

Yes, we can!

Resource-oriented education in the kitchen

During two days, 16 women from five different European countries cooked, took photographs and shot movies together, and documented their common work on the computer and on the internet. This was, briefly said, the "Learning Kitchen Event" in June 2009 in Darmstadt, an event within the framework of the corresponding learning partnership GRUNDTVIG. The intended goal of "Learning kitchen" is to measure and make useable the potential of a kitchen and of cooking for educational purposes.

The kitchen as a steppingstone

The involved partner institutions analyse, how culinary experiences, cooking skills and alimentary know-how, in particular of elderly women, can be utilized as a starting point and steppingstone, in order to motivate this target group for diverse educational activities. The foundation of this project idea is the fact, that especially elderly woman (still) possess practical culinary skills and would like to pass them on to other, younger people. One possibility thereof is the documentation of recipes and cooking processes by means of photographs and movies which, consequently, can easily be made available on the internet for other people. Written Recipes often do not contain the essential information – however, with the help of photographs or movies one can get to know and experience better, what really matters.

The desire to share their knowledge also motivates those women, who have not yet had (or had little) experiences with digital cameras and computers, to try out how to deal with such appliances. The main goal of the learning partnership though is not exclusively the promotion of IT skills, but rather the encouragement for women to discover their own creativity, to present themselves in front of others and to become active.

Cooking and documenting

The workshop in Darmstadt was the first test run of this idea and served for collecting experiences. The German partners and, at the same time, hosts, Onno Fallner and Dorothee Becker from the Kochwerkstatt, had prepared food products from which, over the day, tasty dishes evolved: a fish terrine, stewed roulades of the boar, fresh pasta and an extraordinary cake. As many times as there was cut, stirred and tasted, there were taken photographs and movie shots. All participants formed teams and allocated roles and tasks.

Already at the beginning of the workshop, the group had considered how to best document all recipes and what matters thereby. Those results and many photographs were then used on the second day to create documentations of the recipes and cooking processes on the computer and publish them on the project website. The webpage is designed as a Wordpress-Blog, which guarantees an easy handling and furthermore, allows an exchange through the comment-option.

The concept of educational activities in the kitchen can be adapted and used by educational institutions according to their needs, for example in order to arrange

Pick-up and motivational days or to develop resource-oriented seminar designs for the target group of elderly women. When, at the same time, women can be motivated to document their culinary know-how and thus prevent it from being lost, this is also for the purpose of the project.

The partnership is composed of institutions from Germany, Italy, Austria, Rumania and the Czech Republic. Therefore, the workshop in Darmstadt was enhanced with additional dynamics by the corresponding language diversity. But – people meet when eating and cooking together – this old wisdom is once again confirmed. Another workshop is planned in April 2010.

Detailed information about the learning partnership and the documentation of the activities can be found on the project website: www.learning-kitchen.net.

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