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Healthy Minds for Healthy Europe

Erasmus Plus Project

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“Team Building”



0. Introduction

The theme of the Italian meeting of the Erasmus Plus project *Healthy minds for Healthy Europe* is focused on *Team Building*, that is the ability to cooperate in shared activities with the aim of fostering group cohesion and developing emotional intelligence and European key competences - the life skills which define an active citizen as a social being, able to interact with others, while fully respecting differences (Unesco, 1994).

While working on the development of emotional intelligence and social personality, the meeting aims at reaching some specific goals, which may grant the responsibility of a choice towards a future characterized by a healthy lifestyle (the main theme of the whole project), distant from any form of addiction, towards the reaching of a subjective, collective and shared psychological and physical balance.

The activities carried out during the meeting in Italy are expressions of moments of ecological communication¹, where – through the most pedagogical moments of dialogue – attention is focused on the importance and management of emotions. Such emotions, thanks to their universal character, are instinctively recognized and become an immediate vehicle for non verbal communication.

The handling of emotional intelligence goes along with the issues of team building, since the development of a well balanced personality, ready to interact with social and environmental factors, supports such skills as: cooperation, sharing, acceptance and work, which are at the basis of the new European guidelines as far as education, learning and literacy are concerned.

¹ Communication which takes place in a balanced and harmonic context, where participants respect each other, and are ready to accept other people's opinions and points of view

1. The Five elements which allow an effective cooperation in Team Building (cooperative learning)

1.1. Positive interdependence: students are actively involved in favouring and improving the performance of each member of the group, since any individual action influences and determines the collective action

1.2. Individual and group responsibility: the cohesion relationship within the group is most effective when individual and collective responsibility are fully understood and are given the same importance.

1.3. Constructive interaction: students work together, in a welcoming atmosphere, showing attitudes of acceptance and respect to each other, evaluating in positive terms the work done by each member of the group.

1.4. Enacting of specific skills and role/function division: students plan the work to be done on the basis of each member's competences and skills, in an atmosphere of confidence and reliance

1.5. Group evaluation: the group evaluates the final product and sets further goals for improvement. Moreover, each member of the group evaluates his/her own specific skills in social interaction.

2. General teaching aims

- 2.1. Learning about the interactive, social and cultural mechanisms which allow team building
- 2.2. Promoting the awareness of the possibility to work in a critical way on one's own emotional system
- 2.3. Understanding the relationship between reason and emotions
- 2.4. Understanding the importance of the relationship between emotions and communication
- 2.5. Knowing different forms of communication - verbal, non verbal, paraverbal - and recognize their social value
- 2.6. Using language and symbols in an interactive way
- 2.7. Interacting in mixed groups, working in teams, managing conflicts and dealing with diversity

3. Specific learning aims

- 3.1. Learning new vocabulary (in English) regarding emotional and interpersonal aspects of our life
- 3.2. Recognizing and differentiating basic and universal emotions
- 3.3. Developing critical awareness of one's emotional style
- 3.4. Managing emotional outbursts in a given context
- 3.5. Recognizing other peoples' emotions as a moment of human sharing
- 3.6. Accepting and understanding other peoples' emotions: empathy skills
- 3.7. Getting to know emotional intelligence and ecological communication

4. Some of the group activities during the meeting

4.1. Activity 1: The marshmallow challenge (30 – 45 minutes)

4.1.1. Materials: Measuring tape; stopwatch; video projector and sound system (optional) to show and stop the time. For each group of 4-5 people: 20 strings of spaghetti; 1 metre of masking tape; 1 metre of string; 1 pair of scissors; 1 marshmallow. Language support: worksheet² with expressions to make suggestions and negotiate. Reflexion: worksheet³ to reflect on what has been done

4.1.2. Description:

4.1.2.1. Warmup: give the students (in groups) 5 minutes to absorb and try out specific language to make suggestions and negotiate.

4.1.2.2. Activity: In eighteen minutes, teams must build the tallest free-standing structure out of 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape, one yard of string, and one marshmallow. The marshmallow needs to be on top and cannot be reduced or divided. String and tape can be cut into smaller pieces. While the teams are working, the conductor can shout out any progress of the teams, to build up friendly rivalry. The winning structure needs to be stable.

