“The Project has given good chance to practice and improve my English language and presentation skills. It’s been great to see how the partners had organized and then organize yourself the meeting and workshops. To see each others’ happy faces during and after workshops – it’s so wonderful!”

Marju Tammiste - Estonia

“What I’ve gained from the projects is an insight into the fact that even if our approaches to teaching and learning might vary a lot within the European Union, we all face the challenge of making it more creative and open to innovation. And we all have a difficult time with financing the way we should teach even though we know education is the most important thing for the European economy to rise again. I thought it was very interesting to see that the things we struggle with in Denmark are the same thing that all Europe struggle with. And it will be very strong if we can find an answer to our questions collectively”

Heino Holst Hansen - Denmark

“Again I must say that it was very interesting to visit other parts of Europe, and to experience the differences and similarities in our cultures. The programme about creativity and learning in many different areas were very interesting, and I will use what I’ve learned in my everyday work”

Søren Winther Larsen - Denmark

“Participating in this project provided me with knowledge in creative methods in adult training. Sharing experiences with specialists from other countries is helping me to use these methods in practice.”

Kristjan Kask - Estonia
“I enjoyed it very much to be part of this learning partnership. To meet colleagues and students from other countries was very interesting. A lot of ideas I will use in future for my daily work in our institution. ”
Marion Maier - Germany

“I have attended to all the meetings. The various workshops on creativity were very inspiring for my own work. Getting to know the different teaching methods and different strategies in different countries I could apply them in my own teaching and use them meaningful. My students were thrilled and my acquired knowledge I could pass on to my colleagues. All the experiences of the learning partnership are very, very valuable for me. And I loved to meet foreign students, to talk to them about their needs and sorrows and to talk with them about Europe. Encouraging creativity in my opinion is very important to solve all the problems and challenges of our society in the next years.”
Lisa Jocham - Germany

“The participation in the project was successful to me. I was impressed of the ideas and the creative form of teaching in classes in other European countries. I tried to transfer some parts of the new experiences in our own institution. It’s very sorry of having strong rules for our schedules. And also other institutions, e.g. labour office, give us strong regulations for the courses. To become acquainted with people of different countries, their lifestyle and their working methods is very good for understanding them. The learning partnership is a good way for Europe to grow together.”
Herta Hannes - Germany

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“Because of this project I see creativity much more widely than before. This project gave me also some new ideas, for example how to recognize talented students. This was my first international project so I got some experience of participating in such project and I like to think also that I have improved my English during these meetings.”
Ulla-Maija Heino - Finland

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Marion Maier - Germany

“The different approaches concerning adult learning outside regular schedules were so exiting to see and especially the best practice examples which were presented gave new inputs for my own work. Also it was great to watch colleagues in different cultures and countries working with their methods and didactics, especially how they handled the topic of creativity in learning.”
Peter Seemann – Germany

“The Project has given me different experiences which I can use in my job. For me also cultural experience and networking have been very important. I’ve learned a variety of new creative methods and have used them in my courses and shared with my colleagues.”
Signe Reppo - Estonia

“I participated in the meeting held in Denmark. I was very interesting to get to know the folk high school system in Denmark. Especially I was impressed by the sense of community and the creative spirit in Odder Hojskole.”
Hely Ojala - Finland

“Creativity is a very interesting and important matter especially if connected to learning processes. I learned a lot about creativity and creative methods in teaching and learning and shared my thoughts and experiences with colleagues from Finland. The team spirit in TooB was spectacular and the meetings were very well organized with interesting places to visit and creative people to meet!”
Jonna Malmivuori - Finland

“For me the most interesting experience was the result of the questionnaire on creativity at the very beginning of the learning partnership and to see the differences in each country. Also the best practices from the other partners are very useful for my own daily work. The knowledge of the different cultural aspects improves my intercultural competences and now I’m able to apply much better the European spirit.”
Christian Nausch - Germany

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In short, it has been very enlightening for all of us and has made us change for the better.”

Mary Cruz Crespo Martinez, José Antonio Sevilla Parra, Prados Muñoz Ramírez, Emilio de la Llave, Carmen Contreras Imedio

“The main advantage of the project was having colleagues from different fields whom was able to map and discuss common problems - and seek for right solutions together. Along with the good practices, the experiences of the project can be used instantly in the daily routine.”

Gábor Bathó - Hungary

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Gábor Rekettye - Hungary

“The Estonian workshop was truly astonishing. We improved a lot with the help of a coaching psychologist, a branding expert, not to mention the drama teacher. We can definitely use these creative techniques in our classes.”

Árpád Papp-Váry - Hungary

“Taking part in the meeting in Germany was a pleasure for a variety of reasons out of which the most important for me was getting acquainted with people from all the partners in the program and sharing ideas on the importance of creativity in education. This is without a doubt one of the most discussed and perhaps most important issues of education in the 21st century.”

