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WP04 – Language and Cultural Adaptation Guideline

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1 About this guideline

1.1 Background and structure of this document

As a product of work package four of the UnderstandIT project, the University of Applied Sciences Koblenz prepared the “*language and cultural adaptation guideline*” which should raise awareness of the importance of cultural adaptations in the context of the developing of online-courses and especially courses based on the VITAE course concept. It does not only raise awareness, it also gives some practical support for to VETs (vocational education teachers), trainers and tutors, who plan to use the online-based learning courses in order to complement or substitute their existing training courses.

1.2 Definitions

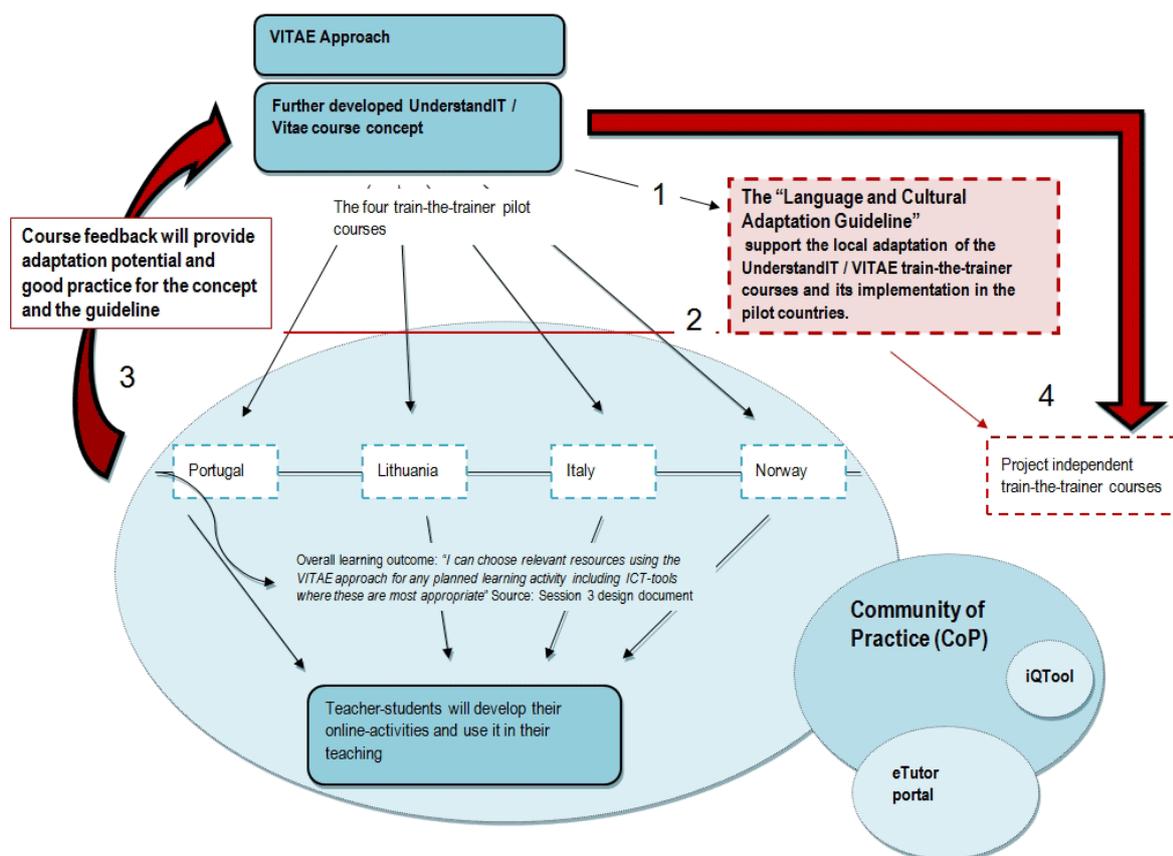
Project-related definitions of the main actors in the process (regarding the UnderstandIT project):

- a) **Teacher-trainer:** the moderator of a VITAE course e.g. the moderators of the planned four pilot courses in the context of the UnderstandIT project. The teacher-trainer teaches teacher-students.
- b) **Teacher-student:** participant of a VITAE course. Outside of the course this participant would have the role of a teacher or trainer e.g. teaching mathematics. The VITAE learning outcomes refer to teacher-students. The teacher-students will use the learning outcomes defined in the VITAE course concept, which are relevant for their own teaching.
- c) **Student:** A person who is for example taught by a VET, e.g. a shop assistant who learns mathematics (this is not part of the target group of the VITAE approach).

