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Guidelines

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IO1: EDUCLAB GUIDELINES

Introduction

This report is the first Intellectual Output (IO1) of the Erasmus+ funded project EDUCLAB (Education and Digital Cultural Laboratory). Its aim is to provide a compact framework on how educational cultural workshops should be organized and implemented when dealing with children aged 3-5 from diverse cultural backgrounds at early childhood education and care (ECEC) facilities. The Guidelines provide **practical and useful indications for pre-school teachers on how to organize cultural workshops in the classroom** in order to prepare children **to visit cultural institutions** (museums, libraries, theaters, cultural and archeological sites) and **be able to appreciate art**. Through these cultural workshops teachers are expected to be able to promote awareness on cultural diversity in the classroom and support children in developing intercultural skills.

The report is separated in two parts. In the first part, we provide an in-depth analysis of the data collected during the various focus group discussions conducted in all five partner countries (Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Romania, and Turkey): two focus-groups with a minimum of five teachers each, for each partner country, resulted in discussions with 50 educators at a European level. The focus groups aimed at identifying best practices and pedagogical approaches in planning and implementing cultural workshops in early childhood education, as well as the skill gaps of preschool teachers in the digital sector and in the field of inclusive education. The analysis of the data gathered from the focus group interviews allowed for the identification of the above skill gaps and pedagogical approaches, as well as of other emerging themes, including school-parents' relations, characteristics of good practices relating to cultural workshops in early childhood education, as well as challenges faced by educators across Europe in organizing and implementing cultural workshops.

In the second part of this report, we provide the EDUCLAB Guidelines, as these result from a meta-analysis of the emerging themes from the analysis of the data presented in the first part of the report. The Guidelines presented are organized in a manner that is primarily supported by references to contemporary literature.

PART A: ANALYSIS / DISCUSSION

In this section we provide a detailed discussion of the findings deriving from the analysis of the data gathered in the first period of the Erasmus+ funded project EDUCLAB. The data was collected from focus group interviews organized in all five partner countries with a total of 50 educators working in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The following discussion is organized around key concepts and emerging themes, including the concept of culture and its relationship to the arts, the importance of the context in which cultural workshops and activities are organized and implemented, detailed description and key elements of what is considered "good" practice, as well as the challenges faced by educators when organizing and implementing cultural workshops in relation to logistical processes, technology and inclusiveness.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

Educators tend to think of culture as that which "**involves our norms, beliefs, traditions and ways of living. It also encompasses social habits, religion, and language**" (PT)[1]. While, different focus groups across countries (RO, TU, CY) closely related culture with music and **folk traditions**, others (IT) discussed culture as something much wider that includes social behaviors, customs, and the respect for nature.

Educators have also addressed the idea of culture as the force that creates **cohesiveness and dialogues**, that which "makes us a cohesive community in terms of knowledge and behaviors" (PT). Different educators across countries mentioned that diversity is very important but this

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[1] Abbreviations are used for the different partner countries as follows:, CY-Cyprus, IT-Italy, PT-Portugal, RO-Romania, TU-Turkey.

is also an element of cultural workshops (and of including cultural workshops in teaching) that poses great challenge in teaching, because teachers need to be aware of the unique characteristics of each group of students / each culture, so that they avoid any conflict or "problem".

In one focus group (IT) educators talked about culture as something that can be **"transmitted"** to young children.

ART AND CULTURE IN ECEC

Educators across the consortium's countries also seem to believe that within a wider understanding of culture, one cannot imagine culture without **Art.** Artistic manifestations, such as music, dance and the visual (PT, TU, IT, CY), are integral to any discussion about culture. According to educators in different focus groups, the importance of art lies on the following:

- Art seems to be considered a universal language and as such a means of communication between and of inclusion of diverse groups of children (cultural and disabilities).
- Education through art allows for free expression, which educators view as highly significant for children's emotional, social and cognitive development.
- Through art children can develop citizenship skills and be prepared to live in intercultural societies.

