



The self-created outdoor class-room “Michelbachpark”: Practical experiences of 5 years project work in every-day school life

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“Economy and ethos” is the guiding principle of the Evangelic Paul-Distelbarth-Gymnasia in Obersulm, located in Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Starting with class 5, the pupils have every year another project to accomplish. Since 5 years, the project in class 10 is the creation of a 1.35 hectare outdoor-class-room near the Michelbach, the “Michelbachpark”. The “Michelbachpark” is a consortium project of the school, the community Obersulm, the company Cartondruck and the forestry commission office of the county Heilbronn.

The focus of the project “Michelbachpark” is on several aspects of sustainable development. In the years from 2009 to 2013, there was a highlight on the ecological aspect. Since 2012, the social facet is the centre. The aim is to construct an area, which is a place for recreation and also a learning-place for people interested in nature science. Therefore the pupils designed and manufactured different experimental set-ups for younger pupils from about age 6 to 14, and some experiential education stations.

Starting from 2014, the outdoor class-room is going to be combined with the use of mobile devices. Several problems aroused in the design-work:

- Pupils from age 6 to 14 do not have a mobile device for certain.
- The pupils maybe do not know how to handle a mobile device.
- The mobile internet in the rural area may not be fast enough for about 30 pupils.
- Someone has to pay for the mobile devices and the mobile internet, if it would be used.

So, there is need for easily manageable mobile device and also easy manageable application, and the data should be provided without ongoing costs and with acceptable speed.

Since the media plays a great part in the prize-winning curricula of the school, a set of tablets is available. The founded solution could be a blue print for other, similar outdoor education settings: The learning modules are working with QR-Codes and the data will be provided through a temporarily available local Webserver.

Hence the project is positioned in every-day school-life, the presentation is about practical experiences and given feedback by pupils (class 10 and primary school), teachers (gymnasia and primary school), partners and people. This way, the presentation may also give hints, what are determinants for success and how to overcome barriers in every-day school life and practice.

In the future, we are going to found a company leaded by the pupils. Younger classes can book the whole equipment together with tutors. This will lead to the economic aspect of sustainability.