCLUSIVE, COMMUNITY- BUILDING APPROACHES FOR EARLY AND CONTINUOUS INTERVENTIONS ADDRESSING ESL

WEBSITE: <http://linc-project.eu>

Duration: December 2013 – November 2015

Project ID: 539024-LLP-1-2013-1-GR-COMENIUS-CMP



Editorial

In the context of the LINC project, an analysis of the current situation in Early School Leaving (ESL) in Greece, France, Sweden, and the Czech Republic was performed.

Literature review based work highlighted the fact that the need to address responses to ESL has been thoroughly realized in all countries in focus (and beyond). However, each country establishes different mechanisms towards addressing ESL. This is reasonable because the context that leads to ESL emergence differs from one country to another. However, all countries pay significant attention to monitoring ESL, reintegrating early school leavers, bringing early school leavers' voices into focus, and improving school programs and teaching practices.

In addition to the literature-review based work on current practices described above the LINC consortium **designed and executed a small-scale study** among teachers, parents, and early school leavers on ESL related elements. The study was executed in Greece, Czech Republic, France, and Sweden.

The study was based on questionnaires through which teachers and parents provided their feedback and comments. The findings of this study allowed the consortium to better understand the teachers and parents' needs and requirements in addressing ESL and to plan LINC activities accordingly.

The study reinforced the observation that there is a growing consensus on the importance of enhancing teacher-parent-student communication towards addressing more effectively the challenges modern schools are faced with.

A typical example that emerged is the fact that in lack of effective communication parents put the blame for ESL on institutional atmosphere and on the lack of flexible structures. Teachers from their side, despite being highly concerned, cannot face the problem on their own. Specialized activities with the inclusion of both sides could establish a better link of all involved actors and create a more supportive extended learning environment for young students. Access to relevant resources and training may also help teachers and parents address more meaningfully ESL challenges.

These findings are reflected in the LINC implementation decisions taken the last 6 months.

Rene Alimisi

LINC SOCIAL-NETWORKING COMMUNITY IS TAKING OFF

The home-school partnership is further enhanced through the LINC social networking community which was launched in the fall of 2014 in beta form and is now being used by learners, teachers, and parents in the context of evaluation pilots.

The service operates as a complementary tool for communication while concurrently provides access to information related to educational thematic areas, to school activities and good practices on preventing ESL.

For reaching widely the target groups of teachers and parents and raising awareness on the urgent issue of ESL LINC deploys (establishes links to) popular services including Facebook®, twitter®, YouTube®, and g+® for more widely reaching target audiences. The services are freely available to interested schools and are designed for use in the context of wider school efforts for addressing ESL.

Given that the LINC service targets parents and teachers that do not necessarily speak fluent English the interface is available / localized in the national languages represented in the consortium through project partners, namely English, Greek, Swedish, French, and Czech.

The LINC community aspires to become an additional on-line “meeting point” that provides incentives for parents, teachers, and learners to become further engaged in the school community.



The LINC Community features include: a file repository, an area for resources for teachers, parents and students, a discussion area, dedicated section for training and skill building events, a Wiki, a hall of fame, a section with the latest news and more.

LINC LEARNING ACTIVITIES



The 10 learning activities are now ready for deployment in the school community. The activities aim at triggering meaningful parent-teacher-student interactions, reflect real-life situations, promote engagement in the learning process, and create a positive environment that can help prevent ESL contributing factors from developing or further developing. The activities move teachers, parents and students to work and play together in the school, to explore museum exhibitions, to get to know communities of experts, to discuss about the world of work, to reflect upon the value of education and the different world views.

➔ [Click here](#) to access the 10 learning activities

A CLOSER LOOK AT EVALUATION ACTIVITIES IN PARTNER SITES

The LINC evaluation activities in schools started in the fall of 2014 with users becoming exposed to selected LINC activities and social networking community. At the moment LINC evaluation is in progress at several sites in Greece, France, Sweden and the Czech Republic.

