



POPULLAR

STUDENT GUIDE

SUPPORTING MATERIALS, RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES



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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDENT GUIDE

The Student guide is designed to give you clear instructions to use the project. Teachers have a separate guide.

The Student guide is broken in to 2 main sections:

1. A step by step guide (Separate document)
2. Supporting materials and resources (including additional activities)

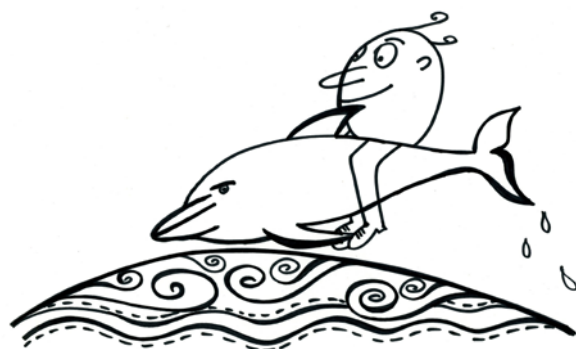
The project consists of a series of consecutive steps. Each is described in detail in the step by step guide with clear instructions on how you can complete this project. You can also see some videos that show how to use the project.

Results of the project

By the end of this project you will have written, played and recorded a song in two languages (both native and target). You will also have created videos and transcripts of your lyrics, and put them up on the web for other students in Europe to share. You will have a real result to show students across Europe, just how good you are.

But then you get to use the songs other students across Europe have made, to make another song to play, record and upload.

You will be part of the PopuLLar European collaboration.



1 BEFORE STARTING

By now you should know how and why you are participating in the project. The steps to add your entry in to the PopuLLar Wiki have been explained. You are now ready to start the PopuLLar adventure of creativity, languages and music.

It is up to you to decide if you have some songs in mind that you want to share with your classmates and start preparing your own plan based on the steps in the 'Step by step guide'. Your teachers will be ready to help with timing, logistics, equipment etc.

However, you may decide that your plan starts with the warm up games listed below. These will help you to:

- Interact with your classmates in way that is different from how you relate to each other on ordinary school days;
- Listen to each other attentively, so you can understand each other better ;
- Experience listening to music together in the classroom;
- Enjoy musical communication;
- Naturally enter a 'collaborative mood'.

The activities are described in detail with a suggested duration for each. If you decide to start a choir, you will find detailed and comprehensive suggestions in chapter 6, 'Starting a Class Choir'.

1.1 FIVE 'POPULLAR' WARM UP ACTIVITIES (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY)

Activity 1: Listening (activity organised by the teacher)

Duration: 20 - 30 minutes, depending on the number of the students

You need a CD player or a computer with speakers. A CD or an audio file with the music you want to hear. We suggest that the teacher chooses the music as a surprise for the students, since it would be perfect if you listen to something that you may not know already. The teacher has suggestions, in their guide. A suggestion here would be *Clair de Lune* by Claude Debussy

Step 1

The students move the desks to one wall of the classroom, put the chairs in to a circle and sit down. You know you are going to listen to a piece of music and are prepared with a pen and notebook. You follow two steps: a) sit comfortably with your back straight, in a relaxed position, the head slightly bent forward; b) close your eyes.

Step 2

Experience the silence for 50/60 seconds and then the teacher plays the music. You listen to it and record in your mind any word or image, feeling and/or thought that the music may inspire to you.

Step 3

After the music has finished, you, silently, write what the music has inspired.

Step 4

Each student reads what they have written on their notebook to the others. Possibly you will see if you can make a story by linking all the words.

Activity 2: The listener and the speaker

Duration: 25 -30 minutes

Step 1

The teacher suggests a reflection and asks you to think of someone that you think very highly of. You decide if they were better listeners or better speakers. You do not have to share your thinking; you will keep the reflection to yourself. Then, the group splits into pairs. Each pair sits together.

Step 2

In each pair, one student will speak about a personal experience or a theme of interest, while the other listens. The listener must only express their attentiveness with eye contact or gestures (body language). The pairs will take turns to be the listener and the speaker. Each turn lasts five minutes and is started and ended by the teacher.

Step 3

The whole class gathers together and a discussion/sharing of the experiences follows.

Activity 3: Imagination, rhythms and sound

Duration – depends on how many steps are undertaken. Overall, it may last 15 minutes

Step 1

You stand in a circle. One student creates an imaginary object by moulding it in the air. Then, throws it to a classmate who takes it, re-moulds into a different shape. S/he then throws it to another student who repeats the steps again and throws to another classmate, and so on. When throwing the 'objects', students will have to communicate only through eye contact.