CONTEXTS

The educational setting, the funding received from the government, the municipality or the community, as well as parent's involvement in schools are identified as important factors in influencing the successful implementation of cultural workshops in ECEC. More specifically, the following are identified as instrumental:

- Teachers training that is continuous (in IT, the Municipality of Prato invests a lot in education and on inclusive approaches by providing ECEC teachers updating training (10hs yearly out of the 20 that are mandatory)

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- Innovative tools (such as Kuno Beller's developmental chart or Nicolodi's approach to recognizing children's disadvantages)
- A central theme, or smaller single themes, around which all activities are developed throughout the year
- Outdoor activities (in IT this happens even if the weather is not good).

"GOOD" PRACTICES

Educators mentioned different examples of cultural workshops with young children, which they consider effective, successful and exciting. Most of them are based on the concepts of **project-based, inquiry-based, object-based** learning and includes:

a. **Activities outdoors** that are exciting and offer opportunities for a different type of learning, better understanding and assimilation of knowledge. Such activities also allow for **hands-on** activities such as collecting (objects), observing (nature), finding, even climbing on trees.

b. **Visits** of children to different types of museums (i.e. the art museum, the ethnographic museum, the Museum of Nature, archaeological museums, etc.) or the theater, where they learn from objects/artefacts and are able to share their feelings and experiences. Some educators mentioned that often "these experiences are not long-lasting" (TU) but they can make children feel positive.

c. Visits of **experts** in the classroom (TU, CY, IT) with whom children can have discussions on specific topics relevant to their theme, their site-specific visits or other topics relating to culture (music or folk) (often people from the community, workers with specialized skills or dying professions, elders, etc.). During these visits, some educators mentioned that students and teachers should be directly participating in the activities led by the external experts visiting the school.

d. **Follow-up creative activities** (e.g. drawing, role playing, etc.), during which students can **reflect upon** and talk about their experiences. Additional activities might involve creating their own artwork (2D and 3D) inspired by the visit/workshop, having exhibitions and/or performances (theater, dance) which can also serve as forms of **assessment** for the educators in the end of each project. Similarly, students can work

as part of a team (together) to produce large scale works (i.e. a mural in the school's garden).

More so, educators mentioned that the best examples of cultural workshops are those that give students opportunities for **active learning** (for instance, using flowers from the museum they visited to create their own perfume, planting sunflowers and watching them to grow while drawing sunflowers inspired by Van Gogh, etc.) and for **constructing their own knowledge**, as well as those activities that allow for **role playing** (for instance, kids as archaeologists, kids as Romans in reproducing games of the ancient city, etc.). In general, the idea of learning through play has been identified as essential in young children's learning process (for instance, using board games, role playing, etc.).

Furthermore, activities that are **multisensory** and stimulate different senses such as touch and smell (for instance, observing different types of wool, smell and touch the different materials, etc.), are important for young children, as well as activities that offer opportunities for the use of different **materials, techniques and technologies** (for instance, photography). More so, activities that draw from **different disciplines** (visual arts, music, movement, theater, movie, etc.) were reported among those that educators found the most successful in ECEC.

Finally, activities that require **simulation of real-life situations** (for instance, planting wheat one year and harvesting it the following year) and **experimentation** were equally significant in what educators defined as good practices. In such cases, young children are called to simulate and carry out an experiment, which requires them to define their questions, set their hypothesis, test them out, and reach conclusions, even record them (for instance, experiment with how wool reacts to water during a visit to a museum).

In addition, educators in different focus groups mentioned the significance of **ownership.** In other words, the content of the workshops needs to be developed around themes, issues, objects, that are close to students' experiences, knowledge and everyday life and educators

believe that it is important that they teach about local traditions and their own culture first before teaching young students about other cultures (RO, TU). Along the same lines, many educators across the different countries have raised the issue of **collaboration** among different actors (for instance, collaborations among different schools, schools and the community, schools and parents, schools and experts, schools and cultural institutions), as highly important in the development and implementation of cultural workshops.

