

# ‘Video Production as a Tool for eTwinning projects’

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Armin Hottmann, Kulturring in Berlin e.V., [www.mediaeducation.net](http://www.mediaeducation.net)



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## 1. Background of this handout

This handout would like to offer some ideas of how to use video production as part of an eTwinning project. It is based on many years of video projects especially in primary schools across Europe. The main idea is that children become active video producers themselves.

Video production is a highly motivating activity for young children and brings something different into the daily teaching routine. The goal however is not that children learn how to use a video camera but that the technology becomes a means by which children engage with their own media world, the world they experience especially at home – this is **media education**.

This handout will give you a basic idea of this media educational approach, some ideas for your first video project and brief technical guidelines. We hope it will be helpful and inspiring and that you will join our team of European educators engaging with media education. Please send us your ideas and video material and we will include it in our European gallery of video projects and broadcast it on the Open Channel Berlin in our transmission slot.

## 2. What is media education?

A first quote from *Robert Ferguson*:

"Media education is a kind of engagement with the world in which we live.

The study of media is not something that necessarily involves the taking of examinations although it may. It is something which is **about the world which the media represent**. So if you study the media you study the world. If you study the media you study your social existence and the social existence of others. You don't just study film and television or radio and newspapers or even the internet. They all relate to the way people live and it is my opinion that the importance of media education is because it is about studying the way people live."

Media education helps young (and old) people to interpret the media messages which confront them every day. It helps to look behind the intentions of the producers and media owners and then contributes to active and democratic citizenship.

Check out our [www.mediaeducation.net](http://www.mediaeducation.net) for more ideas about media education, especially the booklet "Media Education across the Curriculum" which is available in pdf and printed format or watch the short interview with our team on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gsmhujh-EF4>

### 3. Possible themes for your video project

Videos are an ideal medium for **exchanging** impressions of your class, your school or some of the activities you do together. The productions can develop into an active tool of exploration and investigation – of finding out together what is happening behind the obvious and visible.

Videos can be easily exchanged as **DVDs** or via **online streaming** and are an exciting form of communication between children from different countries.

The themes themselves can be linked to your **school subjects**. We have done projects related to the subjects of sport, history, biology and foreign languages (all themes are again on the [www.mediaeducation.net](http://www.mediaeducation.net)) but many other subjects are of course also possible. If you need an idea why not try:

- **Sport:** produce a short video about sport stars (and discuss how sport is represented on television)
- **History:** focus on a past event and ask the children to produce a short documentary (linking with the idea of the mediation of history)
- **Biology:** create short clips where the young people present themselves as advertising models (to discuss the whole area how bodies are represented in the advertising media)
- **Foreign languages:** present short clips where you show a few words of your own language (and discuss what we can see about other languages and cultures on television – see also the [www.speechbubbles.net](http://www.speechbubbles.net) project)

Another idea could be based on **television news**. You can set up a simple news studio somewhere in your school and different groups of children can produce short news articles related to your eTwinning project, about news from the school or the neighbourhood. This can lead to interesting discussions about the selection of news articles on national television channels (you can find more ideas in the Television News on Europe project [www.23muskeltiere.de/europe.htm](http://www.23muskeltiere.de/europe.htm))

#### 4. What video camera do I need?

There is a range of technical tools available to record video material. This includes mobile phones, organisers, web and stills cameras and obviously **video cameras** themselves.

If you plan to do a 'proper' video project then you should really use a video camera, ideally one with a **mini-DV** tape where the picture quality is still better than on a mini-DVD or a hard disk. It is important that the camera has a **Firewire** (also called IEEE 1394 or i-Link) and sockets for an external microphone and headphones.

Mobile phones, organisers, web cameras or still cameras can be useful for exchanging short clips but the picture and sound quality is not good enough use for editing.

The use of an **external microphone** is very important especially for interviews. Make sure that you use **headphones** at the same time to check that the microphone is working and that the sound quality is good enough.

#### 5. What editing setup is necessary?

Again there is a wide range of possibilities. All of them need a computer which is not more than two years old with sufficient hard disk space and a Firewire interface. The entry range of editing software is included free of charge with Windows XP (**Movie Maker**) and Apple Mac OS X (**iMovie**) and is good enough for producing good quality films and can be used by children, especially if you have a computer room with either software installed already. One step up from these (and not free) are **Pinnacle Studio** or **Adobe Premiere Elements** (both Windows XP).

If you have experience with basic editing and would like to develop your skills further use **Adobe Premiere Pro** (Windows XP) or **Final Cut Pro** (Apple OS X).

There are lots of online tutorials on the web to help you especially with the entry software.

For example for Movie Maker:

- <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/getstarted/default.mspx>

and for iMovie:

- <http://www.apple.com/support/imovie/tutorial/>

If you are totally new to editing you might consider getting some external support from a local community centre or also consider experienced secondary school students who might have edited videos before.

## 6. How can I publish my videos on a DVD?

Obviously you would like to exchange your edited video material with your eTwinning partner and there are two worthwhile paths to follow: You either burn the films on a **DVD** or publish them online on one of the streaming platforms. Both of these paths have certain advantages and disadvantages.

The DVD is a high quality medium but it takes some time for it to reach your partner. Online streaming is accessible to everybody instantly but the image and sound quality doesn't compare with the DVD.

The entry video editing packages such as Pinnacle Studio or Adobe Premiere Elements include a function for **authoring DVDs**, so there is no additional software necessary. iMovie also comes with iDVD which will navigate you through the DVD authoring process.

You can either burn one video film straight onto a DVD (without a menu) or programme a DVD with given menu templates so that the viewers can choose the film they would like to watch. This is obviously more time consuming and not always really necessary.

## 7. How can I publish my videos online?

Streaming portals such as **YouTube** or **video.google.com** have become popular forms for publishing video clips and they can be a useful addition to make your eTwinning project known or visible to your wider partnership.

Both of these portals offer a free upload of your video clips. The video clips need to be encoded first with specific video encoders which are normally included with all editing packages.

The uploading can take a few minutes and needs a couple of days before the video clip can be accessed through the search function. Watching the clip requires a faster internet connection. Standard broadband rates are fine for ensuring short waiting times.

The streaming portals can be also used for uploading your short (unedited) clips from mobile phones, organiser, web or stills camera. Just copy the clip onto your hard disk and upload it directly. Most formats work straight away without any conversion procedure.

## 8. Link to media education courses

Once a year we offer a media education course for European teachers in Berlin. If you have found this handout interesting then you might be interested in joining the team for one week in Berlin and explore media education and media production together.

The courses are funded by the European Commission and most of the costs are paid via European funding for the participants. You have to apply through your National Socrates Agency for a place. Funding is not guaranteed and depends on the amount of applicants from your country. There are national deadlines for application which need to be followed.

You can find more information on the course page:

[www.23muskeltiere.de/course.htm](http://www.23muskeltiere.de/course.htm)



Armin Hottmann  
Kulturring in Berlin e.V.  
Ernststr. 14/16  
12437 Berlin  
Germany

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