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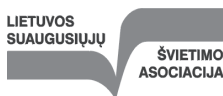
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■■■ Introduction

Arūnas Bėkšta
**Lithuania Association of
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This handbook is the result of joint efforts of the participants of the European Union Socrates Grundtvig 1 project "Promotion of Flexible Learning in the New Environments through European Network of Folk High Schools" – FLENOFHS (www.flexible.lt).

The aim of this handbook is to provide the readers with different approaches to the flexible learning in the participating institutions based on the cases presented by the members of the project team.

The handbook will be useful for the managers and trainers of Folk High Schools, adult educators and to other readers, who are interested in flexible learning.

Idea to write the handbook on flexible learning born during International ERDI Expert Seminar "Flexible Learning in New Environments – Contents and Contexts – innovative learning environments – ICT / new media – learning in cultural institutions – learning in daily life" organized by German Institute for Adult Education 29 / 30 September 2000 in Bergisch-Gladbach (Cologne). We realized it working on our Socrates Grundtvig1 project FLENOFHS.

There were a lot of discussions about flexible learning during our project's meetings. Mostly the flexible learning understood as distance learning. Analyzing of material of international seminar mention above and presenting our own cases using at seminars in every country we came to common conclusion that. Flexible learning should neither be seen as a distinct educational mode nor an ideal condition for teachers to attain. Rather, it embraces, extends and combines a number of existing and evolving approaches to teaching and learning.

In order to show common view of flexible learning we described both the consequences of theoretical considerations and experience from different European countries of cases on flexible learning and the results of projects concerned with developing innovative learning arrangements.

The handbook starts with the article **Flexible Learning** by *Georg Karlsson and Staffan Roselius*. Linköping University, Sweden. The authors present the concept of Flexible Learning, which has many meanings. Sometimes it has been defined as distance learning supported by information technology. The authors argue that actually it should have a broader meaning and the technology is not necessarily the most

important part. Flexible Learning as a phenomenon could be seen in several forms of education and it could be organised in many different ways. Flexibility will be formed by the pedagogical framework, course design, relations of the students, the teacher's role as well as by opinions on knowledge and learning rather than by physical aspects such as the availability of Information Technology and Learning Centres.

Next article by *Vita Krivickiene* describes **The Preconditions for Flexible Learning**: traditions/history, policy instruments, which promote norm creation (legislation), institutional framework/organisation, marketing activities/information and financing.

The author noted that preconditions will work in most efficient way, if they are introduced in a systematic way, that is, action is taken both at national/state level (as in the case of developing system of valuing, recognition and accreditation of non-formal and in-formal learning), which includes development of legislation, and at the level of institutions (development of learning organisation, qualitative educational services, marketing), also, needs for sustainable development should be considered.

Klitos Symeonides, Cyprus Association of Adult Education, presents **The Adult Education Centers of Cyprus**. The article gives a short presentation of the Adult Education Centers of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus. Various flexible initiatives that the Adult Education Centers are promoting, in relation to methods, participants, teachers-tutors, the learning environment, the administration are described. The author presents various subjects and various flexible ways that teachers, administrators, participants in Cyprus are practicing for effective learning. The article finishes with suggestions-recommendations for development of non-formal education policy, based on flexible learning.

Liudmila Mecajeva, Social Innovation Fund, Lithuania presents the **Evaluation of the courses** what helps participants to see their current situation, to examine their strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly, overview their possible future options. The author describes how to evaluate trainer's strengths and weaknesses; methodical support; methods of delivery and self- progress.

Juergen Lenski, Adult Education Centre of Solingen and *Kerstin Mutz*, Berlin, in the article **E-learning – a Case Study** describe the methods, requirements of the environment, qualifications of learners and teachers, the physical resources and the aims or benefits of the method for every way of web based learning. The article describes four major ways of e-learning: one online, one - to - many, one - to - one, and many - to -

many. The authors say that at the beginning of the teacher training the question came up, if software can replace a teacher. All participants found that it **cannot!**

Liudmila Mecajeva, Audrone Kiseliene, Social Innovation Fund, Lithuania
Mobility Training for Women present the training program designed and targeted at women who have either lost their jobs, or who have never worked before and are unsuccessfully trying to enter the job market. The CD-ROM, consisting of two parts "I am a trainer" and "I am a trainee" was developed to organise the training course. To ensure the personal approach and flexibility in learning the training strategy has been developed, which consists of three stages for each of ten training sessions- lecturing, group work and self-study lessons.

Staffan Roselius presents the case **Education for Democracy**, University Course, Department for Adult Education, Linköping University, Sweden. The course is aimed for anyone who wishes to study and reflect on how a democratic approach can be strengthened among citizens in a society where conditions are rapidly changing. The course is based on a collective knowledge process, that is, to gather experiences and ideas from each and every one of the participants. The ideas are being developed in discussions and seminars, which partly take place in a computer conference on the Internet. The author shows that flexible learning requires ability to work and study individually and in groups with few possibilities to be guided of the facilitator. In this ability a great amount of self- discipline has to be included. The role of trainer is changing from teacher to facilitator. To be a facilitator in flexible learning requires flexibility - in time, tools, methods and creativity.

Elisabetta Cannova, Speha Fresia S.C.A R.L. – Roma, presents a learning method **Self-evaluation & Empowerment for an Aware Entrepreneurial Choice**. The article describes a pathway for the entrepreneurial choice, based on a self-evaluation/empowerment process. The learning method is based on the use of different approaches for different objectives: brainstorming, field research, training by doing, coaching, self-organised computer based training, mentoring, project work, individual counselling/advisor.

Arūnas Bėkšta, Vilija Lukošūnienė, Lithuanian Association of Adult Education present the article **Learning in Multicultural Group. Being Together**. According the understanding of authors, intercultural competence can not be achieved by distance learning. Personal physical contacts are of the great importance here. IT technologies can help to solve communication problems in between the seminars, but they are

not very useful for development of intercultural competencies and especially skills. The flexibility means here flexibility in methods, time and place. The authors stress four things important for developing cultural understanding: personal knowing of people, knowing of cultures, communication solving common problems and informal environment.

Vilija Lukošūnienė in the article **Meeting the Cultures** gives a short description of training event designed for initial acquaintance of participants of multicultural group based on presenting the names and telling the stories of name-giving in different nations.

Arūnas Bėkšta presents a case **Trainer and Training Styles** which shows a short (hour and a half) presentation which was organised using several methods: lecture, training each other, using IT technologies, video recording, assignments, discussion.

Gita Šapranauskaite, Estate Academy of Rumšiškės Museum, Lithuania, presents an article **Therapy or Expression of Creativity in the Estate Academy of Rumšiškės Museum**. The case presents the Art Therapy – a treatment/education method based on art creation, expression of creativity. Using this method in education, the organisers of courses focus on the social skills that are needed in society, working life, interpersonal relationships. The course aims at training of the communication skills, recognising the problem, developing the creativity and feeling of self-confidence. These aims are especially important when dealing with the people from the social exclusion groups.

The article **Dream-Work - A Path to Empowerment** by *Valgerður H. Bjarnadóttir*, Iceland, closes the handbook. In the Women's Learning Centre dream-work is part of a self-empowerment program called the *Web of Life*. Its main themes are women's and personal history; recognizing and working with emotions; communication with self and others; women's bodies, women's health; self-esteem training; rights and responsibilities; creative expression; myths and stories as mirrors of self; and dream-work. Working methods are short lectures and discussions in the big group; group work, pair-work and guided meditations or visualizations. All these methods are used in the dream-work.

As the reader can see the articles themselves and the subjects they cover are very different. We wanted that the participants could share what they feel as important to them and could be interesting for others, who are working with adults in flexible training and learning environment.

We would like to thank all those who wrote the articles and made the suggestions for improvement of the handbook.

■■■ Flexible Learning

*Karlsson and Staffan Roselius.
Linköping University, Sweden*

Background

In the ideas on Life-Long-Learning it has been postulated that in a modern society it has to be possible to study and to learn throughout the whole life and to combine family life and working life with studies.

During the last decades *knowledge* has been regarded as a fundamental factor for economic and human development. Competence is directly connected to a nation's development and economic growth, and is as important as the availability of capital.

The development of the internet and economical, cultural and political effects of globalisation, have had an immense impact on human life and created new and various needs of knowledge for individuals and societies.

UNESCO as well as OECD and EU in several policy documents have stressed the importance of creating infrastructure promoting Life-Long-Learning. In order to promote Life-Long-Learning, society's support has to be based on the needs of the individual as well as the needs of society and the labour market.

Life Long Learning will depart from daily life, i.e. working life, family life and leisure time activities, such as taking part in organisations and informal meetings.

Life Long Learning, which has to be based on the needs of the individual, opens up for flexibility, so we talk about *Flexible Learning*.

Many meanings

The concept of Flexible Learning has many meanings. Searching *Flexible Learning* in the Internet will result in more than 2.5 millions of hits! Sometimes it has been defined as distance learning supported by information technology. But actually it should have a broader meaning and the technology is not necessarily the most important part.

Flexible Learning as a phenomenon could be seen in several forms of education and it could be organised in many different ways. Flexibility will be formed by the pedagogical framework, course design, relations of the students, the teacher's role as well as by opinions on knowledge and learning rather than by physical aspects such as the availability of Information Technology and Learning Centres.

The process of Flexible Learning has to be based on rational, economical and ideological reasons from the point of view of the individual student as well as of the society.

- ✓ *Rationality*: for the students individual needs as a way to new knowledge which take its starting point in the students' own experiences.
- ✓ *Economy*: as a way that both the society and the individuals get highest effect for lowest cost.
- ✓ *Ideology*: the right of every individual to take part in adult education in his/her own way, based of the needs of the society, working places, organisations and personals.

Life Long Learning is the individual's own project.

It is important to stress that lifelong learning is the individual's own project. A person has to have power over her/his own studies and to be able to influence their content, time, place and form. It is not just the material and the methods that have to be adapted to achieve flexibility, but also the organisation.

The point of departure will be to put the individual student in the focus; the student's conditions have to be the base for the organisation. However there are risks to be aware of. There are reasons to suppose that the schools, organisations and the society, i.e. the institutions responsible for economy and organisation, sometimes are looking more to the superstructure, programs and techniques, thus forgetting the students and their needs.

As the concept of Flexibility implies that Learning has to be adapted to the needs of each individual and/or group, it is important that all pedagogical conditions will be carefully taken into consideration. It has been shown by experience that usually it does not work well to start courses on the net for people who are supposed to share experiences, expectations and needs, unless they have met before.

From the point of view of the organiser it may probably seem that the process she has started could be regarded as flexible.

Self-directed Learning is an essential part of Flexible Learning since the students define their needs and together with their fellow-students and teachers plan their learning project.

However, in learning the dialogue and the exchange of ideas and experiences between students are always important. In our view on *Knowledge* we mean that *Learning* is created in an on-going process where the encounter (i.e. student to student) is an important "engine".

Infrastructure for Flexible Learning

Flexible Learning demands an appropriate infrastructure including technical as well as organisational and pedagogical issues. The *Centre for Flexible Learning*, CFL, is a Swedish State authority whose task is to support the country's development of flexible learning. Its activities are directed towards municipal adult education, popular adult education

and other actors within adult education at upper secondary level. CFL supports the students by giving information and counselling about study material, ways of working and methods. The Centre also assists teachers in pedagogical and methodological issues and gives financial support for local development projects. CFL is also working with dissemination of information about Swedish and international research and development.

