



MODULE 3

UNDERSTANDING NEGOTIATION AND DECISION-MAKING IN EUROPE

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Skills#EU Module: Intercultural Communication

1. Introduction

This document represents the central outputs of the Skills#EU project. The project's overall goal is to add civic education components to the ERASMUS+ mobility experience of VET students. This is necessary first to compensate for the general lack of civic and citizenship education in vocational training; and second, to provide ERASMUS+ VET mobility students with specific knowledge and skills when going abroad for a professional stay in another European country. Both are desperately missing: civic education is hardly existent in VET education any European educational system; and even if VET students decide to participate in an ERASMUS+ mobility experience they are not prepared at all in terms of European democracy, citizenship rights, EU politics or intercultural, European communication. Knowledge of these issues is highly important for students to be able to profit from the opportunities of a European labour market as well as for becoming responsible members of our democratic societies.

The project outputs are describing and illustrating three different approaches to civic education and intercultural communication. They are represented in the three modules of the Skills#EU Curriculum. The Curriculum is designed as a hands-on guideline for teachers and multipliers who are providing preparatory, accompanying, or follow-up courses to VET mobility students both in their country of origin and the host country. It is assisting teachers and multipliers with didactical explanations and practical advice for their implementation. Furthermore, the Skills#EU Curriculum has a modular structure. This means that it allows the application of the three approaches together or separately depending on the temporal resources of the mobility courses on site. It even allows using certain units and sub-units of the modules individually and integrating them to the specific course structures. Highest practicability and flexibility shall make it as easy as possible for teachers and trainers to provide civic education in the context of ERASMUS+ VET mobility. This shall increase the probability that this important subject receives more attention and is offered to the VET-mobility participants.

The Skills#EU Modules present and explain all the material that is necessary to implement and perform civic education from the three different perspectives. All materials are provided either online via the Skills#EU website and peer-learning platform or in form of a method-box. Accordingly, teachers, trainers and multipliers of all participating partner organisations have direct access to all relevant materials. Trainers, teachers and multipliers of interested organisations outside the project will have the possibility to directly access the online material free of charge, to compile their own method box or ask for its provision from the Skills#EU project partners.

Next to presenting materials, the Skills#EU Modules gives deep insight in the development process, while detailed explanations of the approaches and methodologies are provided as well. This shall enable teachers, trainers and multipliers to further develop the presented methodologies and find even better ways for their implementation. In the end, teachers, trainers and multipliers on the ground know best how to organise their courses and how to deal with their students.

This document is covering Module 3 of the Skills#EU Curriculum titled "Intercultural Communication". It is focusing, in particular on the elements that characterize the diversity of different cultures and cultural adaptation. It highlights intercultural differences and the ability to understand communication in a cross cultural environment.

This document is structured as follows: Section 2 refers to the context of Module 3 within the Skills#EU project. It elaborates on why it is necessary to talk about the above mentioned values in the EU in VET education and therefore show how it is contributing to the overall project goals. Section 3 is describing the development process of Module 3 and is illustrating how the initial theoretical approach has been adapted to the realities of the ERASMUS+ VET mobility programmes in the different European countries. Section 4 is the actual core of the document and is presenting and explaining the intercultural learning material that has been developed during the project. Section 5 and 6 conclude.

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2. Context of the Module

European civic education is currently not living up to this responsibility in any of the EU member states. Studies have clearly shown that civic education in particular in relation to the EU is receiving very little attention in the education system both in terms of time and educational resources. The lack of European civic education has other very practical consequences as well. The European Integration process has created a Single European Labour Market eliminating the bureaucratic barriers for workers and employees to take jobs in other EU member countries. The VET systems, however, are not taking these new possibilities sufficiently into account. Training and teaching is still geared very much towards the national labour markets and dedicate very little time to prepare students for the European labour market. Accordingly, they are not trained in European issues like rights and duties as European citizens or intercultural communication to deal with cultural differences in European states. Such “soft skills” are highly important for students’ ability to get along with new working conditions and therefore impact greatly on their performance as employees. The SKILLS#EU Project aims to fill these currently existing gaps and provides students with skills which are not standard part of a normal vocational education. Without these essential skills, the European Integration process cannot develop. Module 3 aims at helping students understand the EU context as well as communication in a cross-cultural environment. In addition it provides trainees with skills that are essential in today’s European Labour Market.

