

‘Twin’ your psychology students with a class in another European country!

Interested in ‘twinning’ your psychology class? Students in different countries are studying similar topics at similar levels – around 16-19 years. For example, many classes in Scotland often study Memory as part of the ‘Scottish Higher’ (Baccalaureate-equivalent) or other psychology courses, and may design and carry out a simple experiment based on this topic, which they then write up in a report. Memory is commonly studied in various countries – as are many other popular psychology topics – so teachers and students could work collaboratively on the practical project by communicating online, possibly agreeing standard procedures and materials, pooling data and discussing /evaluating the methodology. This would give a ‘cross cultural’ flavour to their study – always a desirable element of a psychology course.

Teachers should establish contact initially, to establish compatibility in topic and level of the classes, working language, timescales etc. This could be done online, through a shared facebook page or other social media. Depending on the nature and complexity of the project, it might be possible for multiple groups to collaborate. There would be no financial costs involved – just time and effort!

This could be beneficial to students in various ways, exposing them to different sources of knowledge, generating discussion about cross-cultural differences in psychology and issues such as language in research; it would also meet broader educational aims in developing students’ use of ICT for studying, their team working skills, and their development as ‘global citizens’.

Getting started: For the initial contact, the following format may help to establish practical details:

Name of teacher, location and contact details	
Psychology domain/ topic, and brief description of student project	
Level of class /age of students	
Timescale	
Working language(s)	
Proposed online media for collaborative work	
..etc	

As a project progresses, it could be reported on in various ways, eg a blog, website updates, conference presentations etc, to inspire others to engage in similar projects.

It may be difficult for a teacher to find another teacher/class that matches all the details of a proposed project (topic, timescale etc), however ‘looser’ matching might still work. For example, students may be studying a roughly similar topic area over a roughly similar time period, and could communicate with each other about it, using structured tasks (ie the kind of normal learning tasks that we frequently use with students). Even if they were not actually collecting data for a research task, the collaborative work would still provide valuable learning experiences and fulfil various learning objectives.

If you are interested in collaborating with other teachers and students – on this type of project or any other project based on studying psychology – please contact Morag (contact details on the ‘Executive Board’ page), who will put you in touch with other teachers as potential collaborative partners.

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