Most frequent questions would be about how learning should be organised. One example is the *Learning Centres*, which have been founded in most Swedish municipalities. These Centres are well equipped with computers, books and other materials. The students go there to meet each other, to attend video-recorded lessons or for guidance by tutors as well as for "chatting" with fellow students in other parts of the country. In this way relations to fellow students all over the country (or the world!) are established.

In Popular Adult Education (Folkbildning) in the Nordic Countries flexibility has been an important characteristic for a long time. In Folk High Schools and study circles, person to person encounters have always been regarded as corner stones. Nevertheless there have been good opportunities for flexibility because these free and independent schools have great possibilities to rapidly adapt to new needs and wishes. Today we can find several study circles working mainly on the net.

The Folk High Schools also have a long tradition to taking the point of departure for the learning process from the experiences and needs of the students.

As an important part of the infrastructure there is also the issue of material. As said above the *Learning Centres* provide virtual meeting places for videoconferences and chatting. There have also been created a lot of new computer programs for electronic communication, such as First Class, Blackboard, Central Now and others.

Some critical points

Flexible Learning could be attained through a good combination of all available pedagogical possibilities in a Learning process. Flexible Learning will not guarantee a successful learning process, but an appropriate use of the concept and its tools will give good opportunities for many people to take part in Life-Long-Learning.

From the point of view of the students Flexible Learning demands self-discipline and capacity to organise and to plan their own studies.

As Flexible Learning is self-directed there could be a risk of isolation. Thus relations and co-operation between students are important conditions in Flexible learning.

When Flexible Learning is organised as distance learning it would be preferable to combine distance communication with some physical meetings.

The role of Teacher

In flexible and self-directed learning the role of the teacher will be changed. Adult education is in rapid transformation. Thus for organisers and teachers there are a lot of new pedagogical problems to be solved. In flexible learning the teacher will be more a guide than an intermediary. For the teacher it will be a great challenge always to have the student in centre even when he physically may be far away. There is also a challenge to make the student see himself as a subject in the learning process.

It is a general experience among distance pedagogues that distance communication requires more preparation and planning than ordinary classroom teaching. It has been stated that "online teaching calls for the same qualities in the good teacher as "normal" teaching does. Only more of it".

Good preparation, as for identifying critical matters during the course, may facilitate the race for both the course leader and the participants. How to create a supporting climate? There will be a need of a delicate balance between active coaching and careful monitoring. And finally, we know that even the most well-planned course will surprise you, because unexpected things will happen.

Summary

Why is flexibility worth striving for in the learning process?

- ✓ Modern working-life changes rapidly and has need of both flexibility and life-long learning.
- ✓ In the *Knowledge Society* new needs and subjects are coming up.
- ✓ Life Long Learning is the individual's own project. The studies have to be combined with working life, family life and leisure activities.
- ✓ The individual has to choose suitable time for studying.
- ✓ The place where you live must not pose an obstacle for taking part in organised studies.
- ✓ Flexible learning is based on the needs of individuals and groups, and courses are tailor- made for these needs.
- ✓ Flexible learning makes it possible to combine formal learning with informal study situations.

■■■ The Preconditions for flexible learning

Vita Krivickienė
National Association of Folk High Schools in Lithuania

Flexible learning does not necessarily have to be connected to the folk high school, but this particular type of school has good possibilities to develop flexible learning because of the long history and experience in the field.

Since during our project we were working with Folk High Schools, Adult Education Centres or similar institutions – we will mainly talk about preconditions for flexible learning in such institutions, however the same principles apply to other institutions as well.

The main preconditions are as follows:

- ✓ traditions/history, policy instruments, which promote norm creation (legislation),
- ✓ institutional framework/organisation,
- ✓ marketing activities/information and
- ✓ financing.

Traditions and Legal basis for flexible learning

Historical inheritance is of crucial importance in the process of developing Flexible Learning (FL – further). It is the part of culture, and prevailing culture is one of the essential preconditions for any phenomena in the society, also it is essential for popularity of flexible learning, and success of its introduction. Countries, which participated in this project partnership reflect and exemplary picture of what we mean by identifying different traditions in the field: there are countries that enjoy a 150 years tradition of fostering attention to individual's learning (system of Folk High Schools, as an example), as in Sweden, Germany, and there are countries, which have just started introducing these and other elements of flexible learning, as in in Poland, Lithuania.

The evolution of laws that constitute legal foundation for flexible learning and the philosophy behind it are of primary importance for revealing certain country's social engagement into flexible learning. Those countries that have a long history of promoting flexible learning may rely on a substantial legal basis. On the other hand, those countries, which have only begun introducing tradition of flexible learning, have to devote additional and special attention to legal basis

which would be favourable for further developments. As an example, Lithuanian situation (the country, which emphasises new developments) can be presented, the documents are analysed in a chronological order.

Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania (1991), which established the foundations governing the structure, activities and management of educational institutions (with the exception of the institutions of higher education) of the Republic of Lithuania should be mentioned as the one of primary importance. It was passed the next year after Lithuania regained its independence after fifty years of the Soviet regime. Article 1 defines major goals of the educational system, while Article No3 seeks "to provide possibilities of a continuing education for the residents of Lithuania" (VET-Related, p.5, 1997). A recently (2003) updated draft of the law emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning as prerequisite for national prosperity. It was developed by the Ministry of Education and Science and now is under debate in the Seimas (Parliament of Lithuania). It determines the goals of education, establishes principles underlying the system of education, foundations underpinning the structure of the system as well as responsibilities of the state in the field of education. It also states that separate laws regulate educational activities in different sectors: *the Law on Vocational Education, the Law on Higher Education, the Law on Non-formal Adult Education, etc.*

General Concept of Education of Lithuania (1992) points out: "adult education is the largest part of the continuous education system and encompasses persons who are usually above the age of 18 and not studying in the sequential education school system" (1992).

One of the major developments in the field of promoting adult education was introduction of the *Concept of the System of Adult Education* in 1993. It recognizes adult learning and adult education both as themes to be discussed and as phenomena to be promoted at the national level. As the main theme of this paper is broad and complex interrelationship between education and being a citizen, it is important to point out that the Concept outlines both structure of formal and non-formal adult education. The concept also emphasizes two types of formal and non-formal adult education. The first is directly related to needs of the labour market (training of unemployed and employer-initiated employee training). The other is for disadvantaged social groups like disabled, soldiers in the mandatory military service, immigrants and convicts, therefore adult education in Lithuania seems to be viewed as a means of social inclusion.

Both *Law on Vocational Education and Training (1997)* and *Law on Non- formal Adult Education (30 June, 1998)* should be mentioned. In the *Law on Non- formal Adult Education* objectives for non-formal education are enumerated. These are:

- ✓ To assist the individual in a process of self-actualisation and education,
- ✓ To provide the individual with the possibilities to acquire competences necessary to compete in labour market,
- ✓ To develop individual potential, and, which is in the focus of our analysis,
- ✓ To assist the individual in becoming an active citizen of democratic society.

Analysis of objectives clearly indicates a trend to promote FL, as individual needs and support for an individual to seek necessary competences are emphasised.

Guidelines for Education for the period of 2003-2012 is another document that draws guidelines for introduction of flexible learning into practice. It is an exhaustive document built up of four chapters:

- ✓ Educational reform: a necessity of the present time (in the international and national context).
- ✓ Effective and coherent system (a vision of the development of education system).
- ✓ Ensuring access, social fairness and sustainability.
- ✓ Quality assurance.

Another document, which should be mentioned in this context, is *Strategy on Lifelong Learning (2004)*. Lifelong Learning as a concept – and Vocational Education & Training (VET) as a major component of Lifelong Learning – seeks to maximize the value of the country's greatest asset: people, human resources.

As it will be outlined later, legal framework functions at different levels: both international, and national. At international level *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2001)* should be mentioned. Flexible learning receives an exceptional attention in this international document, as it is considered to be a strategic way to provide individual with competencies, which are both competitive, and rewarding.

Institution/organisation framework

Traditionally educational services have been provided by educational institutions, in our case Folk High schools should be at focus. However, in contemporary world, almost any operating institution provides educational services, even if sometimes their members do not reflect

on the fact, and fail to recognise the fact. As an example, we may analyse companies, which provide market, and, therefore, customers, with new products, as a consequence, in order to sell their services, they teach customers about the ways to benefit from them. We know it as advertising, however, being educators, we have to admit, that learning takes place every second of our lives, and learning opportunities are provided by a number of institutions, and educational institutions comprise just a part of these (Fig. 1). Therefore one of the main preconditions for FL is to enable and empower institutions that operate in our societies to organise learning opportunities in a rewarding, fair, and educationally appropriate way.

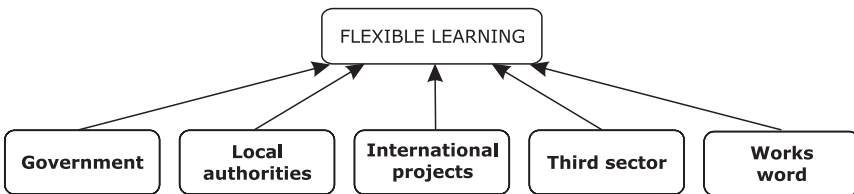


Fig.1 **Institutions providing of learning opportunities**

Now collaboration of formal and non formal institutions providing flexible learning becomes closer: flexible learning gives the possibility to combine formal learning with informal learning.

In order to develop flexible learning any institutions have to provide a strategic approach, and staff should act as guide and facilitator of learning, they have to foster thinking skills of inquiry. If flexible learning is at focus, learning to meet the requirements of the individual is in the first place, however, these should be in congruence with needs and values in society and the labour market.

Members of organisations have to develop new competence in order to employ new forms of delivery of open learning so as to foster of flexible learning in organisation., this is another important preconditions for FL as sometimes staff in educational and other (as is was mentioned earlier, any institution can participate in the process) institutions lack certain competencies. These would be e.g., andragogical competence, mastery in ICT, ability to organise co-operation in class, foster positive group dynamics, and/or to maintain rewarding, appropriate teacher/mentor/student/equal partner relationships. Therefore lifelong learning of those, who create life long learning opportunities, can be enumerated as one of the crucial preconditions for FL. The role of teachers is given a special attention in the starting article" Flexible Learning" by Georg Karlson and Staffan Roselius.

Institutions provide FL in two dimensions: contents and process that comprise forms of delivery, their management into a learning opportunity is reflected as a curriculum appropriate for life long learning. Both of these dimensions (contents/forms of delivery = curriculum) have to be organised in a user friendly way, should enable any individual to pursue one's needs and goals. Competence of staff therefore should be adequate in both dimensions.

Responsibilities of any institutions, which plan to introduce FL, are:

- ✓ to identify and address the needs of an individual;
- ✓ to identify and address the needs of labour market;
- ✓ to ensure values and beliefs of democracy, citizenship, also, historical inheritance are preserved and reproduced in some way;
- ✓ to provide flexible learning opportunities to clients (dimensions of contents/forms of delivery):
- ✓ provide students with services of counselling, mentoring;
- ✓ provide students with qualitative and appropriate learning materials and services;
- ✓ foster skills of critical thinking, foster students' independence;
- ✓ to keep in touch with employers, other social partners;
- ✓ to monitor the process of teaching/learning;
- ✓ to evaluate the process/results/outcomes of teaching/learning;
- ✓ to foster competence of the staff, that is, foster develop learning organisation, introduce educational innovations into teaching/learning process (e.g., new andragogical technologies, like INTERNET conferencing and others);
- ✓ to introduce marketing activities (e.g. informing, see later);
- ✓ to monitor changing patterns in technology, economics, both nationally and globally.

