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ZPRÁVA O MOBILITĚ VRÁMCI PROGRAMU ERASMUS

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Two of the Best Learning Apps

During my Empowerment in ICT course in Malta this year, I learnt how to use several online tools. Many of which would be beneficial to use in the classroom, to enhance the learning experience of students. However, two applications stood out the most and I have already implemented these into my lessons. I will tell you more about these websites.

Thinglink is a Finnish company founded in 2010. It started from the idea of connecting objects in our physical environment to digital information about them and makes it easy for anyone to do that. Over the years the idea expanded to using digital objects, virtual tours, to access places and situations in the physical world.

Thinglink is easy to use. All you do is upload a picture/ image and add labels to it. The labels can then tell students more about the objects or things in the image. In addition, it is not just an image you can upload. You can also embed YouTube videos to the labels, so a video will automatically play when someone clicks on the label. This makes the images more engaging for students. You can then share the image with whoever you want. You can have all this with a free subscription.

On the other hand, for an annual fee of about 1000 Kč you can download your work and attach it to presentations without the need of an internet connection. Other teachers can also use your content and edit it to their needs. Upgrading your subscription also gives you access to all the content on Thinglink, so you can search for whatever you may need. You can then use and edit it. Which saves time.

For the Maturita exam, our students need to learn and speak about several English-speaking countries. Since I did this course, I have used Thinglink to create five maps of English-speaking countries. In lessons I ask students to try to guess what might be behind each numbered label. Many students are visual learners, so using this type of application helps them to learn more about a place, without having to read long paragraphs.

The only disadvantage of using Thinglink is the amount of time it takes to create the content. The images need to be downloaded to your computer first, then uploaded individually to your content. Then editing and writing the content also takes time. However, as I said before, with a subscription, access to all content is available and would save a considerable amount of time. I think it would be a good idea for a school to have a subscription. Then the teachers could log into the school account and use, create and download the content they need. Not just for English language teachers, but for many other subjects too.

The second application I use is Learningapps.org for interactive and multimedia learning. LearningApps.org is a tech tool where you can input your own content into a pre-made template for a quick, easy, and fun app to share with your students. You can also search for and use other people's content. It's a free app, not just for learning English but for almost every other subject too. For example, maths and history.

When you choose to create something, you decide what template you want to use. This depends on the type of activity you want to do. There are many to choose from: Guess the word, Pairing Games, Multiple Choice, Cloze Text and Matching Pairs. I have created a couple of listening exercises with a Cloze Text. For the first one, I used a music video and created pauses in the video. Students then have to choose the correct word to fill the gaps. Learningapps is a very useful tool to do listening exercises, where students can choose the word they hear while reading and listening to the text.

When you subscribe for free, you can save your work and also look for ready-made activities. There is a filter you can use going from Elementary to Further Education level. Tasks can be completed individually and then shared or they can be done in pairs, in class or at home.

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