Gábor Rekettye - Hungary

“For the teachers of the Adult School CEPA Río Taho more involved in the project, TooB has meant a big change not only in our way of teaching but also in how we approach our students or the problems we may have on a daily basis.

It has been very motivating and, in many cases, has provoked to reinvent ourselves. It has contributed to add a European sense to the whole educational community and try to act and view everyday situations in the light of creativity. This has also led to the use of new methodology in the lessons in a way that we have given more prominence to the students and to the fact of being creative.

It has helped us to realize that despite our having different capacities they are all very worthy and when putting up together and seeing them in a creative way, we can come up with very good results.

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“THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX”

The aim of our project was to teach creative thinking to adult learners in order to facilitate their adaption to the rapid changes of the labour market, foster entrepreneurship and help disadvantaged groups like young graduates, unemployed people, elderly or already retired people (aged 60+), immigrants and handicapped people.

We realized the new competences are necessary from workers who want to find or keep a job. These new competences include the flexibility of employees and the ability to accommodate to the fast changing labour market. Also in order to create new jobs, new enterprises have to be established, based on new ideas. That’s why improving creative thinking is becoming a crucial factor in all levels of education, but especially in adult education, which is „directly connected” to the economy. Creativity is the key in how to adopt to fast changing circumstances and also how to review one’s former experiences and make something new, useful and profitable from this knowledge.

During the project implementation we focused on teachers in adult education, as target group, since we aimed to transfer and introduce new methods in their/in our everyday routine concerning the teaching of creative thinking, and share the best practices on European level.

Our consortium consists of 6 different adult education providers from 6 different European countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary and Spain.

During the 2 years of the project, we have organized six international meetings focused on vary topics related to creativity in each country.

The consortium:

Budapesti Kommunikációs és Üzleti Főiskola – Hungary
(www.bkf.hu)

Centro de Educación de Personas Adultas “CEPA Río Taho” – Spain
(http://www.epatalavera.es)

Länsirannikon Koulutus Oy Winnova – Finland

Odder Højskole – Denmark
(http://oderhojskole.dk/in-english/)

Tartu Ülikool, psühholoogia instituut – Estonia
(http://www.psychology.ut.ee/et)

Volkshochschule für den Landkreis Regen – Germany
(http://www.vhs-regen.de/vhs-goes-europe/grundtvig)

OUR DISCOVERIES

“Creativity is everywhere” – 1st meeting
Pori, Finland. 12-16 December 2012

On the Kick-off meeting we have studied the effect of creative approach on both the society and the economy, but most importantly: what we mean by creativity. Along with discussing these issues, we have also shared the current situation of the education system in each country. Even though they are very divergent from country to country – we all agreed on the fact: none of our education systems pay enough attention to bring creativity in the learning process of an individual’s life in general. During the workshops we have also analysed the outcomes of the survey we’ve been running prior to the meeting. What we were able to recognize generally is that those who answered the questionnaire think creativity is something special, new, an ability, which can be used and helpful everywhere – arts, work and the everyday routine. When they feel themselves creative they feel brighter, limitless, happier, worthier, stronger, able to do anything, in the flow, successful and open-minded. According to respondents creativity is free-thinking; doing something in another way and creating something new, sometimes even strange linking. Creativity is to solve a problem, or to reach an unforeseen opportunity. To find valuable solutions which make our lives easier, quicker or just more joyful. The knowledge we gathered on the first meeting was a good mind set for the further implementation of the project.

“Everybody is creative” – 2nd meeting
Regen, Germany. 13-17 February 2013

After we have reached a common understanding on creativity, we moved our focus on how to “recognize” creativity on the second meeting: how to discover one’s given talent, how to coach and motivate this person?

Each of the partners made their research whether there are any sort of measuring systems exist, which are capable to find outperforming individuals on a national, regional and institutional level. It came
clear the answer is no. Even though in some of the countries the necessity of care should be taken of ‘highly gifted’ students is provided by low (where highly gifted includes high degree of commitment and motivation towards the tasks, intellectual capacity is over the average and high level of creativity), that method doesn’t really look for them. It is each institution’s role to find the talented among their students, and also to find the way how to mentor them. Luckily there are many ways to facilitate gifted students, and our partners have their own ways to support them as well. Some of us have special development centres or talent workshops, others provide special flexible time distribution, cross-curricular activities, peer tutorials, and so on. In all cases teachers hold a very important role, because they are the ones who see the students day by day, thus they have the utmost chance to recognize the talents.

During the workshops our German partner shared their way of measuring their students’ competences with an instrument called “ProfilPASS”, which aims to facilitate their students to find a job which meets their skills and interests most. We also had insight how an Assessment Center works, therefore we gained knowledge not only how to discover talents, but what expectations they have to face with on the labour market.

We have also discussed about the challenges of the ‘talented’. There, again the important role of the teachers been underlined, but also responsibility of the parents in early ages. Creativity can be easily influenced by the environment, which includes the parent’s behaviour and focus on the children’s interest; the ideal career plan not always matching students’ needs which easily cause general disinterest, dissatisfaction and unhappiness. As one of us have mentioned, high level of teacher’s emotional intelligence also needed to find and mentor the talented.

