



The Geonauts' Club: A "society" of secondary school students, who aim to be time travellers!

Theodora Korou

5th Gymnasium of Chalkida, Evia Greece (theodorakorou@gmail.com)

The Geonauts' Club, is a team of students who willingly choose to stay at school more time once a week, in order to attend an additional course in Geosciences. In the lessons presented, the students get involved in the principles and the processes which form or deconstruct the earth's surface, using different means and methods.

In order to achieve our team's aims, we meet in the Science school laboratory, either to construct models, watch animations or videos about Earth evolution, unfold the local geological history using relevant bibliography, or discuss our findings, organise and present them and plan out our next indoor or outdoor activities. In an attempt to explain the geology structures of our local terrain, and understand how culture and people are effected by the geological facts, we use maps and, gather information, photograph and take in situ measurements (ie. pH, temperature), or collect rocks and trace fossils, folds and faults. We also pursue to visit local Organizations whose aims are focused on the environment, such as Universities and Environmental Educational Centers. In these Centers the students can take part in outdoor activities and learn more about sustainability. Finally, we usually compose the results of our researches and present them either as posters or a slideshow, which combines our scientific homework with artwork and possibly other expressive methods.

In this point, it is very significant to refer to the educational innovative methods that are used as a way to proceed learning and captivate knowledge. Students are induced to knowledge through "authentic" learning opportunities, created and based on real life experiences, blending formal and non- formal education serving as the only way of learning and a mean to increase awareness on the different aspects of Science. Bringing real life experiences in class or in the field and blending natural and virtual environments, though it may require more effort and be more difficult, it turned out to be very creative and ended up to unique results.

Due to experiential learning, the team members develop strong relationships and learn to collaborate in a better way. Additionally, it is very important to notice that in "hands-on learning", the emotions of the children are taken into consideration too, which is crucial in establishing and maintaining knowledge. Senses, not only are not ignored, but they also are intended and the learning acquirement is endorsed by the positive feelings which arise after a very carefully planned activity schedule for each workshop, guided by the teacher.