Step 2

A student claps his hands and produces a rhythm. S/he 'throws' the rhythm to a classmate who repeats it and then creates her/his own rhythm and 'throws' it to another classmate who repeats it and creates her/his own and so on.

Rhythms can be created by clapping hands, snapping fingers or drumming on body parts you should feel free to be creative.

Activity 4: Count to 10!

Duration depends on how long till the goal of the game, is reached.

Step 1

The students stand in a circle. The goal is that the group will count from 1 to 10, not all together, but randomly around the circle. One student will say 'one', then another student at random, will say 'two', a third will say 'three', until 'ten' is reached.

Step 2

The game starts and the players have to look at each other, trying to guess who is about to say 'one'. Anyone can say the next number in the sequence.

If two or more students say 'one' simultaneously, the game has to start again.

Only one student may say 'one' and this rule is valid also for the other numbers, until 10.

Note: the students need to look at each other, but are not allowed to make gestures to show their classmates that they are going to say the next number.

Activity 5: The Improvising Circle

Duration: 20-25 minutes

Step 1

The students sing Frères Jacques or any other simple song that everybody knows. They sing it together gently three, four times until they feel confident with it, by adjusting the voices.

Step 2

Then, the class will be split into two groups, a smaller and a bigger one. The smaller group will be in the centre and the bigger one will form a circle around them.

Step 3

The students in the centre will sing Frères Jacques and those around will improvise by making any kind of sound they like (sh...sh... tra... tra... bum..bum..., drumming on the body...) to form an accompaniment to the song . This can be repeated several times until all students in turn will have been in centre and outer circle. For a nice outcome it is very important to listen carefully to each other and try different dynamics (softer, louder...).

2 STEPS TO HELP YOU WRITE LYRICS

Although writing lyrics is a complex task, here is a simplified, brief outline of the typical song writing process. You do not have to follow it strictly. The teacher can explain to you if you need advice. However, it's important to remember that the choices you make during the writing process will determine the results.

- Select a distinctive melody which evokes some ideas and feelings.
- Select the topic of the song (the choice is the students'; it can be anything from pains of a broken heart, friendship, betrayal, to the last holidays.)
- Everyone can offer a thought flowing from the initial idea, brainstorming.
- Take note of ideas by writing them down.
- Learn to sing the chosen melody, decipher the melody, see how it is formed, analyse the sections, see where repeats are, where verses appear, where a refrain appears, where there are variations on the theme.
- Develop lyrics gradually, moving from phrase to phrase in the melody, keeping in mind the entire scheme, the rhythms and accentuations. Choose carefully and meaningfully each word. It could be useful just to speak the words in rhythm to make sure all syllables fit the music. Many times starting from the final word, the word that rhymes, and working backwards towards the construction of the phrase, could be a useful process.
- Consider Verses and Refrains where the music repeats.
- Revise the poetry as the work proceeds, rewriting necessary parts.
- Try singing each phrase as the writing proceeds with new words to judge the results.
- Proofread the language of the lyrics. Keep in mind a good song comes from good lyrics.
- Sing through larger sections as the phrases become completed. (Final accommodation of the lyrics within the musical frame).
- Give the song a catchy title.

2.1 LOST IN TRANSLATION: TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

Although you are encouraged to work autonomously and will be equipped with the suggestions above, it will be a challenging for you to accommodate your thought to rhythm and rhyme, while also aiming for language accuracy. The teacher can give you a hand if you need.

Probably the two most demanding stages will be the following:

- A. Getting ready for the translation
- B. Translation stage

A. GETTING READY FOR TRANSLATION

It is essential that understand the whole meaning of the song. You may need help from the teacher to understand completely. Here are some tips which can help you understand the song well without the Teacher.

- Listen to the song carefully, be immersed in the song, imagine the scene, the background, place, characters, situations, actions, etc. and try to create a picture in your mind.
- Feel the whole scene within you. What kind of feelings does this “picture” arouse?
- Now, feel the rhythm, the song and the emotions and set your imagination free.

As soon as your group understands the song, it is time to interpret it for group work. You need lots of space to gather together, to create a comfortable atmosphere to discuss the song and share your feelings from the previous stage with the rest of the class. There will probably be several points of view about the song, but you all need to agree on one. You will produce a list of statements that you all agree on, as the outcome of this brainstorming.