Finally, educators also discussed the idea of **documentation and reflexivity** after the cultural workshop: writing down the activities carried out, how these were planned and implemented, and attach photos of the workshop and feedback, and comments received by children. These can then be shared with parents, with the rest of the school, other educators and with the children themselves. More specifically, educators in one of the focus groups (IT) raised: "the importance of a discussion to reflect on the experience and then the development of graphical / movement activities where children can elaborate again on what they had experienced".

Various prerequisites for successful implementation of cultural workshops have been identified across the different focus groups in the five countries. These are:

- Planning ahead (yearly planning of the curriculum, central topic around which workshops, activities, etc. are organized, integrating the workshop in a thematic week, securing authorizations and agreements with other colleagues and parents)
- Preparing student ahead of the visit / workshop by clearly describing the activity in details and by teaching them about how to behave during a visit to a cultural institution (e.g. in the bus, in the museum, etc.), help them develop necessary skills such as observation, sharing feelings and thoughts, as well as provide hints for curiosity and motivation. It is important that in all cases young children feel **safe** and this can be achieved by explaining all the details (for instance with visuals) in advance.
- Well-organized execution of the workshop with small numbers for each group to be the ideal (by considering the number of students, their ages, diversity, needs, previous experiences, interests)

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- Educators' flexibility to adapt the material to the needs, age, pace, previous experiences and responses of their students
- Involvement and positive support of parents (parent's responsibility) (PT, CY)
- Fieldtrips and visits need to be close by (nearby locations as young children might need to use the WC while traveling) and not exceeding the two hours
- Teaching assistants, supporting staff
- Financial support for cultural visits

CHALLENGES

Educators interviewed in the various focus groups have identified a series of difficulties in implementing cultural workshops in early childhood education. These are as follows:

Before the visit / implementation:

a. Bureaucratic and administrative processes that hinder visits outside the school, lack of adequate public transport, as well as lack of financial support (from ministries) to organize more visits to cultural institutions, the theater, etc. Other relevant issues to logistics, mentioned by educators across focus groups, include: lack of support staff for field excursions, time limitations both for visits and for educators to appropriately prepare before the visit, crowded classes, lack of appropriate facilities for young children/toddlers in the sites of planned visits (diaper changing tables) or lack of accessibility for children with disabilities.

b. Lack of adequate time and educators' skills for preparing workshops and relevant materials for the visit (CY, TU). In a focus group, educators mentioned that they had a company /agency that organized the visit and the material to be used during the visit (TU).

c. Families' difficult financial backgrounds which leads to limited access to culture. Students' lack of relevant experiences in cultural institutions through their families (PT, RO, TU) creates a gap between school and home.

d. Parents' mentality. Sometimes, parents are over-protective of their children and do not support activities that are too open-ended and experimental, are hesitant towards cultural visits, or refuse to let their children participate due to reasons relating to

religion, or do not understand their significance (PT, TU), or feel excluded from the wider community (minority group) which leads to demarcation (e.g. Roma, RO) and difficulties in organizing cultural workshops that involve them.

During the visit / implementation:

a. Educators seem to find challenging addressing different cultures (different cultural backgrounds) through their teaching especially when they have to deal with those aspects of culture that address religion and sets of belief. According to them, some communities "are conservative and teachers need to be very careful with what they are saying in the class in order not to create any conflict or problem" (TU). Educators need to be able to adapt their activities to include different aspects and address diversity (PT). Also, there are times when cultural backgrounds cause several issues, either in terms of behaviors [i.e. in some cultures boys are allowed to do anything they want (IT)] – or in terms of degree and form of participation in the cultural workshops [for instance, when children come from "closed" communities and are not accustomed to express their feelings and thoughts (RO)].