Therefore, the Skills#EU project is aiming at two overall goals:

- First, it is educating VET students in the areas of civic and citizenship education in order to foster their knowledge about democracy and democratic values as well as the European Integration process, its advantages for each citizen as well as its shortcomings and challenges. This shall help these students to exercise their democratic rights and make them become responsible European citizens.¹
- Second, it is providing VET students with important “soft skills” that help them to take their chances on the European labour market. They shall learn about their opportunities, rights and duties as well as how to behave in different working environments and different cultures.

The Skills#EU project follows the following strategy:

1. The Skills#EU project is going to integrate educational elements in the ERASMUS+ VET mobility programme. Therefore, it is cooperating with sending and receiving organisations in Austria, France, Germany and Malta that are organising the mobility stay for VET students. They are providing the work placement, the accommodation, and are supervising the participants during their stay. Furthermore, they are arranging preparatory and follow-up courses for the participants. These preparatory and follow-up courses are the ideal contexts to include new elements of European civic and citizenship education. They are rather flexible and not regulated by strict national standards and therefore offer the space to include new content.²
2. The Skills#EU output consists of three modules that are tied together in a common Skills#EU Curriculum. The modules' titles are:
 - **Module 1: Challenges and Opportunities as European Citizens**
 - **Module 2: Understanding Negotiation and Decision-Making in Europe**
 - **Module 3: Intercultural Communication**

The three modules are implementing the new content of civic and citizenship education in the ERASMUS+ context and are applying modern pedagogic methodologies that are not common standard in the VET. They are tackling both VET students' civic and citizenship education as well as their abilities to cope with the European labour market.

3. The Skills#EU project is developing material that can immediately be used by the trainers and teachers on site. This means that they are provided with hands-on material as well as guidelines and advice how these materials can be used and further developed. This is responding to the fact that civic and citizenship education material is hardly designed for the VET context and is mostly targeting academic education. In contrast, the Skills#EU material is specifically designed for the specific competences of VET students.

Intercultural Communication

Module 3 of the Skills#EU project aims to prepare VET students for their Erasmus+ experience. Therefore it focuses on intercultural differences and how one can communicate in a cross-cultural environment. Throughout the online and offline courses of Module 3 participants can understand the essential meaning behind notions such as '*Intercultural Communication*' and '*Cultural Shock Adaptation*' and can familiarize themselves with the analysis of intercultural differences.

Traditional teaching methods are struggling to convey a deeper meaning of the above mentioned values. Far too often they are not taught at all or only superficially without being put into context or being grounded in learners' everyday lives. Consequently, learners in general are quickly losing their interest in the subject, will not be able to fully understand these concepts and will not realise what they mean for their personal lives. Therefore, new ways have to be found in order to motivate students to pay attention to this important subject. With the Skills#EU perspective they have to focus on cooperation, interaction, common decision-making and collaborative action.

Module 3 of the Skills#EU project is implementing simulation games and similar experimental exercises to raise awareness of these essential notions among young adults. These methods give participants a role in a decision-

² In contrast, national education systems are highly rigid and difficult to change. New content like European civic education is very hard to be implemented.

making context and ask them to act according to a certain amount of information given. The games go far beyond than merely describing isolated facts; rather, they create a personal context, reproduce cooperation dynamics and will elaborate on these concepts and values and how they are incorporated in our everyday lives abroad. They provide a highly interactive setting, giving students the opportunity to test themselves, experiment with new behaviours and behavioural patterns. Furthermore, students can develop their social skills as well, by learning how to behave in a community. Module 3 includes an introduction to the theory of cultural dimensions by Geert Hofstede as well, through which students can learn about different ways of acting and interacting within one or more cultures. With such knowledge, they can build relationships more easily and implement appropriate behaviour strategies. They understand different ways of communication (verbal, non-verbal and para-verbal) and can define the elements that characterize the diversity of a culture. By being introduced to new perspectives they can become more open-minded and tolerant towards other cultures. As a result they will be able to improve their own perception of the world which they could benefit from during their mobility.

