

BEST (Blended Erasmus+ Staff Training)

KA203 – Strategic Partnership for Higher Education
REFERENCE: 2016-1-ES01-KA203-025594
01/09/2016 to 31/10/2018
Coordinator: ALCALA University

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 3

INTERNATIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF UNIVERSITIES

COURSE OUTLINE

**Course designed and coordinated by Dr. Carmen Santamaría-García
(University of Alcalá)**

This course outline contains tips for future users of the course materials in order to help them when planning a course of similar characteristics. It was used for the delivery of BEST+ in Joensuu, University of Eastern Finland, from Tuesday, 28/11/2017 to Thursday, 30.11.2017, a course you can find at:

<http://beta.blendedmobility.eu/courses/best-joensuu-international-attractiveness-universities>

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WEBINAR

A webinar is recommended in blended trainings as the first situation in which all the participants meet online and, in the course reported here, it proved to be very useful to start engaging participants with course contents and activities.

Aim of session: To create a comfortable and safe learning environment, in which the participants get to know each other before the on-site training.

Time of session: It was opened one month before the physical training.

Description of the session: The trainer opened a course activity in the online platform named “Webinar” plus the topic “Introduction”.

The trainer created a discussion group on the platform and wrote the first post. This was done in order to stimulate discussion among the participants, during which they could get to know each other.

It is also important to upload an agenda for the webinar.

This was the information posted for the Webinar before the course in Joensuu.

Webinar - International attractiveness of universities

PERIOD

Start time:

Wed, 25/10/2017 - 13:00 CEST

End time:

Wed, 25/10/2017 - 15:00 CEST

DESCRIPTION

The webinar is going to take place on Wednesday, 25.10.2017, 13:00-15:00 CEST.

Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

This meeting is locked with a password: XXXX (not displayed here for privacy)

First GoToMeeting? You can do a quick system check:
<https://link.gotomeeting.com/system-check>

The meeting will be open one hour before the official start for you to join but we will also take some time at the beginning of the webinar to make sure all technical issues are resolved.

This is the agenda for the webinar:

1. Testing and troubleshoot for the webinar participants
2. Welcoming words and introduction by the course designer (Carmen Santamaría, UAH)
3. Presenting the aims and outline of the course (Carmen Santamaría, UAH)
4. Introduction of the webinar participants by sharing results from activity A
5. Presentation of activity B

The recording of the Webinar can be found here:

<https://youtu.be/a6gesh1bc10>

WEBINAR LINK

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/620962021>

FIRST SESSION WARM UP FOR THE ON-SITE TRAINING

Aim of session: To create a comfortable and safe learning environment, in which the participants can get to know each other better at the very beginning of the on site training.

Time of session: 15-30 minutes (depending on the number of participants)

Description of the session:

After welcoming words by representatives of the institution and project coordinator, the trainer of the session asks participants to come to a circle so they can experience a less formal interaction format. The trainer greets one of the participants by shaking hands and saying her name. The routine can be “Hello, my name is....”. The participant replies “Hello, my name is”. The routine is closed with “Nice to meet you + name” by trainer and participant. The trainer will keep greeting each of the participants in turn.

Another game can be played for participants to learn their names. In this particular training, the “crystal ball” game was played. The trainer sends an imaginary crystal ball to a participant with the routine “I’m sending you +name”. The participant replies “I’m receiving + trainer name”. The participant comes to the centre and repeats the routine.

These activities proved very successful with our group of participants. After them, they knew each other better, felt more relaxed and ready to engage in class discussions.



Pic. 1. Participant sending “crystal ball”

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

It is important to distinguish between course *activities* and *assignments*. The more general term *course activities* is used to refer to all the actions contained in the course which have been designed with a learning aim, while assignments are activities that expect some results to be reported by participants.

For blended teaching it is important to design activities that take place before meeting for the on-site training, during the sessions of the training and after them.

In this course, assignments A and B are designed to be carried out before the on-site training and assignment C is designed to happen afterwards.

You can also see headings that distinguish activities happening before, after or during the training in the course overview and on the platform, such as these:

- BEFORE MEETING IN JOENSUU
- TRAINING SESSION ACTIVITIES
- ACTIVITIES AFTER THE TRAINING IN JOENSUU

Apart from containing clear instructions, it is important that course activities set the tone for the reader. If we want to create a welcoming atmosphere for trainees, the trainer can choose to start activities with greetings. For this course, several greetings were included and participants reported that it was nice to feel welcome with activities. For example, this is the start of the first activity:

Hello and welcome to the BEST+ Training on the international attractiveness of universities.

Dear participants,

We would like to take this opportunity to get to know each other before our meeting in Joensuu. For this purpose, please go to the Discussion [HERE](#) and introduce yourself.

It is also important to include clear instructions and a deadline. This was the text for this first assignment:

1. Please let us know your name, university, position, town and country and describe shortly your work duties and environment
2. Share one slogan you would choose to promote your university. The slogan can be already in use or you may choose to create one yourself.
3. Briefly describe your expectations of the event.
4. (Optional) Please upload one or more picture(s) of yourself and your university. The picture of yourself can be either CV picture or any other picture, such as a picture of you doing your favourite hobby.

Posted on Monday, October 16, 2017 - 16:18

[Contents removed for privacy of participants]

LEARNING SESSIONS PRESENTATION FORMAT

In the folders for the learning sessions you can see different presentations prepared with Powerpoint carefully tailored to suit the needs of course participants. Presentations contain informative content together with assignments and points for discussion. This format was chosen because of its several advantages for both trainers and trainees. It increases the visual impact of the material, improving audience focus and the possibility to highlight the most important aspects that require participants' attention. Presentations can also trigger wonder, thus enhancing useful inquisitive cognitive processes and facilitating interaction. They have been designed to facilitate future course designers the planning of their own learning sessions as it is easy to estimate the amount of time needed for presentation and discussion of each slide. If changes are considered, it is also easy to replace some slides by others. Each presentation has been designed for thirty minute sessions.

Presentations are not meant to be presented as lectures under a teacher centred approach. The trainer can choose to present some bits of information and allow for interaction and discussion to happen. In blended learning it is extremely important to give participants plenty of opportunities to interact and make most of the opportunity to be together during the on-site sessions.

During this course we tried pair and group work, pair and group presentations and dynamic activities in which students had to group themselves in different locations in the room before discussing their points of view (pic. 2), as you can see in the pictures. All these were combined during the sessions with brief presentation time by trainers.



Pic. 2. In this picture, participants grouped themselves in different locations in the room before discussing their points of view



Pic. 3. Participants distributed in groups



Pic. 4. Participants listening to group presentations