

## **Title: Visualisation**

### **Summary:**

Learning and teaching languages is a never ending but exciting challenge. Especially now, due to the demanding job market, learners are confronted to the need of communicating in one or two languages additionally to their own. But how can they achieve good results in stress situations? What can tutors offer to support their efforts? They can focus learners' attention on visualisation. Visualisation combined with cooperative learning strategies and kinaesthetic elements gives learners better tools to acquire skills in a foreign language relatively quickly. These strategies are appropriate for learners of all ages without differences of sex or origin. They give also a genuine chance to reach learners of any education level, even illiterate. They enable tutors to present sensible topics like stereotypes and xenophobia in a respectful way. Cooperative learning generates more understanding and solidarity between learners. The visualisation of topics raises cultural awareness, develops interest for other countries, improve the understanding of the common cultural heritage of EU nations. It is not bound to any specific topic so that a large range of everyday situations but also of social, historical and political themes can be presented in an attractive and interesting way to learners. The subjects addressed will also refer to the finding of appropriate motivating mechanisms for adult learners to take up educational effort as well as ensuring authentic intercultural approach of the training provision. The project provides an ideal and unique opportunity for partners to develop training modules, offers opportunities for adults to get some essential skills to learn languages and contributes to valuable continuing professional development for staff and learners at a pan European level.

**Motivation:** Taking into account the EU policy of widening the use of different languages in all Europe, the partners have been reflecting about ways of motivating learners to obtain or to improve knowledge in foreign languages. Their reflection led to the conclusion that it is necessary to find ways of catching the learners' full attention to reach good results. Out of a range of possible approaches we selected one of the most eclectic ones : the visualisation of topics.

We believe that, with the various technical means offered e.g. by Internet , YouTube, handling of pictures, etc..., the teams and their learners can collect a lot of information to be used in courses.

The teams are convinced that there is an urgent need for actualized learning strategies to acquire good language skills.

They are aware that new technologies need new approaches. They are certain that visualisation is one of the most adequate responses to this demand. They see a fair chance for learners and tutors to develop and test a variety of tools to promote visualisation in combination with cooperative learning.

We see a good opportunity to improve communication between learners and comprehension of behaviour in collecting information and material issued from all countries involved in the project.

With the visualisation of topics it is possible to reach people of all education levels. Differences in interpretation of the visualised topics are expected and seen as positive intercultural exchanges.

Visualisation is a tool to discover other cultures and to improve respect and understanding for otherness. We want to include cooperative learning strategies in our reflection. Cooperative learning has been proven to be really effective for all types of students: young or older, women or men, gifted or slow-going because it promotes learning and fosters respect and friendships among diverse groups of learners. The more diversity in a group, the higher the benefits for each learner.

The introduction of kinaesthetic elements as learning strategies is considered by the partners as a balance to high concentration. Moving, dancing, playing a part, etc ... activate both brain hemispheres and lead to better learning results.

We are sure that the combination of visualisation strategies with cooperative learning and kinaesthetic strategies is an effective way to diversify ways of teaching and learning.

**Need:** Considering that the European Union's goal is that all citizens should be able to speak three languages and taking into account the expectations of the labour market, the teams consider that it is their duty to promote the learning of European languages.

We believe that, due to the fact that people will have to work longer, more and more citizens will be expected to speak several languages. People travel a lot nowadays and go abroad to work or for their job. A kind of "country hopping" developed during the last years. European citizens need urgently knowledge of other languages and information about other cultures.

The partners see a real challenge in the demographical ageing of the European population. It is necessary to prevent a spreading of diseases like Alzheimer. Lifelong Learning is proved to slow down the development of such disease. Furthermore older people need social networks. They find them in adult education courses.

Hélène Sajons  
Head of the Board  
Volkshochschule Olching e.V.