

DESIRE



Report on the 2nd Teacher Online Discussion Event

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Day 1	3
3. Day 2	3
4. Day 3	4
5. Conclusion.....	4

1. Introduction

The primary objective of the DESIRE project is to identify how new project results of methods and practices in science education can reach teachers and schools more efficiently. The online discussion events (ODE) of DESIRE are used to facilitate the sharing of experiences between stakeholders in science and math education. The ODEs has the purpose of collecting qualitative material for the DESIRE Project.

This report is a summary of the second teacher Online Discussion Event which took place in the period 19-21 September 2012 and was moderated by Carlos Cunha, teacher of Physics and Chemistry at Escola Secundária Dom Manuel Martins, in Setubal, Portugal.

During the three day event teachers were invited to discuss how they use project results and if they use both resources and methodology information from project results. The following sections contains summaries of the discussed themes from each of the three days and the outcome of the discussions.

2. Day 1

On this first day of the event teachers discussed which STEM (Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Maths) education projects they know. To help the participants, the moderators mentioned a wide range of projects to be commented. The purpose was to see if teachers remember specific results from projects such as publications, the website, virtual tools or had subscribed to any of the newsletters providing results from European or national STEM projects.

The first day there were 22 responds to the questions posted by the moderator and 180 views.

Some teachers mentioned that they didn't know about most of the projects but highlighted some other projects in which they had participated. Others had participated in some of the highlighted projects but said that in some countries, the language is a barrier for the participation of students and teachers.

Tetsa mentioned that "*All this projects opened for me new horizons, inspired students to study science and technology*" what according to Carlos Cunha well expresses the feeling most teachers who has participated actively in STEM projects have.

3. Day 2

On this second day, teachers where invited to tell what they think projects results are good at providing. The questions especially focus on how appropriated the project result are at explain how the methods/tools can help teachers reach the goals of their teaching plan more efficiently.

During the discussion teachers focused much on the resources, information and data that teachers search for, for their teaching.

Teachers usually search for videos, applications, experiments and presentations that can help them on their day-to-day teaching. Some projects and sites were mentioned as sources of good materials, such as CLIMANTICA and Xplore Health, Cosmos, EU-HOU, ITEC, etc.

When it was discussed if the materials they find from project results are the right materials - it was mentioned that the main difficulty most teachers face, is to choose among the vast amount of information available on the internet.

The second day's participation was a little lower than yesterday. There were only 12 posts and 85 views.

4. Day 3

The last day teachers were asked to tell about the tools and methods from science education project that had been useful for their teaching practice by giving concrete examples of project results that have been useful as well as project results that has not.

The 3rd day the discussion focused a lot on the resources from the internet for teaching.

Teachers mentioned that these resources are "*fresh, immediate, with excellent diagrams and drawings*". Several EUN projects were mentioned, such as Xplore Health, NanoYou and InGenious.

However, "*the importance to have supporting guidelines for teachers and also training to make sure teachers are prepared to handle the resources*" was an aspect that is always referred to as important, but they should be developed by science teachers. It was also mentioned that teachers will always be "*interested in any project that has clear and simple 'step by step' guidance*".

One teacher also said that the resources used by teachers are "*fun and inspiring activities(...) to motivate students and raise their interest in science. (...) The students enjoy learning using these tools either individually using laptops or as class activity using interactive whiteboard and they benefit a lot from the immediate feedback or self-assessment.*"

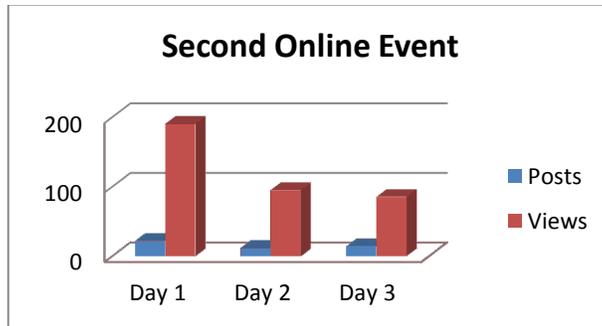
Almost all participants agree that these resources increase the motivation and interest of students for studying sciences, and improve the development of skills.

5. Conclusion

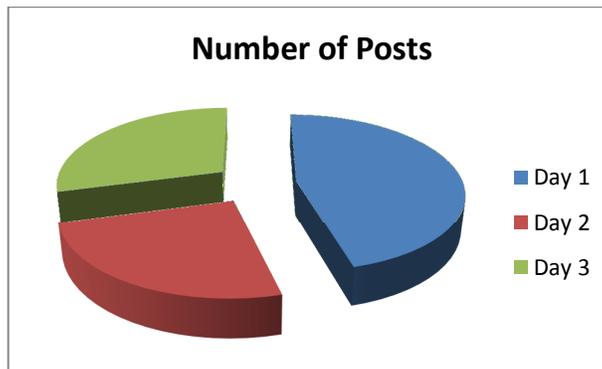
The second online event went fairly well: For a period where most teachers are already working on their schools, participation level was lower than on the first ODE. Nevertheless the quality of the posts was very good.

In fact, along the three days, the ODE had 48 posts along the questions threads and there were about 370 views of all these post, showing that the subjects that were discussed were interesting.

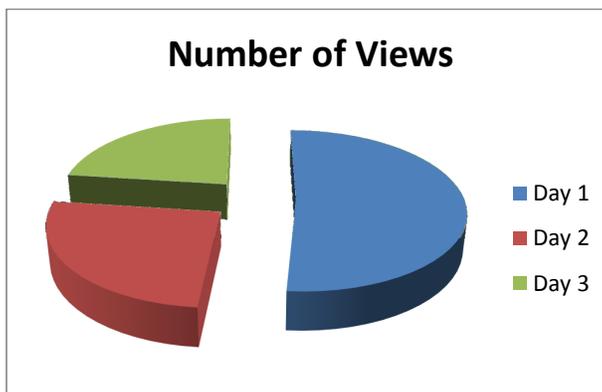
The distribution of the posts and views for each day is shown in the figures below:



The first day had the biggest number of posts, as shown on the next figure:



Finally, the day with more views was the second day:



Due to the lower participation in this second event the team as considered it necessary to take some measures to increase teacher participation on these events.