b. Children of young age (3-5) have short attention span, can loose interest very quickly, forget, while might prove difficult to involve the whole class actively in all workshops (for instance, 5-year-olds might be more interested than the 3-year-olds). Also, activities might not correspond to the age of the students, or take much longer to execute, which interferes with planning and successful implementation of workshops.

c. Changing family structures which requires educators to be more open-minded and more flexible in adapting to new social conditions (PT).

d. Digital devices are often outdated or on shortage, and educators do not have the necessary skills for using new technologies in the classroom in creative ways.

e. Educators' resistance to new methodologies, new technologies and new ideas (such as teaching outdoors – even when the weather is not good), and often lack of flexibility to adopt to new educational approaches, especially when they have been working in the same way for a long time (IT).

f. Educators' lack of expertise, skills and experience with children that are more difficult to manage (behavioral issues) or children with disabilities.

INCLUSIVENESS

As already mentioned above, educators often face challenges with children with disabilities and with children from diverse cultures.

A. In the case of students from **diverse cultural backgrounds**, challenges can arise because of **language barriers** and **cultural differences**. Sometimes, children from different cultures or geographical areas, or children of immigrants might not speak the same language as the rest of the class. In other cases, children might come from families that are more or less conservative than the school, do not cooperate with the school, refuse to let their children participate in planned activities because of religious beliefs, or do not fully comprehend the significance of these activities. There are also those cases of children of immigrant families that are more integrated in the wider community, in which cases parents enjoy participating in the school activities (PT). In all cases, educators highlighted the significance of including all children in all the activities and some suggested that it is through inclusion that other children learn to accept each other without prejudice, following the educators' example.

B. In terms of children with disabilities, educators mentioned how challenging it can be when educators lack experience, knowledge and expertise and are unable to properly respond to the needs of these children, or fully recognize what the issues/ needs are for individual children. Educators mentioned that these challenges can be heightened during planned visits, especially with children who might find a new environment unsafe and challenging. In these cases, educators pointed out that it is easier for them to have parents accompany their children (RO, PT) so that educators' attention is evenly distributed to all children. Educators agreed that all students need to be included in all activities, but teacher training on disabilities is needed, in particular on how to recognize them, how to deal with individual children, as well as what types of approaches are the most appropriate to use in each case, both in the class and during a visit / cultural workshop. Educators recognize the lack of necessary competences and the need for further training and professional support (for instance, supporting

staff, psychologists, supervisors) to be able to adequately respond to the needs of children with disabilities and to integrate them successfully. In the case of Italy, the educators mentioned that the Municipality of Prato provides educators with charts and tools (BRIEF-Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function on Nicolodi's approach) to recognize disabilities.

TECHNOLOGY

The issue of technology was not properly addressed across the different focus groups, but some educators mentioned the use of some technologies in their workshops, such as:

A. Camera for photography workshop

B. Overhead projector

C. Video-projector.

In most cases, educators reported the lack of relevant skills regarding the use of digital technologies, the lack of financial coverage and outdated digital devices (RO). Some indicated the need to further include technologies in their teaching, even online learning platforms and acknowledged the possibility of virtual visits to museums with the use of VR technologies.

IMPACT/ BENEFIT

Educators across the different focus groups mentioned different areas in which they feel that cultural workshops can positively impact on young children:

- **Intercultural dialogue and Interpersonal relations**: One of the benefits of including cultural workshops is the potential of "promoting respect and intercultural dialogue through the arts" (PT) and a good way to overcome cultural and language barriers (IT). More so, during these activities, interpersonal relations are also supported, especially since children are asked to work within groups, share their thoughts with their peers, and work together to produce something in the end. More so, art is viewed by educators as a universal language, and as such a means of communication among students who do not speak the same language (IT, PT).

- **Self-confidence**: children participate in activities without their parents and in groups, which is considered important in being developed as an individual. Also these

activities give children the opportunity to share their thoughts in front of others, while often they force them to move out of their comfort zone (RO) – especially those children who come from closed communities – and thus learn new things in new ways.

