

## **European Challenge Based Learning (ECBL)**

The idea of the ECBL came from the Dutch school, BC Broekhin, because the headmaster of the school visited the High Tech High school in San Diego, United States, last year. High Tech High has a vision for education that embraces learning that flows from personal interests, passion for discovery, and a celebration of art, technology, and craftsmanship. For our project we decided to learn from the methodology of High Tech High, and transform the method into a methodology that we call European Challenge Based Learning. We think these days, that it is important for students to see the challenges in life and to think out of the box. To be able to do that, they will need a coach, who will help the students and who will follow the learning process of the students.

In this project we will have four visits. A visit to Sweden in January 2019, a visit to Portugal in May 2019, a visit to the Netherlands in October 2019 and a visit to Finland in spring 2020. Each of these visits has a topic that is important for the country. And in each of the countries the students will work on the topic for which they create their own challenge and find their own solution for this challenge. The topics have been chosen in a way, that they are applicable to all four countries, so all students can relate to the topic and will be able to understand the topic, even when there are differences between the countries. In this methodology it is important that students can learn from each other, each other's countries and that they learn to discuss about a challenge, even if this challenge is different in their own country.

Students will do research in the community and ask people about their opinions. They will work on assignments in a specific way, coached by teachers. At the end of each project week there will be a 'Face the Challenge evening', where students, teachers, parents and local media will be invited and where students present their solutions to their challenges.

Important criteria for ECBL are:

- **Authenticity:** challenges and themes of the project visits are suitable for both students and teachers
- **Personalization:** Every student, who participates in the project has to think, that what he or she does is useful and meaningful
- **Collaborative design:** lots of collaboration and integration of the different subjects.

All the work will be presented to the community on the 'Face the Challenge evening'. How these presentations will be executed, is up to the hosting country.

How does the methodology ECBL work?

Before each meeting students of the hosting country create learning goals for the project week. The hosting country makes a film about the topic and creates a questionnaire for the visiting countries, that they have to prepare before the visit.

During the meeting there will be brainstorm sessions in small mixed groups. Each group consists of three students of the hosting country and one student of each visiting country. In this brainstorm session the students write down all their ideas about the topic, without seeing any restrictions or problems. Everything is possible. After that the students will create a mind map with their ideas on the

topic and decide, what the subject of their challenge will be. So they decide, which specific part of the challenge they want to investigate and discuss how they think, that they can come to a solution.

One student of each group pitches for 1 minute. After this pitch the other groups ask questions. First clarifying questions, after that open questions. If there are no more questions, the students start a discussion. First the students give the pitching group positive feedback, after that they will provide points of improvement. Finally the 'pitcher' comments on the reflection of the other groups and the group starts working on the challenge.

The coaches (teachers) plan feedback moments to help the students to continue their work.

Three important standards for a successful challenge:

- Craftsmanship: a film/presentation/ product
- Complexity: teachers set standards for the project
- Authenticity: students can relate the project to the real world.

Actions that have to be done before each project visit:

- The hosting country creates a film about the topic
- The students of the hosting country set the learning goals for the week, together with their teachers
- The visiting students work on a preliminary assignment

Actions during the project visit:

- After seeing the film during the meeting in the hosting country, students come up with a challenge using the methodology described earlier.
- Students start searching for information
- Students think of a strategy
- Students do research
- Students create a plan of action
- Students visit companies, organizations, city hall and speak to people in the community
- Students reflect on the results and make adjustments if necessary
- Students come up with a solution for their challenge
- Students present their solutions during the 'Face the Challenge evenings'.