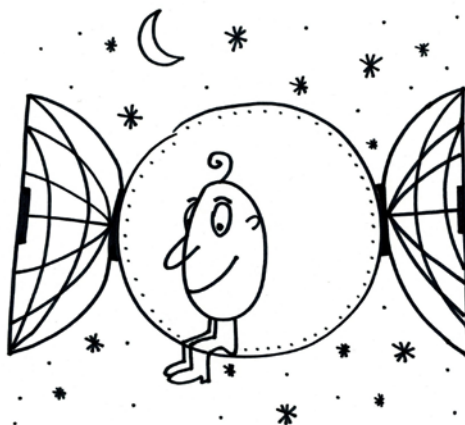
B. TRANSLATION STAGE

You should bear in mind that a perfect or exact translation is not the most important issue. The important idea is to concentrate on how the new words and sentences fit the melody and the rhythm.

The next stage requires you to use your musical ear and sense of language. You must decide whether or not to use rhyme in the new lyrics and only then will it be possible to start working sentence by sentence to fit words to each musical phrase, keeping the rhythm in mind.

Many times notes that originally carry one syllable can be subdivided to carry two or more syllables in a faster rhythm. Sometimes the opposite is true: notes on separate syllables can be tied together on one syllable.

Your whole group has to think about the key word for each of the sentences and brainstorm as to which words which are associated with these key words. For example, given “rain” as a key word, you can think of “grey clouds, raindrops, cold, storm, blues”, etc. Although it can be a complicated activity, you should work on it yourselves. Once you have the key words, they can start writing the song in the target language.



2.1.1 USEFUL TRANSLATION TOOLS TO HELP IN THE PROCESS

Creating lyrics that rhyme in a foreign language is certainly a linguistic challenge. Here are some useful links and tools you can use in the process.

RHYMING DICTIONARIES

You can consult Rhyming Dictionaries, available in many languages that are free to use online. Here is a link that lists dictionaries by language, each has hundreds of words that rhyme. There are dictionaries in Italian, German, Turkish, English, Spanish and other languages. You only need to enter the number of letters desired to search for words that rhyme.

http://www.alcor.com.au/rhyming_dictionary.asp

THESAURUS

A Thesaurus is a Reference work that lists words grouped together according to similarity of meaning (containing synonyms and sometimes antonyms), in contrast to a Dictionary, which contains definitions and pronunciations.

www.wordreference.com (several languages)

<http://thesaurus.com/> (English)

www.openthesaurus.de (German)

www.sinonimos.org (Spanish)

ACTIVATORS

A language activator is a new concept in vocabulary reference books. It can help you use words correctly (in the correct situation and with correct grammar) and to find exactly the word needed for a certain situation. It also offers conceptual maps of a language.

<http://de.vionto.com/show/me/Regen> (German)

<http://de.vionto.com/show/> (Spanish)

<http://www.ideasafines.com.ar/do-buscar.php> (Spanish)

MONOLINGUAL DICTIONARIES

A Monolingual Learner's Dictionary (or MLD) is a type of dictionary designed to meet the reference needs of people learning a foreign language.

www.dictionary.com (English)

<http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org> (English)

<http://www.rae.es/rae.html> (Spanish)

www.dwds.de (German)

BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES

A Bilingual dictionary or Translation dictionary is a specialized dictionary used to translate words or phrases from one language to another.

www.wordreference.com (several languages)

www.pons.eu (several languages)

MULTILINGUAL DICTIONARIES

<http://wordreference.com> (several languages)

<http://diccionario.reverso.net/> (English, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, German, Chinese)

<http://www.sozluk.net/ceviri> (Turkish, English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, etc.)

<http://translation.babylon.com> (Turkish, English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, etc.)

ONLINE TRANSLATORS (GENERAL)

Online language translation services instantly translate text and web pages.

Note: although they can be very useful resources, they cannot be relied on completely and a revision of the translated version must always be done.

