



**The impact of eTwinning projects on teacher trainees and their trainee teaching in a variety of European educational contexts**

Contribution of Reunion Island  
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## **Introduction**

This study is part of the contribution of Reunion Island in the project entitled *The impact of eTwinning projects on teacher trainees and their trainee teaching in a variety of European educational contexts* that brought together five academic partners: the University College of Northern Denmark, the University of Castilla - La Mancha, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, the University of York, and the ESPE of Reunion Island.

This short communication is organized in two parts: first of all a presentation of the framework of our study and secondly a presentation of the analysis of our data.

## **Framework of the study**

First of all if we believe that the conduct of an eTwinning project has an impact on construction of professional skills among the teacher trainees, this requires us to define what we mean by "competence". Educational sciences offer definitions that vary according to the chosen theoretical frameworks. We retain the first following definition because it echoes the one chosen by the French Ministry of National Education. Competence is definite as "*a set of knowledge, capabilities and attitudes that allow to act or solve professional problems in a satisfactory manner in a particular context*" (Carré & Caspar, 2011).

The French Ministry of National Education has also relied on an EU directive in 2013 to build a reference table of professional skills dedicated to teachers. "*all appropriate context knowledge, capabilities and attitudes mobilized by each teacher with critical thinking, creativity and initiative to solve problems, assess risks, make decisions and managing feelings constructively*" (Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, 2013). Every word of this definition is chosen deliberately. It allows listing a set of knowledge, capabilities and attitudes that a teacher should master. But how are they constructed?

Primary school teachers are concerned with two groups of skills :

- A first group of 18 skills common to all teachers and educational personnel.
- And a second group of 5 specific skills that interests us (Board 1).

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• P1. Mastering the disciplinary knowledge and didactics</li><li>• P2. Mastering french language in a teaching context</li><li>• P3. Build, implement and animate teaching and learning situations taking account of pupil diversity</li><li>• P4. Organize and provide an operational mode of the group for the learning and socialization of pupils</li><li>• P5. Assess pupil progress and achievement</li></ul> |
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Board 1: five specific skills

We chose to interview students involved in an eTwinning project to try to assess its impact. Interview is an interesting interrogation mode of human action inherited from sociology provided to define the specific frame. We used the interview as a heuristic tool to question the meaning given to action by the actor.



A first treatment produces a word cloud (Illustration 1). The word "think" appears in the center of this cloud around which other words aggregate depending on their frequency in the student speeches. This visual representation is a first guide for the rest of the study. It allows us to ask ourselves three main questions particularly about the links between these words.

The second treatment shows how the discourse of the interviewees is organized. Five classes appear (Illustration 2).

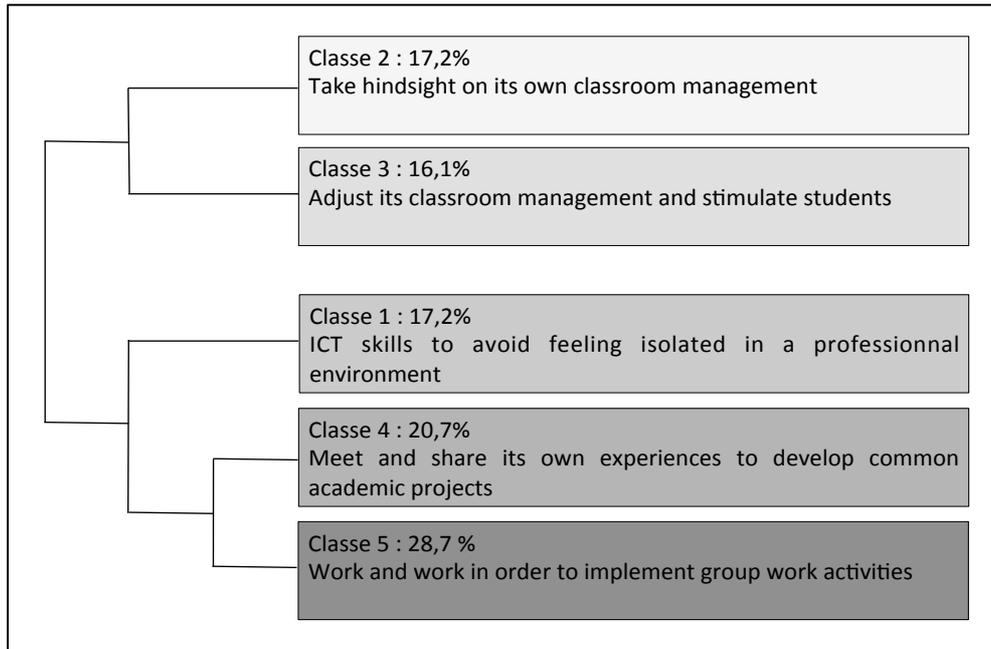


Illustration 2: five classes dendrogram of the students speeches

This representation - that has been simplified for diagram - consists of three classes to facilitate the continuation of the study.