The aim of the 3rd meeting of our project was to examine best practices and methods, new approaches of learning and teaching creativity. There Trin Hannust (Head of Institute of Psychology at our host institution, University of Tartu) made us aware of the fact: so many times we only use routines because we’re used to it and either lazy to change or don’t even think about the possibility of changing it or we do follow out-dated routine which need to be revised time to time. With that in mind we had exercises to widen our horizon, among which we had a very interesting session where we all brought our own practices from each institution in action – by used each other as students. Later we have visited the Centre of Creative Industries of Tartu, where talents can find their space and possibilities to start their own company by participate in exhibitions, workshops and sales. We had a tour around the complex and we have seen very different types of startups: from clothing design through graphic design, also comic art, even community-space design – all in one place. One of the advantages of the centre is the different startups can help each other in-house.

Also we had a trip to Viljandi, where we had an insight of an afternoon of the art section of Tartu University, followed by situation- and mind-games in spring forest “how to open our creativity through acting” by Katrin Nielsen, drama teacher of Viljandi Culture Academy. Those activities were very inspiring how one can change the point of view in situations and come up with interesting solutions.

“Let’s learn creativity” – 3rd meeting
Tartu, Estonia. 8-12. May 2013

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by different colours of lights, scenes, scents and sounds. Each room has its own theme and intended to effect on different ways. We have also ARoS Museum of Arts in Århus, and we have been to a little island, Alra.

“Creativity has no age” – 5th meeting
Talavera de la Reina, Spain. 12-16 March 2014

During the 5th meeting of our project our aim was to discover the ‘ageless creativity’. Our Spanish partner Centro de Educación de Personas Adultas “CEPA Río Taho” in Talavera de la Reina has experienced colleagues according to the topic, because they work with both young and adult learners from every age. We learned about a project of University of Castilla-la-Mancha (UCM), which provides opportunities for elderly people to spend their time actively. Their way of doing so is to invite elderly people to participate in making short movies: from inventing the story through script-writing, acting and editing – together with youngsters. Through that process generations are able to learn from each other through real situations. We have also visited the local Public Library “José Hierro”, where they provide special programmes to gather different generations together and make them able to connect with each other. We even experienced a very special story telling session with Jennifer Ramsay and her thoughtful tales. Also we have visited the enterprise incubator “CEEI” in Talavera de la Reina, where numerous innovative ideas have the space to improve their ideas and develop them to successful business.

We have also practiced our creativity in action: after being introduced to the local High School “San Isidro”, we have tried our own creativity explode in the kitchen, also experienced new ways of self-awareness and using music instruments and music itself as a tool of reaching group synergy by Iratxe Pérez Elizalde and Elena Suela de Marcos at the Municipal School of Music and Dance. After being tuned onto music, we continued with a Dancing workshop with Baisalón Dance Academy – which is often used by our Spanish colleagues as well, also which is a great tool to reach common understanding lightly between generations.

During our stay we did not only discover Talavera de la Reina’s heritage, but visited the historical Toledo, and had a very special farewell dinner accompanied with a great concert of the saxophone virtuoso Ismael Dorado and “Baisalón” Dance exhibition.

“Inspired by creativity” – 6th meeting
Budapest, Hungary. 21-25. May 2014

On our last meeting we aimed to map the connection of creativity and business by visiting innovative initiatives and companies in Budapest. We checked out “The Grund” and “Demola Budapest”, visited the Art Faculty of Budapest College of Communication, Business and Arts (BKF), also learned about the startup programme of BKF and heard talks about the future of teaching from Balazs Koren and Dr Zsolt Laviczka.

Our first destination was The Grund, which is located as in the book “The Paul street boys” of
Hungarian author Ferenc Molnár. This entrepreneurship has many functions from entertainment through support education and giving space such projects like Google’s startup & training centre, Google Ground. They provide programmes for the kids and schools to visit when they reach the novel in their curriculum, thus they not just learn from the books but get their own experiences.

We continued our journey and visited another interesting initiative called Demola Budapest. This goal of this international network is to gather students together from different higher education institutions and fields in order to solve problems which companies gives to Demola instructors. The groups of students can choose which problem they would like to work on, make demos for the solution and present their idea to the company. If the company finds the solution useful, they can buy and implement it. Through this possibility students have a chance to use their knowledge in practice and connect to the labour world before ending their studies.

After Demola we checked the Art Programs of Budapest College of Communication and Business (BKF), where Ferenc Koleszár guided us through graphic design, ceramics, clothes and jewellery designs and interior designs. As it was the final week for the students to get their projects done, it was fascinating to see the entire sparkling atmosphere of creativity.

We have not only visited the art faculty of BKF, but the main campus as well, where Dr. Ferenc Kiss Academic Vice-Rector of BKF told us about the possibilities of the students including the freshly started Startup programme of the College, where BKF donates the best entrepreneurship ideas, also the good results alumni students have already achieved on startup competitions.