<http://translate.google.com/>

<http://www.etranslator.ro/tr/turkce-almanca-online-ceviri.php>

<http://tr.bab.la/sozluk/turkce-almanca/>

http://www.reverso.net/text_translation.aspx?lang=ES (with voice)

DICTIONARIES OF IDIOMS AND FIXED EXPRESSIONS

<http://www.redensarten-index.de/suche.php> (German)

http://www.dean-dictionaries.com/index_de.php (several languages)

SPELL CHECKERS

A spell checker is an application that flags words in a document that may not be spelled correctly. Spell checkers are capable of operating independently on a block of text or as part of a larger application, such as a word processor, an email message, an Electronic Dictionary, or a Search Engine.

www.correctorortografico.com

3 WHY USE MULTIMEDIA TO SUPPORT YOUR MUSIC PROJECT

The guide has already given you a clear rationale on how the use of music can be a very helpful in the language classroom. The use of multimedia can take this even further. Multimedia in this application means the use of audio and video to record your song. You will be able to record your productions and share the results across Europe.

In the PopuLLar project we expect you to use your technology skills to the full. Record your songs, with video or audio only, and share them, proudly with students across Europe. Below we have loads of ideas and tips how to make great recordings.

3.1 USING AUDIO RECORDINGS

Audio recording technology has become very accessible and easy to use. Most modern mobile phones have the functionality to record audio. Notebooks with built-in microphones and purpose-built audio recorders can be used to record your music. The recordings can be easily uploaded and shared.

Audio recordings are a good option if privacy is an issue and you don't want to show yourselves on screen.

3.2 USING VIDEO RECORDINGS

Video recordings is now easy and common, many smartphones have a built in High Definition camera. Some have built-in editing software so that you can make basic changes immediately to what you have recorded.

Video recordings are obviously more interesting and engaging then audio recordings but more time and care is needed if you want to make more sophisticated video clips.

4 HOW TO MAKE AN AUDIO RECORDING

Recording your music is relatively straight forward and it needs very little preparation. The most important problem to resolve concerns the technology you want to use. First of all, you need to explore the technology available within your school and also discover what the students can provide. Check out which of the devices have the best sound quality.

4.1 AUDIO RECORDING IN FOUR STEPS

1. **Prepare your sound equipment:** It is advisable to do a test recording before you record your song. Make sure that you are close enough to the microphone so that the sound quality is clear. Charge the battery before you start so that you are not restricted by the power supply.
2. **Record your song:** Practise your song and then record it. Make sure you are not touching the microphone during the recording, this might create unwanted noises. Press the recording button early enough to start the recording and late enough to stop it, making sure that neither the beginning nor the end are missing.
3. **Check your recording:** Once you are done you can check the recording quality. Play it back and make sure that the full song is included. If you are not happy with the results, just go back to step 2 and record it again.
4. **Share your recording:** Now you can upload your recording on SoundCloud, <http://soundcloud.com/>, or a similar free service. Make sure that you also share your recording with us on our project wiki (see chapter 5 for more information.)

5 HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN CLASS VIDEO

Recording your music is relatively straight forward and it needs very little preparation. The most important point is deciding which technology (cameras, editing software, microphones, PCs) you want to use. Explore what technology is available within the school or what the students can bring. Check out which of the devices have the best sound quality. Purpose-built sound recorders are normally best for quality but smartphone or a computer with a built-in microphone can be good enough. You can also test external microphones, which you can plug into a computer. They will normally produce a better sound quality than built in mikes.

5.1 CLASS RECORDING EQUIPMENT

As with the audio recordings – use the technology you already have. The first step of a video production is not to go to the next electronics shop and buy a modern video camera! For sure you already have a device which is capable of recording video. This could be a still camera with a video function, a smartphone with a video camera or a purpose-built video camera. All of these technologies are suitable. The quality of the technology is not too important because this is not the goal of our approach. But you do need to make sure that the sound quality is good enough that your lyrics can be easily understood.

If you have more video recording technology at hand, you can employ different parts or members of you team to record the songs. This way the tasks of the project will be divided among more people.

5.2 GET ORGANIZED! SETTING TASKS

If you want to include video production into the project then it is advisable to consider your project pedagogy. It is a good idea that you work in small teams, this will force you to discuss what you want to do and help you learn more about the production process.

It is also helpful to discuss beforehand how and what you wish to record. A rough plan or a storyboard can help to have a better idea of the potential upcoming production. We recommend constructing a planned approach rather than you just run off with cameras and come back with lots of material which are often not easy to use.

5.3 CAMERA! PRODUCTION TIME!

The video recording can be a wonderful creative process. Make sure that you are creative – try to use the camera in all sorts of ways, to experiment with the picture framing, how the camera is moved and to explore different camera positions and heights. Check out this video if you want more ideas about this: <http://youtu.be/qVEnqoRJRLU>.