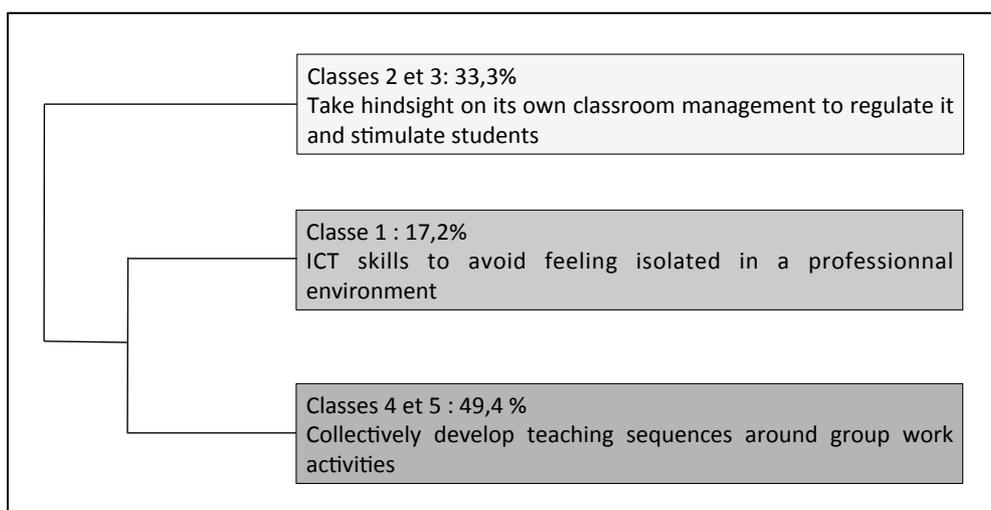


Illustration 3: three classes reorganized dendrogram

The following paragraphs present more precisely the five main skills students said they developed. We tried to relate more details about the students speeches revealed during the analysis.

1. *ICT skills:*

Students reported they developed ICT Skills and the ability to share. These skills seem to be important to fight against novice loneliness (Illustration 4).

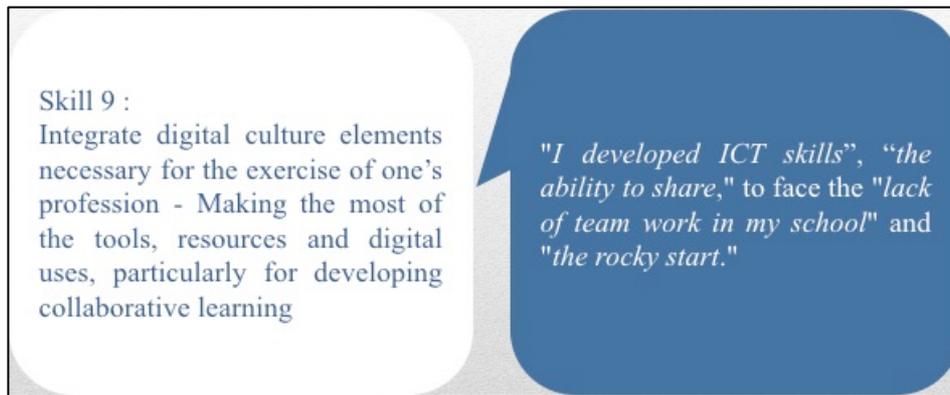


Illustration 4: skill 9 development

2. *Motivation:*

The eTwinning project gets the pupils engaged and motivated (Illustration 5).



Illustration 5: skill 10 development

3. *Questioning practice*

The skill number 14 has a special place, because it has been the centre of the initial teacher training in France for 2 years. It's tricky to get students to reflect on their practice. From this point of view eTwinning seems to be a useful tool (Illustration 6).

