

## **Group Dynamics and Social Skills, by Maria Zarpetea**

by Maria Zarpetea (Secondary School teacher)

The workshops are based on the Erasmus course Group Dynamics and Social Skills in the Classroom that took place at Grotta Ferrata, Italy, in February 2015. It was organized by European Bridges Consulting, a leading organization in Finland in the domain of curriculum innovation and Educational Psychology.

The aim of the workshops is to give experience and basic information on group dynamics and social skills, give tools to observe group process and also to create a better school and classroom climate.

Providing basic knowledge of group dynamics includes: phases of group development, emotions (feeling, naming and understanding the sources), roles in a group, communication, leadership, norms and conflicts and cohesiveness.

Observing the group dynamics in the classroom includes: observing verbal communication, observing hidden meanings of communication and learning to analyse the social context: positions of group members, climate, resources and the weaknesses of the group.

Providing tools to make positive interventions in the group dynamics includes: starting the group, supporting the partnership in a group, creating the norms of a group, creating goal oriented groups and finishing the group process.

Providing basic knowledge of social skills includes: intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, group skills and organisational skills.

Providing tools to create a classroom climate which supports learning social skills includes: creating safety and trust in a group, creating openness in a group, creating cohesiveness and tackling with conflict.

Providing adequate methods to teach social skills includes: co-operation, discussions, giving positive and constructive feedback, games, playing, role playing and situational analysis.

Learning to recognise our own power and weakness as a group leader includes: being aware of and evaluating our own behaviour and its influence on the group, being aware of and processing our own emotions in a group and being aware of the areas we should develop as group leaders.