Project
N E W S L E T T E R

English Language Teaching Adventures in Minecraft

July – December 2023 / Vol. 4

Follow Me to MINECRAFT

Follow Me to Minecraft provides a unique experience for both ESL learners and teachers. Not only does it provide an engaging fun way of delivering language practice in classrooms or when teaching remotely, but also integrates features of problem-based learning (PBL) methods.

Furthermore, the whole concept of a game based on real life situations encourages critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Designed and provided to everyone who enthusiastically strive to go the mile for acquiring their language skills to have more opportunities or helping their children when learning ESL, and delivering cutting-edge ESL classes.

Last months of the projects were dedicated to finalisation of the project results, testing the games and receiving feedback from both learners and teachers involved. Two face2face project meetings (LTT and TPM) were held. Also, extensive dissemination of the project results alongside the multiplier events in partner countries were organized. Furthermore, continuous elaboration of the games, their instructional manual, and certification scheme took place. Social media presence was increased.

Promotional materials targeting ESL teachers in partner countries (bottom left) and general public in EU and non-EU countries (above)

Train the Trainers Workshop in Prague

In October 2023, selected FMtM participants got together at Channel Crossings premises to obtain an expert insight into various facets of the project. The methodological lecture aimed at the Problem-based learning (PBL) conceptualisation

accompanied by several tips on how to implement it into classroom environments and/or to educators were given. The practical hands-on workshop was led by Nikolett Kékesi (HESO). Presentation of CCSDE by Eirini Papanastasiou on lessons plans, their changes, and importance of a successful introduction followed.
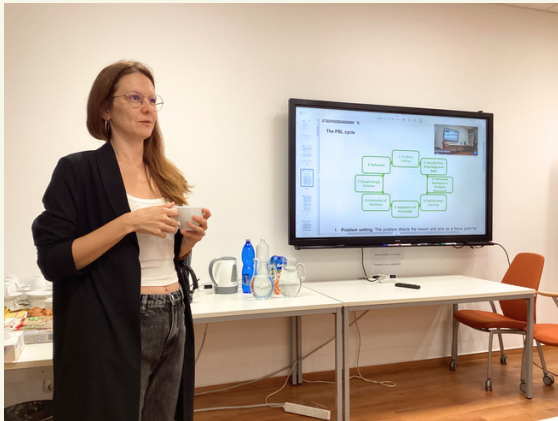
PBL cycle workshop

An Atermon representative, Grigoris Gkogkas, provided an in-depth insight into programming of the Minecraft objects, characters, and environments as well as what goes on backstage when transforming scripts into the game realities. Participants of Grigoris' practical workshop tried to create their own character from scratch using https://web.blockbench.net.

Creating a cat for the Minecraft environment during Grigoris' workshop

During the 3-day workshop sessions we also discussed the sustainability and promotion of the the project, motivational badges and certification procedures together with their assessment. Part of the LTT programme was dedicated to testing and thorough discussion of the newly completed games (worlds) Treasure Island and Shopping Mall.

Multiplier Events Starting Off in Prague

The first huge success with presenting the FMtM worlds happened in Prague at Channel Crossings, presenting the FMtM project and its resources to relevant stakeholders, mostly ESL teachers. The teachers also had an opportunity to experience the magic of gamified learning while playing the FMtM games. More multiplier events organized by other partners followed.

Multiplier Event in Prague

Multiplier Event in Rotterdam

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Transnational Project Meeting in Athens

Mid-December 2023 was marked with the last face-to-face meeting of the project members hosted by UNICERT at the heart of Athens. An updated detailed dissemination plan of the FMtM project was presented, together with the system of running the Foundry after finalisation of the project. Certification Scheme (recognition framework) as well as practical information related to in-class or out-class settings were introduced.

TPM in Athens

A Word ... with Grigoris

Grigoris is a gameplay developer and project manager from Atermon, The Netherlands, who used to play Minecraft as a child and loved it. Even though his background is healthcare, he managed to work in IT and develop games through Minecraft which he really enjoys. In the future, Grigoris wants to combine his healthcare background with the job he is currently doing - developing educational games/content centered around health and safety matters.

Grigoris, which FMtM world was the hardest one to create?
Treasure Island was the hardest one yet because of its map and scenario. Treasure Island involved a creation of a museum and treasure island itself which was difficult but manageable feat nevertheless.

If a beginner wanted to create a Minecraft world (educational game), starting from scratch, what should they do?
A tip I would give is to begin by creating something new. For example, you may want to add penguins to Minecraft. You can read through the documentation and start by creating a model for it first. Later, you can make it move in the game. You can continuously upgrade it which means adding animations, sounds and custom behaviours in-game.

Why educational games matter?
Children nowadays are a bit addicted to quick and fast information. We believe that by playing games they enjoy, they take their time to explore our educational content more.

Treasure Island