3. Development of the Module

According to the conceptual basis outlined in the previous section the original plan for Skills#EU Module 3 was to help participants prepare for their Erasmus experience, get over the first cultural shock they might feel after arriving in a new country and help their integration in that foreign, multicultural environment.

Module 3 is revolved around the following building blocks:

1. First, and foremost to observe **Intercultural Communication**: Be aware of one's role and identity in a multicultural environment.
2. Experience what does **Diversity** mean : Cultural shock - to raise awareness of the differences in cultural behavior, understanding the influence of one's own cultural background on communication in a multicultural environment
3. Learn about **Cultural adaptation** in a new cultural context - HOFSTEDE theory applied to Erasmus+ mobility

Thus, participants have a chance to learn about these concepts in a playful manner and learn substantially about the ERASMUS+ programme and how it is integrated in the EU context as well.

Transnational project meetings

Transnational project meetings in Perpignan, Malta as well as the staff training in Berlin have all added important insights to the development process of this module.

Projects in the context of the "Strategic Partnership" are particularly suitable for advancing the ERASMUS+ VET mobility programme due to the fact that several acting organisations come together, share their experiences in and with the programme, and come up with concrete reform steps. This is also the case in the Skills#EU project. Sending and receiving organisation from four EU countries elaborate how to advance the preparatory and follow-up courses by elements of civic and citizenship education and intercultural training. And the collaboration proved genuinely fruitful.

As it turned out, there is relatively little communication and cooperation between sending and receiving organisations when it comes to preparing their students and following up on their mobility stay. By and large course contents are not aligned – each organisation seems to follow its own procedures and offers solely the course content

that it deems necessary. While this is unfortunate from an ERASMUS+ VET mobility participant's view it is fully understandable from the organisations' perspective. The organisational differences between the national VET systems are so large that coordination is highly demanding and rarely successful.

Therefore, the first lesson learned from the project partners is:

- Preparatory and follow-up courses are embedded in highly different organisational contexts. For the Skills#EU course content this means that it has to be flexible enough to be fit in highly diverse course structures as well. The Skills#EU Modules need to be applicable individually. Assuming that the whole Curriculum will be applied as one monolithic course before, during, or after a mobility stay is not realistic.

Nevertheless, sending and receiving organisations are required to offer preparatory and follow-up courses to their students. However, the resources that are granted therefore are hardly living up to the formal requirements. They are enough to cover the most important information as for example the students' duties during their mobility stay and the reporting requirements. Both organisationally and financially there is hardly any room for providing fine-tuned and sophisticated training. This is unfortunate because the VET systems are not preparing their students properly for a job or an internship in another European country, although intercultural training would be particularly useful for a positive experience both in the workplace and in private life.

Accordingly, our second lesson learned from the project partners is:

- Sending and receiving organisations have a great interest in upgrading their courses by civic education and intercultural training because they see the need for it and experience the respective failure of the national VET systems. However, they are bound by strict regulations and tight budgets and therefore select carefully what they can integrate and what not. From a Skills#EU perspective this means that the course contents need to be as relevant and useful for the everyday lives of the mobility students and less theoretic.

4. Implementation of Skills#EU Module 3

1. Focus on the individual VET mobility participant, on cooperation and interaction

Since Module 3 aims at preparing participants for their mobility, it focuses on the individual participants. During the workshop we are interested in participants' thoughts, their expectations for the upcoming mobility, so that we can raise awareness and consciousness of their own professional and private development. The specific methodologies applied here can motivate them to think about what a European exchange is, how foreign working environments and work ethics can differ. Instead of providing them with answers to questions they have not asked, the participants are guided to develop their own questions that are rooted in their very own mind-set.

