

# comWork



Erasmus+

**Learning units for competences of  
social and educational  
professionals**

**TRAINERS GUIDELINES**



Exchanging practices to recognize and validate competences of social and educational professionals.



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ComWork-Erasmus



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## Introduction

The training model presented here is addressed to operators in various capacities dealing with young people NEET in both services and mainly educational projects as in career guidance services and vocational training. We talk of a lot of operators working in informal education contexts on the territory of those involved in more formal educational settings but also providers of services for career guidance and vocational training and professional initiation.

### 1. Trainees

This choice grows up from an initial hypothesis. The assumption is that it is necessary to weave the dimension of the job orientation with an educational model, working out the motivational dimension, on the construction of the project of life of young people, alongside the professional planning and the processes of empowerment and recognition of talents of young people. To realize this we need to put in place a more personalized intervention model with greater continuity and capable of dialogue with communities and networks where young people are placed. On the other hand, if it is hard to have a defined life project it is normal that it will be impossible to build a professional project that speaks about us and the job relationship will live in a lonely functional dimension aspect of income and may not be an important aspect in which to invest.

For this reason we imagine a recipient of the training course that can come from a basic education and professional practice quite varied, and when possible also it seems interesting to imagine the possibility of mixed classrooms where different practices and professional experiences can foster moments of

exchange and collaboration and the construction of common languages. To enable this you need to be a part of a training model very flexible and adaptable to different contexts and on the other hand it was necessary to find a common thread that would combine both support paths to the work that the accompanying educational paths that could be useful tools and skills to someone so large.

## **2. Training needs analysis and reading of incoming skills and reference frames**

There is a deep asymmetry between the statistical definition of NEET (Not in Employment, Education and Training) and the multidimensionality of the social phenomenon that lies behind this acronym. The differences between young Neet occurs at different levels: gender, age, level of education, the type of the course, the characteristics of the family of origin. This makes it particularly difficult to imagine the appropriate operational strategies to address the problem in a comprehensive manner and necessarily refers to a calibration of the interventions. Even from the point of view of the necessary skills and training needs analysis, then, it is not easy to identify a linear framework and common to different contexts. Starting from the research some areas of common skills have emerged that may be useful beyond the basic training of the operator and operating contexts although obviously will be declined from the specific needs of both operators and operational contexts under exam. It is also clear that no basic training formalized itself is sufficient to cope with the problems that this work involves; that is not enough knowledge and techniques that can be acquired in a university course.

These are the identified areas used to build the operational model:

- Soft skills area of listening and reception, communication and assertiveness;
- Area of the knowledge of the cultures and languages of youth;
- Skills area for teamwork and cooperation;
- Area of leadership skills and design and activation of motivational processes and the construction of the Socratic and educational support processes;
- Area of resilience, ability to reflect, and management of the emotional component of the work;
- Analysis Area of territorial needs and the ability to work with the formal and informal social and economic networks.

In particular appears as cross elements of working in various job contexts both the need to do not limit intervention to the young but to work on territorial systems, family and the peer group, and to do this in view of the network and teamwork, so much the issue of motivation and self-esteem of the young. These two aspects are fundamental to be able to accompany a planning dimension. In particular, this aspect of promoting the ignition of a motivational spark seems to link educational settings with guidance contexts, the NEET of different ages and in some ways different socio-cultural extraction, and it also raises the issue of operator's motivation because it is difficult to motivate someone to a project if you have not in turn.

### 3. Educational objectives

The training aims to train those who work with NEET, in formal and informal contexts, experiencing an integrated intervention model for the acquisition of soft skills and guidance activities with a view to networking.

Specifically it will:

- To promote the processes of learning and change that operators contribute to the exercise of new skills and awareness necessary for work with young people, through the acquisition of soft skills identified in the draft;
- To support the personal development through the enhancement of soft skills such as collective and network; motivational and empowerment; design and change, according to the model of reflective learning;
- To provide an experiential training for professionals through this mode can acquire the tools to re-transfer the experience;
- To experiment and model the proposed route, so it can be replicated in different contexts.

