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MANUAL

BLENDING SKILLS COMPETITION VET SCHOOLS

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1

How to organize a Blended Skills competition

Blended learning is a mixture of face-to-face and ICT-based educational activities, learning materials and tools. Both types of learning activities are a substantial part of education; ideally, they reinforce each other.

DESCRIPTION:

Organise a competition for students of all kind of studies. The competition should consist of an online and offline part, involving students from VET schools based upon a national or international collaboration.

Create a blueprint and share it with potentially participating schools

- Explore existing collaborations between schools
- Or look for new collaboration opportunities within the sector in which your school offers degree programs

Launch the collaboration between the participating schools and plan an initial joint online meeting to establish the topic and structure of the competition

Topic:

- Preferably integrated in curriculum
- Finding the common value of training
- Establishing the topic
- Setting goals for the contest

Structure:

- Half of the competition is online
- Half of the competition is offline



In the next chapters you will find the elaborations of these



2 How to find partners

If the school has not yet steady partners, or if it is the first stage of its internationalization process, there are some tools to find similar organizations, which are suitable for both public and private players.

The first step is to define a suitable profile: what type of school(s) are you looking for? Here are some options to be considered:

1. A school with a similar course offer, or with a complementary one?
2. One with a similar size (number of students), a smaller or a bigger one?
3. Options for example:
 - Looking for a school with the experience in organising a Blended Skills Competition.
 - Looking for a school who both are new on the process to organise a Blended Skills Competition.

Another important issue is the contact person at the school – who will send and receive the communication with potential and chosen partners? Will it be the manager or will a teacher be appointed for that? Regardless of the decision, the person should have a sufficient level of English and be able to make decisions on behalf of the school.

Then, here are several channels that can be used to connect with potential partners:

- European platforms – all these sites require registration, but are free and managed by the European Commission:
 - [eTwinning](#) – this is the oldest platform, but has been continuously renewed. The school can place its projects here, include its teachers/staff, network with other schools, ...;
 - [Community of European VET practitioners](#) – like the name says, it's a network of VET teachers and staff;
 - [Erasmus+ project results](#) – this site is where the details and outcomes of projects funded under the Erasmus+ programme are presented, as well as the schools involved in them, including its contacts.
- [Erasmus+ National Agencies](#) - The EU works with National Agencies to bring the Erasmus+ programme as close as possible to the participants. The National Agencies are based in EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme. Although they cannot recommend schools, they publish on their website their country's schools that have projects funded by the program, which can be a good starting point.
- European VET umbrella associations – there are several associations that aim to represent, at a European level, the VET providers. Obviously, the school must be an associate to have access to their full services, but some list its associates on its website:
 - [European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(EFVET\)](#);
 - [European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training \(EVBB\)](#);
 - [European Vocational Training Association \(EVTA\)](#);
- Social networks – namely on Facebook and LinkedIn, there are literally dozens of groups where schools ask for partners / to be included as partner: type Erasmus+, or Erasmus+ KA 1 or KA2 on the search icon.

3 Preparations

BEFORE STARTING THE BLENDED SKILLS COMPETITION:

- Committed teachers involved in the process with f.e. 1 up to 3 classes per school.
- Transnational element important to get students engaged with the project and add the language improvement as one of the project-goals for students.
- Discuss whether there are any cultural, traditional, or religious habits in each of the participating countries that need to be taken into account.
- As a result we have enough students who want to participate in the competition, after which we can select students for the teams per country.
- National: select number of teams per country.
- Transnational assignment to be able to select the required amount of students per country.

PREPARE A DETAILED BUDGET

It is of utmost importance to know, in advance, the costs and the sources to pay for them, so that the competition can be properly planned and implemented. We will not mention specific amounts, as it depends on the topic of competition; number, type and geographical origin of participants; number of days, among other issues.