1.3 Field of application of this guideline

The picture below visualizes the UnderstandIT pilot courses and their relevance to the different project elements. The base of the pilot courses is the VITAE approach, an online-course model with defined learning-outcomes. VITAE was an European-funded project with the main target: “*VITAE is a European Leonardo project which introduces teachers to its new approach to learning by mentoring. The project is developing mentor training which can easily, rapidly and effectively prepare the way for implementation of the new learning approaches which have become easily available through the cheap or free communication channels now offered by the Internet.*”¹ The VITAE approach was further developed by the UnderstandIT project team in order to serve as a template for the four UnderstandIT pilot courses which have been tested in four European countries using the local languages (PT, LT, IT, NO). The guideline should work like a link between the template and the actual pilot courses in order to support the developers in questions concerning cultural adaptations.

¹ http://www.vitae-project.eu/project/description/vitae_english.html, 1. March 2012



Picture 1: The guideline and its context in the UnderstandIT project and beyond

2 Cultural Adaptation

2.1 The change of learning culture

"The learning culture is changing. What is the role of new media in this process?"

The relationship between new media and education is not uncontroversial. Euphoria and scepticism can best describe the opposing reactions the topic evokes among the educational community. Some see a new generation of learners growing up together with the Internet. Such a generation requires new educational approaches which make use of tools the Internet provides and which are formed by the development of the Internet. Most teachers in today's vocational, school and higher education organisations grew up without or with a different, i.e. older version of the Internet than their learners ..." (Berger 2010).

This gives us a glimpse on the main challenge teachers need to master if they want to use more collaborative, interactive media in their teaching.

As a first step, teachers may think about their own role(s) in the learning process. By switching from a classroom-oriented and teacher driven to a more collaborative learning style by using web-technologies which foster communication and team work between the learners, the teacher's role changes from an authority in the area of knowledge to a motivator, moderator or a coach who guides the learners and facilitates their learning process.

For this role-change it may be helpful for the teachers to be able to use some coaching-techniques at least on a basic level, techniques like effective-questioning or giving feedback.

2.2 The role of motivation in online-learning

The following chapter highlights the importance of the motivation of participants as the main success factor for successful online-learning. Success is defined as participants reaching the planned learning outcomes. The reader should keep this chapter in mind when following the rest of the guideline.

During face-to-face lessons participants are physically present and can be addressed directly with a visible response. In the case of online-education the teacher often cannot be sure how much time the participants have actually invested in the learning process. The most important concern of all teachers is very often to have active contributions from learners in the classroom. In order to get active participants, they need to motivate them, which is much harder in (asynchronous) online-teaching.

Motivation is defined in many ways, depending on the field of activity. In the area of learning the following definition fits well: "*Motivation could be seen as a personal state or condition that activates behaviour in a special direction*" (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981).

Every learning activity should be designed in a way to give the learner a direction in terms of gathering new knowledge and applying this knowledge, especially by collaborating with other course participants. The motivation of the participants is seen as the main success factor and the main creative element implemented during the whole development process, from formulating the learning objective to the completion of the course modules. The ARCS model described below illustrates this point.

In order to motivate online-learners, the ARCS model can give guidance during the development of the online-tasks and their accomplishment. The model was developed by Dr. John Keller, professor of instructional systems and educational psychology at the Florida State University. "*The ARCS model is a problem solving approach to designing the motivational aspects of learning environments to stimulate and sustain students' motivation to learn.*" (Keller 1987) On the following pages the ARCS model will be introduced. The ARCS acronym stands for the four conditions of motivation: "Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction". During the online-course development the project-team tried to take the four conditions and sub-conditions into account.

In the following table you can find the categories, each with the three subcategories followed by a description and some practical actions (Feßler 2009).

