



Erasmus+



## BEING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION TEACHERS

CHALON-SUR-SAÔNE- FRANCE  
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1. **What do you think about the importance of this experience for teachers?**
  - **understanding of other cultures**
  - **English fluency improvement**
  - **knowledge of the partner countries' school systems and Methodologies**
  - **multicultural collaboration and overall atmosphere**
  - **results achieved****Discuss**

It has been an incredible experience to work and socialise with colleagues from such diverse nations. We have been able to experience many aspects of life from within each other's domain. Although we are European neighbours, our cultures and behaviours are very different. If we are to understand one another better, and collaborate effectively it is important to know each other better. If you don't have experience of different cultures, how can you expect to teach understanding of these differences to students?

We have now become friends as well as colleagues and this further helps collaboration – we are not afraid to ask questions of each other to further our understanding. What seemed like difficulties in the beginning have proven to just be simple differences in cultural or social etiquettes; and have been embraced and overcome.

We have witnessed the French students' blossom in their use of the English language – they were very embarrassed to try to speak English to begin with – this was partly because the students and staff missed the first mobility to Wales due to the tragic terrorist attacks in Paris. They therefore missed the initial 'hands-on' activities, - even though the learners joined in via the internet application called 'Today's Meet', it is not the same as being 'with' fellow students.

The Finnish students who were initially so formal and reserved are now very much admired; they have proven to be innovative, generous and the students communicate regularly as they are all now 'facebook' friends with each other – this also has helped to break down the stereotypes that each Nation had of each other before the project began.

The Italian students initially talked so much, even when others were speaking – but it came to light that they were trying to understand the English being spoken, so were asking what was being said – they were excited to learn about business as it was all so new to them. The Italian students are not shy in any way – especially the male students. This has been a wonderful characteristic as it has helped to 'bring out' the more reserved Finnish, French and Welsh students.

The Welsh students already knew the foundations of Business, but had no experience of the World outside of their local community. None of the students had travelled beyond a 50 mile radius of their home town. For them, it has made them realise that they can cope and excel in the wider world. It has given them confidence to try new things, and confidence to help others develop their English language competency.

All of the teachers believe that their own competency levels have improved hugely and this will enhance future teaching. We are now all more confident in the delivery of Business topics and are able to see how these topics build and overlap in the development of an overall concept and strategy. We are all more learned as a result.

All of the teachers agree that the levels of English fluency are greatly improved, not just amongst learners but also amongst ourselves. The competency and confidence in using spoken English is greatly enhanced; and the levels of written English are also greatly improved.

All teachers have now experienced the differences in the education systems of each country. It has been interesting to experience and understand the didactics of each institution according to the National requirements.

Collaboration has been the most exciting part of the project – it has been very interesting and very enlightening to observe the different methodologies and to share good practice. However, cross-cultural differences have often meant that our expectations in terms of communication for example, have been different. The Welsh and the Finnish are more used to working quite independently, so to be holding meetings with International colleagues via video conferencing was a new experience. It was also a challenge to combat different time zones and to find a time when all colleagues were free of other teaching commitments etc.

The atmosphere at all mobility visits has been very positive, this is no different for the French mobility – the visit has been wonderful.

Now that we are at the end of the project, the results are tangible. Our own knowledge has expanded, this has enabled an expansion of teaching and learning from the society with partner countries – almost like pedagogical tourism. We now have enhanced ideas and goals, much improved since we first began the collaboration. In fact it could be said that our focus has changed from ideas to fruitions and outcomes – as it should be, but not always what we expected. There has been great enrichment for all completing the project; students initially were afraid, but now we can see the entrepreneurial skills shining through.

## **2. Do you think that the main goals of the project have been achieved?**

- students benefits in terms of motivation, self-esteem cooperation skills, etc.**
- improvement of students' entrepreneurship knowledge**
- competence in English language**
- competence in ITC**
- knocking down of stereotypes and prejudices**

The bar was set very high from the beginning. The first mobility to Wales expected students to immediately perform PowerPoint presentations. It is difficult enough for students of this age to undertake presentations to a peer group at home, let alone undertake this on foreign soil, in a foreign language, so strangers! The enhanced self-esteem was immediate. Success was immediate! This set the standard for the rest of the project where every step of the way students have to present their results and share their ideas and strategies. Learning has been profound – fast and upwards!

As teachers, we have been able to witness the students' perceptions change. We have seen first-hand how some of the most underprivileged learners have 'blossomed' when given the opportunity to explore their own learning in this entrepreneurial environment. We have seen students show a depth of understanding in areas where there was previously no knowledge or no experience whatsoever. Being able to use so many different ICT tools has been a great enhancement for both teachers and students. We have been able to use various tools to facilitate digital collaboration including:

Dropbox

Google.doc

Today'sMeet

Skype

ETwinningPlatform

File sharing

Web page authoring; and many more.

By working collaboratively, during a mobility and/or on the interim work, has enabled cultural perspectives to change. We have been able to break

down stereotypical prejudices of learners – beneath our language, ethnic or social differences we are actually all the same. We each want to be safe, happy and healthy; we have learnt we all want the same things in life. We have the same values even though we may live in different countries. Friendships have been made, for some the friendships will be lifelong. New skills have been learnt; how to communicate in ways that do not always involve language, but involve communicating on different levels; these are life skills that are transferable and valuable. We have learnt that there is always opportunity to improve.

Many of the students have told us that the experience has been life changing! This is the true value of the project. We have helped to produce European citizens who value the contribution of their peers. We have produced explorers of learners – some will become the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.