We suggest following these steps for your video recording:

- **Preparations for shooting:** Make sure that your camera/video recording device is charged and that you have enough memory storage at hand.
- **Record the video:** Record your music clip in one go. As with the audio, make sure that you press the record button early enough to start the recording and late enough to stop the recording to avoid cutting the song. If necessary, you can record your clip in more than one take and put it together later on in the editing phase. You should not stop the recorder and do retakes, again during the editing process you can cut out the unwanted or redundant sections.
- **Check your video:** Check your music clip/s straight away. If you are not happy, repeat your recording.
- **Share / edit your video:** Either upload your video clip straight away or transfer it to your computer if you want to do some video editing (instructions for video editing will be described in detail in the next section).

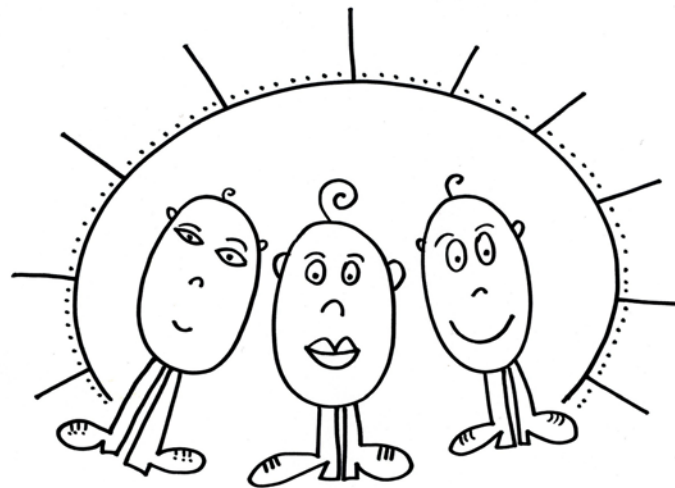
5.4 EDITING YOUR CLASSROOM VIDEO

Editing can take the message and quality of your music video further. Titles and credits can add useful information and subtitles can strengthen the idea of language learning. There is no need to get expensive editing software. Moviemaker and iMovie are enough to get started (here is a link to a Moviemaker tutorial: <http://youtu.be/Y9uVx2t8ihI>)

How do you go about editing? Once all video recordings are finished they need to be transferred to the computer. This can either be done with a card transfer or a USB lead. Then you are ready to import all clips and start with editing. Select the video clips you want to use, change the order, work on the length of each clip and add titles. Once you are happy you can export the video again and share it online.

If you want to work on more sophisticated video productions with at least two video channels where you overlay different video clips and / or still images you will need to upgrade your software to packages like Premiere Elements, Magix Video or Pinnacle Studio.

Warning: To produce a video that is lip-synced with different video clips is very time consuming and quite complicated to complete. (lip-sync is a technical term for matching lip movements with sung or spoken vocals in videos).



5.5 THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Approach 1 RECORD IN ONE SHOT (NO EDITING)

Summary Record your music piece with one camera shot.

Requirements Video camera / recording device, connection to computer, internet for uploading (through computer or directly from smartphone).

Important Concentrate on the creative use of camera – don't just keep the camera on the tripod without an operator. Change camera framing, also experiment with camera height.

Example



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mZ1zV1l2KQ>

Approach 2

RECORD IN ONE SHOT AND ADD TITLES

Summary

Record your music piece with one camera shot and add titles and subtitles afterwards with a basic editing programme (still not too much effort).

Requirements

Video camera / video recording device; connection to computer, video editing software (such as Moviemaker or iMovie), internet for uploading.

Important

Check beforehand your editing equipment and make sure that you can import your camera footage.

Example



<http://youtu.be/NKTn9db93ao>

Approach 3 RECORD MORE SHOTS AND EDIT IT ALL TOGETHER

Summary

Record your music piece a few times with a range of different shots and edit them together afterwards.

Requirements

Video camera / recording device, connection to computer, video editing software (such as Moviemaker or iMovie for very easy productions or Premiere Elements, Magix Video or Pinnacle Studio for more advanced productions), internet for uploading.

Important

Think of “cut-aways” - shots which don’t rely on lip-sync to keep editing easier; this could also be a range of still images.

