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Learning-Teaching-Training Activities Report

Learning session in Aveiro, Portugal

16th-20th May 2016

Preface

This report is a summary of the participants' evaluation of the Learning-Teaching-Training Activities that took place in Aveiro, Portugal from 16th to 20th May. The base of the following summary is: questionnaires administered to the direct participants 3-8 days after their return, their informal feedback, observation of reactions and their personal thoughts in retrospect.

There were 45 students and 19 teachers from 7 countries involved in this training session. The students' ages ranged between 13 and 19. All the students, excepting Italy, come from an urban area. The teachers have between 4-30 years of didactic experience. Most of the participants had never been involved in a European project before and they were from the beginning attracted to the idea of participating in a multicultural learning activity with many benefits and the chance to acquire knowledge and experience that could not have been obtained within the school curriculum.

Overall evaluation and Comments

1. Quality of the event

The results are in general very good for students and teachers. The majority (93%) of the participants found the event to be of very high quality - very good or excellent – and 7% evaluated it good. The main aims were clear, reachable, well scheduled and explained. The students reported that it was very interesting and quite challenging to be involved in learning activities that demand cooperation, share of responsibilities with students from 6 different countries and reflection on the cultural diversities. They also welcomed the



opportunity to contribute to the development of a positive attitude towards cultural diversity by sharing information about their country.

2. Structure, content and delivery of the event

The participants (96%) referred that the trainers/leaders of the learning sessions were skilled communicators, with a deep knowledge of their own subject and of the social/cultural part they were supposed to develop in the mobility. They all had solid didactic competences and experience.

The participants found all the activities interesting and very well planned. Their connection to the aim of the Unesco Heritage project was made clear to them and students were glad for the opportunity to share relevant information about their country. The mixture of the activities, ranging from icebreaking activities to information-giving and role sharing during workshops was much appreciated. There was a very high degree of satisfaction with the effectiveness of the delivery by workshop leaders and the ongoing assistance provided. The participants felt appreciated and welcomed to contribute their own expertise during activities. Every member of the team has always been ready and happy to help them with any requests or needs and has showed a deep emotional and professional involvement in the effort to grant the hosts the opportunity of a cultural development in a relaxed and collaborative atmosphere.

3. Materials, resources, equipment

The materials and resources put at their disposal during the mobility were effective, appropriate with high quality and well organized.

4. Quality of domestic arrangements

The majority of the participants (96%) reported that there was sincere attention paid to practical details and catering arrangements, excellent suitability of the working venue and the participants were very pleased with the arrangements and the quality of accommodation. The Portuguese host families were well chosen and tried to make the guests feel at home and welcome in their country. Only 4% of the participants referred that there was poor attention paid to practical details and catering arrangements for the teachers.

5. Aim of the educational activities

Participants reported that the educational activities were involving, motivating and various. The educational activities and the event as a whole gave them the opportunity to increase knowledge, language and communication skills and increase their self-esteem. They greatly appreciated their being exposed to a multicultural, diverse learning environment that consolidated their appreciation for their own and other cultural heritages and most importantly instill a new appreciation for experiential learning within the framework of a European programme.



Strong points of the event

- Students have found the strongest points of this mobility to be getting to know other cultures, visiting Portuguese cities with famous monuments and working together as a team.
- They highly appreciated the friendly approach and hospitality of the host families.
- Also developing a friendly relationship with other students from all partners' teams and finding out about the ways of life in different communities.
- They have also found the conversation in English to be very useful, since English was the "official" language of this project. They realized that this meeting was extremely useful for them.
- All topics were student-oriented towards learning activities in multicultural contexts.

- The experience of collaborating with students of their age from other cultures in discovering the Portuguese heritage. They understood the project made them aware of the great importance of intercultural tolerance and of their own role in preserving the world heritage.
- All the activities (workshops, visits, trips) were well planned and rich of cultural information, activities, interesting and stimulating proposals.
- The hosting families were very nice, hospitable and friendly, so the students were taken care of as effective members of the family.
- The symposium was highly appreciated, because the students and the teachers had the opportunity to exchange opinions and to confront with works of great relevance.
- The students showed a particular enthusiasm for the trips, and considered the most exciting ones those to the ocean and to Lisbon thanks to the beautiful scenario that they saw.
- All the activities organized promoted intercultural exchanges, improved the knowledge of the different European cultures and deepened the competences in the use of the English language as an effective means of communication and interexchange.
- The participants also had an opportunity to teach each other some basic vocabulary in their mother tongue.
- good relationships established with people from different countries and cultures;
- good planning of the activities
- relevance and variety of the activities proposed.
- Teachers have also gained new experience and acquired knowledge about the methodology of their work at school by participating in the symposium, workshops, meetings with other teachers in the project and all the other participants, getting to know other countries' traditional food, way of living and folk music and clothes.
- Teachers have exchanged their experience and methods of work in the teaching process, discussed different school systems of the participating countries and gained knowledge about other methods of work in the classroom, discussed all tasks that should be completed until the end of the project.



- The excellent collaboration between partners, both students and teachers. All the working sessions involved the students actively most of the times, so that they didn't get bored and retained the information more easily.

Weak points of the event

- The vast majority reported that there were no weak points to refer to. They were convinced that the whole host team did their best during the meeting.

However, some students and teachers mentioned that

- sometimes the English skills of some teachers were rather poor, which decreased the quality of the activity and made it less enjoyable. (5%)
- the shortage of time; because of it some activities such as visiting landscapes were done in a hurry. A guide in Lisbon could have been useful for teachers and students. (10%)
- the trips were not well organized enough. (5%)
- Some countries could not play their traditional games due to bad weather conditions, which made the pupils sad and disappointed. (3%)

Overall, the majority of the partners evaluated the event to be an excellent quality, useful and relevant to their learning needs. They reported that "the activities organized were found to be of excellent quality, highly educational and beneficial to the students. Communication, collaboration and socializing in a multicultural setting are invaluable learning opportunities that provide educational benefits with lasting effect. The workshop and the presentations of the student-generated content that followed provided excellent opportunity for project-based learning. The teachers were very pleased to watch the students research, manage and present information to a multinational audience using ICT and English as a working language in a real life situation. The students, took initiatives, practiced their skills and acquired new ones, strengthened their self-esteem and cultivated the attitude of cooperation, self-management and accountability. Working UNESCO Heritage. Erasmus + 2014-2016 collaboratively within a unifying theme, helped the students develop competences and attitudes much needed in the future role as European citizens while building bonds and making friends in the process. The intercultural festival that was successfully organized in two successive days gave the participants the satisfaction of witnessing the presentation of high quality products generated within the framework of a European project. The multinational contribution to the relevant product (the journal) gave the whole result wider recognition and justified the European added value of Erasmus+ projects. The in-situ visits that were arranged in 3 succeeding days were very well organized and very indicative of the merit of experiential learning. The participants were able to take in the sights, see, hear, smell and taste Portugal's culture as they were guided to Unesco Heritage sites that revealed the rich history of the country. The intercultural activities with the traditional games that were organized in the final day were an excellent closure to the activities as a person is never too old to play children's games and enjoy the



opportunity to communicate, cooperate and compete in a multicultural environment of ...fun. Differences in origin, age, language and socio-economic background were not a barrier to communication, cooperation and the development of friendly relations among the students, who had many opportunities to talk to each other, to socialize and exchange email addresses.”

“As a conclusion, the Portuguese team was excellent in their manner and hospitality and they provided a memorable experience for everyone.”