- **Lifelong learning:** Understanding their own reality and the world that surrounds them, ownership of the material (and culture) and transferring knowledge to other domains, even at home. "In addition to fostering our skills, we are also empowering out children to think critically and creatively. Our goal is to develop very important skills in childhood development, and it is very rewarding when we are also learning, while doing it" (PT). Children are motivated to learn, because they learn in a fun way.

- **Enriched experiences**: Positive feelings can be enhanced because children become active learners, they contribute to the activities – even their planning and organization- and are given the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, emotions with others.

- **New perspectives**: The opportunity to view things – even things they are familiar with – under a new light and gain different perspectives.

- **Development of cognitive, social and emotional skills**: Children become excited and love to participate in things outside the classroom, while the practical, hands-on knowledge they gain, can be retained more and make them want to learn more (PT, RO). Cultural workshops also promote the development of the children's personality and social skills (RO).

THE EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVE

Most educators across the different focus groups showed great enthusiasm and agreed that they had fun, felt challenged and gratified after successful implementation of cultural workshops. Many educators also mentioned that they learned a lot, gained new skills and watched their students being empowered and critical in the process, all of which gave them great satisfaction (PT). However, educators also raised several issues that make them feel uncomfortable (see "Challenges" above). As indicated above, there are many challenges still

to be addressed both in terms of logistics, administration, teaching methodologies, their relationship to parents, inclusiveness and technology. Furthermore, educators across different focus groups raised the issue of their own lack of experiences, skills and competences in developing and implementing cultural workshops (IT, CY).

In general, it seems that traditional schools and teaching methodologies need to be improved, to be flexible and allow for active, dynamic and cooperative learning processes (PT). As one of the focus group similarly mentions, it is because of a flexible syllabus and a flexible program that teachers are allowed to develop their own material, include field trips, teach outside the classroom and implement a variety of cultural activities (RO). More importantly, and as the analysis of the data suggests, it would be beneficial for educators to improve their knowledge and skills regarding new teaching methodologies, disability, diversity, approaches to learning, innovative technologies and tools to be used in cultural workshops, as well as participate in training courses (IT, PT).

PART B: GUIDELINES

In the second part of this report we provide guidelines, as these result from a meta-analysis of the emerging themes from the analysis of the data presented in the first part of the report. The guidelines presented are organized in a manner that is primarily supported by references to contemporary literature and aim to be a helpful guide for the development of the Handbook for Educators (IO2). We propose that the Handbook is developed around two main axes: a) the pedagogical approach, which will include a general theoretical description of how the learning processes should be organized in cultural workshops, so that children develop their creative skills, appreciate culture and the arts, and come to better understand and accept others, and b) the methodological approach which will include more practical guidelines and useful resources for educators in ECEC, developed around specific "themes" as these are suggested in the following sections.

A. PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

This section should form the theoretical framework within which the practical information and guidelines are going to be developed and proposed to educators. This should include a clear defining of what we mean by cultural learning activities and how these should evolve based on the current literature.

Defining Cultural Learning Activities

Defining culture is a complex task and as it appeared from the analysis in the first part of this report, educators have indeed varied responses and understandings of the term. However, what educators come to all agree is that culture – and cultural activities – should be an integral part of learning in early childhood education and care for it promotes understanding of our social condition, social behaviors, traditions, customs, and belief systems, and thus allows for the formation of a collective, multiple, identity. Within this broad and rather loose definition of culture what is even more important is the emergence of key concepts and ideas that allow us to develop and organize cultural activities and workshops in a manner that ensures successful implementation and fulfilment of the main aim and objectives of this

funded project: to provide ECEC educators with concrete tools and suggestions for **organizing cultural workshops in the classroom, promoting awareness on cultural diversity, and supporting children in appreciating art and others.**

Defining Active Learning

In order to better understand how cultural activities can be most effectively organized and implemented in early childhood education and care, we must consider them in relation to the most essential theories relating to learning in early childhood. These propose a pedagogical approach that emphasizes **active learning (constructivist approach).** The following section, summarizes the basic characteristics of active learning based on contemporary literature and which reflect in many ways those "good" practices that educators have already identified and outlined during their focus group interviews – and which are discussed in the first part of this report. In other words, this section theorizes educators' practices and displays the context within which we should work in preparing the EDUCLAB Handbook.