### 4. Training methodology

“A man travelling into a region unknown come to a fork in the road. In the absence of knowledge to be safe, he is brought to a moment of pause, of hesitation, of suspension. Which way is the right one? How will resolve its concerns? There are two alternatives: he must, or continue on his way blindly or arbitrarily, and trusting in the fortunate outcome of his attempt, or discover evidence that the lucky his quest, or discover the evidence, they conclude that a particular road is the right” (J. Dewey, 1933, How we think, trad. en. p. 74).

The course will be conducted using classroom-active and interactive, capable of dialoguing with the concrete contexts, subject to flexibility, able to generate a participation felt, and aware of the operators, and to promote a “climate collaborative”, which offers the operator the possibility to “dominate” in the way of his learning, using a reflective practice.

These methodologies encourage:

- the participation in "lived" of the operators (involving the whole personality of the operator);
- the constant control and recursive (feed-back) on learning and self-assessment;
- the training situation;
- training in the group.

The proposed approach is developed in the context of the training, the reflexive approach is particularly suited to those professions that deal with the relational aspects services to the person and that Schon called professionalism reflective. Imagine a formation that moves from assumptions very different from the logic of the training or of the transmission of techniques and knowledge in a standard way, in fact: “In professions that have to do with the relationship help adherence to models of technical rationality, based on the concept of experts and collides with the low level of generalizability of knowledge and the difficulty to uniquely define the problem to be addressed”. The reflective training must be oriented to self-development and self-empowerment, the training must be flexible and multi-purpose capable to develop and re-during the same training process. To better perform its role, the training should be able to play even a role of proposal, to stimulate individuals and businesses with ideas and visions can surprise you, mobilize energies, and to reveal trends



and guidelines emerging, the aggregate of people and organizations. Thus it is essential to re-learn patterns, strategies, risk. and good practice within their daily operations in order to systematize its own style of work and of their effective strategies.

The methodological process of this program will have as main features the possibility to focus on a problem and to investigate complex situations, the construction/reconstruction of reality, a collective analysis of the attributions of meaning; consider the globally avoiding the risk of fragmentation in the multi-sectoral aspects and one-sided.

The development process will be the actions to learn to recognize and redesign.

The sum of the planned actions, and finally allow you to:

- maintain a continuous attention to the collection of information and all analysis of the realities of the context and of the operators;
- bring out and recognize the large and small theories that follow from the actions;
- create a perspective of dissemination and transferability of the results in situations that the operators will recognize as similar.

Particular attention will also be devoted to the establishment of a climate of relational and communicative, characterized by:

- confidence;
- active listening;
- empathy;
- support;
- recognition of emotions,
- recognition of the needs of each operator;
- exploitation of the resources of each operator.

From these theoretical approaches to derive the tools and techniques selected are described in the next paragraph.

## **5. Type of classroom tools and their use**

The tools for the training represent a hypothetical toolbox that accompanies the training model proposed, the number and the variability of the proposal allows you to choose the instruments in reason in the context of the target audience and training needs detected in the single path. The tools are available, presented through the individual tabs (with related suggestions and instructions for their use) these are only a sample of the various tools that can be selected and used by the trainers (also on the basis of their experience and ability to use them) and in correlation with the different training units with the aim of making more interactive and effective training action in order to simplify the understanding and use them according to the training objectives the training tools proposed can be divided (roughly) in some "macro-categories".

### "Reflective" Tools

Some of the tools presented belong to the category that we define as instruments, self-reflective, and who respond to a reflective approach to the training of adults we consider reflexivity as an essential element to be able to understand the change: the people must constantly reflect on themselves and on their contexts of life and work, must have tools to be able to understand and includes and to be able to operate in the contexts changing and in continuous evolution.

To allow this process in our opinion it is essential to go through a training focused on the life situations, experiences, learning strategies, on the dynamic between informal learning and "classification" more and more large, and more

and more consistent of the knowledge acquired, and it is this ongoing relationship between theory and practice between knowledge and action, that constitutes the specific space of the educational process emerging at the same time, the experiential dimension, from the emergency of the problems, reflexivity and proactivity.

