

Title of scenario: “What I like about your country”

(Example Project: Feel more at home!)

Target group: Students before they go abroad and those who are already guests abroad.

Description of scenario: A student in his/her home country matched with a student who is spending a period of time in the country where he/she is going. They reflect on, discuss, investigate, test and document their knowledge of the host culture in terms of positive things to say and use this information to suggest and recommend general measures students might take.

Aims and objectives:

This awareness exercise, which sets out to encourage guests to become actively interested and involved in the host culture, aims to equip students working in intercultural contexts with some food for thought and comment on how to feel more at home.

The objectives are:

- i) to raise awareness of the importance of:
 - being interested in integrating,
 - doing something about it
 - being well informed
 - showing their interest
- ii) to encourage active interest in the host country
- iii) to increase understanding and appreciation of what might be important content in conversation, and why, in ICC in a given context and in general.
- iv) to promote learner independence
- v) to prepare guests to show the right, polite, positive face
- vi) to increase the student's media literacy via research, report, discussion and portfolio documentation
- vii) to broaden strategies in ICC using ICTs

Equipment needed: List of reasons, report sheet grids, local informants, access to the Internet.

Learning outcome: Learners become more and more aware of the importance of developing and displaying sincere interest in the host culture in the here and now. They see this from the point of view of host as well as guest. They come to see the importance for integration of knowing about and understanding what one's hosts cherish and hold dear. This helps them to adopt positive attitudes to aspects that are different/new and become increasingly more sensitive to their host as host. As they become more interested, they become better informed, more integrated and more confident.

Scenario in more detail.

- i) First, students at home and abroad consider why it might be useful for a guest to have positive things to say about the host country. Then, they put in order of priority (for them) a list of reasons that they are provided with. They compare and discuss their top three reasons with their partner. They document their results.
- ii) Each student prepares a list of tips for visitors on positive things to say about the town/community they are living in. They justify and discuss their tips with their partner in terms of what aspects the positive comments refer to (sport, cuisine, etc.). They document their tips and the results of the discussion.
- iii) Student at home proposes other positive things they have to say about their partner's host country, backed with evidence based on research. The student

who is abroad tries these out or discusses them with informants and reports back. The results are documented. Pertinent questions will include:

Do these comments apply to all parts of the country?

If not, why not?

- iv) Student at home lists positive things he/she has to say about a number of cities/towns/regions in the country they are to visit. Then they need to find support for their comments “to prove” that they actually apply. They should document how they came to their findings. They discuss these with the student abroad who should check out the answers via informants. Subsequent findings are discussed and also documented.
- v) Students are required to imagine that they are going to a place in the host country they know next to nothing about or have never heard of¹, e.g., student abroad based in Paris, France, has to spend a period in Alsace in a town called Guebwiller or a student preparing to go to Cork, Ireland, will have to spend a couple of months in Ballymoney. Based on their research findings and their experience, they discuss and document (adding to their suggestions and recommendations) what should be borne in mind to try to ensure that they say the right thing, at the right time, in the right place, whatever the context.
- vi) Students at home and abroad discuss why it is that visitors make faux pas, i.e., visitors can unwittingly say the wrong thing about their host country. They discuss, suggest and recommend and document measures visitors might take to be prepared to say the right thing.
- vii) Both students prepare their top ten list of recommendations for general measures guests or prospective guests might take (these may include some “no nos”).
- viii) A bank of recommendations can be built up so that students can check to see if they have something new to add and/or something new to consider.

¹Students themselves select the place in their host country