Active learning is:

a. Communicative

Cultural activities should provide natural opportunities for sharing, and negotiating ideas, experiences and thus constructing knowledge. 'From birth, all communication occurs within a socio-cultural context and language is strongly influenced by cultural and ethnic understandings' (Moyles, 2012). The shift, from an understanding of language as a way of thinking and expressing with words, to the acknowledgement of the existence of many languages indicates the multiple ways in which children can think, express and communicate their ideas, experiences, thoughts, feelings and knowledge. This shift constitutes a consensus among many pedagogical approaches, theories of learning and movements which rapidly gain ground around the world. The Reggio Emilia approach (Edwards et al, 2011), Papert's Constructionism, (Papert, & Harel, 2001) and the maker-movement (Martinez, & Stager, 2013) belong to this body of literature and research.

Besides **discussion and dialogue** -one of the main strategic characteristics of the project-approach (Katz & Chard, 2000) - **play** (Moyles, 2012), the **arts** (Epstein, & Trimis, 2002; Edwards, et al 2011; Althouse et al, 2003), gestures and **graphic representations** (Edwards, et al, 2011), **ICT , programming and construction** (Resnick & Robinson, 2017), are activities in which communication is embedded and thus provide natural opportunities for children to communicate as an important part of the learning process.

b. Experimental and Experiential (multisensory, real-life connections)

Cultural activities require interacting, experiencing and experimenting in an exuberant, immersive and pluralistic way with the environment (indoors, outdoors, school, community, the real world), ideas, materials and other people. Learning involves playful experimentation – trying new things, tinkering with materials, testing boundaries, taking risks, iterating again and again (Resnick, 2014). The technological and creative revolution exposes children to new tools or old tools that can be seen in a new way, materials and skills. This intersects with the natural inclinations of children (e.g., curiosity) and the power of learning by doing. Formative learning experiences come through direct experience with materials, phenomena and real life situations. From specialized technologies to recycled materials children have access to all kind of tools to explore and to explore with.

This approach calls out for an interdisciplinary approach. While school traditionally separates knowledge into subjects (e.g., art from science), such divisions are artificial. In real world architects are artists, craftsmen deal in aesthetics, tradition and mathematical precision, and so on.

c. Meaningful

Cultural activities should allow children to make sense of the (their) world and should build on **ownership, freedom, and spontaneity**. The fundamental idea of the children being the architects of their learning requires a practice of **documentation** (Dahlberg, 2011; Forman & Fyfe, 2011, Edelson & Fyfe, 2011; Helm, 2007) and a pedagogy of **listening** (Rinaldi, 2011).

Systematic, high quality and detailed documentation requires a pedagogy of 'listening' and has many functions some of which are listed below:

Documentation

- can be used to make parents aware of their children's experiences and abilities and thus fosters parental involvement
- empowers the image of the child to the eyes of the adults
- empowers the image of the child to the eyes of the child and thus foster's confidence and self-esteem, since it is a practice and strategy for passing the message to the children that their efforts, thoughts and ideas are valued
- allows teachers to better understand children and the nature of learning
- fosters teacher's reflection and thus the professional learning and growth of adults
- integrates reflection as an important aspect of the learning process for the children
- facilitates communication and the exchange of ideas among teachers, parents, the community and children
- allows the teachers to identify and built on children's ideas, experiences, questions, thoughts.