The training methodologies reflective tend to put at the heart of the subject with its design capabilities and its relational dimension. Such methods include the methods narrative methods (and related tools) and also tools for narrative and autobiographical, but also other active methodologies and design in order to build processes, such as the balance of competences and empowerment.

Among the tools we appreciated proposed of which there are several in particular use the metaphor as a vehicle for reflexivity and learning. The metaphor has the ability to highlight elements that are already known in a more simple, but also offer new points of view on aspects of reality as complex; at the same time through through the metaphor, it is easier to say and say things that touch on the emotional aspects and the personal affect in the reaction professional with the young people. In particular, there are in the proposed model some of the cards reflexive that use the metaphor and some of the exercises and games that require the use of the metaphor. Very important in the use of metaphorical tools is not to attempt to interpret metaphor or treat it in a standardized way, will be the participants that, if they wish, tell, and reflect on the meanings subjectively attributed to it.

Role playing, case studies, classroom games tools

Among the proposed instruments there are several examples of Role playing, Case studies, and classroom games (with specific instructions), but always in a

perspective of training, reflective of the following will provide some guidelines to assist the trainer an effective use of these tools.

### The game of roles (role playing)

Some of the participants, or even all ,depending on the number of participants and the type of the game or to the course, participate in the simulation of a role as "actors" according to a well precise task that has been assigned to them, while the rest of the participants, if not participating directly, will have the role to observe the dynamics put in place. It is one of the pedagogical methods most used and effective in the context of the training courses for the enhancement of the real-life experiences of the participants. At the same time is a methodology that requires preparation and experience of classroom management on the part of the trainer. Useful to recreate in the classroom to real situations, to be analyzed together.

#### What to do:

- Choose the "actors" on a voluntary basis, with never forcing participation
- Highlight that the objective is not to evaluate individuals but to analyse the strategies put in place
- Invite the “actors” to identify himself in a real situation. The “actor” who plays the role of a stimulus, it must avoid taking a way-too-easy-to-manage (there would be interesting points of comparison) as well as too extreme or caricatured. The simulation will be successful if it will be as real as possible and at the same time, with a level of difficulty for the opponent (neither easy nor impossible).
- To be prepare carefully for the roles of the different participants, by delivering a script and/or discussing in plenary role. If the script is

created in direct the participants to take some time to share in plenary the information that the actors must have and bring them out in turn when it comes to the information that only one of the two must have.

- Consider the possibility to record the simulation and then viewing them together with the participants. allows for a greater level of detail in the analysis of the dynamics.
- Communicate objectives in a clear, precise and limited to the participants.
- The observers of the role-play should know exactly what to look at. Possibly provide a grid of observation in order to focus the attention of the observers on the key points of the simulation.
- Do if necessary, repeat the same situation to have an alternative to compare and/or experiment with a new method
- Is better, who are the actors and observers to comment on than the trainer. The trainer must conduct the analysis knowing to ask the right questions.
- The trainer makes a summary at the conclusion of the salient points that emerged during the analysis.
- Lead the observers to highlight the critical elements of success put into the scene, and the emergence of the strategies used.
- Not to last too long in the simulation. The better a simulation of thirty minutes well-done, and then analyzed that one of the sixty analysed in a hurry.
- Cases study

The participants have to analyze a case generally complex and articulated is drawn from a real situation by proposing their own considerations and/or decisions. Two classical variants are: to provide the complete story since she

immediately (problem + solution) or give only the first part (the problem), let the participants work to define a solution to compare then with what happened in reality.

What to do:

- If it is a case structured to make sure you have enough time for presentation and discussion.
- Define and enforce the maximum time of the analysis of the case
- To analyze in plenary session the most important elements of the case
- Facilitate the emergence of the strategies used
- Facilitate the emergence of strengths and weaknesses used for the management of the situation
- Avoid the use of cases, older and/or far away from the expectations and interests of the participants.

The work in sub-groups (to apply into different situations)

The work in sub-groups allows a strong involvement of the participants and the opportunity to learn through comparison with the experience of the other participants.