Balázs Koren, lecturer at ELTE, co-founder of Hungarian Android Portal showed us new ways in the way of thinking when it comes to teaching; embrace technology over than closing it out. Currently smartphones and tablets are forbidden from most of the classes – but they can be used smartly to make the learning process more attractive for students.

Balázs’s tip: Try to involve some apps links to some of the classes. He personally used to be a math teacher in primary school. He asked the kids to bring their smartphones/tablets to class if they have so, than paired them up to make sure everyone has a device. On that class all the problems were given in QR codes. They had to finish one task before decoding the next, which led to more solved math tasks than at a regular class. This trick can not only used for math classes, also other apps available to twist the class up.

Dr. Zsolt Laviczka, professor of Cambridge University, Head of Researches in project GEOMATECH introduced us a specific application called GeoGebra which specialised to support the teaching of math and science. Zsolt is one of the founders of GeoGebra, and been around the globe make it available, thus make STEM subjects easier to understand and fun to students. He also introduced GEOMATECH to us, which is an EU-funded project with the aim of implementing teaching with GeoGebra into the Hungarian national curriculum in order to make students understand STEM more interactive from age 8 to 18, also hopefully break the ice for other innovative teaching applications and methods.

During our stay in Budapest we also participated in a challenge for our own logical creativity by a self-freeing mindgame by Mindquest, where you really need to think out of the box to get all the clues and free yourself and your group, also tried out Europe’s first amphibious tourbus, Riverride. It has been a great meeting, and wonderful two years of exploring different aspects of creativity, and also the value of each other. It was not only a project, but through the joint work friendships been developed or became stronger. Thank you all who participated and made this happen, and thanks for all the people who stayed with us online. Keep the spirit up, keep “thinking outside of the box”!
We collected the methods which are good to enhance creativity in the classroom which you can find hereinafter, divided to four categories. In the first group of activities we did put together teambuilding activities which can build upon the group synergy. We also collected activities for “getting new ideas”, tricks to help your group in memorizing what they’ve learnt and also activities “for exploring”. We hope you will find some of these techniques useful in your routine!

1. Team building

PAPERTOWEL
This method can be used even with a very large group by dividing them to smaller groups. The teams need some good amount of paper, tape and scissors, and they have to build the tallest tower they can, but they are not allowed to say a word nor write to each other. It can put the groups together very well, and will be fascinating to see how the groups handle the situation and what they will create under the given circumstances. Our Danish partners usually use this task in the very beginning of their semester.

STORYTELLER
A very useful game in which participants can get familiar with each other easily.
The rules are:
Step 1: Participants need to pair up first. Then both tells about themselves for about 1 minute (childhood, present time, future plans etc.).
Step 2: After that participants need to find a new pair and tell their partner the mix story from Step 1.
Step 3: After the pair of Step 2 need to team up with another pair (a group of 4) and make a story in which there are something from each other's stories.
Step 4: As the last step, the group needs to make a picture from this new story by is acting the story and the tutor freezes people for the picture.

Our Finnish partner tried this “game” we have learned during the meeting in Estonia in the beginning of courses – when the students don’t know each other. By using this method students get familiar with each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

ARTISTS AND MODELS
This method can be used at either in the beginning of a training course as a warm-up task or the end of a training course as being a kind of feedback.
The students should sit facing each other at the tables. People on one side are the “models”, and “artists” are on the other side. The artists start drawing a portrait of their model, but they only have 10 minutes to work on it. After the 10 minutes all the artists move to the next seat and continue the previous artist’s portrait. After 10 seconds – to the next and so on, as long as every artist has had chance to draw a bit the every model’s portrait. Then they change places: those who were models, become artists and the same procedure takes place. The results will be amazing! It is important to point out that if you did the same „game“ at the beginning of the course, the result would be different. As our Estonian partner suggests, 12-14 persons are needed at least.

CARDS, SYMBOLS
As our Finnish partner pointed out, there are different kinds of teambuilding cards are available. They can be used in counselling situations (group counselling or individual counselling). Also they have used the cards in situations where the students need to get familiar with each other. They often use Ideapakka®-cards (different decks of cards). There are different objectives, because the decks of cards are different from each other. There’s e.g. a deck of cards which objective is mindfulness in work or while studying, there are different kind of methods how to increase one’s own and the student’s mindfulness while studying or how to take a break from thinking during the day. One of the deck of cards is also available in English – There are different kinds of teaching and learning and working methods presented in this deck of cards. These deck of cards are a very good working tool for the teacher because it’s easy to pick up a suitable method or creative practice and use it in class with students. See example: http://verkkopuoti.ideakoski.fi/product/2/idea-deck--sand-glass-bag-ideapakka-in-english

