

Europeana Learning Scenario

Title

From Disability to Creativity

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Abstract

This cross-curricular project seeks to introduce students to different communication scenarios, to give them an insight into the everyday situations of blind and visually-impaired people, to strengthen their empathy and social skills. Students will be motivated by Louis Braille’s life story and his struggle and perseverance that resulted in the Braille Alphabet. Students will understand how every life difficulty can be a motivation for innovation and improvement of the world.

Keywords

Empathy, Social skills, Design Thinking, Communication, Citizenship

Table of summary

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| Subject | First Language, Citizenship, Science, Mathematics |
| Topic | Developing empathy and creativity by finding solutions for all life situations. |
| Age of students | 9 – 11 years |
| Preparation time | 45 min |
| Teaching time | 4 lessons of 45 min |
| Online teaching material | Rebus Braille Alphabet Design Thinking video |
| Offline teaching material | Paper, crayons, wooden puzzles, food to taste, school supplies, eye-covers, cards with words in Braille. |
| Europeana resources used | Resource 1 Resource 2 Resource 3 |

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Integration into the curriculum

This cross-curricular project is fully integrated into the national curriculum of the 4th grade of primary school. First of all, in the subject of 1st language (Mother Language) we learn different types of communication, as well as encoding and decoding in general; in Science, we learn the human body and our senses through which we explore the world, while Citizenship subject aims to strengthen empathy and develops social skills. This project is also integrated into the eTwinning school project entitled *Design Thinking* in which students are thriving to develop creative self-confidence.

Aim of the lesson

Being taught about the life story of Louis Braille, students will understand that from various obstacles in life we can draw inspiration to improve the world, that we can be the best version of ourselves. This LS will help them become more aware of the disability of visual impairment and more sensitive towards others, and it will have a long-lasting positive effect on students future lives.

Outcome of the lesson

Tangible end-products are:

- student develop posters on the theme **5 things you didn't know about Louis Braille,**
- cards with written words in Braille,
- drawings with prototypes of things that can help blind and visually impaired people in everyday life situations.

Intangible products:

- creative self-confidence;
- improved team skills;
- developed logical thinking during decoding;
- strengthened social skills;
- developed empathy for creativity in everyday life situations.

Trends

Project-Based Learning: After getting to know some of the life situations of blind and visually-impaired people, students will work in groups on solutions that can facilitate these everyday situations.

Collaborative Learning: During all activities, students are divided into groups.

Game-Based Learning & Gamification: Students will play Treasure Hunt using cards written in Braille.

Creativity: Students will be able to invent things/services that can help impaired/blind people to ease their everyday situations, implementing the design thinking method.

21st century skills

- Learning skills: Critical thinking, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration.
- Life skills: Social skills, Initiative and Self-Direction, Information and Media.

Activities

| Name of activity | Procedure | Time |
|---|--|--------|
| Lesson 1 | | |
| Motivation | As an introduction to a series of lessons, students will be divided into groups, solve puzzles of 4 words: assistance, dog, white, cane, printed on the paper . After solving the puzzles, they will be asked to find a common connection among these four words and explain this connection. | 5 min |
| Brainstorming | <i>What does the word "blind" mean?</i> The students will brainstorm everything that they can think of when they hear the words: blind and visually-impaired people. | 5 min |
| Class discussion | <i>What obstacles do blind people face? Do you know something that makes their lives easier?</i> | 5 min |
| Exploring | Students in groups - each group has a tablet or computer, explore Europeana and Louis Braille . | 10 min |
| Active learning | Each group will design a poster on the topic '5 things you didn't know about Louis Braille'. The groups will then present their posters and each member of the group will evaluate their work, as well as the work of their team members using this printed evaluation form . | 20 min |
| Lesson 2 | | |
| Introduction to Braille Alphabet | | 5 min |