The ARCS Model (Anrone 2004)		
Attention, attract and hold interest		
Sub-condition	Description	Practical actions, tried out in VITAE and adapted for UnderstandIT
A1: Perceptual arousal	strategies to capture the interest of the course participants	As a teacher you can post surprising or contradictory entries, maybe accompanied by pictures. But take care that you don't overdo it. Try to avoid distractions like inconsistencies in the user-interface in different course stages.
A2: Inquiry arousal	strategies to raise the curiosity of the participants and to stimulate requests	Promote active discovery and research e.g. by using goal-based scenarios, simulations or role-plays.
A3: Variability	use short and diverse elements to hold the attention	Try to use short and clear instructional parts in alternation with interactive or collaborative tasks / group work (if didactically appropriate). For collaborative tasks you could use web-based tools such as wikis, blogs or forums or even games
Relevance, concerning the target group and / or the learning process		
R1: Goal orientation	strategies that meet learners needs or give them the opportunity to meet their own goals	The learning-goals should be clear to the participants throughout the whole course and within each activity. <i>"We need a very precise description of the course, the learning outcomes and the activities we want the participants to do. We also have to give them the big picture and show how all the activities are connected and in total will develop their IT-competences and coaching skills."</i> ²
R2: Motive matching	strategies that address the participants' personal interests and/or learning styles	Try to create different tasks that match diverse personal knowledge levels, e.g. tasks where the use of advantaged technologies is optional like the presentation of a text-based task or an audio-file. Keep in mind that collaborative tasks have a positive effect on motivation.
R3: Familiarity	strategies that build on the participants personal experiences	Use emotive elements (scenarios, tasks) which connect with real life or with personal experiences of the participants.
Confidence, the positive expectation of a successful completion of the course		
C1: Learning requirements	For the participants it should be clear what kind of pre-existing knowledge is required, what are the demands of the course and which goals should be reached. In addition to this the grading criteria should	In every step of the course it should be clear to the participant what is expected and what comes next. For the course online the participants could receive a (graphical) course plan containing a time schedule.

² Extract from the UnderstandIT survey, comment from Norway

	be formalized and understandable.	
C2: Success opportunities	strategies that support the competencies of the participants, in connection with R1	It is important to offer all participants the opportunity to be successful on their own levels. This will maintain their motivation.
C3: Personal responsibility	Feedback that shows the participants that their own abilities and efforts are the basis for success	The time-schedule for the tasks shouldn't be too tight; participants should be able to determine their own learning speed. In the learning environment it is very helpful if the learners can "jump" between the different elements, they shouldn't be restricted to a linear flow. Regular feedback should always contain the analysis of success or failure.
Satisfaction, the results of the efforts differ from the expectations = de-motivation		
S1: Intrinsic reinforcement	strategies that encourage participants' intrinsic motivation to learn	The chosen learning goals and tasks to work on should relate to the everyday life of course participants.
S2: Extrinsic rewards	strategies that provide appropriate rewards for success	e.g. in the form of positive feedback, given by the teacher or by other participants
S3: Equity	strategies that let the participants know that they are being treated fairly (Niegemann 2004)	The teacher's grading criteria should be clear from the beginning.

One of the main statements of the ARCS model is that motivational aspects must be at the core of the course structure and cannot be added later. These aspects must be taken into account during the whole development process of e-learning courses. The described model could help raise the quality and quantity of learning outcomes of the online-activities by keeping the focus on didactical aspects (Feßler 2009).

From an intercultural perspective, motivational factors are culture-sensitive and vary especially in regard to the emotions they produce. This needs to be taken into account by adapting or using course elements, which have been produced in a different cultural environment or in a different teaching culture.

2.3 The UnderstandIT Questionnaire

The first step in order to create some more concrete evidence which should be envisaged, an questionnaire was developed and analysed.

It has been done an analysis of specific learning cultures in local environments represented by the project partners and some additional academic research.

In order to draw attention to different learning cultures and raise the awareness for these differences FH Koblenz has developed an online-questionnaire. This nine page questionnaire is based on six key questions concerning:

- the organisational model of an educational organisation
- the didactic approach to be followed
- the learning tools to be used
- the structure and origin of the content of a learning course
- the role of peers, of their social environments in the learning process and their own role in the learning process (Gonella 2008)

The questionnaire can be found in the annex of this document.