The expenses may cover several chapters:

- **Staff:** consider the number of teachers' and staff's hours/days involved, from the beginning to the end of the project. If these costs are not covered by their salary, or if overtime compensation is required, the calendar should be carefully designed, so that won't overcome what was foreseen.
- **Equipment and materials:** usually these competitions won't need purchase of specific machines or tools – as the participating schools already have them – but materials' might be in order. Hence, depending on the duration of the tasks/activities and the number of participants, a precise calculation on how many/how much would be needed should be discussed and agreed among partners. Also relevant is the decision on where it will be bought (at the city where the hosting school is located), or if the incoming schools shall bring it.
- **Indirect costs:** normally they are not considered, as electricity, gas, internet, water, are covered by the hosting school. However, that depends on the type and duration of the competition.
- **Meals:** although it is common that the breakfast is at the accommodation, lunches, dinners and, eventually, coffee breaks, shall be taken together by the hosting and incoming teams, so how many will occur, where and how much it will cost shall be calculated.
- **Social time:** it is expected that the hosting school provides visits to local or regional landmarks to the guests, which may have paid entrances. If they also need a transfer, or even a public transport ticket, those amounts should be included in the budget.
- **Accommodation:** there are several possibilities concerning where the visitors will stay – from hosting families to hostels / hotels, or even school's dorms, if available. It should mention if the breakfast is included or not. As this is the second biggest part of the budget, it should be carefully chosen.
- The last but the one with the most impact – **plane tickets.** It is very important that the calendar of the competition is defined in advance, and the dates for the trips agreed as soon as possible, so that the participants that have to travel may buy their tickets. It should also be considered the travel between the closest airport and where the competition will take place, and return.

4 Finding funds

As for the revenues, the school may have a mix, or choose only one, from public or private funding sources.

- *Erasmus+ KA1 Mobility for Learners and Staff in Vocational Education and Training* – it supports events in which competitive demonstration of skills is central for promotion, recognition and exchange of experience, know-how and technological innovations in VET. Funding is also provided for staff, mentors or experts accompanying the learners during the activity. The participating schools should apply to their Erasmus+ National Agencies; however, the hosting school cannot, as only funds outgoing mobilities.
- **Local, regional or national grants from public authorities.**
- **Sponsors:** some local, regional and national stakeholders, directly or via foundations, provide grants, in cash or kind, for similar projects.
- **School's own budget.**
- **Students' activities:** students that are willing to take part in the competition may organize activities, both inside and outside school, to collect money.
- **Families:** this should be the last resort. Otherwise, students that come from disadvantaged backgrounds cannot take part.

If the costs cannot be covered entirely by external sources, partners must agree on the its equitable division. Moreover, even if they are covered, incoming schools must have a clear and detailed agenda, with all the foreseen costs they will have to cope, right from the beginning of the process.



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Launch project online to ● teacher involved *Break out rooms (optionally)*

OPEN ASSIGNMENT TO ALLOW CREATIVITY

- Students present cultural aspects to students from other countries.
- Contest online will be...date.....
- Combine countries, f.e.: A Greek teacher with Spanish students, a Bosnian teacher with Greek students and a Spanish teacher with Bosnian student.
- Output online or output during the offline part? Still to decide what is preferable.
- Evaluate and reflect.



PLATFORMS

MS Teams
(if all countries use this)
or Google Meet

PRIZE

This is to be specified

EVALUATION OF THE BLENDED SKILLS COMPETITION OF ALL PARTICIPANTS

Offline, after one week
of the competitions



6 Setting up the *online* part of the contest

An online contest between students from different countries in Europe is a fun and educational way to learn about other cultures, languages and skills. To organise such a contest, you need to consider a number of things, such as:

