



# Children can present their town in the best way

## Norway

Project name:  
Our Home Town

Teacher:  
Erik Westrum

School:  
Askollen skole, Drammen

Learning areas:  
Geography, History, Music, Art

Objectives:  
Winning a competition in making a presentation about the students' home town using picture, video and text

Outcomes:  
Students learned that technology was just a tool for their assignment and acquired new and exciting knowledge and skills

“What started as a competition, ended up giving us so many exciting challenges and problems we needed to solve and plenty of meaningful learning experiences.”

— Erik Westrum, Askollen skole

The objective of this project was for the pupils to gain more knowledge about their home town, Drammen in Norway, and to make a presentation of the city's main landmarks and features. Pupils worked in groups, researching and gathering information about the history and the present of their city, along with relevant pictures. They learned that technology was just a tool for their assignment, helping them to learn more about their home town, and in addition they've gained more knowledge using different media types.



### Situation

The class of the Askollen skole in Drammen, Norway, was invited to participate in a competition hosted by Microsoft Norway in making the best presentation about their home town. They thought this was a fun and exciting challenge and instantly brain stormed on how to take on this challenge, what methods and what approaches to use. The pupils gathered in groups, researching and gathering information, history and pictures of the city. Askollen skole is an elementary school in Drammen, town located on the near Oslo, the capital of Norway. The school was appointed by the Norwegian government in 2005 to function as a resource school to others, and share and open up to visitors and other schools based on work done in the fields of literacy and ICT.

“ They had better skills in using software than I had ever foreseen.”

— Erik Westrum, Askollen skole

#### Objectives

The objective of the project is for the pupils to gain more knowledge about their home town, and to make a presentation using sound, picture and text in Microsoft Photo Story. It was up to them to decide an expedient and proper way to collect the material they would need for the project. Finally, they were to edit the gathered information and make a presentation, using Microsoft Photo Story. Making a photo story to present their home town in a new and exciting way, they made an excellent introduction to the city for someone who has never been to this area before.

The pupils were divided in groups, based on what methods they wanted to use, and they set up their own schedules and decided who was taking responsibilities for different assignments. They obtained information and knowledge on how this was to be done, and did some research gathering material for their project. The project lesson was based on a lesson plan where the objective was defined, but not every step on the way to reach it, so it was up to the pupils to participate and contribute as far as making sure the progress led towards the objective. It was also very important that all communication with sources of information (local newspapers or administration) should be distributed through the teacher, or at least that he was receiving a copy of all enquiries being made.

#### Outcomes

Besides learning the basic facts and getting to know their home town better, students experienced the use of Microsoft PhotoStory, as a fun tool for learning and presenting the project, trying to win the national competition. The students, and teachers also, have learned to use e-mail to communicate, using Outlook Express, MSN Messenger and the Microsoft Learning Gateway. During the project the teacher was given an opportunity to teach new skills and help the pupils gain more knowledge in certain areas.

To sum it up, the pupils have participated in a successful learning process and made experiences due to the competition. They have i.e. learned that enquiring permission to use copyrighted material has been absolutely positive. When they explain what they want to use the material for, and if they ask in a polite way, they are most likely to be given permission to use any material in their projects. The pupils have impressed the local community by making precise, polite and decent enquiries, receiving positive response from all the different contributors.

“The greatest benefit from working on this project was that what started as a competition ended up giving us so many exciting challenges and problems we needed to solve and there of plenty of meaningful learning experiences”, says Erik Westrum, teacher from Askollen skole in Drammen.