2.4 Analysis of the questionnaire answers and possible conclusions / adaptations

2.4.1 Teachers Role

Question: What are the local expectations of teachers concerning their own role in the learning process?

Teachers role is:

- a) detached (the duty of the teacher is grading and she/he is seen as an authority) (12%)
- b) motivator (the teacher tries to start discussions, gives impulse) (76%)
- c) partner (the teacher is acting more like a member of the different work groups and is widely open for new strategies or solutions) (12%)³

The survey shows, that most of the project members see themselves in the role of a motivator in the context of online-teaching (76%).

Possible Adaptations:

In some online-activities, it could be more effective if the teacher acted like a partner. Quotation from the survey: *"I would try to leave space to students' ideas and cooperation to exploit the experience of students' possibility experts in some area, and spur them towards coaching and peer-mentoring activities."* Teachers should try to give their students more space in order to develop ideas and let them defend their approaches.

³ Extract from the UnderstandIT survey

2.4.2 Didactic approach

Think about your didactic approach and if it needs a change in connection with a possible role change of the teacher. What would be the right level of guidance and support learners need working in a collaborative online-environment? Participants need enough room to learn from each other. The course structure needs to take into account the specificity of the target group and the number of participants. See below a list of different approaches - a) and b) are the more traditional ones, connected with classroom teaching and c) and d) more common in the area of collaborative online-learning.

Question: Please tick the didactic approach to be followed from the perspective of the teacher-trainer:

- a) Transmissive (autonomous) (teacher has the knowledge and skills which need to be passed on to the learners; teacher manages everything) (6%)
- b) Assisted (the learning is guided by a teacher) (41%)
- c) Collaborative (learners work together, tasks are pre-defined, learning is moderated) (53%)
- d) Peer to Peer (learners teach each other without intervention by a teacher or moderator) (0%)⁴

Possible Adaptations:

Peer to Peer teaching does not seem common practice, however, it could be a chance to raise the level of motivation. In any given course there are always student experts who can support other students or even the teacher in a special topic. Try to experiment with group projects and peer assessment.

2.4.3 Expectations from the learners of learning tools to be used

Question: What are the local expectations of teacher-trainers concerning (online) tools to be used?

	will be used, expected	not expected	No idea
a) Using Web-based resources (Web 1.0, which means, documents are available for download via web pages)	94%	6%	0%
b) Using Learning Management Systems (e.g. Moodle or Blackboard as a closed environment)	59%	61%	0%
c) Using Learning Management Systems and collaborative tools (LMS, accompanied by tools like Skype, Wikis, ...)	59%	61%	0%
d) Using the web as a platform (using web-based tools, choice depends on the actual challenge)	65%	29%	6%
e) Using offline resources (e.g. books) ⁵	59%	61%	0%

⁴ Extract from the UnderstandIT survey, page 2

⁵ Extract from the UnderstandIT survey, page 3

As a result of the UnderstandIT survey, 94% of the teacher-trainers estimate, that learners will expect downloadable resources (documents, weblinks, etc.).

Possible Adaptations:

If we encourage “interactivity”, e.g. by using a learning management system (LMS) like Moodle, the use of collaborative online-tools can raise the level of motivation and hence the active participation of participants. The use of web-based tools, in particular tools which are already known and used by the course participants, can have a positive effect on the level of good quality communication and involvement. Think about whether this could work in your cultural environment.

2.4.4 Attitudes concerning the use of social media as learning tools

Question: What are the local attitudes of teacher-trainers concerning social media as learning tools?

- a) Social media can help the learners interact with the material/ressources in new ways and engage with their fellow learners. (64%)
- b) Social media appear to motivate the learners (18%)
- c) Social media may help the learning process, however, for the teacher it is much more difficult to track and evaluate (18%)
- d) no idea (0%)⁶

Within the project team members seem to agree, that social media „...*can help the learners interact with the material / resources in new ways and engage with their fellow learners.*“, but there is also a lack of experience, how to use social media in a professional context.

“People know quite well how to use tools like Facebook, YouTube or blogs in their personal lifes: to show its benefits for professional goals is a key factor”⁷

We need a „clear idea of how social media could be used in learning or for producing learning content“. Social Media is also identified as a positive channel to interact with the students on their level with tools of their everyday lives.