- The purpose and target group of the contest.
- What do you want to achieve with the contest and who do you want to appeal to? This determines the content, format and promotion of your contest¹.
- The platform and tools you use for the contest. How are you going to broadcast the contest online and what interaction options do you offer? You can choose from several options, such as livestreaming, webinars, video conferences or online games.
- The programme and duration of the contest. How long does the contest last and what are its components? Make sure you hold your participants' attention by offering an engaging and varied programme, with a clear structure and a good balance between information and entertainment³.
- Communication and participant registration. How do you make sure your participants know about the contest and register? Send clear and attractive invitations, reminders and confirmations, and use a registration system that collects your participants' data.
- The European Union as a source of inspiration and support. How can you connect the contest to European values, themes and projects? For example, you could use the information and opportunities offered by the European Union in the field of education and training.
- During the first online contest students can present their topic concerning their own country and/or region.
- Students are working together online at their chosen Topic and the case.
- During the second online contest, which will take place after the offline contest, students need to reflect on 'lessons learnt' professionally and socially.
- External assessors (professionals) will be requested to participate in the assessment of the contests.
- Teams and / or jitsi.org + Google Drive can be used as platforms.



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Setting up the *offline* part ● of the contest

BEFORE THE ARRIVAL:

Each school defines itself how many groups/students participate in the contest, and there at least two possibilities:

- A “national” competition to choose which team will go abroad - this internal competition rules should be determined as well, as well as the deadlines and documents for the application and selection.
- Choosing directly the group of students to take part on the mobility - the application stage should be preceded by defining the selection criteria: the best performing students can participate in transnational groups, or the students who needed the benefit of participating the contest most.

After the partners' selection:

- A videoconference should be organized by the hosting school, to provide logistics or social details that can be relevant for the teams before they travel.
- The closest international airport.
- How to reach the city of the competition by public transport, the available schedules, terminals, ... If possible, sending the partners links for buses/trains companies' timetables, locations and costs beforehand is a good idea, with all related information.
- Accommodation for the teams: families, hotels, ... If this last option is the chosen one, define who will book it - the hosting school, so all the teams be placed together - or if each team can choose, depending on its own budget.
- How will the transfer from the accommodation to the school be made, if applicable.
- If letters are required, which details should be included and what is the deadline for them to be sent is also relevant to be set.
- Will it be needed that the outgoing students take something in particular: working clothes/shoes, outdoor activities clothes or shoes, a specific object (material, equipment, ...) for the contest?

Besides those issues, other ones, more pedagogic, should also be decided upon:

- When will the transnational groups be formed: before the contest, or in the beginning. Besides one student from each country for each group, for example, there can be other criteria to be considered.
- The goals to be achieved, individual and/or related to a specific project.

Tasks / activities to be developed:

- What resources will be needed (equipment, materials, time, staff, ...);
- When will it be done (before the contest, during and/or after);
- When is each deadline to be ready for the other partners to prepare for;
- Who will draft them;
- If there are tasks / activities to be prepared by students, appointing a tutor for them.
- Will the sending schools need to take something in particular (equipment, materials, ...)?

Define the assessment to be made:

- Deadline and agenda;
- Participants on the assessment;
- Document(s) (paper / online) to be answered;
- Partner that will draft them;
- Elements (dimensions/skills/knowledge/criteria) to be included.
- Prize(s) for the teams:
- Common ones;
- Each school decides how to reward its own students.

Certification:

- Any official national and/or European document(s) (like Mobility Europasses, for example). Include any required logos or mentions to sponsors, ...
- Partner responsible.
- Deadline for the hosting school to send the agenda, including the foreseen costs.

AFTER THE ARRIVAL:

Students should be at least 2 days at the country in which the contest will take place: 1 day for cultural experience and team activities and 1 day for doing the contest. In total 4 days including travel time:

- If possible, the teams should have lunch and dinner together, including the hosting one(s), even at the arrival day;
- The first activity of the contest should be an icebreaker, where students and teachers can finally meet face to face and get to know each other better. If there is enough time, icebreaking activities should include individual tasks first, and group ones second; those group ones should have the groups that will work together in the contest.
- A lesson on the topic of the contest can be organized for all the teams, in English, to provide a theoretical framework for the contest.
- Already in groups, students are explained the agenda, namely the detailed activities they have to perform and its dedicated time slots. The goals to be achieved, the assessment and the rewards should be clearly detailed.
- The tutoring during the activities should be also explained, and which are its limits; in other words, what can the teachers in that role can and cannot do.
- The hosting students should provide their peers with a school guided tour, focusing on the places/rooms where the activities will be held and where the equipment and materials for them can be found.
- If possible, study visits to companies / organizations related to the topic should be included in the agenda, or invitation to their managers / staff to come to the school and talk to the students.
- If needed, a meeting with the participating teachers should have allocated time, but not while they are involved in the students' activities.
- A contact person from the hosting school should be available at all times, to deal with unexpected situations, but should not be involved in the activities and/or in the assessment, as (s)he might be asked to perform some task that require being absent.
- Social activity(ies) shall be included, targeted primarily for the students, which may include travelling to a local / regional landmark.
- A final ceremony with all the teams shall be held, where the awards should be given.



