

INTRODUCTION

Cartoons, caricatures and comics are an excellent medium to explore stereotyped perceptions of other cultures as well as provide pathways to engage learners in collaborative projects. They are a way to describe emotions, feelings or situations, to tell stories or to illustrate a point of view on current social, political or cultural topics. As such they can be used for teaching a wide range of subjects for learners of all ages and education levels. Working on stereotypes we can recreate a more adequate picture of other ways of thinking and behaving.

The workshop scenario presented here was designed to involve Polish participants in a reflection on some stereotyped perceptions of our neighbours, the Germans. The students embarked on a virtual journey to Berlin and elaborated their experiences in the form of a cartoon. The whole journey took around 20 workshop hours and required the learners to complete some tasks at home (searching the Internet for materials, thinking out continuation of the plot, etc.). Obviously, the time can be adjusted to different environments, groups and objectives, ranging from a single workshop to a full course.

The learning path originated in the framework of a Grundtvig partnership project Re-creation <http://www.recreation-eu.com/> , in which adult learners from Poland were involved in an exchange with German, Belgian, Spanish, Greek and Lithuanian partners and followed a workshop program primarily focused on critical investigation of their own perceptions of the partners' cultures. We soon discovered that this can best be done through virtual tours leading to creative reconstructions of some common clichés and stereotypes. The computer room provided an appropriate environment for these explorations in view of the fact that the project "mobilities" were not sufficient in number and length to satisfy the participants' passion for learning – some of them had serious disabilities limiting their physical mobility. Thus the course of workshops with intercultural objectives also provided an opportunity to learn and practice the skills of using the computer as a "window on the world".

Authors of the workshop concept and scenario: Piotr Kostuchowski and Aleksander Schejbal, EST Education Centre www.est.edu.pl