2. Getting new ideas

GALLERY WALK
“Gallery walk” method from the Finnish team designed to be an interactive way of gather information and learn from each other. During that students are working in smaller groups, where each group works on a given topic and they make a poster to sum up the knowledge they have gathered. Each group work on different topics, but all the topics are a part of bigger picture. After the teams are done, they hang their posters and they need to be re-grouped on a way where each group has at least one member of the previous groups. These new groups start a walk around the posters, and the ‘expert’ (the one who has been part of the team which has prepared the poster) “teaches” the others and opens up discussion. When a signal is given from the teacher, the groups move to the next poster, where the next ‘expert’ will share the information the group gathered, and so on until all the groups get to all the posters. At the end the teacher makes a conclusion by all the work the groups have made. The advantages of this method are that participants equally responsible for the whole group’s learning and participating; everybody is equal in the group; develops performance and discussion skills; possibility to physically move around the room (kinaesthetic learners).
HAWAIIAN STYLE

Everyone loves Hawaii! And what’s not to love? White sand beaches, pineapple fu-fu drinks with umbrellas, the clear, blue ocean. Even the graphic style of Hawaii is attractive. The Polynesian visual language is unique and distinctive, with certain graphic elements consistent through many applications. There are certain places we expect to see that distinctive Polynesian style, and some, it turns out, we don’t.

Today we’re going to explore the places we don’t. Your task is to choose one of the following “places” and recreate it, Hawaiian style:

A car / Your desk area / An outhouse / A doghouse / A dump truck

Consider what Hawaiian elements can be added to the environment, including graphic print, foliage or uniquely Polynesian décor. Here’s a tip: Don’t bend over if you’re not wearing anything under that grass skirt!

LETTERS

In the following line of letters, cross out six letters so that the remaining letter, without altering their sequence, will spell a familiar English word. Play with it for a while before proceeding.

BSAINXLEATNTEARS

In the mid-1960’s, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover was reading a typed copy of a letter he had just dictated to his secretary. He didn’t like the way she had formatted the letter, so he wrote on the bottom, “Watch the borders” and asked her to retype it. The secretary did as she was instructed and sent it off to all top agents. For the next two weeks FBI agents were put out on special alert along the Canadian and Mexican borders.

This story illustrated two of the main reasons why most people don’t like ambiguous situations (those that can be interpreted in more than one way): (1) they’re confusing, and, (2) they cause communication problems. As a result, we have learned to “avoid ambiguity”. This is a good rule to follow for most practical situations such as giving directions, documenting programs, or drawing up contracts. On these occasions it’s important to be clear, precise, and specific in order to get your message across.

There are instances, however, when ambiguity can be a powerful stimulant to your imagination. When you’re in the imaginative phase of the creative process, a little ambiguity can whack you into asking such questions as:

- What’s going on here?
- What does this mean?
- How else can this be interpreted?

These are special questions, the kind you ask when you are looking for new ideas. So, one way to “think something different” is to look at things ambiguously. For example, what is half of 8? One answer is 4. But if you assume that the question is ambiguous, you’ll look for other answers such as 0, 3, E, M, and “eig,” all depending on how you define “half”.

Okay, how did you do with the six letters exercise? What word did you find? Many people look at the problems and say, “Okay, here’s a string of sixteen letter, and to solve this problem I should cross out 6 of them. That means I’m looking for a 10 letter word.” And that’s what they spend their time looking for. One way to solve this problem is to interpret the instructions with an ambiguous attitude. What else could “cross out six letters” mean? Perhaps instead of crossing out 6 letters, you literally cross out the “S,” and the “I,” and the “X,” and the “L,” and the “E,” and so on. If you try this approach, you will be left with the word: BANANA

OLD SPORTS

Sports are a part of our heritage, and have been for centuries. Can you imagine if those first athletes, running foot races in ancient history, could see what sports have become today, with technological advances, athlete enhancements and state-of-the-art facilities? Although our amazement might not be of equal shock value, we’re going to put ourselves in their shoes. Your task today is to pick a sport. Any sport.

Now, write down what you think that sport will be like in the year 2500 A.D. Consider all the fantastic advances in technology, space travel, science, equipment and players that might be experienced.

CUSTOMIZED CARS

Often, finding a creative solution simply means looking at what we see every day in a slightly different way. From our work environments to our computer desktops, altering our perspective can lead to creative results. While we spend countless hours in these environments, there’s another place many of us spend countless hours observing our surroundings—our cars.

Many of us have taken steps to “customize” the interior of our cars to “brighten the view” of something we stare at everyday—the driver’s seat. We have pinned up photos of loved ones, created places for our phones and sunglasses to reside, even flower vases! Your task today is to “redesign” or decorate the dashboard and surrounding area of a car’s interior. But not for you... Choose one of these occupational audiences:

- Cowboy / Doctor / Park ranger / Kindergarten teacher / Mortician / Actor or actress / Creative director / Circus clown / Pilot

Consider what “things” these occupations might need, and how traveling from one place to the other can be enhanced with your new design. Keep in mind they still need to be able to steer somehow, but the rest is up to you.