Blended skills contest Gastronomy at Landstede Zwolle **GOOD PRACTICE**

The following programme was part of a KA2 project. As a school you can also decide to include a BSC within an Erasmus+ KA 2 partnership. However, in this case, the competition is one of the project's activities, and it must be defined coherently together with the goals and the other foreseen tasks. An example of a situation like this is the following best practice, as it was included within KA2 VET partnership "TEF"

PROGRAMME WEEK 1 (ONLINE)

DAY 1

09.00 AM CET	Online programme starts with all participating students and teachers and an introduction to the programme of the competition.
Subsequently	Online Workshop (interactive Kick-Off to the project with a variety of exercises to get to know each other). Students will also present their PowerPoint presentations.
10.00 AM	Online assignment: 1. Present the 10 most recognized general cultural aspects of your country 2. Present "the landscape" of the Gastronomy industry in your country with at least 5 common techniques used in the kitchen
Goal	Students get to know each other and get to know other gastronomic cultures How: Each country presents the results of the assignment to the other participating countries in one presentation.
12:00 AM	Lunchtime between 12.00 and 01.00 PM.
01:00 PM	Work on the assignment. After receiving the assignment students can go off-line to work on the assignment. At 02.00/03:00 PM only the teachers/ organizers involved will meet online to exchange results on how students have worked until now. Also looking forward to the programme for tomorrow.

DAY 2

09.00 AM CET	Online programme where students work together on the assignment
09 - 10 AM	Workshop Online Presenting
12.00 AM	Lunchtime
01.00 PM	Concept presentation Group Landstede/The Netherlands
01.30 PM	Concept presentation Group Cebanc/Spain
02.00 PM	Concept presentation Group Bougas/Greece Aim is to give feedback to the students on what they have made and presented. They will be online again the next morning to make final changes to their presentations with the feedback given by the teachers/ organizers.

DAY 3

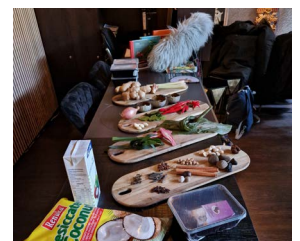
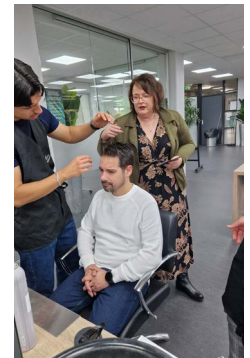
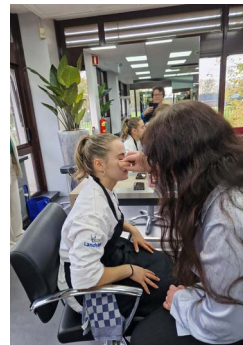
- 09.00 AM CET Finalizing the presentations and in the afternoon the presentations are held online. No one comes online in the morning but on each school the teacher works in a room with the group to pre-prepare for this afternoon.
- 01.00 PM All participating students and teachers are online for the final presentations of each country.
- 01.00 PM Presentation Group Landstede
- 01.30 PM Presentation Group Bougas
- 02.00 PM Presentation Group Cebanc

Every presentation is finished with a “react-to-board” which will be filled in by everyone who has attended the presentation. We are going to use Padlet.com/ Menti.com as the tool to do so.