Possible Adaptations:

Try to use social media on a basic level to get first-hand experience by using it in learning, for example by doing small online-activities using existing, public social media platforms.

⁶ Extract from the UnderstandIT survey, page 3

⁷ Comment from the UnderstandIT survey

Risks: the use of social media will involve a mixture of private and professional life, which may not be acceptable in all cultures / environments. An example from Denmark illustrates this point: „*There is quite a strict division in Denmark between work and personal life so professional development (PD) has to look serious and traditional. PD must be sold as a product which the school or local authority can buy. If you try to emphasise personal benefits that spill over into private life then that is somehow not attractive. It suggests that your employers or union are trying to avoid their duty to pay for your PD. In short: novel forms of autonomous PD are difficult to 'sell'*“.⁸

Note: If you decide to use social media please keep in mind, that the operating company (according to their terms and conditions) very often has the right to use your content for their purposes.

2.4.5 Adaptations in the language area

The question remains whether or not to translate the English VITAE course template and parts of the learning materials into the local languages of the UnderstandIT pilot courses.

“The language and cultural adaption is making localized versions of the course. For the Norwegian version of the course that means translate the course to the Norwegian. That is the course description, the learning activities/exercises and others that naturally can be translated. But specific resources and tools found on Web and used in the course can of course not be translated because the resources/tools are owned by others. We have to evaluate to what degree the design of the course, the learning activities and how things is done will be special for Norway. This depends upon Internet availability, the willingness for taking courses of this kind, the institutional and personal momentum for change. To greatest possible extent find local web resources and web tool to be used in the course.”⁹

Possible Adaptations:

The content and the tasks need to be checked if they can be used in English in the new cultural context. You can ask:

- Is this task still motivating?
- What kind of emotions can be initiated?

⁸ Source: UnderstandIT survey

⁹ Source: Comment from the UnderstandIT survey

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4 Annex

- UnderstandIT Questionnaire

Questionnaire to analyse the local learning cultures in the local environmen

General description of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire is mainly addressed to the UnderstandIT project partners in order to analyse the specific learning cultures in local (pilot course) environments.

The analysis of the questionnaire will be supported by the identification of good practice examples of cultural adaptations (e.g. by audio-interviews, wiki documentation).

The final product will be a supporting guideline with the focus on cultural issues for implementing and establishing ICT supported teaching.



1. General Questions to the questionnaire participant

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Please enter your surname *

Please enter your first name *

Please enter your e-mail address *

Please enter your Skype-ID

Please tick your real life role (but answer the questionnaire on the perspective of the teacher-trainer) *

Definition of the different roles: Teacher-trainer, the moderator of a VITAE course e.g. the moderators of the planned four pilot courses in the context of the UnderstandIT project. Teacher-student: Participant of a VITAE course, which is in the role of a teacher or a trainer e.g. teaching maths students. The VITAE learning outcomes are formulated for the teacher-students. The teacher-students need to "translate" the goals for their own teaching. Student: A person who is for example a shop assistant. Teacher: A person who teaches not especially in the UnderstandIT context

- teacher-trainer
- teacher-student
- student
- teacher
- other

Kind of institution where you teach *

(e.g. University, Vat school ...)

Country and region you live in: *

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2. Questions concerning the model of your educational organisation

Description

"Model" in this case means the personnel structure, the attitude regarding hierarchy.
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2.1 Please tick the model of organisation closest to your insitution from the perspective of the teacher-trainer *

(You can choose one)

- a) Hierarchical / Top-Down Task-oriented (often applied in the industry)
- b) Hierarchical / Top-Down People-oriented (like the one above, but with more attention to people, roles and individual abilities)
- c) Flat / Middle-Up-Down (structure can include a "knowledge manager" with tasks in the areas: "identifying, collecting, synthesizing, organizing and adminstrating information)
- d) Flat, Liquid / Buttom-up (the management gives only a few guidelines and stimulates collaboration through different channels)

2.2 Comments on the classification of the educational organisation model from the perspective of the teacher-trainer: *

Please try to describe who makes decisions about content, organisation and didactics to be applied by teachers in the type of organisation you present.