2. Separated course-structure:

Although the activities in Module 3 were designed for 10 hours altogether, parts of all three units can be carried out in the same 60-90 minutes. The titles of the separate units are:

- **Observing intercultural communication**
- **Experiencing diversity**
- **Cultural adaptation in a new foreign context**

This allocation has two major advantages:

- First, by keeping its overall duration at a maximum of one hour but spreading it over three distinct units, the Module becomes more flexible and more easily applicable. In particular, the units become shorter and can be matched better to the course restrictions of sending and receiving organisations. This increases the probability that the content of the Skills#EU Module 3 will be employed beyond the lifetime of the Skills#EU project.
- Second, the individual units are better attuned to the specific interests of the participants. The first unit revolves around observing intercultural communication through watching sequences of a movie and reflecting on it, connecting it to their own experiences. This reflection phase is particularly important for the students' individual learning process. In other words: learning takes place during reflection. The second unit involves a game through which participants can experience diversity. The third unit involves both a theoretical and a practical part. A game is part of this unit as well which aims to make it easier for students to grasp the theoretical part.

3. Pilot of Module 3 in Perpignan

After Module 3 was developed and drafted, it was piloted at ALFMED Language Academy with VET students participating in the Erasmus+ program. The students who attended the workshop did their internships in Perpignan in various vocational sectors, from gastronomy to tourism; most of them were of Italian and of Belgian origin with a diverse level of education. Most students were of a young age (18-19) and worked in a foreign environment for the first time. Thus an important element of the workshop was to help students get over the first cultural shock they might experience after coming to France and to help their integration in a foreign, multicultural environment. The workshops took place with mixed nationality groups of 10-15 students; each workshop lasting about 2,5 hours.

Module 3 was originally planned before the mobility and it worked as a great preparation. Students participated in this workshop shortly after they arrived in the foreign country. VET students in general are not frequently confronted with global issues such as how the Erasmus program fits in the context of the EU and they have rather little knowledge about EU institutions and European geography in general. Thus it was expected that they would not show high motivation for this topic. The first pilot workshops on the other hand showed that the theoretical and the practical part within each workshop were very well balanced and that the practical games helped a lot in the understanding of the theoretical context. The reason for this could be that the course contents were dealing with the actual reality of the participants: being in preparation for a new working experience in a foreign environment. Thus even during a theoretical part, students could personally relate to the topic.

The tables below show a detailed description of the three different parts and their sub units:

Table 1: List of sub-units of Skills#EU – Module 3 – Unit 1: Observing Intercultural Communication

	Title	Content	Learning Objective
Sub-Unit 1 Duration: 10min	Warm-Up	Speed-dating: The participants are getting to know each other and their trainer	Creating a good atmosphere among the participants and motivating them to speak up in front of strangers
Sub-Unit 2 Duration: 15min	Intercultural - Communication 1	Watching sequences of the movie ' <i>L'Auberge Espagnole</i> '	Participants can observe an ERASMUS+ setting in the movie to which they can relate to
Sub-Unit 3 Duration: 30min	Intercultural - Communication 2	Interpreting scenes from the movie ' <i>L'Auberge Espagnole</i> '	Participants formulate their thoughts about the movie and they can share their expectations about their own mobility
Sub-Unit 4 Duration: 2,5h	Intercultural - Communication 3 - DERDIAN game	<p>-Setting: two groups: 'Derdians' and foreign engineers. The "foreign" group teaches Derdians how to build a bridge. They have to interact and work together but contact for Derdians is restricted to certain rules and behaviours (eg. Touching while talking, Greeting by kissing each other's shoulder) and the foreign group has to adapt to these.</p> <p>-Task: Find the key to foreign cultural behavior, analyze the effects of meeting with a foreign culture</p>	During the game participants take a role of a foreign cultural behavior and can experience the effects of meeting a foreign culture
Sub-Unit 5 Duration: 30min	Intercultural - Communication 3 - DERDIAN game	Reflection on the game, feelings, interpretations	Participants formulate their thoughts about the game, they can share what they found easy and difficult and add why

