



a breathless learning experience

**Summary-** Only human intelligence is innovative and creative. A major innovation of the EU project EMoCC is its cognitive and holistic approach to upskill career counsellors. Their support is crucial in a troubled world where mastering one's emotions is vital to build a career.

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2025 is the European Year for Digital Citizenship Education. This is vital in a world where access to information is increasingly easy, but where misinformation is also prevalent. Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially through the American software OpenAI and now a Chinese competitor, DeepSeek (which is open source), should heighten our concern. Only human intelligence is creative and innovative; AI is merely a tool to enhance and stimulate human innovation and creation.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a field of major innovation in learning. It is a main priority of the Erasmus+ program. A project supported by European funds, EMoCC (2021–2024), is a good illustration of innovation in learning and eLearning. A European team led by UCSC (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy), together with HDBA (Hochschule der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Mannheim, Germany), ESMOVIA (Valencia, Spain), and IRIV (Paris, France), designed a project addressing career counsellors to upskill them in general vocational guidance with a specialization in mobility. There is a huge variety in career counsellors' profiles and initial education. The audiences they address are also very diverse. The issues faced by junior professionals (looking for a first job) are totally different from those of senior professionals (finding a job according to their experience and competences). Surprisingly, junior professionals are more philosophical: they deliberately keep expectations low to avoid disappointment. Senior professionals, on the other hand, tend to be dreamers who sincerely believe that career counsellors will value their experience and its attached competences. They must fight for the recognition of even very basic expectations, which may lead to a series of misunderstandings - a curious game of "deaf and dumb."

The first innovation of EMoCC lies in its methodology. A qualitative (AToM) and quantitative (WoMSA) survey focused on psychological issues. The central theme is motivation, aspiration, and expectation for going abroad to study or work. This is genuine, alongside the skills required and acquired (intercultural competences, open-mindedness, constructive mindset, etc.). The competence approach is addressed in a broad sense: it is not so much hard skills but soft skills that are paramount for succeeding in a professional path. Social and emotional skills are most valued in the labor market. This is crucial in the troubled times Europe has faced over the past five years. Geopolitics is a major source of anxiety. Mental health has become a main issue since the COVID-19 pandemic, as officially recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO). COVID-19 also impacted mobility when borders were closed due to pandemic risks. Tensions escalated further in Europe with the war in Ukraine since 2022. The future and professional plans of many Europeans have been disrupted or completely changed. The psychological dimension is therefore a highly sensitive issue when tackling migration or expatriation.

The second innovation of EMOCC lies in the design of very innovative and up-to-date MOOCs. The first focuses on general counselling; the second specializes in international mobility. The complementary competences gathered—psychology, sociology, human resources management, management of diversity, and lifelong learning perspectives—are a significant asset, as the issue of mobility/migration must be tackled holistically. Depending on one's educational background, theoretical paradigms, and their practical application in real life, the provision of career counselling varies widely. Members of the European team have diverse professional experiences in both career counselling and mobility/migration issues. The framework built, the topics selected, and the different ways the EU team members address these issues are both original and specific. Many experts in human resources management and mobility were invited to share their experience. For instance, an Italian expert in migration discussed “trends” in certain destinations (e.g., Australia), highlighting the many barriers that must be overcome (similarly for Canada), as these countries do not belong to the EU, where mobility has become far simpler thanks to the single market. Unfortunately, worldwide in 2025, there is a drastic increase in protectionism (including in the labor market).

The third innovation of EMOCC is the assessment provided at the end of each MOOC. Experts in each national team will conduct an online interview with career counsellors who have completed a MOOC by achieving a minimum score and who can justify practical experience related to its content. The focus is on how theoretical knowledge has been applied in practice. This reflexive approach with a real human professional is most needed after an eLearning experience, as one may be mistaken about many points. During the process of reviewing the subtitles for videos delivered in English, we noted how misunderstandings may occur—particularly with “false friends” across languages. It is indeed easy to be lost in both learning and translation.

A major transversal innovation of EMOCC is thus its cognitive approach. The emotional aspect is a key difference between learning via AI and human learning. You can ask OpenAI or DeepSeek to design the same MOOCs, but they will not deliver the same content that stems from extensive and diverse field experience. Thanks to EMOCC, career counsellors are asked to work on their own emotions (and potential burnout) and on the difficulties they face with their audience, which are mainly due to an overload of unmastered emotions. Their audience is also confronted with powerful emotions that can be both a blessing and a curse. If you are overwhelmed by emotions, you will not make sound decisions (cognitive bias). If you feel no emotion, you behave like a robot—lacking memory beyond a mere compilation of data—and you do not learn from experience (whether positive or negative). EMOCC is therefore highly innovative and necessary in 2025 and contributes to excellence in VET. As Jean Bodin, a 16th-century French economist, said, “The only wealth is humankind.”

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