In group of 4-5 people it is interesting to think of something which is very ordinary for us from a slightly different point of view. This task usually appears during marketing students’ training at the Hungarian institution.

REVERSING PROVERBS

Reversing your viewpoint is a great way to sharpen your thinking. Try disagreeing with people with whose ideas, principles, and beliefs you usually agree. You may find that the opposite view makes more sense. If you don’t have anyone handy to disagree with you, why not disagree with yourself? Play the fool and take the contrary position on common sense proverbs.

“If something’s worth doing, it’s worth doing well.” If a thing’s worth doing, it’s okay to do it poorly. Otherwise, you’ll never give yourself permission to be a beginner at a new activity. If you have to do well, then you’ll prevent yourself from trying new things.
“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” Two in the bush are great. After all, everybody needs a dream. Without the “two in the bush” mentality, what would happen to risk-taking? “A chain is no stronger than its weakest link.” Weak links are wonderful! As a matter of fact, many systems have weak links designed into them. They’re called “fuses.” When a system gets overloaded, the fuse blows and saves the rest of the system. After all, which part do you want to break: the $50,000 piece or the 5 penny one?

Take one of your favorite pieces of common sense and roast it. You might try some of the following:
1. Business before pleasure.
2. Every cloud has a silver lining.
3. Every dog has its day.
4. Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.
5. Fight fire with fire.
6. Patience is a virtue.
7. Hate makes waste.
8. He who laughs last laughs best.
9. Curiosity killed the cat.
10. Beauty is only skin-deep.
11. You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.
12. If at first you don’t succeed, try, try, again.
13. As you make your bed, so you must sleep in it.
14. Look before you leap.
15. Too many cooks spoil the soup.

Looking at things in reverse can also be a good technique for discovering the comic side of things.

WEBQUEST
IT can be used in a different, creative way. Students work in teams and follow some clues to find information about a given subject. With this activity we want the students to use the Information Technologies in a more relaxed way at the same time that they learn how to search the internet for information and get the gist of it to later summarize it to their classmates.

Sometimes this activity is carried out throughout a normal class period either in Spanish or in English and requires some time at the end of the lesson to put it in common and other times this is regarded as a contest which fosters students’ competitiveness.

CONTESTS
Following the idea of “WEBQUEST”, along the academic year, we organize several contests for the students to take part in. The students use their creativity at their most when they pursue to get the first prize and be mentioned in front of the rest of the students. We organize different types of contests:
• Gastronomy / Photography / Christmas cards / Literary works / Crafts / Christmas decorations

THEMED RESTAURANT
Themed restaurants are nothing new. We’ve dined at establishments that are modelled after our favourite cartoon characters, sports or music genre. But our favourite movie? That’s your challenge today. Think of your all-time favourite movie. The one you could quote every line from. Now create a themed restaurant around that movie. Consider the subject of the movie, the characters, the setting. Now, by either writing down the ideas or sketching them out, create the features of the establishment, from the tables and tableware to the costumes to the decoration to the food. Think of as many themed elements as you can for your favourite movie-themed restaurant. Just don’t order the veal.

YOUR AD
Ad guys spend all day and all night creating ads for various products and services, including headlines and body copy, graphics and visuals. Photo shoots and illustrations are involved. Someone even chooses the right font. Sometimes.

Regardless of the product or service, creating an ad for someone else is easy compared to something a little more personal… say, your! Your task today is to create an ad for you. That’s right, you. You’re the product. Or service. Whichever fits best. Come up with the headline, the body copy, the visual, the whole thing. Even the font choice. Sell you like you’ve never been sold before. That didn’t come out right…

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
During our Spanish partner’s cultural week, the students are the teachers themselves. They volunteer to lead workshops and share their knowledge with other students. This knowledge is normally based on informal learning and their own skills. Things learned all along their lives and which they are willing to share with their school mates. This way they can enhance the relationship and respect within the educational community and foster communication of students of different levels and courses who sometimes don’t share the same goals, classrooms, shifts, and so on.

Some of the workshops carried out are:
• How to create your family tree
• Music and relaxation
• Laughter therapy
• Dance
• Doll making
• Bracelet making
• Cultural visits
• Science challenges
• Drama improvisation
• Storytelling

EXHIBITIONS
Sometimes the best way to approach some subjects to the students is by seeing and “touching” it. In this sense our Spanish partner usually organize exhibitions to bring the topics closer to the students. They have made exhibitions like “Women in History”, “Carpe Diem” and “Poor Art”.

LITERARY WORKSHOP
In which students work at their best their imagination to write in different literary styles depending on the subject dealt with. Sometimes with a given topic, sometimes free composition where their creativity is the most valued ingredient. This workshop is carried out all school year long and it aims at being a different approach to reading
classic texts and promoting students’ creativity at the same time that spelling and punctuation are minded. Students learn to express themselves in a relaxed, cooperative atmosphere.