Table 2: List of Sub-Units of Skills#EU – Module 2, Unit 2: Experiencing Diversity

	Title	Content	Learning Objective
Sub-Unit 1 Duration: 15min	Experiencing Diversity 1 - 'Profile cards game'	<p>-Setting: standing in a circle each student has a card with a nationality, a job and a specific behaviour typical for that country.</p> <p>-Task: Students walk up to each other and have conversations. Using the described behaviour, the goal is to guess the profile of someone else (using indirect questions and body language)</p>	During the game participants can widen their perspective as they become aware of the differences in various cultural behaviours. Furthermore they witness how our cultural background can influence communication in a foreign environment
Sub-Unit 2 Duration: 10min	Experiencing Diversity 2 -	Reflection on the game, feelings, interpretations	Participants formulate their thoughts about the game, they can share what they found easy and difficult and add why

Table 3: List of Sub-Units of Skills#EU – Module 2, Unit 3: Adaptation to a new cultural context

	Title	Content	Learning Objective
Sub-Unit 1 Duration: 15min	Adaptation to a new cultural context	HOFSTEDE Theory applied to Erasmus+	Participants can familiarize themselves with HOFSTEDE's theory of cultural dimensions, they can place their own countries within these and thus can understand it better
Sub-Unit 2 Duration: 15min	Conclusion and Evaluation	Reflecting on the trainer's presentation, students can ask questions, share their thoughts	This reflection ends unit 3, as well as the whole workshop, it intends to provide room for a final discussion

5. Lessons learned, Reflection

Watching a few sequences of the movie '*L'Auberge Espagnole*' (The Spanish Apartment) was a great way to get the workshop started and put the students in a good mood. The students could easily identify with the chosen movie as it describes an Erasmus experience as well. The scenes were carefully selected for an upcoming discussion where the students and the trainer talked about a possible influence of our cultural background, differences in behaviours, cultural awareness and stereotypes.

Afterwards, they played the "Profile cards game". Everybody received a profile card with some hints on profession, country of origin and communication patterns. All students were asked to find out what is the other person's profile in one-to-one-discussions.

Upon finishing the game, participants sat down in a circle with the trainer and had an open discussion about the game. Students were asked what they found rather easy or difficult and what helped them manage the dialogues. The reflection showed that they were able to understand the gist of the game as they related to the tasks personally. During the game they managed to have basic conversations in English and could play their parts in the role-play. Students who had a lower level of English listed 'body language' as a huge helping tool in guessing the profile of their partner. On the other hand, as they had very diverse educational backgrounds, some of them had rather little knowledge about geography and thus could not complete the game. Thus, a map of Europe was set up as well, in order to help their understanding.

Being the framework for cross-cultural communication, a brief introduction to the Hofstede Theory turned out to be a great and interesting part of the workshop as well. This was done after the game through a power point presentation. In their evaluation, students mostly gave positive ratings as they could all place their own country within one of the theoretical dimensions.

6. Conclusion

The core objective of this module is to provide youngsters with intercultural training and prepare for communicating in a multicultural European setting.

Following the evaluation of both the trainer and the participants, the pilot workshops proved to be successful. Module 3 provided good content and encouraged the right mind frame for the mobility. Participants found the two games expressive, inspiring and eye opening; both games supported the theoretical content well. Altogether, interaction and a deductive approach proved to be very helpful for the target group. This is important because

young VET students are facing the reality of a European labour market which is requiring these new soft-skills, in particular.

There is of course room for improvement, especially in awakening motivation and interest to the topic and maybe reduce a highly theoretical content to a more personal level. More visual aids should be provided as well to fill the gaps in the educational background of participants and thus help them understand the games better. Furthermore the evaluation also showed that more time should be left for reflection where participants can elaborate on their experiences.