However, it should be noted that even institutions provide qualitative FL opportunities, in many instances client; learner is confronted by the problem of accreditation, as in many countries this process has not been adequately developed yet. Some countries (like France, Scandinavian countries) have introduced elements of valuing, recognition, and accreditation of non-formal and in-formal learning, however, even in most advanced countries, this remains to be established at a governmental level. In other countries, on the other hand, like in Lithuania, Poland, and other countries of the partnership, the discussion about the necessity had just started, and the process of systematic valuing, recognitions, and accreditation should be give an exceptional attention in years to come, therefore role of ministries should not be underestimated, as only joint efforts will introduce

positive changes in the sphere. Development, social pressure, publicity about the need of valuing, recognition, and accreditation of non-formal and in-formal learning is another important precondition for the development of FL.

Marketing/Information

Information is an essential feature of flexible learning. Every institution, which provides the opportunities of flexible learning and plans the organisation of flexible learning – should inform about it in different ways and means. It is important to note that according to survey, which was completed in 6 countries (1400 respondent totally) a majority of respondents think that the information given by the organisation is not sufficient. It is known from the research that the personal information from former students is very important recruiting students. The institutions' leaflets work as a complementary source of general information, also information given by personal counsellors, job centres, schools are important.

Research clearly shows that a great deal of the information reaches students through friends and people involved with institutions in some way (full time; part-time staff).

Therefore we need to inform about flexible learning using all forms of media: TV, newspapers, booklets etc.

Financing

As FL is orientated to need of an individual self – financing is one of the main sources for this type of learning, as people are willing to pay for educational services they want. On the other hand, there are many, who can not afford paying, as they are marginalised, or are at risk of being marginalised, therefore additional sources may play an important role of integrating those people into labour market and society at large. These additional different sources are: the government, local authorities of the county (where the institution is situated), various funds, institutions e.g. office for employment, international projects (Fig. 2). Even then students are encouraged to contribute – they have to pay for textbooks and other material, for food and accommodation.

Of course the situation in every country is different. The biggest support from government is in Sweden, Italy, Denmark and Iceland. The least is in Cyprus, Germany and Lithuania. Most often FL is financing from different funds: local governmental, employers, and fees.

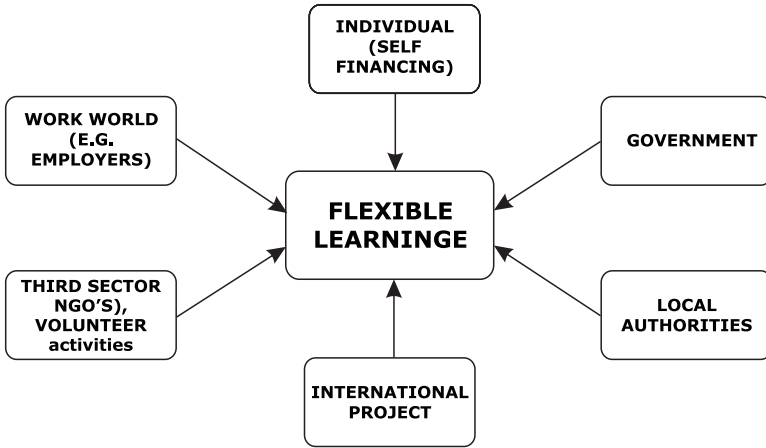


Fig.2. Financing of flexible learning

As a concluding remark it should be noted that preconditions will work in most efficient way, if they are introduced in a systematic way, that is, action is taken both at national/state level (as in the case of developing system of valuing, recognition and accreditation of non-formal and in-formal learning), which includes development of legislation, and at the level of institutions (development of learning organisation, qualitative educational services, marketing), also, needs for sustainable development should be considered (e.g., people in certain areas /rural/ may need additional attention, as opportunities for learning are still inadequate there). Joint and systematic actions will lead to introducing qualitative and person orientated learning opportunities, which in their own turn will contribute to development of both individually and socially rewarding lifelong learning culture.

■■■ The Adult Education Centres of Cyprus Flexible learning – a case study

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Introduction

One of the greatest principles in Adult Education is **Flexibility**. In Adult Education there is great diversity. All ages and both genders are participating. People with different educational backgrounds, participants from different social and economic status take part in the programme. There are also members from various cultural backgrounds. Flexibility saturates all fields, contributing to adult learning - theory, administration, infrastructure, environment, human resources, participants, teachers, methods, etc. Therefore by nature Adult Education should be flexible.

Rapid changes are taking place in Adult Education concerning the methods of teaching, the learning environments, the theory of teaching and learning and the necessity of flexibility in order to achieve high levels of learning.

In this case study, I will follow the agreed format. Initiatives that are taking place concerning flexibility in the most important non-formal education programme, the Adult Education Centres, will be discussed. In non-formal education for adults, flexibility is even more important due to the diversity of all involved in adult learning.

The case study

The case study will give useful information concerning flexible initiatives to administrators and practitioners working in non-formal education in Cyprus.

A short presentation of the Adult Education Centres of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus will follow. Then there will be a discussion on the various flexible initiatives that the Adult Education Centres are promoting, in relation to methods, participants, teachers-tutors, the learning environment, the administration. Various subjects will be presented and the various flexible ways that teachers, administrators, participants are practicing for effective learning will be discussed.

Adult Education Centres

The programme is run throughout the country in more than 240 Adult Education centres. At Administrative level the Supervisor of the Centres is assisted by a number of district coordinators who are mainly Primary Education teachers serving on secondment. There are more than 450 teachers-tutors serving on a part-time base, some of whom are qualified Primary Education teachers and the remainder subject-oriented.

In 2002-2003 enrolments reached 18,000, in 60 different subject areas. Women make up almost 75% of the participants and persons over 65 are about 8%.

In the last two years participants have been given a certificate, following an ongoing assessment.

The Adult Education Centres cover a wide range of subjects and satisfy the needs and interests of the population. Foreign Languages are the most popular. The following table shows the enrolment by subject in 2002-2003:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Foreign Languages | 18% |
| Cultural Activities | 14% |
| Crafts | 14% |
| Computers | 12% |
| Health Education | 10% |
| Subjects related to household | 7% |
| Painting | 6% |
| Cooking | 5% |
| Greek for foreigners | 4% |
| Others | 10% |

Flexible initiatives

V 1. ADMINISTRATION-ORGANISATION AND FLEXIBILITY

The educational system of Cyprus mainly due to the small size of the country is centralized. The Adult Education Centres of the Ministry of Education and Culture follow this tendency.

A lot of efforts have been made by the administration in the last 10 years, to develop flexible strategies and mechanisms, in order to serve better the needs and interests of adults. These efforts are related to the curriculum, the learning environment, the marketing, the students motivation and their needs, the teacher training, the teaching methods, the timetable of the courses, the enrolment process etc.

The administration provides all teachers-tutors with the curriculum which contains the various subjects. The administration advises the

teachers to use the curriculum as a guideline and not as the "bible" for their work. The teachers with the members will prepare the programme for the next 24 meetings. This is considered as a significant step towards flexibility in learning, as the programme which is prepared by the teachers in consultation with the members is close to the needs and interests of the participants.

Another significant flexible initiative is related to the timetable of the subjects offered. Usually each meeting-session is of 90'. Teachers could extend or limit the duration of each meeting and consequently, work for more or less than 24 meetings. Especially in rural areas where the teachers have to travel, the duration of the meetings is usually extended to 135' or 180' (3 hours).

The learning environment is very important for effective and pleasant learning. The administration is very flexible in providing the best learning environment, something which is not always possible.

Concerning students' motivation and their needs and interests, there is a lot of flexibility, because participants are in a position to suggest subjects which the administration usually approves. The enrolment phase is very flexible.

At the end of the academic year, participants are given certificates without examinations, but with evidence of competence. This is considered as a flexible procedure as many adults in non-formal education are reluctant to participate in examinations.

V 2. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND FLEXIBILITY

The learning environment should be flexible. When we refer to learning environment we mean also learning materials, duration, place of learning, use of IT etc.

The Adult Education Centres operate mainly in Primary Education schools where the sitting arrangements are not suitable for adults. For the moment, due to free access to Primary Education schools, the programme uses the facilities of Primary Education. The administration knowing that this solution is not the ideal encourages local organizers and teachers to work in cooperation to identify other suitable facilities. In the last years many local authorities-the church, social clubs etc, provide space where adults can have their meetings.

The teaching of practical subjects such as crafts, computers, cooking, is taking place in special workshops mainly in Technical Education schools. Gymnastics is taking place in the large halls of the school buildings.

In rural areas there are limitations for a flexible learning environment, as there are no workshops, large rooms, learning materials etc. of a satisfactory level.

Flexible environment is very important for special groups such as the older adults, where lighting at a satisfactory level is a crucial factor. Recently the School Buildings Board decided to enrich the lighting of all new buildings in order to facilitate the learning of the adult population.

V3. TEACHERS-PARTICIPANTS AND FLEXIBILITY

Flexible learning should guarantee high levels of cooperation and mutual understanding between teachers and participants. All teaching and learning should focus on the needs and the interests of the participants. Flexible learning should focus on participant's experiences.

The teachers move gradually towards the role of facilitator, especially in practical subjects. This requires more work for the teacher to organize the class and follows the pace of learning of each participant. Some teachers use learners as "helpers" of other participants who for various reasons cannot follow the group work.

In many cases teachers use the participant's experiences to facilitate learning.

V4. METHODS AND FLEXIBILITY

The use of many methods is important in adult education. The diversity of the learners, the vast differences among them, requires the use of a lot of different methods which can apply to different ages, to different educational backgrounds, to different characters and personalities. The use of various methods is advisable due to the vast differences between participants. Teamwork, cooperative learning, participating learning, individualization of teaching, face to face teaching, self-guided learning, active seminars, study circles, visiting lecturers, discussions, are methods used by many teachers.

There is a significant move from traditional methods to methods which recognize the individuality of each learner, the importance of communication skills and the emotional, spiritual and psychological world of each participant.

It is important for the teachers to know very well the characteristics of adults as well as the group dynamics and the group interactions and understand the behaviour and reactions of the participants. It is also important to know to work with small groups within a large group.

VI. SUBJECTS OFFERED AND FLEXIBILITY

In this part of the case study we will discuss very briefly the various

categories of subjects that the adult Education centers offer. We will discuss the techniques teachers use in order to make teaching and learning flexible.

VI 1. FOREIGN LANGUAGES

All teachers are University graduates and main emphasis is given to spoken language. Participants motivation is to meet people from other countries especially tourists visiting Cyprus and in order to be able to talk to other people when participants are visiting other countries. Many flexible strategies and techniques are used for teaching foreign languages. Many teachers use the cultural centres of the various embassies and exchange visits, giving the opportunity to participants to practice the language.

Teachers are free to choose the texts. There are a large number of books used. There is no any basic book suggested by the administration. Concerning Greek for Foreigners the tendency is to employ teachers from the place of origin of the learners.

VI 2. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

There is a lot of interaction between the dancing groups and a lot of mobility.

In cultural activities-dancing music, theatre-there is ground for cooperation between the learners. Teachers very often request participants with high skills to assist others with poor performance. The subject "Get to know Cyprus" is undertaken by the Tourist Guides Association and the theory is combined with many field visits.

Byzantine music is mainly undertaken by priests or preachers and many groups have their meetings in churches or in church halls.

VI 3. HEALTH EDUCATION

Gymnastics is a very popular subject. The meetings in the cities take place in school halls but in rural areas in regular school rooms. In gymnastics there is a lot of flexibility in the timetable of the meetings as many participants, due to the rich network of groups can change the day and the time of the meeting.