MAP YOURSELF
In order to be successful in the labour market one should be aware of his/her competences: what they are good in at, what their interests are, also which areas they should develop themselves on. It is possible to make self-notes, but also there are instruments to help one out in this process. Our German partner uses a system called ProfiPASS, which aims to discover talented young persons for the companies - developed by the German Institute for Adult Education. This system is a combination of a folder and accompanying counselling from qualified ProfiPASS counsellors. This system supports users to analyse their activities with a focus on what they have learned by doing, to become aware of one’s own personal strengths and learn how to communicate them, also they get evaluated without any fixed expectations regarding the results, voluntarily.

3. Memorizing

EASTHER EGG HUNT
If you want to monitor what your how much your students can recall after a bigger module before closing it, but you don’t really want to use a test, the “Easther egg hunt” practice of the Spanish team can be used very effectively. During this students are work in smaller groups. When one group comes to the teacher, they will get a clue related to the chosen topic. If they can answer correctly, they will have another clue which leads the group to the hidden object (the Easther egg). This method is good for a little team-building, for refreshing what they have learned, and also make the group move a little which also helps in concentration. Before the start the teacher have to prepare with getting the questions / clues ready, also hide the “little eggs” around (possibly out of the classroom).

QUIZ
This method can be used in practising the material which was studied in previous lecture. At classes held on Saturdays and Sundays it can be nice to twist it up a bit. When our Estonian partner holds lectures both days of the weekend, then on Sunday they start with a ten minute session of a quiz from the previous day’s material – where the ones who answered correctly got “imaginable” price of points. Even if the students are diverse in age (from age 19 to late 40s) they can be made more active and motivated. As our partner shared, students on one hand they felt amused and surprised but on the other hand, they were active to participate. Later some students said that this approach helped them to focus on the lecture afterwards and broke the

4. For exploring

BARRIERS
Barriers keep things out... or in, depending on your point of view. We create barriers to protect what’s ours. Strangely, that is true for both physical AND mental barriers. We put up fences in our minds to protect us from embarrassment, pain or trouble. Both physically and mentally, barriers are all around us. While some are meant to protect, others simply keep us from accomplishing the greatness we deserve to achieve. But before we can differentiate the two, we have to identify them. Grab a digital camera. Your task today is to take fifteen pictures of barriers. They can be physical barriers, things that divide or surround, or they can represent mental barriers of some kind. Take picture of the barriers, print them out, then examine them in your life. Do they protect or inhibit? The eternal question!

SOCIODRAMA
A sociodrama is a dramatic play in which several individuals act out assigned roles for the purpose of studying. Our Finnish partner uses this method for eg. to study how to serve customers, while our Spanish partner uses it as build upon the students’ self-confidence who are especially shy and find difficult to face talking in front of an audience.

NUMBERS
Shown below is the Roman numeral seven. By adding only a single line, turn it into an eight. VII This is pretty easy: all you have to do is add a vertical line to the right of the VII to create an eight: VIII. Want something a little more challenging? Show below is a Roman numeral nine. By adding only a single line, turn IX into a 6. IX Some people put a horizontal line through the center, turn it upside down, and then cover the bottom. This gives you a Roman numeral VI. But if you’re “thinking something different,” you might put an “S” in front of the IX out of the context of Roman numerals and put it into the context of Arabic numerals spelled out in English. What prevents some people from doing this is that even with only three examples
of Roman numerals – VII, VIII, and IX – they get locked into the context of Roman numerals. Let’s look for another answer. Can you think of other ways in which you can add a single line to “IX” and turn it into a 6?

Another solution might be to add the line “6” after IX. Then you get IX6, or one times six. Here the “X” no longer represents “10” or the English letter “X” but rather the multiplication sign. The point: everybody has a lot of knowledge; by shifting the context in which you think about it, you’ll discover new ideas.

NEWSLETTERS
Our Spanish partner found a great way to disseminate our European Project, TooB among their students. They decided to divide some newsletters and give a part to each class so that the students had to read and translate it. Thus they wanted to awaken the students’ curiosity on the paragraphs that would come previous and after the one that they had to work on.

In the end, they’ve made a big poster arranging all the parts that we hanged on one of the walls of the school and we also encouraged the students to creatively write their opinions and feelings on it.

CULTURAL DAYS
A way to bring British culture alive and make them understand and respect others ways of living. On some particular days and dates we learn how they are celebrated in English speaking countries. For example at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Halloween, the Book Day, St. Patrick’s Day, International Women’s Day, Tea Time, etc. This way students can learn English vocabulary and structures in a different, more enjoyable way than a proper grammar lesson. On response, students also make presentations about traditional festivals and customs in their country or region.

PHONE BOOTH
Is there anything sadder than a pay phone booth these days? With the advent of the cell phone, those once-popular necessities are all but extinct. Try to think of the last time you used a pay phone, and then try to recall the last pay phone you used that was housed in a phone booth. It’s been a while, huh? Those phone booths are still around. They didn’t get their feelings hurt and leave the country, they just have no purpose in life anymore. It’s your job today to give them a purpose. Come up with ten alternative uses for your old friend, the phone booth. They can have the pay phone still housed inside, or you can lose the phone altogether, replace the phone with some other usage, whatever you want. You can even dislodge the phone booth from its home and put it somewhere else. Just don’t forget the dimes.