4.1.2.3. Feedback: have students reflect, through the attached paper, on what they have been doing and how they have been doing it

4.1.3. Aim: build cooperation; build trusting atmosphere; set roles within a group

² Worksheet 1 (all worksheets to be found in the teacher's welcome kit)

³ Worksheet 2

4.2. Activity 2: Feelings and communication (15')

4.2.1. Materials for each group: one sheet of paper with faces representing emotions⁴; one sheet of paper with body figures representing postures and body movements⁵.

4.2.2. Description: the activity is introduced by showing a video with people expressing different emotions, possibly in a different language, so that students realize how emotions are a language in themselves. At the end of the video students work in two groups of about 10 people; each group is given ONE paper with faces and ONE paper with postures and students try to answer the question: *what does that expression/position tell?* After a 5-minute study, the two groups share their interpretations, so as to better understand oneself and other students.

4.2.3. Aim: develop awareness of how some emotions and expressions are universally understood (or, as an alternative: can be interpreted in different ways)

⁴ Worksheet 3

⁵ Worksheet 4

4.3. Activity 3: Emotions board

4.3.1. Materials: sticking notes, poster with list of emotions

CONFUSED	ANGRY	SCARED	SHY	GUILTY
HAPPY	STRONG	UNEASY	ANXIOUS	CURIOUS
EMBARASSED	EXCITED	PROUD	CONFIDENT	ARROGANT
BOLD	KIND	CHEERFUL	INDIFFERENT	SAD

4.3.2. Description: in groups of 9/10 people, the students will draw on sticking notes an emoticon representing each of the feelings mentioned. Once they are finished, one student at a time will choose the emoticon that best represents them (as a person or in this moment), and will place it in its square. While doing so, they may want to explain the reason for their choice. When all students – one at a time - have stuck their emoticon onto the poster, together all students finish to place the drawings in the correct square. A song speaking of emotions may be played

4.3.3. Aim: getting familiar with different emotions and learning to speak about one's own emotions

4.4. Activity 4: Developing self esteem (I like you because...)

4.4.1. Materials: a coloured poster with the inscription “I like you because...”; sticking notes, with the name of a student written on the front.

4.4.2. Description: Each student picks up two sticking notes and writes down a sentence on the back of each card. The sentence, addressed to the person named on the front of the note, is to be continuation of the inscription on the poster (ex: “..... you make me laugh”). The sentence may be signed, or may remain anonymous. Students are to be warned that only positive qualities are to be written on the papers (no such a sentence like “I like you because you are stupid”)

At the end of the activity/meeting students will go and look for the notes addressed to themselves and can decide to keep the notes as a memento of the meeting, or leave them.

4.4.3. Aim: The message(s) they found may (or may not) influence their self-esteem

4.5. Activity 5: Deviant behaviour

4.5.1. Material: a list of deviant types of behaviour⁶, with room for rating them

4.5.2. Description:

4.5.2.1. Each student reads the list of situations described and rates them 0-1-2, according to how bad they think the situation is (0=not very bad; 2=very bad)

For 10 minutes students, in groups of 4/5, take into consideration the situations and try to explain/justify them, also by giving funny/creative interpretations

For 15 minutes the groups come together into one single group, in a circle, and try to share their ideas with the other students. At this point they may decide to change the score they gave at the beginning

4.5.3. Aim: trying to view unusual/deviant situations in a different way, with different eyes; sharing ideas; building a group based on shared values

⁶ How would you feel if one of your friends:

1. got drunk every weekend
2. took drugs
3. smoked
4. gambled (slot machines)
5. were aggressive and quarreled with everybody
6. were always sad and never laughed
7. vandalized properties in town
8. only talked about football
9. over-ate
10. always wanted to be hugged
11. were a liar
12. always felt embarrassed
13. stole
14. did not get washed

5. Conclusion

The final part of the experience will involve the students in a self-evaluation of what they have done over the week, through a specific evaluation paper which will define the quality of their social development and of the development of European citizenship competences

Self-evaluation of Emotional Intelligence

This evaluation paper focuses on team-building behaviour, and it is meant to be used at the end of group activities, to develop awareness on what has been done.

To build an effective team I think it is important to:	<<	<	□	>	>>
Help a friend in need					
Carry out my duties in a responsible way					
Build empathic, altruistic, sincere and balanced relationships					
Take part enthusiastically in group activities					
Modify my behaviour in various situations					
Have an active part in group activities					
Respect rules					
Meet with deadlines and respect other people's skills					
Be flexible					
Know my limits and trust my own resources					
Know how to control my reactions and predict their consequences					
Evaluate what I have done and accept constructive criticism					

<< very little < little [] indifferent > quite >> very much