First aid, a popular subject is offered in a practical way. All participants pass the examinations of Saint Ambulance Association and become official first assistance.

Cooking is taking place in special classes. There is a lot of freedom for learners to choose what they want to learn.

Mental and emotional health is promoted in small groups where panel discussions, self-expressions, dialogue and other methods are used.

VI 4. CRAFTS AND PAINTING

Meetings are often taking place outside the classrooms, especially in painting. Learners are often taking part in field visits where they collect materials for their work. In pottery, most of the ideas-patterns are taken from the Cyprus National Museum. Many materials for mosaics are collected by the learners during field visits. Cyprus, famous for its copper and silver work, promotes these crafts and learners feel proud to promote the culture and heritage of their country.

VI 5. COMPUTERS

All groups use very good workshops of the Secondary Education schools. Learners are free to choose what they want to learn. In many cases employees from various governmental and non-governmental organizations suggest a curriculum related to their work. Participants can decide to take examinations for the European Computer Driving License.

VI 6. SUBJECTS RELATED TO HOUSEHOLD

This group of subjects is very popular as contributing to the household budget. The meetings of most of these subjects take place in Technical Schools and workshops. Gardening is taking place in the homes and fields of the participants. In car maintenance, the learners repair their own car. Some groups have their meetings in garages. A popular subject is plumbing which takes place in the homes of the participants. The same applies to the Interior Design where the meetings take place in the homes of the learners.

Suggestions-recommendations

For a sound flexible learning in non-formal education and especially for the Adult Education Centres of the Ministry of Education the following should be done:

1. Training of trainers is very crucial in order that teachers will be able to operate in a more flexible way.
2. The administration should work for an infrastructure which will enable flexible learning. Buildings suitable for adults, materials for adults, learning environment in general require serious improvements. Laws and regulations should be introduced facilitating learning.
3. Modern learning methods should be introduced by all teachers promoting effective learning. Especially the methodology of teaching special groups of the population such as disabled and older adults should be promoted.

4. Special attention should be given to rural areas, where the learning environment and learning facilities are poor compared to that of the cities.
5. Learners should be always in the centres of the educational interest and the motivation for learning should be promoted.
6. E-Learning and Distance learning should be introduced in the programme of the Adult Education Centres.

■■■ E-learning – a case study

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“Flexible learning” can be understood in very different meanings. One of the ways of flexible learning has arisen since the time personal computers came into use. It was the beginning of the possibility to learn independently from a teacher or printed media. In this way learning became really flexible because the learner himself could decide about time, way and intensity of his learning process.

Especially and mainly since the internet got the importance and the possibilities it has nowadays this way of learning disseminated and extended in a speed we could not imagine let us say ten years ago. So this chapter is dedicated to what we call nowadays “e-learning” or “blended learning” which means that it can be and mostly is a mixture of traditional learning by teaching and e-learning.

As e-learning is mostly based on the use of the internet we speak as well of “web-orientated” or “web-based” learning.

This web-based learning can be discriminated in four meanings:

- 1) One - online (one is learning by himself or herself by using the resources of the internet or learning software)
- 2) One - to - many (information and instruction is given by the internet – the principle of a “web board”)
- 3) One - to - one (individual use of web based communication – the principle of e-mail)
- 4) Many - to - many (joint and task orientated working as “computer supported collaborative learning” (CSCL) or “working” (CSCW) – the system of a conference)

In the following article we will describe the methods, requirements of the environment, qualifications of learners and teachers, the physical resources and the aims or benefits of the method for every way of web based learning.

Of course in all of the described ways all must have a computer at their disposal, must be able to work with it and use it as an instrument of learning. With exception of method four they are all “web based” (see more at this paragraph).

Ad 1) One online

Synchronous/asynchronous

The common feature is that there is a distance between learner and tutor and that the internet bridges that distance.

Two main forms of e – learning result from the aspect whether teaching and learning take place at the same time (synchronous) or at different times (asynchronous).

Synchronous learning means that the transfer of knowledge and the actual learning take place at the same time, i.e. learner and tutor meet at a certain place in the internet at a fixed time. Communication takes place via chat or in a virtual classroom. Asynchronous learning is a process where learner(s) and tutor are not online at the same time and where they cannot communicate with each other without a delay in time.

Web quest

The web quest procedure is also a kind of research using web sites, but in its concept the web quest procedure assumes that learners, especially younger or less internet experienced learners need exact tasks and learning aims. If the tutor provides web addresses for certain tasks, the risk is reduced that the learner gets lost in the vast information available on the internet. Thus it can be avoided that the learner does research without a plan and perhaps also without any result. This procedure saves time and cuts down possible frustration and annoyance.

The results can then again be presented on the internet and made available for other learners as a basis for their work (learning spirals).

Web based training

Web based training is an intranet/internet application, which offers a variety of aids to improve learning activities using the internet technique: Web based training (wbt) is the whole process beginning with the information about the courses on offer and the enrolment and continuing with the actual interactive, multimedia online training with intermediate and final tests as well as the handling of certificates and assisting with the general administration of courses and participants. Web based training is a learning method that extends and complements the traditional teaching methods. However, there is still a necessity for traditional courses in traditional places (e.g. x number of students with one teacher in a classroom), because the

fields where wbt can be used is limited to certain contents. It is easy to see how we can use it for bookkeeping classes, but (not yet) imaginable for gymnastics for patients after a heart attack.

Comparing wbt with computer based training on CD-ROMs (traditional self-study software) the enormous advantages become obvious:

- Better communication possibilities
- Training on demand and just in time (more flexibility)
- Number of participants almost unlimited
- Contents can be updated quickly and easily

Training can be split into small modules and participants pay only for what they actually need.

Another advantage is that these training units are usually a lot cheaper to produce than the traditional CD-ROM software.

Ad 2) One – to – many

This method might be considered as the one nearest to traditional teaching methods. The idea is that the learners are not together as real persons in a real class room but as web users in a virtual class room.

It can be used for lectures, discussions, group presentations, questionings, quizzes etc.

Learners and teachers have to be working at their computers at the same time so it is a synchronised web based working. They need some kind of internet platform where they can meet in their virtual class room.

The big advantage of this method is that learners and teachers can live far from each other – even in different continents so you can say it is an instructive teaching without the necessity of the teacher being at the place.

Ad 3) One – to – one

Two persons at different places communicate by e-mail – at the same time (synchronised) like a chat of learners or at different times. They may do this at work or in their spare time at home. One of the persons can be a teacher but this is by no means compulsory – for example they can teach each other their mother tongue (what we call “tandem learning”). Mostly it might be the electronic version of the old fashioned principle of distant learning by study letters or an individual project accompanied by a tutor. The instruction can be given like before not – synchronised but as well (and this is new in e-learning) directly as if

the two persons were in the same room.

Access to the internet is needed.

This method might be understood as traditional teaching by distributing learning material – with the new possibility of immediate responses.

Ad 4) Many – to – many

This method can be understood as a conference by using an electronically learning environment. As it may be used inside a company it is not necessarily based on the web because it can also use a server system.

The users can work without any delay or in time shifted frames as well.

All group working methods are possible: group discussions, debates, brainstorming, role plays, case studies, group counselling, project working including e.g. development or construction of buildings, machines etc.

There has not necessarily to be a teacher involved but all participants have to be able to work in a team.

So it is a shared working without any time or room limitation.

I Teacher Training

In our teacher training we only refer to Flexible Learning with the computer with goes with the software. The computer opens the participants the possibility to repeat, work out and to reinforce the topic independent of place and time. That is called self-directed learning because the participant can choose his own independent way of learning. A further advantage is that there is an interaction between the computer and the learner and between new information and available knowledge.

In the following paragraphs we want to discuss English software on CD that was presented during the teacher training.

Presented Software:

Tell me more -English (Auralog),

Eurolingua Deutsch (Cornelsen)

Cool (Klett)

Bridges (Klett)

English Elements (Hueber)

“Tell me more- English”:

There are 4 levels of Tell me more: Beginner – Intermediate – Advanced –Business (These programmes exist also for the following languages: German, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Dutch,)

The Beginner – level is appropriate for students who already have a knowledge of English (- about one year of VHS-classes) to profit from the programme.

There are no books accompanying the software.

The user can classify his or her learning style and look for exercises in reading, writing, listening, speaking in any combination. Furthermore the user can “tell the programme” how long he / she intend to work on the computer and the computer reminds the user in case he/she is beyond his / her aims.

Presentation of all the different types of exercises in the programme (linking a picture with the correct word out of 3 – linking opposites – filling gaps with the correct form of a verb – crossword puzzles ...)

Speaking dialogues according a choice of possible answers. The programme recognizes correct pronunciation or gives a link to the pronunciation-training-programme. The translation of single words is possible just by pointing on the word or linking to a dictionary. – Here the words are pronounced and translated. But what a shock: trying to find words in the dictionary showed that they got mixed up. Only words up to “d” were in the correct order, later on under the index “h” there were words beginning with “l” ... and so on. It was worst, when under the index “w” we found a mixture of words beginning with any letter. (The publisher has to work on this!)

Pronunciation-training is divided into three stages: phonemes – words – sentences. Within the phoneme stage there is an animated picture of the head to show how to move lips and tongue to produce the sound. – Negative was, that the most tricky sounds (č) were missing. But this part of the programme was favoured.

Grammar – A reference-grammar gives examples and rules. Doing an exercise there is a possible link to this reference grammar but there is no link back to special exercises.

Finally there is an icon to show the points you got in the different fields of the programme which is really motivating.

“Eurolingua Deutsch”:

This is a programme according to a textbook for German as a foreign language. The exercises could be done after working in class with the book. Unit by unit.

But as a plus there is a survey of grammar, situations, topics and learning strategies of the whole programme. And – which is very good – there is a link to any of the exercises. (That was not possible with Tell me more.)

The different presented exercises (drag a drop – fill in the gaps – constructing a dialogue ...) were nice and effective.

The teachers found that it could be possible to work with the programme without working with the textbook as well.

“Cool” is a course book for ‘false beginners’ used for pupils aiming to achieve a school-leaving certificate in day courses. “Bridges” has been used for almost ten years now to teach English to adults, who usually attend two lessons a week. “English Elements” is a new course book that will gradually replace “Bridges”. All three books were written for the German speaking learner.

The software programmes follow the same structure as the corresponding textbook; they are subdivided into units (12 to 15) that offer additional practice material to the students. They **cannot** be used on their own to actually learn the language as no grammar explanations are given and knowledge of the grammar structures and vocabulary introduced in the corresponding unit in the textbook is necessary. Mistakes the students make are corrected, but not analysed and no help is offered if comprehension or grammatical problems occur.

“Bridges”, however, offers a dictionary translating all the words used on the CD-ROM.

“Cool”:

Rather basic software that offers four additional exercises for each unit in the textbook

no audio material (i.e. no listening comprehension, no pronunciation exercises)

no grammar reference section

no dictionary

no pictures, no video material

instructions easy to understand

“Bridges”

software more sophisticated offering a large variety of additional exercises for each

unit in the textbook

audio material for listening comprehension exercises (good quality), but no

pronunciation exercises

no grammar reference section

bilingual dictionary that also reads aloud individual words (pronunciation help)

colourful pictures (also providing information on English speaking countries, but no video material)
 most instructions easy to understand

“English Elements”

software offers a large variety of additional exercises for each unit in the textbook
 audio material for listening comprehension exercises and pronunciation exercises
 (poor quality)
 no grammar reference section, but table of contents following unit structure **and**
 grammar topics (i.e. student can choose to practise certain grammar structures)
 no dictionary
 no pictures, no video material
 instructions difficult to understand due to unclear symbols

It was pointed out that none of the programmes could be used as an alternative to attending regular lessons, only as additional help for learners at home or as a medium in class.

