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<https://www.nextfood-project.eu/>



Nextfood - Educating the next generation of professionals in the agrifood system

Practice Abstract #34: Challenges in training Reflection: Facilitator perspective of working with high school students

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As part of the practice-oriented course in food innovation at the University of Oradea in Romania, facilitators practice the NextFood core competences with university and vocational high school students. Due to age difference and knowledge level of the two student categories, a series of challenges were brought to facilitators' attention when training the competence reflection. As part of the NextFood action-learning process, students write a "learner reflection document" in which they link experience, theory and personal reflections as regards the contents and processes of the course, the learning itself and the implications for further individual development. Particularly for high school students, it was a complex process to write the document at the level of thinking and of transposing the thinking into words. Facilitators spent additional time providing guidance and giving examples, keywords, expressions and sentences to high school students and noted that university students were able to start writing their documents immediately after the end of each course meeting. Furthermore, facilitators observed, during reflection sessions, that high school students had difficulties expressing their thoughts and feelings verbally being shy towards their older team colleagues. Facilitators intervened when necessary by supporting them with additional questions or advice. In the end, the participation level of the high school students increased with each meeting, so that in the second part of the course there was no difference among the team members. We may conclude that despite challenges due to age and background, using patience and additional effort led to the levelling of discrepancies and eventually to their disappearance.