What to do:

- Split the large group into smaller groups of four to five people maximum to involve all of them
- Define with precision the objectives of the sub-groups
- Share the summary of the work in sub-groups in plenary
- If possible use of the support room, and to divide the sub-groups
- Edit each exercise, the composition of the sub group and the choice of spokesman
- To be monitor the positive performance of the work by turning in each group responding to any concerns / questions. Keep the groups focused

and motivated on the task. Provide any assistants to the trainer to support the sub-groups

- Not to abandon the participants during the work, but to make an observation of the dynamics , "moving" between the various groups, this activity will be very useful at the time of the debriefing.

Games's Classroom.

What to do.

Games in the classroom can have a variety of functions, from games and icebreaker leading or thesis to the construction of the group up to the games that have the function of facilitating the processes of learning through displacement or through the construction of experiences protected through the game, through to games that meet most of the emotional dimension in facilitating this way the learning processes

Some good practices useful for the management and debriefing of the games in the classroom are:

- Gradually increase the level of difficulty starting from simple exercises, and by adjusting the difficulty also in function of the group work that occurs in the classroom.
- Avoid to propose exercises that are too difficult that could lead to demotivation and frustration as well as the exercises too easy (risk of trivializing of activity)
- Always give the maximum time to complete the exercise and do it respect
- Always be at the disposal of the participants during the exercise for any clarification
- Analyze even together with the participants the utility of the exercise
- Avoid exercises with solutions ambiguous to risk controversy ( unless that is a conscious choice aimed at the processes of displacement)

Methodologies in the classroom that use video and cinema

In the path it is proposed to use some of the “blob” composed of different pieces of film in sequence, interspersed with phrases and images on a given theme. The function of this tool is to encourage reflection and discussion among the participants on some of the themes touching on the emotional experiences that the movie wakes up. It is important, therefore, in place of the debriefing, after the vision, from the sensations and reflections which will bring participants. In the model you propose of “the blob”, but of course every trainer by following this diagram will make it different by using different films on the basis of needs and target audience.

## **6. Training path phases management and overall time. Opening, closing and interim evaluation.**

Training needs analysis and overall time

Training path described in learning units assume to perform a preliminary participants training needs analysis. According to participants’ experience level, previous training and so on, is required a preliminary phase in which trainers assess participants’ goals, to assure their best involvement. Assessment can be realized with preliminary meetings, interviewing main contacts and other appropriate ways.

Learning units proposed last between 20 and 35 hours, more or less. This time can be modified according to needs analysis results. Also, each of them are virtually independent, so they can be proposed in separate way (i.e., a group of learners could need only LU3 and not others).



So needs analysis is useful to direct development of next training action. Maybe this phase can be very short (just time for some talking) or last some time (group interviews, meetings with representatives and so on). However it's a basic phase to next development: it allows to better gauge time and issues, reduces chance to be "wrong-footed" in participants or trainers expectations and enable to evaluate more careful learners starting condition about issues proposed.

Once specific training path is defined, training activities can start.

#### Path and lesson opening

Path designed for learners will last for many lessons. What you read here is a "good practice" which can be applied on an adequate scale both at path beginning (opening of the first lesson is also beginning of the path) and at the start of every lesson.

Opening main goal are:

- Explain how you will work and what to work on;
- Reassure participants anxiety;
- Build the classroom pact;
- Involve, activate and make curious learners in the topic;
- wrong-footing participants' expectations through a surprising and learning experience

Naturally one or more of these goals can be good for first lesson, other for next ones.

Some possible ways to open a lesson are:

- Brainstorming the topic
- Story, picture, movie
- Making some questions

- Asking to some learners an experience
- Presenting lesson schedule and making classroom pact for the meeting
- Starting from expectations and needs of the group
- Through a game, a joke and so on
- Starting directly the topic with some data or other

We leave to trainer judgment to choose which ways are more adequate.

Path and lesson closing.

Closing phase represents lesson or path ending. Conclusion is an ultimate moment for learning consolidation, to analyse other deepenings and to sustain personal interest.