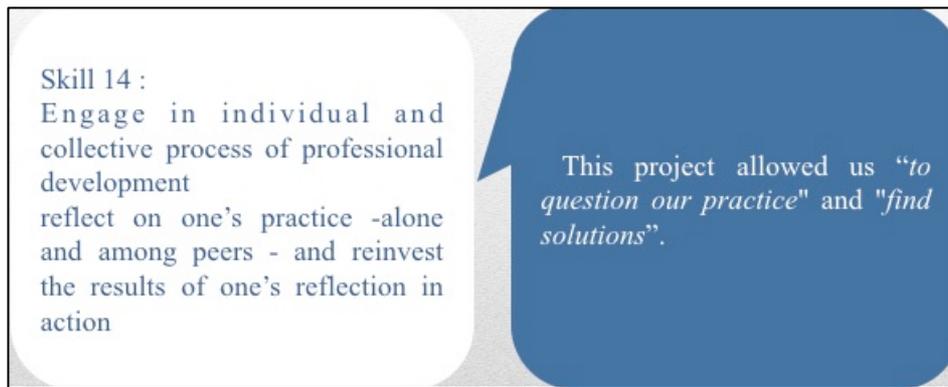


Illustration 6: skill 14 development

#### 4. *Readjusting practice:*

This reflection on their practice led them to find solutions by adjusting this practice. This idea reveals a vision of the teaching-learning process that interests the university teachers (Illustration 7).

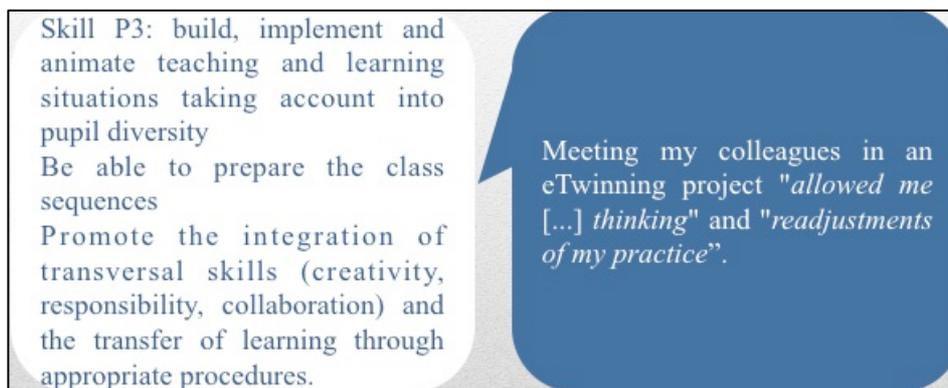


Illustration 7: skill P3 development

#### 5. *Working in a group:*

The last skill concerns the work group again. But this time, beyond the ability of students to work together, we are talking about their ability to have pupils work in groups (Illustration 8).

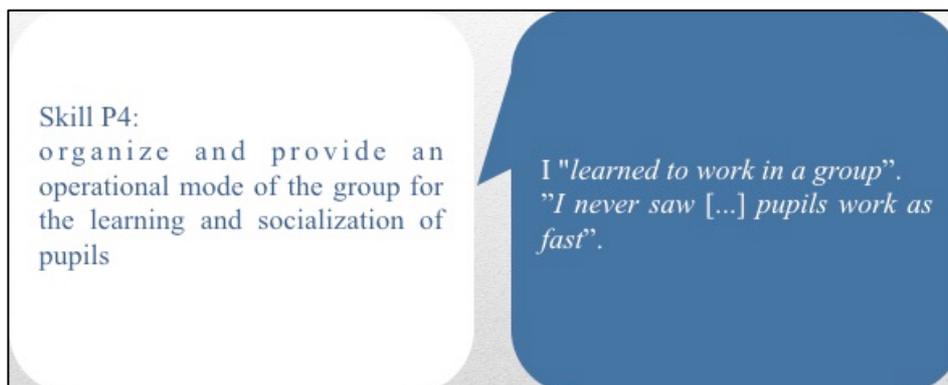


Illustration 8: skill P4 development

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of transcript associated with each class allows to link these classes to skills of the Ministry's reference table. It appears that students say they have developed general skills (1 to 18) as well as specific skills (P1-P5).

Nevertheless eTwinning still has a marginal place in the initial teacher training in France, especially in Reunion Island. Yet it seems that this tool could contribute to the development of professional skills of future teachers. A reflection on the place and modalities of use of this tool in initial training is engaged at the University of Reunion Island.

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