Evaluation activities in Greece

In Greece, evaluation activities in the school complex of the 1st and 25th primary school of Volos started in October 2014 through the deployment of the “Stargazing” activity. 15 parents with their children, 2 experts, and several teachers were brought together in order to explore the night sky and the related scientific concepts. It was perceived that the activity was well accepted by both parents and students. It provided a very good opportunity to kickstart a new parent involvement in the school community. The activity is still running and is expected to continue throughout spring 2015.

Evaluation activities in Czech Republic

In Czech Republic evaluation activities started in the fall of 2014 with the deployment of the “Reflecting upon career aspirations” activity. Students from several grades were engaged in the activity. The teachers make conscious efforts to establish links between the “Reflecting upon career aspirations” activity and the “Realizing the value of education” activity. Concurrently with these activities regular parental meetings are organized by the teachers in order to inform parents about the LINC initiatives and proposed social-networking tools. These meetings further aim at strengthening teacher-parent partnership which is considered essential for a strong school community.

Evaluation activities in France

Evaluation activities **in France** started in October 2014 through the deployment of the following two activities: “Parents’ jobs to future children jobs” and ‘The child as an ICT teacher’. In total 49 low secondary school students were engaged in the activities with the support of their teachers. The activities were organised in 3 stages: a) preparation stage b) introduction of the activity in the class and c) parent involvement through the organisation of a conference that targets parents, family members and other interested individuals. At the moment, the 1st and the 2nd stage have been implemented and the 3rd stage is planned. The parents have been informed about the LINC initiatives and their participation in the LINC activities has been ensured.

Evaluation activities in Sweden

External evaluation is underway **in Sweden** through the engagement of 22 students and 23 parents in the “Reversed classroom” activity. The activity aroused parents’ interest and allowed the engagement of even the most reluctant parents. This was a pleasant surprise for school authorities as traditionally parent participation in the school activities was low. The students’ reactions were also very positive. It appears that this activity boosts their self-esteem and confidence while moving them to reflect upon their learning process.

LINC activities will be completed in November 2015.



Exploring the beauty of the night sky in Greece



Exploring the world of work in Czech Republic



‘The child as an ICT teacher’ in France

‘Reversed classroom’ activity deployed in Sweden



DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

The LINC project is broadly disseminated to stakeholders and the wider lifelong learning sector aiming at maximizing the impact and added value of activities and outcomes. Up-to-date events include:

Events and workshops:

The LINC project was part of the formal program at the “**Mobile and Game-based learning**” event that was organised by the University of Thessaly and the Institute of Research and Technology Thessaly with the support of the 1st Vocational School of Karditsa and the Center for Development Thessaly (AKETH) in Karditsa on October, 10, 2014. The event was well attended by more than 85 individuals. The audience consisted of teachers, trainers, educational administrators, and school consultants.

In addition, LINC was presented at the “**Europe in Motion**” event that was organized by the Secondary Education Administrative Authority of the area of Karditsa on November, 22, 2014 in collaboration with the Regional Educational Administrative Authorities of the area of Thessaly. The project was presented in the course of the main program through an invited speech. The event was attended by 150 primary and secondary education teachers and educational administrators.

Conferences

LINC project has been presented at the **Future of Education conference** in Florence, Italy on June 12-13, 2014; at the **EduLearn Conference** in Barcelona, Spain on July 7-9, 2014; at the **EDUCA Online Conference** that took place in Berlin, Germany on December 2-4, 2013; at the **Panhellenic Conference for ICT Teachers** in Volos, Greece on March 28, 2014 as an invited keynote speech. The project has been also accepted for publication to the proceedings of **INTED 2015 Conference**; the conference will be held in Madrid, Spain on March 2-4, 2015.

Media and Web

In addition with the support of the University of Thessaly public relations office, a press release on the LINC project, its objectives and related outcomes has been sent to **22 newspapers and other local media** in Greece. **LINC ideas have also web presence**. LINC publications are available to thematic portals and databases as well as through social network services.



'Mobile and Game-based learning' event



'Europe in Motion' event



LINC at EDUCA Online Conference



LINC on Scoop it! Electronic magazine

PARTNERS



UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY (GR)



ORT FRANCE (FR)



CERTH/ IRETETH (GR)



CENTER FOR FLEXIBLE LEARNING (SE)

ZS KOLIN (CZ)

25th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF VOLOS (GR)



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication 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.