RANDOM ITEMS
You’re going to need one other willing soul for this exercise. Get a paper bag (or anything that can carry a few items without being seen). Give the bag to the other participant and ask him or her to fill the bag with four random items. The only restriction is that the items have to be able to fit entirely in the bag. When your partner is done, have them roll the bag up so you can’t see the contents and give it back to you. These are your “clues.” The story is that you were having coffee at a café down the street, and a man ran up to you and gave you this bag. He said “I can’t explain now, but I need you to hold this bag for me. I’m being chased by three men, I think they are government agents, but I’m not sure. Please take this bag for me, I’ll contact you later.” He then looked behind him anxiously and ran off. You took the bag back to your office and even though it’s probably not a good idea, you decide the mystery is too great to stand. You have to know this guy’s story. Now take the bag and remove the contents onto your desk or table. The four objects you see are your only clues to the mystery of who this guy is, who he was running from and what’s going on. Write a story about how these four objects go together, who the guy was and the story behind his mysterious circumstances.

SOFT DRINK CAN
Some of the most powerful brands on the planet right now are soft drinks. The graphic qualities of the packaging are recognizable for just about everyone alive. It makes you wonder what soft drink packaging would have been like in historical times? Ok, maybe you don’t wonder that, but you’re going to start today. Your challenge is to create the soft drink can of choice for any of the following historical eras:

Old west / Impressionist painters / Prehistoric times / Medieval times / Futuristic

Create the name of the soft drink, its flavor, and what the front of the can would look like.

SIGNS
There are signs posted around every office in the world, signs that warn us of impending danger, bathroom segregation or even which way the exit is. These signs become such a sterile-bummer. What if those signs were changed to an international pictorial language that not only identified the door, room, fire extinguisher, etc. but added art to the space? Forget the shapeless figures and celebrate the difference between men and women, janitors and upper management! Create new signs for:

Men’s/Women’s room / Fire Extinguisher / Janitor’s Closet / Executive Washroom / Parking Garage / Exit

THE SCIENTIST
Giving an extraordinary task for your group just for 20 minutes will twist your group up for sure. Our German partners challenged our creativity with science: we had to build an engine out of the items they gave to us; a Duplo chocolate, a magnet, an AA battery and a screw… It was really a challenge to all of us.

The initiative called “Little Scientists’ House” endeavours to link everyday encounters with natural phenomena, technology and mathematics to everyday life at children’s educational institutions, with ongoing success.

Aside from awakening interest in natural science and technology and conveying initial specialist skills, learning by researching stimulates the language and social skills of children.

PROJECTS IN WORK PLACEMENTS OR IN SCHOOL
The students in institutions whom are very practically oriented and therefore “real life projects” can be used widely in order to learn different skills, including creative skills. These projects can be individual or group oriented and they can happen in school (e.g. an event that the students are responsible of organizing, real customer cases – that is – somebody has placed an order to the institution and the
students do the work as “student work”) or in work placements. The students can in such real life projects better integrate their gained knowledge and create a link from theoretical learning to the practical world.

**LYRICS WRITING**

Especially at Christmas time, our Spanish partner encourage students to try and change the lyrics of traditional Christmas carols in which they could reflect the current social situation, trending topics, school matters, etc. and then perform it. This way students can work out new ideas, also a good occasion for connect students from different courses.

**LUNCH TOGETHER**

“Most advances in science,” explains physicist Peter Borden, “come when a person is forced to change fields.” You can “change fields” briefly by taking someone to lunch. Let’s suppose that the following pairs of people went to lunch together. What could they learn from one another?

- A bus driver and a comedian
- A beautician and an insurance salesman
- A kindergarten teacher and a software programmer
- A priest and the head waiter at a fancy restaurant
- A nurse in a cancer ward and a jazz drummer
- A choreographer and a bookie
- A prostitute and a professional football player
- A policeman and a librarian
- A circus clown and an air traffic controller
- A bull fighter and a gardener
- A fool and a banker

Some of the are based on the following books:

- De Bono, Edward: How to Have Creative Ideas – 62 exercises to develop the mind (Vermilion, 2007)
- Epstein, Robert: Creativity Games for Trainers (McGraw-Hill, 1995)
- Foster, Jack – Corby, Larry: How to Get Ideas (Berrett-Koehler, 2003)
- Michalko, Michael: Thinkertoys – A Handbook of Creative-Thinking Techniques (Ten Speed Press, 2006)
- Schenck, Ernie: The Houdini Solution – Why Thinking Inside the Box is the Key to Creativity (McGraw Hill, 2006)
- Wiseman, Richards: 59 Seconds – Think a Little, Change A Lot (Pan 2010)