If possible the teacher should introduce learners to the software in class and help them to understand instructions and types of exercises. For older and perhaps less computer experienced students it was also discussed to actually practise installing the computer programme.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the teacher training the question came up, if software can replace a teacher. All participants found that it **cannot!** At the end of the group work and the final discussion this was even confirmed.

Especially in language classes, where the main stress is on communication among the students and the teacher, there is no programme that can replace the teacher or the face-to-face course. During the group work the presented software has been checked according to the previous fixed criteria. None of the products could fulfil all of them. So working with software programmes is difficult because the users often don't know much about computing in general. Even the teachers in this training had difficulties in getting along with the programmes. The structure was unclear or even missing. It seemed that the programmes had been established without knowing about the users and their abilities and aims. One negative point was that you had to read lots of pages in a manual that you first of all had to

print out before you could get along with the programme. This may lead to frustration, because students think they make mistakes and don't understand the task they have to do. This confusion reduces the success.

Although the participants had been sceptical about this new media, many of them found several interesting items that could be a help for students. Certain topics could be worked out easier or more efficiently and independently and the work for the teachers could be easier. Most interesting was the pronunciation-programme. The teachers found that it really could relieve them in the classroom because on the one hand the groups are often too big to work with the individual student and on the other hand the students could work on their pronunciation individually at home.

Teachers using e-learning methods must develop new skills. On the one hand they need profound knowledge of the hardware and the software used in the classroom or at home so that they can help and advise their students. On the other hand careful planning and evaluation of each lesson are inevitable in order to keep track of each learner's progress. If e-learning is combined with traditional classroom teaching in a bigger group, it is most important to have a common platform where to discuss your topic or to introduce new aspects. This means not only keeping an eye on the individual's work, but also to modulate the group's learning progress.

The role of the teacher therefore changes from imparting of knowledge in the traditional way of "chalk and talk" to a facilitator of learning processes.

II Participant training

English

The participant training took part during English lessons for 15 adults (aged 17 to 43 years) in a class for students trying to pass the lowest school leaving certificate in the German educational system.

Their previous English knowledge varied to a large degree:

5 students had no official previous knowledge and only took part in the 4 lessons a week a voluntary basis.

5 students had an elementary previous knowledge and

5 students came with an intermediate previous knowledge.

In class a textbook written for German false beginners ("Cool"), the audio cassette and the CD-Rom accompanying the textbook were used.

The CD-Rom offers 4 additional exercises in each of the 15 units (vocabulary and grammar). We used it during the lesson to keep the faster students busy, but also to offer slow or shy students the opportunity to practise on their own lower level without having to speak in front of the class.

Other additional material used included grammar games (e.g. memory, domino), crosswords and easy readers.

The software used so far does not offer any audio material to the students so that the computer did not disturb the lesson in progress. It is however intended to use further software which enables the students to practise speaking short dialogues and to improve their pronunciation. This is particularly important for those students who consider attending the next year at school.

Geography

The computer was also used in the sixth forms in Geography to enable students to test their knowledge on specific topics (e.g. European Union) in small groups or on their own. We also watched video material of e.g. historic conferences offered on CD-ROMs.

In these classes the previous knowledge did not vary to a large degree, but the speed at which individual students were able to work with written material did. It was therefore most useful to have software available that offered interesting additional material to faster working students.

We also worked with software offering up-to-date maps and information on states in the world.

Unfortunately we had no access to the web in class yet. This would enable students to do their own research on current topics (e.g. the war in Iraq).

Conclusion: what's new in all this?

It seems that the only thing which is really new is the possibility of working even on large distances without any delay.

If it is in one building or throughout the whole world: persons with access to the internet or another shared net organised by a server can communicate and exchange all kind of information as if they were sitting in one room ignoring borders whether they are political or economical. Of course they need apart from the availability of the hardware a similar culture of learning and communicating.

So even if the working, teaching or learning methods are not new it is a big benefit for democracy.

Note

This case – study is based on training realised at the Adult Education Centre in Solingen in the year 2003.

“Flexible learning” is not a common concept in Germany. We use instead the term “blended learning” for activities described in this article. If you search web pages for this keyword you will get nearly countless hits.

So only one basic book is given:

Issing/Klimsa (Hrsg.): Information und Lernen mit Multimedia und Internet, 3. Aufl. Weinheim 2002

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■■■ “Mobility Training for Women”

A Case Study on Flexible Learning

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The Mobility Training Program for Women was developed under the support of the European Commission Socrates Program in framework of project EUROPEAN NETWORK OF ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS WORKING ON WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT ISSUES No 71248 - CP - 1 - 1999 - 1 -LT- ADULT EDUC-ADU. It was made under the co-ordination of the Social Innovation Fund in the international partnership of twelve partners from nine European countries Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Spain, The Netherlands, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania. You can find more information at the project's website www.womn-employment.lt

Goals of the course.

The main goals of the Mobility Training Program are:

- ✓ *Motivating of unemployed and disadvantaged women to lead active social lives and to seek education, employment and career advancement;*
- ✓ *Learning to see, accept and work through the obstacles in life and set realistic goals for ourselves*
- ✓ *Strengthening positive female self-image;*
- ✓ *Building self- esteem and self-confidence;*
- ✓ *Encouraging seeking employment;*
- ✓ *Learning to know and respect our rights and responsibilities;*
- ✓ *Increasing knowledge of own competence and limits;*
- ✓ *Defining ability to live with conflict and different views and ability to handle and effect changes;*
- ✓ *Increasing the communication skills and usage of networking.*

Target group.

Mobility Training Program (MTP) is designed and targeted at women who have either lost their jobs, or who have never worked before and are unsuccessfully trying to enter the job market.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS (SUB-MODULES) OF THE MOBILITY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR WOMEN

- ✓ Life planning
- ✓ Study skills
- ✓ The importance of non-verbal communication for seeking employment
- ✓ Personal development and self-empowerment
- ✓ The importance of creation of self-image
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Job application training
- ✓ Networking and job market orientation
- ✓ The importance of self – help approach
- ✓ The Importance of Information Technology Skills for Job-Hunting and Increasing of Self- Confidence

How to organise training process for the “Mobility training for women”, using CD-ROM.

We offer different approaches to the problems that these women may have. Some of them who are stronger in a way (e.g., higher self-esteem, more feminism oriented, more experienced) primarily need support and an opportunity to practice ways in which they want to improve themselves. However, there are those to whom self -analysis in different perspectives is essential.

That’s why it is important to have methods that could target problematic areas such as low self-esteem, insufficient communication skills, self- knowledge, lack of motivation and self-confidence. The curriculum of the “ Mobility Training Program” consists of chapters that help to eliminate such problems.

It is very important to use different adult education methods and new information technology for organising training process. The CD-ROM was developed to organise training course. To ensure the personal approach and flexibility in learning we have developed the training strategy for the MTP , which consists from three most important stages for each of ten training sessions, described in the structure of the MTP

- ✓ Lecturing
- ✓ Group work
- ✓ Self-study lessons.

The CD-ROM has two parts: **“I am a trainer”** and **“I am a trainee”**

In this CD in the part **"I am a trainer"** you can find all methodical material about how to organise lecturing and work group. Our suggestion is to give the lecture on each of sub-modules, after that to organise a group work on each sub-module.

The self-study lessons will be an additional part for each sub-module and will be done together with tutor, because students will need support on how to use CD and even that is the content of each part of CD for trainee. So, we suggest for trainer to learn by himself the part **"I am a trainee"** in order to be able to guide the trainee in using new information technology for learning.

The self-study part of CD **"I am a trainee"** consists from four different types of self-study materials:

1. Short description of the sub-module
2. Exercises
3. Tests
4. Advice

Innovation of the course.

This is one of the samples of flexible learning course, which includes elements of class-room-based course with lecturing and working on the group with the e-learning part using the CD-ROM. The course does not aim to deliver the fixed content and/or duration of the course. The course is based on the analyses of the demand of the knowledge of the group of trainees. Duration of the course is approximately 3-4 days. The students could choose the exercises, test and advices from the CD-ROM by their own. CD-ROM for trainee has developed with the supporting elements. It means that some tests are programmed in the way that depending on the result of the test, the program could suggest to the trainee to fulfil one or another new exercise or read some advice. The important element is open discussions on obtained knowledge, which we suggest to organise after each training session.

It is important to have a well organised training method, so even the less skilled trainees can catch on to it easily. This will later help to have a more successful teaching results and experience. The following methods are used in the developed mobility training module:

- ✓ Informal atmosphere
- ✓ Active participation
- ✓ Written materials
- ✓ Tutorial instructions
- ✓ Exchange of experience
- ✓ Group work / individual

- ✓ Case studies
- ✓ Visiting companies
- ✓ Feedback and self-evaluation

Evaluation

Evaluation is essential at the end of the course. It should be used to review several aspects of the program. For example, it is important to evaluate the organisation of the course, teaching methods, trainer's performance, importance of using the CD-ROM for self-study etc. Evaluation is good tool for quality control, it is important that the high standards of such courses are not only maintained, but also gradually improved.

Another aspect of evaluation is trainee's performance and involvement itself. It is very important to give an opportunity to review after the trainees had been given such an amount of the information. The aim of such review/evaluation is to help women see their current situation, examine their strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly, overview their possible future options. The outcome of such reviews should form a basis of an action plan identifying a possible progress for each trainee.

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■■■ Flexible Learning practised in a University Course on Education for Democracy and Global Understanding

S. Roselius:

***A Case Study on Flexible learning:
Education for Democracy, University Course,
Department for Adult Education, Linköping
University, Sweden***

This is short description of an international course that has been arranged by the Department for Adult Education three times during 2000-2003 with participants from different countries, besides Sweden especially Lithuania, Russia and Belarus.

The course is distributed on a part time basis over distance with extended duration over one academic year. In the course there are used some tools of flexible learning such as electronic communication (computer conference), work in local groups, written tasks, internet discussions and a limited number of general course meetings spread over the academic year (40 weeks).

Target groups and main purpose

The course is aimed for anyone who wishes to study and reflect on how a democratic approach can be strengthened among citizens in a society where conditions are rapidly changing, for example due to the process most commonly known as globalisation.

The course has been of particular interest to teachers and leaders of popular education as well in Sweden as in north-west Russia (Novgorod) and Lithuania (several Folk High Schools).

However it is also very suitable for every citizen actively involved in societies and organisations.

The school system as well as popular education has a central position, in the past as well as at present time, when it comes to developing a democracy that continuously works in new ways and faces new challenges.

While the battle for democracy during the 20th century has been fought on a national level, during the 21st century this battle must be fought on a wider arena. The processes of globalisation affect our living conditions in a number of ways. The expansion and the development of the European Union will require new democratic institutions and new roles for active citizenship.

The main purpose of the course is:

- ✓ to allow the possibility for teachers of different nationalities, and others who are involved in popular education, to make connections
- ✓ to exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences in order to render thoughtful reflection
- ✓ to develop new ways of cooperation, inspiring and useful in every day work.