Thus the Skills#EU modules they have to be highly flexible and adaptable to existing course structures. Trainers that are on site can so decide independently which elements of the three Skills#EU modules they want to work with in practice. Accordingly, all material that is produced in the project's context aims at providing as much support as possible to the trainers. They can access this material online via the Skills#EU website and peer-learning platform, respectively and/or a method box containing all ingredients of the modules' exercises in hard copy. Therewith, the project partners achieve that trainers take the opportunity and upgrade their course offers by civic education or intercultural training and develop their offer further. In the end, VET students shall be better prepared for life and for work in a larger European context.

ANNEX 1: Instruction Cards

Skills#EU – Module 3 – Unit 1 - Sub-Unit 1: Warm-Up –Speed-dating

Goal and Nature of the Exercise

- Light and personal introduction
- Activating the workshop participants to talk about their personal life, their interests, their thoughts and feelings.
- Reducing the timidity of the participants and motivating them to speak up and to talk with and in front of each other.

The Course of Action

- Split the group in two and create two rows of chairs so that two persons can face each other
- Project the given questions (see: below) on a screen. You are free to choose different questions, of course.
- Each group of two (facing each other) have 2min time to go through the questions and answer them to each other. This means that each participant has one minute to go through all the questions. If the workshops have few participants the time per duo can be prolonged.
- Once the two minutes have lapsed the participants of one row move one chair to the right and start the presentation anew.

The Questions

The following questions are suggestions and not mandatory, of course. The list can be changed, shortened, or prolonged according to the preferences of the trainer and the group.

- What is the worst flavour of ice cream?
- How would you spend one million Euros
- What animal frightens you?
- What song do you sing in the shower?
- If you could rule the world for a day, what would you ban?
- What was the best vacation you ever had?
- What is your hidden talent?
- If someone made a movie of your life, what genre would it be?
- What is your favourite Christmas food?
- If you could drive, ride, or fly anything to work, what would it be?

Skills#EU – Module 3 – Unit 1 - Sub-Unit 4–DERDIAN game

Derdian-group (instructions)

The Game

You live in a country called “Derdia”. To reach the market from where you live, you have to walk for two days because the market is by a deep valley. If there would be a bridge across the valley, you could get there in 5 hours. The government of Derdia made a deal with a foreign firm to come to your village and teach you how to build a bridge.

The bridge will be built out of paper, using pencils, rulers, scissors and glue. You know the materials and tools, but you don’t know the construction techniques. Your people will be the first engineers of Derdia. After having built that first bridge with the foreign experts you will be able to build bridges all over Derdia to facilitate other people’s lives.

Rules

1. Touching while talking

The Derdians have to touch each other when talking (not touching while talking is very rude). You don’t have to be in direct contact, though. If you join a group, you just hang on to one member and you are instantly included in the conversation.

2. Getting in touch with someone

A Derdian man will NEVER get in contact with another man unless a woman introduces him. It does not matter whether the woman is Derdian or not.

3. Greeting by kissing each other’s shoulder

You have to greet each other when you meet, even when you just pass someone. The traditional greeting is a kiss on the shoulder. The person who starts the greetings kisses the other on the right shoulder. The other then kisses on the left shoulder. Every other form of kissing is insulting! Shaking hands is one of the biggest insults possible in Derdia. If a Derdian ever is insulted by not being greeted or touched while being talked to, he/she starts shouting loudly about it.

4. YES/NO: Always use ‘yes’

Derdians don’t use the word NO. They always say YES, although if they mean NO, they accompany the YES with an empathic nodding of the head (you should practice this well)

5. Work behavior: Tools are gender-specific

Scissors = MALE | Pencils and rulers = FEMALE | Glue/paper = BOTH
 Men never touch a pencil or a ruler. The same goes for women and scissors.

6. Foreigners

Derdians are very proud of themselves and their culture. They expect the foreigners to adapt to their culture. But because of their own behavior is natural to them, they can’t explain it to the experts (this point is VERY Important).



Engineers-group (instructions)

The Game

You are a group of international engineers working for a multinational construction company. Your company has just signed a very important contract with the government of Derdia in which it committed itself to teach Derdians how to build a bridge. The bridge will be built out of paper, using pencils, rulers, scissors and glue.