| Name of activity | Procedure | Time |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------|
| Decoding of Braille Alphabet | Divided into groups, students will explore Europeana photos of books written in Braille. They will conclude what the Braille Alphabet looks like and what it consists of. | 15 min |
| Braille Word Workshop | Each group will receive a series of cards with words in Latin and Braille Alphabet. The cards must cover all the letters of the alphabet. The task is to make an alphabet in Braille so that they decipher each letter in the words on the cards. | 10 min |
| Braille Treasure Hunt | <p>Each group will be given a list of words - from 5 to 10 in total, which they will translate in Braille Alphabet using a 6-point form on a paper. Each group will be given a different list of words, all of them naming things from the classroom.</p> <p>The groups will exchange a list of words written in Braille and will go on a hunt for things in the classroom by trying to decipher the written words. The group that collects the most items from the list is the winner.</p> | 15 min |
| Lesson 3 | | |
| Active Learning | <p>During this activity, students are divided into groups. There are several different scenarios set up in the classroom- one for each group of students. Students will go through their group scenario with their group partner in ways that the first student is blindfolded and later the second one. Scenarios are part of a child's everyday life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) playroom: students will play a board game trying to put together wooden puzzles of different shapes; b) school: students will try to take their books out of their school bag, notebooks and school supplies that their partner gives them for the task, and try to distinguish a textbook from a workbook, as well as a pencil from a crayon or felt-tip pen and, also they will try to write something on a piece of paper; c) eating: students will taste different food/drink and try to guess which food/drink they are tasting, they will also try to make their own sandwich; d) shop: by touching various products they will try to guess the objects; e) movement: under the supervision of the teacher, the students will try to go from the school entrance to their classroom blindfolded. | 45 min |

| Name of activity | Procedure | Time |
|--|---|--------|
| Lesson 4 | | |
| Reflections/Discussion | Students will be given a worksheet to write down their reflections and describe how they felt during the scenarios they went through with a blindfold. All of them will read their reflections and we will discuss difficult situations that blind/visually impaired people face and our possibilities of helping others. | 10 min |
| Design Thinking Workshop | Divided into groups, students will be introduced to the Design Thinking Method which aims to find a solution to everyday problems. Design Thinking is a working method that faces and solves the challenges and problems that arise in companies based on creativity, multidisciplinary and teamwork. During this method participants define user needs by focusing on the person and not the product, using observation and empathy. Students will watch a video about the new method, and since they have already experienced some of the scenarios of blind/visually impaired people and seen different problems they encounter, now they will work on the Ideate phase in which they will suggest solutions to help blind/visually impaired people in already experienced situations. Ideate phase of the Design Thinking Method is the step in which the students brainstorm all sorts of ideas – solutions, look for alternative ways to view the problem and identify innovative solutions to the problem situations from the 1 st phase of the Design Thinking Method. | 35 min |
| Group presentation and assessment | Each group will be given a different scenario for the task: school, playroom, shop, movement, eating, and they will design devices for their scenario that will help the blind person in these situations. | 30 min |
| Group presentation and assessment | All of the groups will present their inventions, explain their drawings and how they work. During this presentation, group will be assessed by other groups – peer assessment, according to a printed rubric . | |

Assessment

The assessment method is described during the activity procedure, and there are links to the rubrics and assessment forms.

***** AFTER IMPLEMENTATION *****

Student feedback

During the activities and class discussions, students expressed their feelings and filled out a worksheet about their reflections.

Teacher's remarks

The students were very surprised and inspired by Louise Braille's life story. They were shaken by his fate but also motivated by their inventions. Their favourite activities were experiencing various life situations of blind/impaired people, but also the Scavenger Hunt on words written in Braille Alphabet.

About the Europeana DSI-4 project

[Europeana](#) is Europe's digital platform for cultural heritage, providing free online access to over 53 million digitised items drawn from Europe's museums, archives, libraries and galleries. The Europeana DSI-4 project continues the work of the previous three Europeana Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs). It is the fourth iteration with a proven record of accomplishment in creating access, interoperability, visibility and use of European cultural heritage in the five target markets outlined: European Citizens, Education, Research, Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage Institutions.

[European Schoolnet](#) (EUN) is the network of 34 European Ministries of Education, based in Brussels. As a not-for-profit organisation, EUN aims to bring innovation in teaching and learning to its key stakeholders: Ministries of Education, schools, teachers, researchers, and industry partners. European Schoolnet's task in the Europeana DSI-4 project is to continue and expand the Europeana Education Community.

Annex