The course does not aim to deliver a fixed content on how to work with education for democracy and global understanding. On the contrary, the course is based on a collective knowledge process, that is, to gather experiences and ideas from each and every one of the participants. The ideas are being developed in discussions and seminars, *which partly take place in a computer conference on the Internet.*

Course Literature

Due to the composition of participants the course literature is exclusively in English. English is also the language used at seminars throughout the course. There is a vast amount of literature on democracy both in its theoretical and practical uses. Part of the suggested literature has been replaced by equivalent literature in consultation with the course organisers.

The Organisation of the Course

The course *Education for Democracy and Global understanding* (10 credits) is distributed by correspondence on a part-time basis over extended duration. This means that a different type of organisation is needed rather than the organisation of a full-time campus based course.

The corner-stones of the course are:

- ✓ ***The local group***
- ✓ ***Computer conference***
- ✓ ***Written tasks***
- ✓ ***Course meetings***
- ✓ ***Study Guidelines***

The Local Groups

Important parts of the course take place in study circles usually consisting of four to ten persons. They form a local group. Usually four to five local groups have been working in Sweden. There have also been local groups in Russia, Belarus and Lithuania.

These groups were composed during the first meeting so that the participants had a chance to get to know each other and plan their work together.

The intention of the local group is that it is supposed to work as "an ideal study circle", which means shared responsibilities in planning the work. The main activities in the local groups are to discuss literature and to carry out minor scientific research.

Every local group has to keep contact with the course organiser as well as other local groups using the conference on the Internet. Generally, the local groups meet every week (an option is to have longer meetings every other week).

The work in the local group is partly based on written tasks (see below). Apart from that, each group is free to organise their own work.

Computer Conference

Shortly after the first meeting the computer conference was opened for the course.

Everyone has to possess a user ID and a password, which was given by the course organiser at the first course meeting - or by post to the groups abroad.

The conference has been used for communication between local groups and to distribute written tasks. This means that all participants have an opportunity to share all written tasks. Previous course projects have also been found and used at the conference.

There have also been net discussion on special topics, so for ex, the Russian group was responsible for introducing an interesting theme one week, and one of the Swedish groups had the responsibility for asking some questions another week. Then the other groups made comments and so on.

There were also some chat meetings, when everybody was connected to the Internet conference at the same time.

Course Meetings

After the Introduction meeting the course organisers visited the different local groups as well in Sweden as in the other countries. During spring term there was a weekend meeting at a Swedish folk high school where all participants had a chance to meet.

Furthermore, there were possibilities for groups from different countries to visit each other.

The course meetings consist of presentation of tasks, seminars on course literature as well as planning the work as the course progresses. Also guest lectures were arranged at the meetings. The visits of the course leaders in the local groups offered opportunities to get consultation on the course projects.

At the closing seminar the projects were presented

Course tasks

Apart from participation in the local group and course meetings, the autumn term course (5 credits) includes the following three tasks;

1. *Own Experiences and Ideas Concerning the Meaning of Education for Democracy.* Describe your own views on the possibilities and difficulties of promoting democracy, in theory as well as in practise, at schools and within popular education in modern society (2-3 pages).

This task is preferably to be discussed in the local group to start with. The task was to be delivered to the computer conference, at a fixed date.

All local groups have made short summaries in English of the most important ideas and issues discussed in the local group. The summaries were e-mailed to conference. The summary often included questions to other local groups.

2. *Personal Reflection on Course Literature.*

This is an individual task: *What new thoughts did the literature raise?* The participants were asked to choose a few books (approximately 4-500 pages) to comment. These reflections were distributed on the computer conference.

3. *Course Project.*

The course aims to develop *new knowledge*, that is, the participant's contribution of thoughts, ideas, material and methods, which can be used in every day, work at schools, popular education, or society activities. An important part of the course is to carry out a project (either individually or in a group). The project could, for example, consist of suggestions on how to work out ways of dealing with issues such as democracy, justice and international understanding in different contexts and how to develop an exchange of international contacts.

Many times the course project could be used for further developments of international projects related to the subject of the course, in which the participants were already involved.

Organising Flexible Learning - some comments

There are some critical matters in flexible learning - especially distance learning. It is a general experience among distance pedagogues that distance communication requires more preparation and planning than ordinary "classroom teaching".

- ✓ Often it is stated that distance learning also requires *physical meetings*, i.e. a mixture between the physical and the virtual room, and that the physical meetings are well planned. It is testified that courses without - or with badly planned - physical meetings have a greater number of dropouts. "A fist meeting, eye to eye, renders possible the creation of contact and trust that will later be needed."
(Axelsson in folkbildning.net p. 54)
- ✓ It is crucial to be sure that all participants have access to the necessary tools and that they have the ability to handle them. Very often there is a technical threshold for some of the participants. A general reason for leaving the course as dropouts is insufficient ability to handle the tools.
- ✓ Flexible learning requires ability to work and study individually and in groups with few possibilities to be guided by the facilitator. In this ability a great amount of self-discipline has to be included.
- ✓ To be a facilitator in flexible learning requires flexibility - in time, tools, methods and creativity.

■■■ Learning Method: Self-Evaluation & Empowerment for an Aware Entrepreneurial Choice

Matrix by Speha Fresia

Elisabetta Cannova

Speha Fresia S.C.a r.l. – Ro

1. Brief description

In the framework of the formula of Women Enterprise Incubator we have proposed a pathway for the entrepreneurial choice, based on a self-evaluation/empowerment process.

2. Description of Target group

Everybody who would set up his/her own business or be a self-employed worker.

3. Objectives

To support the decision process, through the balanced growth between subject and enterprise idea;

To built together the main elements to analyse the opportunities for an aware choice, through integrated learning activities (individual or in group);

To facilitate the start-up of new enterprises as a self-employment solution.

4. Roles (professional profiles)

There are three “general” roles:

One operator for reception and welcome;

One for guidance counselling;

One for enterprise advisor.

There are also some different experts in the following field: human resources, finance & management control, marketing.

5. Learning

The learning method is based on the use of different approaches for different objectives: brainstorming, on field research, training by doing,

coaching, CBT (self-organised), mentoring, project work, individual counselling/advisor.

6. Preferential contents

To attend our entrepreneurial pathway we draw up an Incubation Agreement with each participant in an open, friendly and professional relationship.

7. Prerequisites

To have an entrepreneurial idea consistent with the promoter profile and the market.

(Generally the main approaches start with the market evaluation and the individual comes after).

8. Setting (accommodation, organisation, tools)

We use some common spaces: ICT room (with library), meeting room, reception.

Office rooms for work with single participants.

There is a common timetable for group work and an individual time/objectives schedule for the appointments during the whole pathway. The tools: territorial data bank; users data bank (for back-office use and for networking); lows data bank; multimedia guidance to the entrepreneurial choice, business plan guide, spread sheets.

9. Phases (preparatory, workshop, evaluation)

First stage: Welcome and first analysis of demand

In this stage participants get information about the set of services offered to the target group. Operator fills in the starting personal schedule and fix a first appointment with the guidance counsellor.

Second stage: Guidance

Guidance counsellor welcomes participants and through a narrative approach get in deep in the analysis of the demand.

If consistent with the pathway proposed, users will participate to a common guidance section of 40 hours, with a trainer in guidance for the entrepreneurial choice and a tutor.

Third stage: Entrepreneurial base course (pre-start-up)

We organise participants in 10/12 persons group for a base training course of 80/100 hours of individual and common work on their own business plans.

During individual work they are supported by a coacher and several management advisors; during common work they are supported by a trainer expert in business planning and by a tutor.

Fourth stage: Business Plans ratification

Participants are asked to present their own business plans to a Commission composed by entrepreneurial and trade associations, banks operators, and public administrators.

Fifth stage: start up

The new enterprises are supported in this first phase of their life with logistic supply and organisational tools (meeting room, secretary service, internet connection, relationship and networking, seminars about micro-enterprises, office seat, data banks).

Sixth stage: after-start-up

Periodical enterprises check-up about the main management functions.

Participation to seminars about micro-enterprises and other networking events (meetings, working groups, visits, etc.).

10. Source and reference theories

Starting from the experience of an Association called "Women and Development" we have together experimented their Incubator Model for the local development, enriched with our experience in supporting start-ups and in management training.

11. Risks and advantages

This method, particularly successful with adult people, facilitate awareness about personal strong & weak points, activate a participation process to the economic local life, it gives methods and tools to face decision about working and personal life, it increases self-fulfilment.

12. Variants

Duration of activity: we have chosen the following standards of common training duration:

- ✓ 40 hours for guidance session (possibility to expand it up to 80 hours);
- ✓ 80 hours for pre-start-up course (possibility to expand it up to 120 hours);
- ✓ During common training programs participants integrate with individual work, supported by tutor, guidance counsellor and enterprise advisor (standard of 20/40 hours of personal coaching - possibility to expand it up to 50/60 hours);
- ✓ The definition for new enterprise project (pre-start-up) and the start-up can take to the promoter, considering the dimension/complexity of the initiative always little or micro, a range of time from 3 months up to 12.

Tools for analysis: Monitoring of personal process through individual feed-backs (during all phases) and follow-up (after 3 or 6 months). Self-evaluation tools.

13. Examples of use/practice

Speha Fresia has experimented it in the Women Enterprise Incubator of Ragusa (1996 / 2000 in the framework of Now Programme) and has adapted and modified it through the time in other contests: Multi-function Centres in rural area, social enterprise Incubator, local development Incubators in urban disadvantage areas, etc.

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■■■ Learning in multicultural group. Being together

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“Nothing works the way to people’s togetherness so well as knowing each other”
Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė (one of the first Lithuanian women writers in the beginning of XX century)

According our understanding, intercultural competence can not be achieved by distance learning. Personal physical contacts are of the great importance here. IT technologies can help to solve communication problems in between the seminars, but they are not very useful for development of intercultural competencies and especially skills. The flexibility means here flexibility in methods, time and place.

Researchers of culture assert that culture is like an iceberg. We can see only 10 percent of it; other 90 percent is under the water. Speaking about our or somebody else’s culture we speak of those visible 10 percent: folk art, songs, national clothes, national dishes. We think that knowing Ukrainian borshch and Ukrainian folk songs, we identify their culture. But we do seldom think of how Ukrainians, Russians, Uzbeks, Bulgarians and representatives of other nations characterize themselves.

How they understand beauty, define death, justice, how they control their emotions, how they determine madness and sin? What are family and family traditions for them? How their answers to these questions differ from answers given by others – Lithuanians, Byelorussians, Poles?

In bookshops we find more and more literature on cultural differences and peculiarities. But these books, however good they may be, most often describe only general tendencies that can’t be followed and applied in every concrete situation. Otherwise you might be misunderstood or not accepted.

The world becomes smaller and smaller in the sense of human communication. European expansion, new labour markets, etc., make

us change our usual understanding “my home is my stronghold”. Since 2002 Lithuanian Association of Adult Education together with partners from Germany, Italy and England has implemented project of Socrates Grundtvig program “Intercultural Competence for Europe”. Our partners try to solve problems of cultural communication between local people and immigrants, while our target group is Lithuanian national minorities. For us the object is communication between national minorities and the majority, between organizations of national minorities and municipalities. 24 people participate in the final part of the project. They are from Lentvaris, Trakai, Visaginas and Vilnius. These are people of different nationalities, having different experience of life in Lithuania, different social situation and taking different positions. When the group meets, different cultures meet each other in a wider aspect, not only national. What should we do in order to understand each other, to listen to each other and to hear each other? Experience of the project proved that it was the right way chosen to know each other – to communicate as much as possible informally, to do much BEING TOGETHER.

Being together in our project did not mean just being in one room or under one roof. **Being together** in our project meant to understand behaviour of a man who was different from you, to understand how he felt the world, to base communication on similarities, not on differences among people and nations.

