

You are never too old to learn!

This is a e-summary of the Telenovel project – a European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme Project funded as a Grundtvig Partnership. Click on the links within the document to view the videos.

Summary



Who was involved?

This was a project targeting the over 50s in seven member states originally – Slovenia (project co-ordinator), France, Spain, Latvia, Poland and the UK. They can be seen to the left. The newspaper being held up has the project on the front page and the project was also featured on two television stations in Spain.

What was the project about?

The project was quite ambitious for a partnership project and involved learning Spanish (except for the Spanish who learned English), acquiring digital skills – using a digital camera (with a photographic competition), shooting and editing a video, as well as script writing and acting workshops. **The focus was on the production of a Telenovel – a soap opera in Spanish** which is very popular with older people in many EU states.

What happened?

Three full project meetings took place – the start-up meeting in Velenje, Slovenia, a further meeting in Wolfen in Germany and the final meeting in Valladolid, Spain. The Wolfen meeting was very stimulating as it was the first time that learners from seven countries had met each other. Workshops included a day-long one on script-writing conducted by Roy Smith from The MRS Consultancy UK. This was quite demanding with seven languages being used and very few people speaking a common language. However with good planning and many interactive activities within common language groups, the evaluation showed that it was an excellent day. At the end of the day, everyone voted for their favourite script and this came from Poland. The second day involved a digital workshop, run by the German partner and an excellent Acting Workshop run by the Polish partner which also involved everyone participating.

In order to engage all participants in the acting, filming and production of the telenovel, it was decided to incorporate a “dream sequence” into the film. The “star” was to daydream. These dreams were to be filmed in each country with basic equipment and to involve more people than were actively involved in the final shoot in Spain. This was the way to get “buy-in”. The UK dream sequence can be found by clicking [here](#). It has a touch of humour – sophisticated

lady getting out of posh car, walking into house with large bag. Then what next? She's does some plumbing! UK learners were involved in the acting, organising the shoot, actually filming – with all the many “takes” and finally in using Windows Movie Maker to create the final film. The same activities occurred in all the countries and got everyone involve with minimum expense. However, in the final version, these dream sequences have apparently ended up on the cutting room floor.

At the last project meeting, the final shooting of the telenovel took place in Spain but few actors were involved although everyone watched the activities and some, including Alan from the UK, were interviewed by the television companies. You can see an excerpt from the interview [here](#). In this he explains the difficulties he has with the pronunciation as well as the benefits of participating in the project. The main challenges were :

Actors – speaking quite complicated sentences in Spanish as well as acting

Other participants feeling involved

Director - filming in public spaces taken over for the day with so many participants



The final “rough” product can be viewed [here](#)

Lessons learned.

Learning a new language requires practice and regular interactions, preferably with native speakers. “*Learning Spanish in rural areas is challenging as there are limited facilities for interpersonal action. The course was remote which is fine as far as it goes*” - comment on learner evaluation form.

Where a project has a large number of participants speaking a range of languages, the organisation of common sessions needs to involved very practical activities / ones where they can interact in their own language as well as any newly learnt one(s).

Basic digital skills are fairly easily acquired.

Video production can be time-consuming and requires some professional input to achieve TV quality.

Where can you find out more about the project?

<http://telenoveluk.ning.com> (and the formal project website <http://telenovel.eu> – but this website is less accessible we think) or contact The MRS Consultancy Ltd on info@mrsconsultancy.com. You can also request a full copy of the DVD using this address as well.