Example

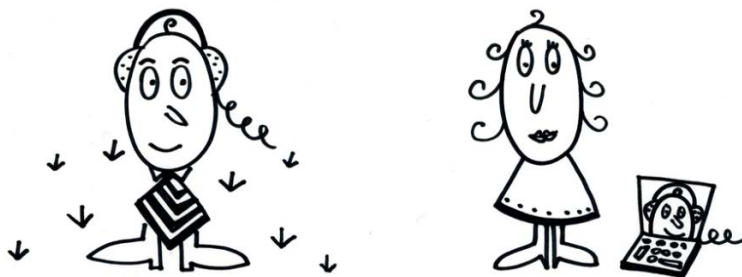


<http://youtu.be/kz5dfzqC3J4>

5.6 DON'T FORGET!

There are a few points you should consider.

- **Keep it simple!** Don't start a big production which will take too much time and which you will not be able to finish. It should be a rewarding exercise, not a frustrating one. If you are not happy with your result, you can always repeat your recording again. Once you are happy, upload your video.
- **Ask parents!** You will also need the parent's signatures to make sure that you can publish your result. It is very easy to copy the videos on to a USB stick and upload it at home, so don't even think that you might be able to stop the spread of material and keep it under control.
- **Mind the copyright issues!** Also make sure that the copyright issue is cleared with the use of commercial music but also the potential use of commercial video material or still images.
- **Share what you've done!** Put your video on your Social Networks, share it with your friends and family, build an audience for your work.



6 SHARING WHAT YOU'VE DONE

This part of the Guide explains the benefits of sharing the results of your work with other schools and students around Europe and suggests ways to do it.

6.1 BENEFITS OF SHARING WORK

A basic concept of the project is that you can share your own songs with other schools across Europe. The idea of sharing raises the international European aspect of the project, allows you to interact in a fundamental interest area (music) and, most importantly, builds the use of European languages in an authentic context that is challenging and fun.

The additional benefit is that you will improve and stretch your ICT skills by using the internet and sharing methodologies that you may not already be aware of.

6.2 PROJECT LEVEL SHARING

In the PopuLLar project, you can share in 2 directions:

1. A school can create its own song, digitally record it and then upload the resulting productions (lyrics, audio and videos) onto the media sharing channels provided by the project.
2. Schools can select other schools' productions, listen to them, learn them, discuss them, sing, play and then translate and re-record them, sharing your versions. This aspect is an important part of the project as it raises the European level of your collaboration and breaks down cultural and language barriers. It also raises the value of your achievements by having other students share your work.

6.3 WHY YOUTUBE AND A WIKI?

Nowadays it is very important for educators and students to understand and use the free Web2.0 resources available online. Often a single tool does not completely fulfil all the needs of a particular educational project, as in PopuLLar, so we use multiple tools to gain the best value and results. In fact, this is great practice for utilizing Web2.0 tools in every aspect of life, education and career, as by combining tools we build increasingly powerful ways to utilize the Internet.

Videos are generally quite big files and free resources for educators generally do not allow videos to be directly uploaded on to their sites, as this soon becomes expensive in terms of storage space, and uploading and downloading bandwidth. To get around this problem you will upload videos on to a prepared channel on YouTube (that has no restrictions) and then embed them on to the wiki where you can share and discuss each schools production.

The project uses a wiki as that allows us to restrict commenting and other aspects to the schools involved in the project or schools that would like to be involved. It also allows us to make a single page for every school, your school will have its own page and apart from your videos and song transcripts, you can add more information about yourselves and your school, if you want.

PopuLLar YouTube Channel

<http://www.youtube.com/user/PopuLLarEU?feature=mhee>

The PopuLLar YouTube channel passwords will be available to your Teachers only. The Teacher will need to login for you, then you can upload your own videos and add descriptions yourselves. Your teacher should have viewed the videos before you upload them to ensure that the videos and descriptions are appropriate. The passwords cannot be used by the students. The project is doing it this way, as this is an education project and we have to make sure that inappropriate materials are not added to the projects channels.

A video manual of 'How to upload on YouTube' can be found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jwv6j0v6iQ8>

The official YouTube version is here:

<http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=57924>.



PopuLLar Wiki

<http://popullar.wikispaces.com>

The PopuLLar wiki is the space you share your productions. This will be the actual sharing space for the project. You can request membership by registering on the wiki. This will be approved by the project partnership.

Members will be able to edit pages of the wiki and add yours groups productions. A new wiki page will be made for your school. You can also add a short description of your school as well. Every profile page will also include some contact details for your school as well as a discussion forum so other students and Teachers can comment.

