

## ERASMUS+ STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Mediation in Language Learning and Teaching (MiLLaT)  
2019-1-PL01-KA203-065746

## TASK DESCRIPTION AND PILOTING FORM

### Part 1 – Task Description

**NOTE: Necessary materials for the task are available in a single shared Moodle page with guest access:**

<http://teacamp.vdu.lt/moodle2/course/view.php?id=66>

GENERAL INFORMATION		
<b>Task title: STUDYING ABROAD: CULTURAL AND ACADEMIC CHALLENGES</b>		
<b>Task author/Institution: VMU</b>	<b>Lesson type:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> online or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in-class	<b>Target learners/course:</b> Academic English C1/C2
<b>CEFR starting level:</b> C1 (can be easily adapted to lower levels)	<b>Group dynamics (e.g. pair work/groups of X):</b> individual, pair and group work	<b>Target language of the course:</b> English  <b>Other language(s) used:</b>
<b>Mediation scale(s) relevant to the task. Up to three scales can be included here:</b> COLLABORATING IN A GROUP - FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE INTERACTION WITH PEERS FACILITATING PLURICULTURAL SPACE ACTING AS INTERMEDIARY IN INFORMAL SITUATIONS (WITH FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES)		
<b>Short description of the task:</b>  Students will discuss the challenges or problems an international student might have due to differences in academic culture at different universities. They will also create a wiki on the biggest challenge, an awkward situation or unpleasant emotions that they experienced during their first days at university. The tasks can be used with students of different levels as they can be easily adapted, depending on students' level, their input and interaction. This simple activity could be one of the first activities at the beginning of the course in order		

to help students ‘acculturate’ in a new group without the stress of a complicated content of Academic English.

**Expected learning outcomes: By the end of the task, students will be able to:**

- discuss typical cultural and academic challenges that international or first-year students are faced with;
- understand the concept of acculturation and differences in academic cultures;
- give advice to international or first-year students at their home university.

### TASK DESCRIPTION

**Background knowledge or sub-skills required by the students:**

The students need to have successfully completed English B2 level, which is the course requirement.

No other specific skills or advance preparation is necessary.

**Pre-task activities (What were the activities, when were they scheduled and how were they carried out?):**

As a home pre-task, students could watch an extract from a lecture on acculturation delivered by Prof. Rings, Anglia Ruskin University:

[https://www.cambridge.org/files/5315/2847/6344/Cambridge\\_Academic\\_English\\_Advanced\\_C1\\_Unit\\_E\\_Video.mp4](https://www.cambridge.org/files/5315/2847/6344/Cambridge_Academic_English_Advanced_C1_Unit_E_Video.mp4)

(E3, from 06:16 till 12:47)

**Detailed description of the task:**

1) On a post-it note, students write down ONE challenge or problem an international student might have due to differences in academic culture at different universities.

2) Every student puts his/her post-it note into the appropriate category (on the board, if in the classroom or on the padlet board, if in an online lesson):

- RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS
- TEACHING METHODS
- PEER-TO-PEER INTERACTION
- FORMS OF EXAMINATIONS
- ASSESSMENT SYSTEM
- CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
- OTHER

3) Everybody looks at the results and reads the students’ ideas.

4) A discussion in groups is organized: ‘How would you suggest to deal with these challenges?’

5) Students are asked to create a wiki in their virtual learning environment Moodle, where they have to write about the biggest challenge, an awkward situation or unpleasant emotions that they experienced during their first days at university. It could be related to the relationship between students and lecturers / peers, language,

**Time required:**

**about 30 min.**



communication, psychological, environmental or any other barriers, something new, unknown or awkward, teaching methods, forms of assessment, cultural or academic differences, being homesick, lonely, different, angry, confused, etc. They have to describe how they felt and how they coped with it. They can describe their friend's or acquaintance's experiences as well. If possible, they have to think of a title of their situation (e.g. Getting lost, Miscommunication, etc.)

**Post-task follow-up activities (Could any follow-up activities be carried out, what are they, and when should they be done?):**

Students have to choose 1 post written by their peer and write an answer to him / her. Is it a frequent situation that first-year / international students face at university? Have you ever had similar problems? What would you advise to do in such a situation?

**Resources required by the teacher:**

post-it notes, the classroom or padlet board, the link to a video lecture, virtual Moodle environment

**Resources required by the students:**

post-it notes, IT device, the link to a video lecture, virtual Moodle environment

**Potential challenges and solutions:**

There is a **risk** that students might not be familiar with differences in academic cultures and may not be able to think of particular examples. **Solution:** in such case, if the class is multicultural, international students could be used as a teaching / learning resource (e.g. the teacher could ask what challenges they had when they came to study in another country). It is also very interesting if such students write about their home university in a wiki, which lets all the students compare the similarities and differences at different universities.

This activity is usually one of the first activities at the beginning of the course. That is why it is quite simple just to have a clear and non-threatening lead-in to the course and help students 'acculturate' without the stress of a complicated content.

## Part 2 – Task Piloting

To be completed by the teacher piloting the task		
<b>Piloting teacher/institution:</b>	<b>Lesson type:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> online <input type="checkbox"/> in-class	<b>Target learners/course:</b>
<b>CEFR starting level of the students:</b> Choose an item.	<b>Number of students / group dynamics (pairs/groups of X):</b>	<b>Target language of the course:</b>  <b>Other language(s) used:</b>
<p><b><u>Pre-task activities</u></b> How well did the students complete the pre-task activities?</p> <p>Did you modify the activities (why/how?) or would you suggest any changes (what/why)?</p>		
<p><b><u>Completion of the task</u></b> How well did the students complete the task?</p> <p>Did you modify the task (why/how?) or would you suggest any changes (what/why)?</p>		
<p><b><u>Post-task follow-up</u></b> How well did the students complete the post-task activities?</p> <p>Did you modify the activities (why/how?) or would you suggest any changes (what/why)?</p>		
<p><b><u>Resources required</u></b> Were the resources sufficient?</p> <p>Can you suggest additional/alternative resources for the task?</p>		
<p>How would you evaluate the skills of the students according to the relevant mediation scale(s)? Up to three scales can be included here:</p>		
<p><b>CEFR mediation scale:</b> Choose an item. Level(s) of the students: A1 <input type="checkbox"/>; A2 <input type="checkbox"/>; B1 <input type="checkbox"/>; B2 <input type="checkbox"/>; C1 <input type="checkbox"/>; C2 <input type="checkbox"/></p>		
<p><b>CEFR mediation scale:</b> Choose an item. Level(s) of the students: A1 <input type="checkbox"/>; A2 <input type="checkbox"/>; B1 <input type="checkbox"/>; B2 <input type="checkbox"/>; C1 <input type="checkbox"/>; C2 <input type="checkbox"/></p>		
<p><b>CEFR mediation scale:</b> Choose an item. Level(s) of the students: A1 <input type="checkbox"/>; A2 <input type="checkbox"/>; B1 <input type="checkbox"/>; B2 <input type="checkbox"/>; C1 <input type="checkbox"/>; C2 <input type="checkbox"/></p>		

**How successful was the task overall in developing mediation skills?**

**Would you use it again or recommend it to other language teachers? Explain your answer.**

**How would you rate the task on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)?** Choose an item.