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3. Questions concerning the didactic approach

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3.1 Please tick the didactic approach to be followed from the perspective of the teacher-trainer *

(You can choose one)

- a) Transmissive (autonomous) (teacher has the knowledge and skills which need to be passed on to the learners; teacher manages everything)
- b) Assisted (the learning is guided by a teacher)
- c) Collaborative (learners work together, tasks are pre-defined, learning is moderated)
- d) Peer to Peer (learners teach each other without intervention by a teacher or moderator)

3.2 Comments on the didactical approach from the perspective of the teacher-trainer: *

4. Questions concerning the learning-tools to be used

(Page 4 of 9)

4.1 What are the local expectations of teacher-trainers concerning (online) tools to be used? *

	will be used / expected	not expected	no idea
a) Using Web-based resources (Web 1.0, which means, documents are available for download via web pages)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Using a Learning management system (e.g. Moodle or Blackboard as a closed environment)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Using a Learning management system and collaborative tools (LMS accompanied by tools like Skype, Wikis ...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Using the web as a platform (using web-based tools, choice depends on the actual challenge)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Using offline resources (e.g. books)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4.2 Comments on the learning tools to be used from the perspective of the teacher-trainer: *

(e.g. if there are any kind of restrictions from the management, ministry ...)

5. Questions concerning the use of social media as learning tools for a course

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5.1 What are the local attitudes of teacher-trainers concerning social media as learning tools *

(You can choose one or more)

- a) Social media can help the learners interact with the material/ressources in new ways and engage with their fellow learners.
- b) Social media appear to motivate the learners but in reality the technology distract the learners from the material/ressources and slows them down.

- c) Social media may help the learning process, however, for the teacher it is much more difficult to track and evaluate the activities and progress of individual learners across different social media platforms.
- d) no idea

5.2 Comments on the use of social media as learning tools from the perspective of the teacher-trainers *

(can you please make comment on each selection above and provide reasons, context for the selection you have made)

6. Questions concerning the structure and origin of the content of a learning course

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6.1 What are the local expectations of teacher-trainers concerning the structure and origin of learning materials *

(You can choose one or more)

- a) Predefined Curriculum (e.g. by the ministry)
- b) Learning objects (Re-usable SCORM packages, e.g. information combined with quizzes ...)
- c) Course-based training (course content is made by the teacher)
- d) Mixed production by teachers and students (e.g. Course content is mainly made by teacher, but students e.g. prepare presentations about certain subjects or contribute own research results about topics provided by the teacher.
- e) Community based, user-generated contents (e.g. students discover "real-world" problems, which they solve in (virtual) teams; the teacher facilitates this process by providing advice and mentoring, structure and content is however fully determined by students another example would be learning tasks which are research oriented similar to a thesis project, when a teacher's role is the one of a supervisor/coach or mentor.)

6.2 Comments on the structure and origin of the content of the learning course on the perspective of the teacher-trainers *

7. Questions concerning the different roles in the learning process

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7.1 What are the local expectations of teachers concerning their own role in the learning process?

Teachers role is: *

(You can choose one)

- a) detached (the duty of the teacher is grading and she/he is seen as an authority)
- b) motivator (the teacher tries to start discussions, gives impulse)
- c) partner (the teacher is acting more like a member of the different work groups and is widely open for new strategies / solutions)

7.2 Comments on the roles of the peers from the perspective of the teacher-trainer: *

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8. Questions concerning the attitude towards learning

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8.1 If you think of your main target teacher-students (their background) and their main attitude towards learning, which of the following statements would fit best: *

(You can choose one)

- a) Learning is necessary to get a job (or promotion), as I need to show certificates, which I get from my school/university
- b) Learning is a promise - the more I learn the better are my chances in life/my job; my school/university shall equip me with the right skills, which allow me later to keep up to date
- c) Learning is an opportunity to develop my personality and allows for self-fulfillment at the job and in life in general; my school/university provides me with a platform to get in touch with peers and mentors/coaches who inspire and challenge me

8.2 Comments on this questions: *

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9. Course development

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Now you have answered questions concerning different aspects which influence the learning.

Your have answered questions about the:

- educational organisation
- didactic approach
- learning tools
- use of social media
- content of the learning course

- different role in the learning process
- attitude towards learning

How will these specific (cultural) circumstances influence the design of your course? *

Give an example of your first ideas or implementations

Thank you for your participation!