d. Challenging and thus Enjoyable and Fun

Often a main characteristic for evaluating the quality of a learning activity is whether the children had fun and enjoyed the process. At this point we would like to share Resnick's (2004) criticism towards what he calls 'the approach of edutainment' and the distinction between entertainment as the sugar-coating needed to camouflage the bitter and unpleasant flavor of education, and the idea of 'Hard fun! Hard Learning! as expressed by Seymour Papert (1988). Thus, cultural activities should be challenging, adventurous and risky and allow the children to explore unknown, new concepts, ideas and experiences in a 'safe' and secured environment. **Creative processes, authentic problem-solving, inquiry-based learning and the employment of critical thinking** should be the main ingredients for securing a challenging environment, which will lead to learning.

In summary, the previous characteristics indicate that

active learning requires Involvement of the three Hs:

HANDS

HEAD

HEART

B. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Understanding the learning environment is essential in developing, organizing and implementing cultural workshops that promote active learning in early childhood education and care. Educators always need to take into consideration the specific characteristics of their group in order to be able to better address its needs. Young age, children from diverse cultural, ethic and religious backgrounds, diverse abilities and differentiated previous skills and knowledge, are all factors that can pose great challenges to educators, as already indicated in the discussion in the first part of this report. Considering these challenges, educators need to constantly receive appropriate training and support (one of the aims of EDUCLAB), whereas cultural activities need to be age appropriate, use different methodologies and provide opportunities for all children in the learning process. In the next section we provide an overview of the elements that need to be taken into consideration for the development of the EDUCLAB Handbook (main resource/IO2) for educators in ECEC environments.

Suggestions for the development of IO2 – EDUCLAB Handbook

Based on this report and the above analysis and discussion we would suggest that the EDUCLAB Handbook is organized around **themes, rather than disciplines.** Each theme will then be approached in an **interdisciplinary** manner including elements that support successful and creative learning, the promotion of understanding of culture and acceptance of others. Such elements include, but are not limited to the following:

- visits to different sites (different types of museums, libraries, archaeological sites, monuments, houses, their neighborhood, etc.)

- uses of technologies

- engagement of the community (parents, experts, etc.)

- active learning (described in previous section), which accommodate hands-on, multisensory activities, experimentation, the creation of a safe and fun environment, project-based processes, and includes the arts.

Possible themes/chapters for the EDUCLAB Handbook inspired by the focus group discussions, may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Alternative Spaces

- Environment and Sustainability

- Archaeology

- Tradition and Craft

- Narratives and Oral Histories

- Science and Art

These chapters should be analyzed by providing clearly defined learning objectives and suggested activities, as well as suggested readings and resources for supporting educators in being flexible to further develop these themes according to the specific and unique characteristics of the children they have to teach, and their own skills and competences. For the development of each theme/chapter the following key ideas are essential in providing a coherent, all-inclusive, child-oriented handbook for educators in early childhood education and care:

- **The image of the child**

- **Project-based learning**

- **Tools and Technologies**

- **Fieldwork (detailed analysis on the organization before, during and after cultural visits)**