Goals can be:

- Final synthesis
- Ending check
- Task and job assignation
- Presentation of anticipated references
- Condition of emotional status

Some possible ways to close are:

- Requesting feedback to participants (in a free or spontaneous way, or formalized and write form);
- Telling a story
- Showing a clip
- Offering some tips for further studies.

Training interim evaluation

Evaluation is a key activity to stay aware of training path trend. Before the start of training path, as ex-ante evaluation, it can help to define learners' needs on requested or expected issues.

Since a training path can last for many lessons (according to overall length and lessons scheduling) it needs to foresee some interim evaluation ways, aiming to collect informations about progress achieved, status of expected results, difficulties encountered at that time and possible corrections.

Interim evaluation usually is performed in the middle of the overall path.

## **7. Feedback collection, learning and satisfaction evaluation**

Evaluation phases and its reflexive nature

Usually we define 3 phases:

Ex-ante evaluation: coinciding with needs analysis, when entire path is scheduled; in this phase you can define goals and projects to undertake; it represents the time when “zero point” is fixed, the “yardstick” to understand the range of changes occurred;

Interim evaluation: coinciding with monitoring, data collection on overall path; if we consider that next evaluation phase can go much over training path end, the final check can be considered as interim evaluation;

Ex-post evaluation: it concerns time after learning activity ending; its goal is to verify efficacy of learning strategies and, overall, which results obtained.

However you have to remember that training approach here described has a reflexive and participative nature, so its evaluation cannot be different. In other words, you have to verify not only how much learners possess specific knowledge or skills. This approach assure the absolute protagonist of learners

(more than trainers themselves) and more they are involved more this will foster their awareness of results obtained and to achieve.

Such assumption has an influence over how evaluation will be realized.

### What evaluate

Learning Units describes competences to work on with this training. They are the training final goals and so they are target of evaluation too.

In addition, you can evaluate also:

- Learners feedback (to issue discussed, for the trainer, other participants and so on); it's useful to keep some time (also at the end of every lesson) where every learner can say something about his/her mood;
- Overall satisfaction, usually at the end of the training; if it consists of more than one learning unit, you can choose to ask about at the end of each one.

### How evaluate

Reflexive evaluation is performed through reflexion (free or organized) on experience realized and awareness acquired.

Ways useful for trainers to “take the measure” from the initial condition and the final one are based on value attributed to that distance by participant themselves.

Useful tools are classified in two types:

- Tools allowing to participant to look directly on himself;
- Tools allowing to participant to see his reflex inside the look of other people.

For the first one, in each learning unit you find some self-evaluation sheets. In each of them you find skill description and behaviours expected. Sheets can be administered at the start, during and at the end of training path. Every participant fill in by himself.

For the second one, same sheets above can be useful but filled by colleagues or other participants, matching results with sheets filled by themselves.

Also, another type of reflexive evaluation is performed with every kind of group discussion on results, facilitated by trainer using specific questions, at the end of an exercise, a lesson or an entire learning unit.

#### Constant Feedback tools in classroom

According to reflexive nature of the training path, could be useful to provide some tools giving constant qualitative feedback inside the classroom. For example, a kind of logbook formed with three different posters, over which learners can write at the end of every lesson. Posters could have these headings: “what I bring with me at home”, “what throw in garbage can”, “posts for the group”. Other tool could be a kind of box heading “thought underway”, where learners can put some message, every time they want. Messages can include proposals, feedbacks or other in an anonymous way.

Finally, to probe more deeply their moods, you can use a big poster at the start of the training path with pictures depicting houses as home of different moods (home of surprise, joy, interest, anger and so on...). Each one has a post-it with his/her name and continuously (also more than one time at lesson) the can change position on houses describing their mood in that moment. This offers a feedback to trainers and to the group itself.

Many other solution can be find but goal is to build a collective narration, giving opportunity to monitor training evolution, beneath traditional tools focused on satisfaction and learnings.

Here we underline that the chance to understand results obtained in a reflexive path depends for the most part by how learners tell them. It's surely possible to take over changes occurred, using field observation of their behaviours. However, the action to keep some space, time and tools for learner self-evaluation, about "where I am?" compared to the training going on or a potential goal, has a very strong reflexive value, capable to generate awareness and activation.



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