In order to achieve this it is not enough to have theoretical knowledge. Much more important is wish and practical skills. We stressed four things important for developing cultural understanding: personal knowing of people, knowing of cultures, communication solving common problems and informal environment.

At the beginning of the project much attention was paid to **personal getting acquainted**. We tried to identify the participants’ professional peculiarities and their hopes. We encouraged them to look for relations between the name and self-identification, to reflex the meaning of one’s name, to think over traditions of giving the name that depend on socio-cultural, ethno-cultural and religious traditions, to reflect them and to compare them with traditions of other nations. The seminar took place in Folk Academy of Rumšiškės Outdoor Country Life Museum. It was not a traditional place for training, but informal environment, having supper prepared by the whole group. Confidence, safety and frankness were very important as we invited people to a long three-year project.

Informal environment, unusual time of work (in the evening, after dark), no hurry, professional leadership (in fact the participants did not notice it) created the atmosphere of confidence, safety and

frankness. It was a sincere open dialogue. Ten people who had not known each other until that day were drawn together. The news that the exercise had been planned beforehand was a surprise to everybody.

The exercises of getting acquainted were repeated every time when new members joined the project. Finishing the project we can tell quite much of each other: what we like to eat, how we spend our leisure time, to what words we relate our names, etc.

The second step to know and understand the self and *others* better was **related to knowledge of cultures**. We discussed national peculiarities, symbols, values, rituals, heroes of our and *other* nations; we went deep into the question why we knew of each other less than we thought; we were surprised that sometimes it was difficult to speak about oneself; we tried to find unknown facts, people and stories that would enrich their knowledge of our culture.

Trying to imagine better the environment surrounding members of the group in their living places we organized presentation of multinational culture of Lentvaris and Visaginas. Every group of participants presented its community, national constitution, cultural peculiarities. Work in the evenings we called among ourselves "cultural suppliers". We watched films about artistic companies of national minorities from Lentvaris, sang Ukrainian songs, danced Uzbek dances, listened to Russian poetry and essays about Lithuania by Russian youths.

One training part of the project was getting acquainted with a place or institution where the seminar took place. This is also knowledge of culture. The seminars took place in different places of Lithuania. Participants of the project came to know more about Rumšiškės Outdoor Country Life Museum, about Lithuanian cultural heritage, traces of different cultures in historical Trakai, cultural variety in Visaginas, M. K. Čiurlionis' environment in Druskininkai. Participants of the project discussed experience of multicultural staffs in Polish schools of Trakai and Lentvaris, Ukrainian association in Visaginas, P. Skorina school in Vilnius, Vilnius Centre of Adult Training. They also took part in performances of artistic companies.

Working in mixed groups (from the point of view of national composition, age, sex, social position), we **solved common problems**, discussed the questions of strategy development, conflict resolution, project development, public relations, decision making, interest representation, etc. Tasks of training seminars were prepared so as to solve current and real social problems. We tried to reveal attitudes

of all those trying to find resolution. Practical tasks showed many cultural aspects that influenced communication of various layers (national minorities, NGOs, municipalities). However in everyday life nobody pays attention to those aspects. An example is simulation of negotiation situations which revealed communicational subtleties of eastern cultures in comparison with other cultures. Sometimes suddenly noticed or discovered cultural aspect caused an easy "cultural shock", but the wish to know and understand each other prevailed against things that at the beginning seemed strange.

Informal communication and environment were of great importance for BEING TOGETHER. It was environment in which we learned to know each other. The most ideal place for such training is environment of folk high schools (or similar schools from the point of view of their philosophy and organization). Doing everything together – making coffee, washing cups, making breakfast, evening parties and simply sitting and talking when you don't need to hurry home or to the hotel – brings people of different cultures together more than the most perfect training courses. Experience of the project taught us – the more formal is environment, the more formal are relations among people. But informal environment does not develop itself, it must be created, organized, especially at the beginning. In any case the organizer's efforts should be visible minimally, so that informal communication does not become performing of formal tasks. The main condition of informal communication is voluntary behaviour: to participate, to express one's opinion, to open one's heart.

You can not learn in a day or a month to be together, to understand each other, to open one's heart to a *different* person. Even if you speak the same language, it takes a long time.

Some final remarks:

- ✓ Learning of cultural understanding demands time, patience, efforts and creativity; no hurry, no moralisation
- ✓ Learning by being together- observing, talking, listening, explaining
- ✓ Flexibility in methods, place and time
- ✓ Everything you see, hear and do can tell the story and provides opportunity to learn

We want to share with you of two small methods (cases) we used in our training.

Meeting the cultures¹

Vilija Lukošūnienė, Lithuanian Association of Adult Education

Goals:

- ✓ Acquaintance
- ✓ Understanding of cultural differences

The case can be used in training events when the group consists of the participants of different nationalities to create more open atmosphere and to facilitate understanding of cultural differences of the participants.

Background information

This activity was a part of the first train-the-trainers seminar of a SOCRATES Grundtvig project "European Intercultural Competence Program" designed to develop intercultural competence and understanding between the national minorities and institutions of public administration. The activity took place on the first day of the program when the participants met together for the first time.

Participants

Lithuanian trainers and trainers from cultural minorities groups (Byelorussian, Russian, Uzbek, Polish, Ukrainian).

Location

The location for the first training event was chosen the Open- air museum in Rumsiskes, Lithuania. The place was chosen because of very beautiful environment with aim that all participants stay there for the night to have time for informal communication.

Duration

The activity lasted about 3 hours.

Description of the activity

1. Preparation of the dinner together. Common activity and making fun during the preparation to the dinner built additional confidence, which facilitated openness in the further discussions.
2. Starting point for the activity is very natural- asking to present each of participants and asking the questions:

¹ Adapted from: Bruening G. Foerderung des zivilen Dialogs. Praxisanleitung zur Foerderung der interkulturellen Kompetenz von Verwaltungen und Migrantenorganisationen. – DIE, 2001, Dezember

- a. What is the meaning of your name?
- b. Who chose the name?
- c. Why?
- d. Do you like your name?
- e. Are there any traditions of giving the names in your nationality, family?

Those, who did not know the meaning of their names, were talking about other issues related to the name. It is important to provoke everyone to talk asking different questions. This neutral theme of names built the base for further more open discussion. For example, name Arunas comes from the Aras (eagle). The name was given by the father, who was an engineer and had the hobby of the life- building the planes. Arunas has the brother, who's name is Arimantas, having the same root. Arimantas now has the son Aras. So it became the tradition to give the name related with aras (eagle).

3. Usually there are some participants in the group who are married with person from different nationality. Often it becomes evident talking about the names (especially unusual for the nationality). It gives the possibility to talk about mixed families.
 - a. How the other family accepted you, how your family accepted your spouse?
 - b. What language do you use at home? Why?
 - c. What language do you speak with your children? Why?
 - d. Which school did you choose for your children? Why?

The discussion revelled very interesting aspects of tolerance and intolerance in the families. It showed that despite long history of Lithuanians, Russians, Byelorussians, Poles living together in Lithuania, still there are clear ethnical barriers and stereotypes.

4. Open discussion about the names and families naturally led to the question about the circumstances that led them to Lithuania. Some of the stories are extremely interesting.

Problems/advice

1. The most important thing- creation of confidence atmosphere in the group. That's why the program of all the day should be organised so that it shall not create opposition and conflicts between the participants and between participants and trainers. The participants shall not feel criticised, degraded. The assignments shall produce positive results. Each result is met with prize and applauses.
2. While facilitating the discussions, trainer has to be very careful.

He/she has to ask the questions, but questioning shall not become inquest.

3. Facilitator should not force participants to talk if they do not want to.
4. Facilitator should not stop at one topic and/or one participant for too long.
5. Moving from one topic to another should be smooth and natural, e.g., when one of the participants says something what could be used as the bridge from topic to topic, or when all who wanted to present their cases did that. If there are several trainers, participating in the event, it is very useful when the other trainer starts a new topic.
6. Trainers/facilitators should prepare the questions for discussion in advance, but they should be very flexible and change the topics or the order of questions if they see from the reaction of the participants, that the topic can cause the tension, resistance or withdrawal.

Trainer and training styles

Arūnas Bėkšta, Lithuanian Association of Adult Education, Lithuanian Institute of Public Administration

Goals:

- ✓ To provide the knowledge on the requirements for the adult educator's competence
- ✓ To develop the ability to combine the theoretical knowledge with practice
- ✓ To develop the analytical skills of the participants

Background information

This training event was a part of the first train-the-trainers seminar part of a SOCRATES Grundtvig project "European Intercultural Competence Program" designed to develop intercultural competence and understanding between the national minorities and institutions of public administration.

Participants

Group of 9 to be –trainers in the "European Intercultural Competence Program", representatives of the ethnical minorities and NGOs- 3 Poles, 1 Byelorussian, 2 Russians, 1 Uzbek, 1 Lithuanian.

Location

Classroom

Time

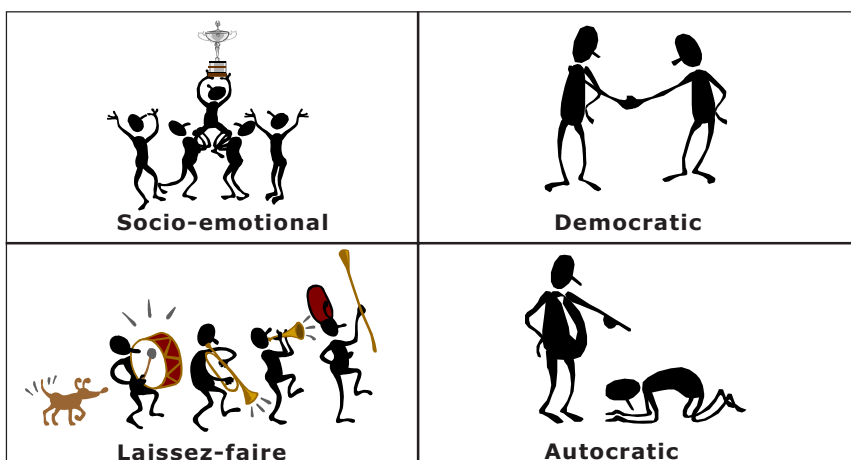
One hour and a half

Used methods

The methodology was combined of traditional lecturing using Power Point presentation and active training methods: exercise before the lecture, discussion on the training material, practicing, video recording and analysis of recorded tape.

of the activity

1. In the first part of the training each participant was asked to prepare to teach other participants one subject which is familiar to them (dance, song, theorem etc.). Four participants were chosen by lot to present their trainings. The other participants had the assignment to describe the teaching style of the trainer. Training sessions were recorded on the video. **Duration:** 15 minutes for preparation, 5 minutes for training.
2. Theoretical material about the main characteristics and skills of adult educators, their role and training styles were presented in the second part of the seminar. **Duration:** 30 minutes.
3. Recorded tape was shown to the participants in the third part of the training. The participants had to use the theoretical material while describing the work of their colleagues. The pictures, presenting different training styles were hanged on the wall.



The participants had to mark with the colour dots (representing the trainer) the styles that trainers presented on the pictures.

Duration: 30 minutes.