After the students' productions have been added to the wiki (your videos, audios and song transcripts), the students of other schools will be able to watch your videos and read your lyrics transcripts. They can use the lyrics you uploaded and translate them into their native language. The students of other schools will then produce a video in their native language version of your songs. They will upload and share it online, they must also tell you directly, through a comment on your wiki page or directly by email, so you can go and see how well they have done.

You will see your own work performed in other languages, by your peers in other countries. The culture and language exchange will then be maximized.

There are three short screen capture videos which show you how to use this tool, how to add an audio and how to use the discussion forum:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgeE65X22ww>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7oU2ZdOtZ0>

<http://youtu.be/GsNpIMV6lo0>



7 STARTING A CLASS CHOIR (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY)

The PopuLLar Project will mainly involve secondary schools and therefore students that are learning a second language. Why not participate in the project by singing in their native and target language by forming a choir? The Project requires making a recording/s as a video clip and/or as an audio file to be uploaded for others to observe and listen to, and to comment on.

They will also be evaluating the work of other schools. Therefore it will be important for all involved to be able to present a worthy performance that they will be proud of as their final product. Certainly there will be some music students participating within the group, singers or instrumentalists, and they will be a great asset, but it will be a new experience for everyone involved to actually perform a song together as a new group, to start a class choir for this purpose. And who knows, they could be so successful and enjoy the activity to the point that they might continue some ensemble singing on other occasions. Ideally the entire class becomes a choir, but they can also choose to perform in groups or as a soloist. They can also choose to mix formations and alternate phrases or verses between groups and soloists for example.

Generally speaking it will be difficult to obtain refined choral results as is usually heard in those choirs that rehearse regularly and audition singers; the most important factor in the class choir for this project we feel is to obtain a correct rhythmical and interpretative performance, this will permit the comprehension of the sung text, the centre point of our studies.

7.1 WHERE TO BEGIN

Having consulted with the professional musicians among our project participants, we are providing some practical suggestions to initiate a choral activity within a typical language class of youngsters with mixed musical experiences. First of all, everyone in the class needs to participate in the project in some fashion, if someone is not singing; s/he can accompany the choir with simple percussion instruments or dedicate her/his time towards the other aspects of the project (recording, editing, uploading etc.). Adolescents who have never sung in a choir will feel embarrassed and silly the first time they try, they probably will not feel comfortable singing in front of their companions, therefore we are providing a step-by-step approach to tranquilly overcome this foreseeable situation in order to encourage everyone to experiment as a choir member.

First of all, a choral director, a singer or another musician who can hold a tune should be called in as a specialist to guide the student group and the teacher in its initial stages of developing a class choir; the purpose is to achieve the basic capacity to sing a song in unison, each person in his own range, in correct rhythm and comprehensible pronunciation. If the language teacher has experience in the music field, s/he can introduce the activity her/himself. Here is a panorama of some quick and easy starting steps to warm-up the atmosphere from the very first session:

Step 1 - Vocal Experimentation

Choose together a simple traditional song that everyone knows in their native tongue (Frère Jacques – Happy Birthday – Three Blind Mice – Jingle Bells – a pop tune – a film melody etc.) and sing it together picking a tonality that doesn't go too high nor too low. This will depend on the range of notes of the song. Happy Birthday for example works well in G major (Sol) that is, starting on the note "D" (Re). Try singing the song a little lower and a little higher in order to discover the choir's potential range of notes. As a parenthesis: one could begin using non-verbal sounds to experiment an initial choral activity but this is asking the students to do two new actions contemporaneously (new sounds and working together). Perhaps singing a common simple song together asks one to begin from a known point; those singers totally new to the experience will definitely feel more comfortable in this fashion.

Step 2 - Deciphering a Melody

Using the same tune then, one can break down the elements inherent in a song. This is important because if the students need to change some of the elements (rhythm, text, note length etc.) they need to understand what these elements are:

- a) Sing the melody again without text, on a vowel/s or a syllable ("lo" – "la"). This isolates the melodic content of the music.
- b) Recite the text together in the same rhythm of the song while clapping hands, this demonstrates the rhythm.
- c) Sing one phrase at a time, repeating it, it breaks down the musical structure of the whole melody.
- d) Sing one word repeating it, this demonstrates a melodic interval and the direction and length of the notes.
- e) Sing a phrase of the song slower, then faster. This illustrates the Tempo.

- f) Sing a phrase softer and then louder. This shows some of the varieties possible in choosing a specific interpretation.
- g) Sing a phrase interpreting it in different sentiments (happiness, sadness, anger, pride etc)
- h) Combine a few elements: sing a phrase loud and slow, then loud and fast, then soft and slow, then soft and fast etc.