DAY 4

Finishing of the Online week with:

1. Presenting examples of typical Dutch/ Regional dishes and/or ingredients that can be useful and are accessible in November.
2. Making clear arrangements for Monday, the day that all participants will travel to The Netherlands
3. Talking through the details of next week's programme



PROGRAMME WEEK 2 (OFFLINE)

DAY 1

Travel-day where students and teachers arrive in the Netherlands

Group Cebanc: ETA in AMS: 12.30 PM

Group Bougas: ETA In AMS: 09.15 AM

Landstede will be at the meeting point at Schiphol Plaza to welcome both groups. We'll travel to Zwolle by train. Group will check-in at Campanile Hotel in Zwolle somewhere between noon and 2.00 PM. At arrival a lunch is arranged in the hotel. Filmcrew will take images from arrival at Zwolle Station.

After lunch 05.00 PM Group has some time to relax in the hotel (Early check-in is possible and agreed with the hotel)
City tour in Zwolle provided by Travel-students from Landstede (Film-crew joins) that ends at Restaurant Bella Napoli for a social

DAY 2 *(we are accompanied by a film-crew in the afternoon)*

08.00 AM Breakfast at Hotel Campanile (Film-crew joins)
08.40 AM We walk to Restaurant Ensemble (Blijmarkt); 950 m = 13 min. walk
09.00 AM Start programme with workshops at Restaurant Ensemble "Creative workshop". The workshop is given by 2 people, an expert teacher on this topic, together with a chef who creates menus on regular basis, using creative techniques. Tiny and Mariëlle are both hosting
10.00 AM Test-time: 1 test to regarding soft-skills will take place
10.45 AM We will walk to Restaurant Indonesian Restaurant Waber (Nieuwe markt 10); 350 m = 5 min. walk, for part 2 of the programme)
11.00 AM Flavour tests with Indonesian food offered by Titi Waber (Chef/ owner Waber)
The teaching chefs, together with Yannick (Chef Ensemble) Titi are forming the transnational groups making use of the results of both tests. Each group will be transnational, so one student from each country.
Gastronomy assignment is handed out to the students by the Yan-nick.

"Create a three-course-menu that has influences and typical techniques from each country, using sea-sonal products".



Budget per group: € 50,-

Subsequently 12.30 AM Students start working on the assignment
Bus to Landstede
01.15 PM Lunch at Landstede (Tiny) (Incl. 3 film-crew)
Subsequently 01.30 PM Groups work on the project
Light make-up is put on by beautician students in room A009 (?) Team by team (so per 3 students together). 30 min per group.
04.00 – 05.00 PM Concepts are presented to the teachers. If the teachers have given their feedback and reaction on the plans of the students. Goal: collecting feedback and questions on the concepts so the groups will have input to finalize their ideas in the morning
05.00 PM Travelling to Hotel Campanile by bus to freshen up
06.30 PM Dinner in Zwolle at Jaffa Jaffa (walking distance) (Mariëlle and Tiny join dinner)
08.30 PM Night activity in Zwolle (The Great Escape with 12/14 participants) (walking distance)

DAY 3 (we are accompanied by a film-crew all-day)

- 07.30 AM Breakfast at Hotel Campanile
- 08.15 AM Bus to Landstede
- 09.00 – 12.00 AM Groups walk to Sligro to collect ingredient/ products.
Groups make mise-en-place in the school's kitchen also making use of the feedback given by the chef's yesterday afternoon.
- 11.30 AM Start make-up and hairstyling team by team (45 min per team)
- 12.00 AM Lunch at Landstede (via Catering regelen Tiny)
- Subsequently Time to start cooking
- From 4.00 PM End-presentations with the chef at present in Restaurant Gerech & Land in Masterchef setting.
- Subsequently Every participating student presents 1 dish
Subsequently: Price giving and finishing of the official contest
- 05.30 PM Dinner (Indonesian buffet provided by Titi Waber - Ensemble)
- 19.00 PM Bus to Hotel

DAY 4

- 08.00 AM Breakfast at Hotel Campanile
- Today Basque delegation travels back home and are accompanied (Bye bye zwaai)

