



Title

A Green Path with QR codes

A service-learning experience which approach environment and ITCs to Viladecavalls' students

Basic data

City: Viladecavalls

Country: Spain

Number of inhabitants: 7.376

Topics: environment, health and sport, educational system, ICTs, leisure, civics and coexistence, policy and administration and urban development.

Principles of the Charter of Educating Cities: 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 19, 20

Summary

After attending some training courses on Teaching Natural Sciences, the teachers at the Rosella Primary School of Viladecavalls were motivated to develop this initiative. The lack of green spaces in town where people could go to walk and enjoy nature, together with the will to create a Green School, moved them to start up this initiative aimed at fostering sustainability and protecting the environment.

As part of its 25th anniversary celebration, the Rosella School began the process of creating a nature path where students in the 6th grade of primary school (11-12 years old) were the main protagonists.

After presenting the project to the City Council of Viladecavalls in order to obtain its authorization and support for the start up of this initiative, a joint meeting was held with the owner of the concerned land, in order to obtain right of way. The result was that the owner gave his consent in order to transform a pre-existing road into a public green space for the community to enjoy.

Once the project was agreed between the City Council and the owner of the land, the teachers at the schools and the 6th grade students in primary school began to prepare the path. The 2 km long path has 25 signs identifying the flora, fauna, crops, farmhouses and the work of man coexisting with the natural landscape. The signs have plates with QR codes, with links to the blogs prepared by the students, which contain information on the flora and fauna of the nature path. During the initiative, the students carried out field work, information searches, created blogs, designed the information plates, etc.

In order to access all the information on the plates the visitors must have a mobile phone with an internet connection and a QR code reader app.

Once the nature path was opened, the citizens of Viladecavalls and other visitors had a space to walk in a natural environment. Moreover, through this service-learning experience, the students have acquired knowledge of their natural environment while they provide a service that benefits the entire community.



Reading a QR code on the green path

Objectives

- To facilitate spaces for contact with nature and for health prevention.
- To foster attitudes of respect for the environment in students and visitors.
- To encourage students to feel useful in relation to the community in which they live.
- To facilitate the students' learning about how to find information using various computer and audio-visual media.
- To let local and external visitors know about the landscape of the area.
- To foster cross-departmental work at the City Council and collaboration between different entities and/or companies.

Methodology

Project phases:

1. Presenting the project to the City Council of Viladecavalls.
 2. Meeting with the owner of the land in order to explain the project to him and obtain his permission for right of way and signage.
 3. Meeting with a former teacher from the school who is an expert in plants and trees with the aim of preparing field trips with the students.
 4. Field trips in groups of students to learn about the nature path, the flora and fauna and take digital photographs.
 5. Search for information and classification of the material by the students. The main source of information was books, Internet and the information provided by the teacher who knows about plants and trees.
 6. Creation of 25 blogs by teams of 3 or 4 students, who were previously trained in this area. The blogs contain information on each information sign plates along the nature path that can be accessed through QR codes.
 7. Generation of QR codes through an Internet program for creating codes.
 8. Design of the plates with QR codes. Each plate has a common heading, the name of the element in Catalan and Latin, the logos of the schools and the city council, and the QR code. At the beginning of the path there is a starting sign with information on distance and elevation.
 9. Sending the 25 digital plates to the printer and the company that manufactures the plates.
 10. Installation of the plates by the municipal squad, in the presence of the school and the owner of the land.
 11. Presentation of the nature path at the municipal library: the students prepared a power point for the occasion and presented the project to those attending.
- On the inauguration day a walk was organized along the path as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the Rosella School. During the walk some students acted as guides and explained to the participants how to use the QR codes on the plates. Moreover, the company in charge of the schools' meal service collaborated by catering a snack for all the participants, and the neighborhood association located at the beginning of the path offered to the organizers of the event its premises and tables for the snack offered before the walk began.

Of special note in the process is the collaboration of certain families of the school in the creation of the website for the 25th anniversary of the school and the design of the brochure, which were free. Others collaborated by lowering the prices of manufacture of the information plates and printing products.

This itinerary begins in the municipality of Viladecavalls and ends at the privately owned farmhouse called Can Sanahuja, located in the middle of the countryside.

Actors involved:

The City Council of Viladecavalls (Mayor's Office, Department of Education, municipal squad, etc.), as well as the owner of the land and the farmhouse, the company that does the school catering, the neighborhood association and the School Parents' Association.



Working on the creation of the experience's blog

Social and urban context

Viladecavalls is a municipality in the province of Barcelona that has more than 7,411 inhabitants (2012). In spite of being a rural town, most of its inhabitants work in the tertiary sector in the neighborhood city of Terrassa, which has a population over 200,000.

There are two primary schools in the municipality and the Rosella School is one of them, with almost 500 students.



View of Viladecavalls © Kippelboy

Assessment

The valuation of the initiative has been very positive on the side of the students, teachers, local authorities and especially the people who enjoy this new nature path in the municipality.

The reticence that the owner of the land had before the nature path was made was overcome when he saw that the students were very aware of their commitment to keeping the path clean. Furthermore, his concern for the possibility that there would be a large number of visitors also disappeared, since the users are mostly people from the municipality who use the path, except for some hikers and/or visitors who are respectful of nature.



The participants

Future proposals:

As a consequence of the positive results, there is a plan to carry out a similar experience: "The Streets of Viladecavalls with QR codes".



Students present the project

Contact

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You can consult more than 1.000 Educating Experiences in the website of the Educating Cities International Documents Databank (BIDCE):

<http://w10.bcn.es/APPS/edubidce/pubPortadaAc.do>

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