- **Documentation and reflection**

- **Interdisciplinarity**

- **Creative Play & the Arts**

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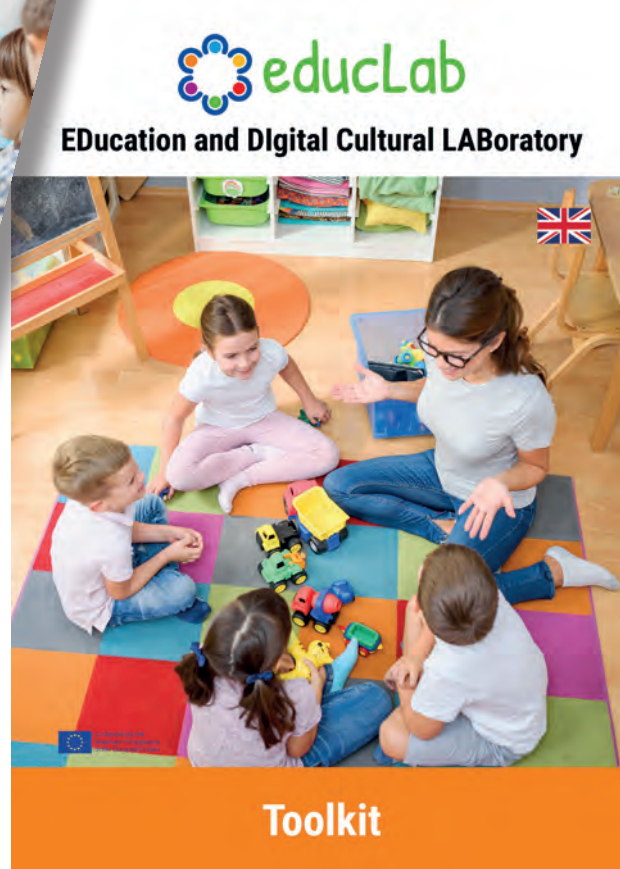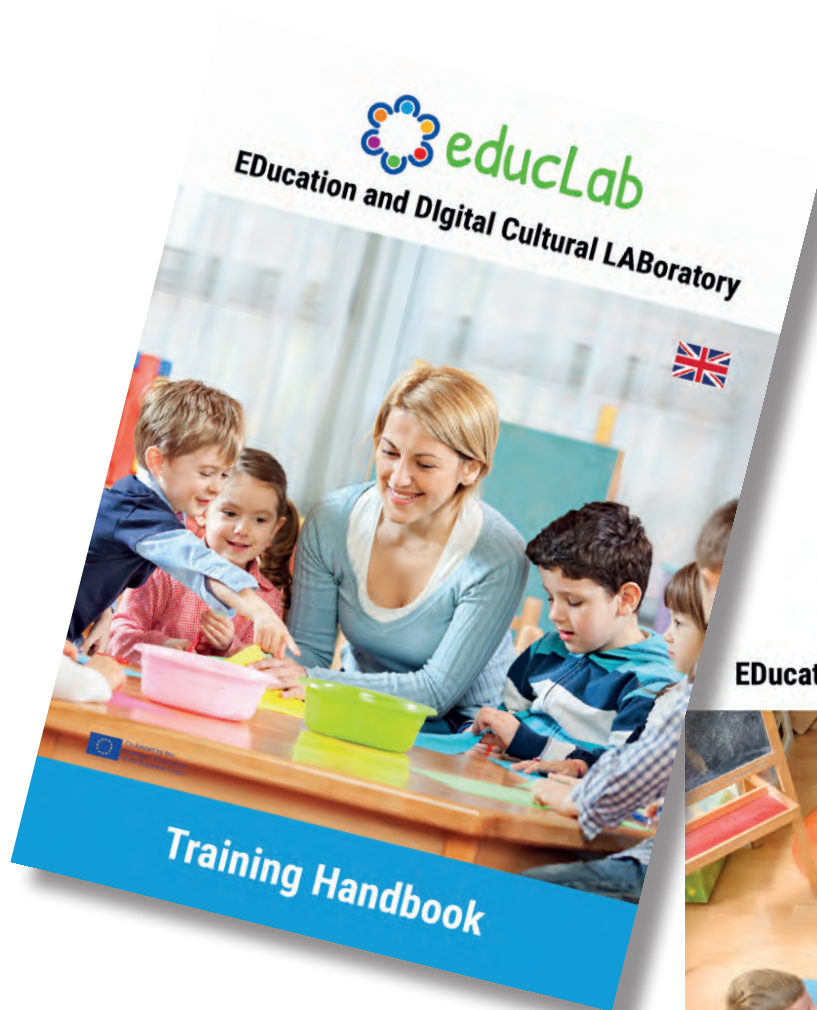
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