Step 3 - Basic Physical Movements

Singing uses the human body as a musical instrument; therefore it is necessary to make students aware of the basic physical necessities that create proper sound production. The following steps would take only 5 minutes to explain and exemplify, but these are important pointers that can help anyone sing or speak clearly in any situation:

- a) Do some deep breathing exercises slowly inhaling air towards the middle of the body through the nose, then breathe out slowly through the mouth. Arms can rise and fall as you do this exercise.
- b) Keep a proper upright posture, sitting or standing while singing.
- c) Make sure the body is relaxed (observe tension in the shoulders, neck and head areas. Easy arm – neck – shoulder exercises can be used to free tensions.)
- d) Open the mouth naturally to sing, relaxing the tongue in a forward position in the mouth near the front bottom teeth. Try using different vowels without distorting the mouth, creating the vowels more with the tongue internally than with the lips; avoid opening the mouth in the direction of the ears.
- e) Be aware of the physical coordination required to sing together (breathing through the nose is the preparatory phase, followed by the opening of the mouth while using the pressure of the diaphragm to emit sounds. The air exits through the throat and mouth by means of the diaphragm's pressure and automatically activates the vocal chords to vibrate. Everyone needs to follow the directions of a conductor (who can be a student that gives the starts and stops to the singing.)
- f) Do some simple vocal exercises on short motives of the chosen tune starting on different pitches, keeping in mind the best body positions for a productive physical coordination.
- g) Video and audio recordings can be made of these preliminary exercises for the purpose of observation, discussion, evaluation and future choices. Some will be uploaded on the Project's Wiki or Youtube page by Opera Bazar as examples.

7.2 SINGING WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

All singers use typical vocalises to warm up the muscles of the larynx and the body before singing songs, in the same manner that a soccer player would warm up his leg and body muscles by running and bending. Classical vocalises can be rather abstract and include exercises in the extreme low and high ranges of the voice; they have been created for a different purpose than ours.

The warm-ups for the class choir should basically consist in reminding everyone of the correct way to sing (described in point 6.1) and can be briefly practised by repeating the breathing and relaxation exercises on motives taken from simple tunes and phrases from their new song. The purpose is to make sure everyone involved is stimulated with very easy exercises and the end results do not have to be technically perfect, but rather comprehensible as far as text and rhythm are concerned and possibly reflect a minimum idea of artistic interpretation through the choice of dynamics, tone quality and speed. These factors can be learned easily in a short period and will contribute enormously towards making a good recording of a song that will be interesting and satisfying to a student public.

Here are examples of short warm-up activities which work well as an introduction to singing in an ensemble while also providing a basis for understanding how to adapt words to music. Let's extract the first four sounds of the melody Frères Jacques (c-d-e-c /do-re-mi-do). On these four sounds, various exercises at different pitches can be practised using the following scheme:

- a) Sing the phrase on a vowel or a combination of vowels such as "a-i-o-u" or "la-li-lo-lu". Sing at various pitches, loud and soft, fast and slow.
- b) Sing the phrase using text, this relates to the project's linguistic goals. The students sing the first phrase on the original text (Are you sleeping – San Martino – Frères Jacques etc.) and then find or invent other words/phrases that fit the motive such as "I like ice cream" or "Te-re-si-na" or "Je vous ai-me". This is a stimulating and fun game that will initiate the thought process necessary in creating new lyrics. This can also be done in various languages.
- c) Again sing at various pitches and incorporate different interpretations (sadness, happiness, excitement etc.).
- d) Once the melody has been chosen for the project, the same exercises can be repeated on small phrases (singing the phrase on vowels then substituting with any words that fit). This will aid all students to learn the melody's rhythm and basic note structure and will help enormously in getting the feel for the accentuation of the melody when creating new lyrics. Their final effort to sing together will then produce the best possible results.

7.3 PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Repeating short breathing and vocal exercises at the start of each rehearsal will enable all singers to acquire familiarity with the mechanisms of producing good sound quality; utilizing melodic extracts from the project's chosen melody, possibly with their new text, for vocal exercises and warm-ups, will secure the memory of the song and provide practice in reproducing it vocally.

Rehearsals can vary in shape, timing and interpretation but sticking to the one melody that will be used for creating new lyrics will offer more practice and assure excellent results for the final task. Rehearsals can be recorded and watched or listened to so the class choir can observe itself and make improvements where necessary.

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