According to the contract signed, it is very important that you respect the deadline agreed, otherwise the contract will be cancelled and you will be unemployed. Derdia is a very mountainous country, with many canyons and deep valleys, but no bridges. Therefore it always takes many days for Derdians to go from the villages to the market in the main city. It is estimated that with the bridge the Derdians could make the trip in only 5 hours instead of two days.

Stages of the Game

1. Start of the game

First you should take the time to carefully read these instructions and decide together about the way you are going to build the bridge (15min).

2. First introduction

After a specific time (you will be informed), two members of your team will be allowed to go and make contact for 5 minutes with the Derdian village where the bridge will be built (e.g. to check the natural and material conditions, make the contact with the Derdians, etc.).

3. Analyze and prepare

You will then have 15 minutes to analyze their report and complete the preparations.

4. Whole team goes to Derdia

Now you have 25 minutes with the whole team to go to Derdia and teach the Derdians how to build the bridge.

The bridge

A paper bridge will symbolize the bridge. The bridge will link two chairs over a distance of approximately 80 cm. It has to be stable. At the end of the building process it should support the weight of the scissors and glue used in its construction. The pieces of the bridge cannot just be cut out and assembled in Derdia because otherwise the Derdians would not learn how to do it themselves. They have to learn all the stages of the construction. Each piece needs to be drawn with pencil and ruler and then cut out with the scissors.

Materials

The bridge will be made with paper/cardboard. You can use for the planning and building: paper, glue, scissors, rulers, pencils.

Time

For the planning preparation: a total of 45 minutes For teaching the Derdians to build the bridge: 25 minutes.

Skills#EU – Module 3 – Unit 2 - Sub-Unit 1–Profile Cards game

The Preparation

There are 28 cards in total (because each person needs to have a different EU flag/nationality). Each of them has its nationality, job and a specific behavior. All the participants have to stay in a circle in the room. Each of them has to pick one of the 'profile cards' and not show it to the others. The participant has to memorize his/her card and hang it around his/her neck (trainer will provide this accessory). Everyone has 1 minute to prepare themselves.

The Game

All participants are free to walk up to each other and have conversations. Only one-to-one discussions are allowed.

Every participant, using the described behavior, has to guess the profile (nationality + vocational sector) of 2 other participants without asking direct questions.

The one responding to the question can't give a direct answer as well (e.g. he can't say his country directly).

For example:

- From which country are you / What is your job / What is your behavior / ...

NOT ALLOWED

- In what part of Europe do you live / What is your native language / How is your job / ...

ALLOWED

Timing: 20 minutes

After the game

All participants sit down in a circle while the trainer will ask them questions about their experience. For example:

- The participants must tell the 2 characters they've found (nationality + vocational sector)
- Did you find it easy to start the discussion?
- What was the most difficult for you? How did you adapt ?
- Did you feel comfortable in playing your role?

Notes: How do VET students profit from a mobility experience?

- In order to profit from the opportunities of a European labour market, workers and employees have to cope with its challenges.
 - **Opportunities** are:
 - Finding better jobs within companies with business ties to other European countries
 - Finding better jobs within companies with branches in different European countries
 - Finding better jobs in other European countries
 - **Challenges** are:
 - more competition with other job-seekers
 - more flexibility required e.g. to move to another country or to travel
 - better communication skills required including language and the ability to adapt to other cultures and habits both in the work life as well as in private life
 - showing initiative and problem solving skills in changing environments

In sum: “Individuals will need to adapt to a changing labour market and patterns of work; take responsibility for investing in and developing their skills, develop both job-specific and soft skills, including collaboration and communication; and develop the skills required by employers, including enterprise and management skills” (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2014: p.22)

- ERASMUS+ is a real-time training of these skills by:
 - Learning a new language
 - Learning to work with a new set people
 - Learning how to adapt to new working habits and work ethics
 - Learning to cope with unknown challenges and find solutions to new problems
 - Learning to cope with new private conditions and accommodate to new cultures and social habits
- If European workers and employees master these challenges they will be of high value to companies and accordingly highly sought-after.