Erasmus +, KA2: Strategic Partnerships,
Project: „The system of support for academic
teachers in process of shaping soft skills of their
student"
Agreement no: 2018-1-PL01-KA203-050754

Module II: Teaching teamwork

In the module, we present and discuss teamwork as well as the approaches that might enhance the abilities of teamwork in students. We also present some specific techniques that might be used for the improvements in teamwork skills in the context of regular classes at an educational institution.

The module presents detailed information in the areas of:

- **What is teamwork?**

According to Business Dictionary, teamwork is the process of working collaboratively with a group of people to achieve a goal. Teamwork means that people will try to cooperate, using their skills and providing constructive feedback, despite any personal conflict between individuals. It is a cooperative process that allows ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results. Team has a common goal or purpose where team members can develop effective, mutual relationships to achieve team goals. Teamwork relies upon individuals working together in a cooperative environment to achieve common team goals through sharing knowledge and skills.

An organisation with a high teamwork spirit will meet increased efficiency as team members will complement each other's strengths, there will be less employee turnover and more flexibility of the employees. In such organization innovation through constructive conflict can be expected.

The important teamwork skills are communication, good listening, the ability of conflict management, reliability, respectfulness, being able to put ego aside and make a decision, problem-solving, planning and organizational skills, persuasion and influencing skills, tolerance.

- **Teaching teamwork - Preparation**

According to Belbin, members of a team can contribute in two ways to the achievement of team objectives. They can perform well in a functional role with their professional and technical knowledge, but they also have a potentially valuable team-role to perform. Each team need an optimum balance in both functional roles and team roles. The effectiveness of a team will depend on the recognition and adaptation of the team members of their relative strengths within the team – both in expertise and ability to engage in specific team-roles. Personal qualities fit members for some team-roles while limiting the likelihood that they will succeed in others. The most effective team-workers are those who can see what skills are available within the group and use their skills to fill any gaps. People tend to be either task- or process-focused, rather than a mixture.

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To communicate effectively, try to introduce the six hats of De Bono method to your students. The coloured hats are used as metaphors for the various states of mind. Switching to a certain type of thinking is symbolized by wearing a coloured hat, literally or metaphorically. These six thinking hats metaphors provide more complete and comprehensive segregation of the types of thinking than the prejudices that are inherent to the immediate thoughts of people. All these thinking hats help people to think more deeply about a certain topic

- **Techniques that may be used for enhancing critical thinking abilities**

Two things get accomplished in good teams: the task gets accomplished and the satisfaction of team members is high. To achieve both ends, team members must get to know other members of the group and their strengths, set ground rules, use a facilitator, keep lines of communication open, know how to avoid (or solve) common problems.

The rules of good communication should be followed while working in the team. The members should engage in dialogue, build trust, be productive, listen well, observe and give feedback constructively. Before starting teamwork, do at least the following three things. Use a facilitator/coordinator, delegate tasks effectively, using a work breakdown structure (WBS) and set some ground rules. Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is a way to organize a series of tasks to accomplish a project objective. It consists of a hierarchical diagram of tasks person responsible for executing the task; deadline to have the task completed; interdependencies with other tasks. Each task in a WBS should contribute to the goal of delivering the required material on time and done well.

Advise the students that the right approach to solving the most common problems in teams is crucial. The following problems might appear in a team: Hogging—talking too much; Flogging—beating a dead horse; Frogging—jumping from topic to topic; Bogging—getting stuck on an issue; Dead buffaloes—tiptoeing around a contentious issue.