Advantages and benefits

- ✓ The use of several training methods allowed the trainer to maintain the attention of the participants, made the presentation much more alive
- ✓ Active method when participants were training the participants was used instead of routine appeal: "please tell us which teaching styles do you recognise".
- ✓ Four participants had the chance to "step into the shoes" of trainer and trainee
- ✓ Using the PowerPoint presentation showed the participants the possibilities of IT technologies and raised the question of the competence of the trainers (knowledge of ICT and skills of using them)
- ✓ Video recording and analysis of videos revealed the advantages of using of the method: quick and exact reproduction of the action; the possibility to see yourself and compare your style with that of others
- ✓ The knowledge that there will be the video recording motivated the participants for better preparation and presentation
- ✓ The assignment raised the discussion on how the style trainer is affected by the personal character of the trainer, ethnical characteristics, pedagogical experience, the subject itself
- ✓ The rules of the group were discussed in the beginning of the training session. One of the rules was "everything what is happening in the group is the matter of the group". This agreement made the participants more safe

Possible problems

Quality of the feedback. Video recording of the activity was not designed for the improvement of the training skills. Therefore there was no feedback provided on the training skills it was used for the recognition of training styles. It is necessary to allocate enough time for feedback while using it for improving of training skills (at least twice as much as the activity itself).

Ethics. It is essential to agree on the group rules in the beginning of the training and to discuss the methods, which will be used during the training. Otherwise the participants could withdraw from the assignment.

Technical means. The trainer using technical means should be well prepared and sure that everything will work properly.

■■■ Art therapy or expression of creativity in the Estate Academy of Rumsiskes Museum (FHS)

Gita Sapranauškaite
Estate Academy of Rumsiskes Museum

Art Therapy – a treatment/education method based on art creation, expression of creativity.

Art is one of the oldest forms to express human's feelings and thoughts. Psychologists treat self-expression as one of the most important precondition for the human nature searching and display. Person who often has psychological problems is not able to see a real picture of him or others, to feel his (her) possibilities, express wishes, and have close relationships with others. The Art Therapy – a unique measure to know more about himself (herself), to stay with himself (herself). In the development of Art Therapy there are several main branches: psychoanalytic, humanistic, gestalt, adaptation, cognitive, behaviour. The character of the method could be both - direct or indirect, the content and the forms may differ depending on the group's needs (children, adolescents, adults and other target groups). We may talk about two variations of Art Therapy: individual and group work. The last one is used in the FHS work.

Aims:

Training of the communication skills

Recognizing the problem

Showing the creativity

Feeling self-confidence

So, using this method in education, we focus on the social skills that are needed in society, working life, interpersonal relationships. Those aims are especially important when dealing with the people from the social exclusion groups.

Participants:

A group of 20 persons physical handicapped.

Duration:

During 5-7 days courses of "Active psychosocial rehabilitation" 3-4 hours every day.

Methodology:

Training is based on non verbal communication

Training is in the group work only provided

Application of various ways creative expression (painting, painting on the silk, grass and line plasticity, ceramic and ct.) during training courses

Application direct and indirect learning methods

The trainer position to give participants a push and to give support during the courses

Innovative

Surveying the ways of the Art Therapy application in Estate Academy of Rumsiskes Museum curricula, first we'll present a few rather exceptional aspects:

Education place, environment, cultural/ethno cultural heritage as a material for learning.

The relation between the Art Therapy method and the place of Estate Academy of Rumsiskes Museum, the environment is very important. Subordination of the Lithuanian Open Folk Museum in Rumsiskes and Folk High School expresses the new tendencies in the general museum concept, openly meeting the principles of life long learning.

Museum (with the ethno cultural heritage exposed here) is a perfect cultural space for the study/educational processes. This cultural inheritance space, traditionally understood as a static one, operated by FHS becomes a certain oasis (cozy, beautiful landscape, restful sights of the idyllic village from the last centuries, closed territory delimiting you from the daily routine and speed) firmly goes together with introspection, awaking creativeness of a person.

The second aspect – directly connected with the place of the Art Therapy workshop – adaptation of the ethno cultural/cultural heritage (pottery, plastics of grass and flax, wood carving, traditional folk music, etc.) for the content.

During those courses *the exposition of the Museum becomes the teaching material of the workshops*. Thus, the Museum has a double effect on the customers and students. This is an ability to see immediately and in creative way the cultural and historical heritage – for the first ones, and – to get known with the active exposition of the museum, when visiting the workshops during the study period – for other ones.

The activities of the FHS is not only orientated towards the Art Therapy, however the experience we have accumulated reveals that even the short course makes an impact on the participants, not depending much on the social status, age, profession, etc. This method is often

used not revealing the aims of the workshop (therefore it may be just training session or, for example – the folk music evening In any case – it is not so important – to declare or not to declare the aims. First of all the activities in the FHS are dedicated for introinspection, relaxation, leisure time, playing with form, colour, sound. That's why even short (2 – 24 hours) Art Therapy course may work successfully, visibly implementing the aims.

Importance

We are presenting this method because:
it is close to the folk high school conception in general,
universal possibilities for application.

The art Therapy helps to find not typical way of solving problems and could be one of the factors to change positively social life, form holistic attitude towards human being. Interest in the Art Therapy reflects human's need to find natural, complex ways for re-creation self-treatment, self-education, harmonize introinspection with active life. This factor is especially stressed by the specialists emphasizing the importance of the "personal" or emotional intelligence in the modern society. This intelligence could display in 5 main areas:

- ✓ cognition of feelings,
- ✓ emotion management,
- ✓ ability to reach a goal,
- ✓ ability to recon feelings of others,
- ✓ intercommunication.

Even short courses based on this method ensure its effect, what is often evaluated by the participants saying: "as it happens, I can also do it" – even if he (she) realizes that personal ability for a second.

The Art Therapy is useful from the sociologic point of view. Flexibly reacting to the dynamic changes in social, economic, political and cultural conditions, it was created a differentiated system of services for various social groups when the humanistic values are in priority. This is a main axis connecting the FHS and the Art Therapy. We could confirm that referring to our work experience.

■■■ Dream-Work – A Path to Empowerment

Valgerður H. Bjarnadóttir
Iceland

Why work with dreams?

Self-empowerment or self-esteem rests upon self-knowledge and self-consciousness. A person who knows herself well, is conscious of her own strength and weaknesses, can easily develop power in her life, control her reactions to others and responses to her own feelings. Self-empowerment increases one's communication-skills, which again leads to a better feeling about oneself, and increased self-respect as well as respect for others. A growth-circle is set in motion. The overall aim for women attending Second Chance Schools, or other informal adult learning courses, is to increase their life-competence, their power over their own lives. Therefore all work that leads to increased self-knowledge is important.

Dreams have been with us since the beginning of human history, and they have played an important role in humans' study of self, our relation to and communication with our ever evolving environment. During most of our time sleeping, we dream, which adds up to approximately ¼ of our lives. Most dream-researchers today agree that when we dream we connect to our sub-consciousness, that which we know, but are not aware of. C.G. Jung proposed that we not only connect to our own un- or subconscious, but to the collective unconscious, the wisdom or knowledge collected by all humans over time.

Even if we are modest and simply assume that while we dream we can access knowledge about ourselves, our lives, feelings, hopes and fears, which we are not aware of while awake, it adds immeasurably to our possibilities of increased self-knowledge. However, dreams are not easily remembered in today's turmoil and even if we do remember our night stories, we need to learn to respect them, understand them and use them as a tool.

The Dream Work

The Web of Life – the instructors

In the Women's Learning Centre dream-work is part of a self-empowerment program called the *Web of Life*. This program was

developed by two social workers²; one with long clinical experience and years of consultation, the other with experience from clinical and group work in psychiatry (both adult and adolescence), awareness raising with women and adolescents, as well as higher education in dream work. The program has been the “heart” of the women’s studies since their beginning in 1994. Its main themes are women’s and personal history; recognizing and working with emotions; communication with self and others; women’s bodies, women’s health; self-esteem training; rights and responsibilities; creative expression; myths and stories as mirrors of self; and dream-work. Working methods are short lectures and discussions in the big group; group work, pair-work and guided meditations or visualizations. All these methods are used in the dream-work.

Working with emotions in groups - precautions

The most effective way to work with dreams in a school setting is in interactive groups. Each group should have a trained leader, i.e. a professional, to teach the working methods and lead the group work. Working with dreams is powerful and often great fun, but it can become traumatic for those who have experienced violence that has been suppressed, even since early childhood. The instructor must be fully aware of this danger, and take care when dealing with dreams that could trigger old trauma. When possible, two instructors work together so that a group of 12-20 women can be divided in two, each with a trained leader. If there is only one instructor, dream work should be done in the big group, although short exercises in pairs can also be fine when the group is a bit advanced.

Introduction - Remembering

Before the group work starts, it is important to give a brief introduction to dreams and dreaming. When do we dream? What are dreams? How can we learn to remember our dreams? In the Women’s Learning Centre we use one morning for this introduction and discussions around what dreams mean to the women. In Iceland, the usual way of working with dreams is to see them as foretelling the future. Dreams predicting the weather, sickness and even death, are a part of the culture. For most people, it is new to look at dreams as a way to self-knowledge. Therefore it is important to take some time for that dialogue. After the introduction the women are encouraged to notice their dreams for the coming week, write down what they remember, and bring a dream the following week. Almost always there

² The author and Karólína Stefánsdóttir, family counselor and social worker

is in the beginning at least one woman, who claims that she doesn't dream at all, but who during this first week remembers a dream.

Visualization – Active Imagination

As mentioned above, remembering our dreams clearly is not always easy in the stress and confusion of modern life. In order to help the women get in touch with their dreams, it is possible to use guided visualization or active imagination as a start to the group-work. This is done in relaxation, i.e. after entering into a relaxed state, which resembles the *alfa*-state of the brain just before we fall asleep. In their minds the women walk down steps toward the dream-scene. They enter the scene and can either simply look around and refresh their memory of the dream, or enter into a dialogue with a person or persons (even herself) from the dream. This can be a wonderful way to realize how the mind works while we're dreaming and a way for the woman to work with her dreams on her own in the future.

The Method

The group-work methods used, are based on the work of such dream experts as Robert Bosnak, Jeremy Taylor and Montague Ullman. All group members are free to share their dreams, as far as time allows, but only one dream is chosen to work on each time. The dreamer tells the dream (from a first person perspective and in the present tense), the others listen without interrupting, and pay close attention to their own emotional responses to the dream. Then all group members are free to ask clarifying questions, such as: What time of day is it? Are you alone in this setting? Do you know the person you're talking to? What is the colour of the house, etc? No speculative questions, interpretations or comments are allowed at this time.

Then dreamer repeats the dream, which has now been filled with details from the question and answer session. After that those group-members who feel like working on the dream, give feedback to the dreamer. Each tells what feelings the dream awakened in her, and then tells what the dream would mean to her, if it were her own dream. Example: "When you talked about entering the red house at dawn, I felt anticipation. If this were my dream, the red house would mean a new dangerous adventure, the development of my life that I'm hoping for but afraid of."

It is especially at this point that the leader/instructor is important. She must ensure that the group members keep to their own feelings

about the dream, and do not superimpose their projections on the dreamer. With this method everyone in the group can gain from only one dream, and the dreamer is free to figure out for herself which "interpretations" she chooses to adapt for herself. Very often the experience is that the dreamer gets a totally new and unexpected insight into her life story and her feelings about herself and others. If the group refrains from ever approaching the dream as the dreamer's personal experience, it feels much safer to share one's dream in such a setting. The temptation is however always there, to "give" the dreamer an interpretation. Therefore, the instructor's role is crucial.

The Results

From three to four sessions of dream-work in groups, the majority of the women have the basic skill and understanding to be able to use their own dreams as a path to empowerment. They will have relaxed into remembering and recording the dreams that stick with them upon awakening, although this does by no means indicate that they remember all their dreams. No one does. Some may have found a dream partner, someone with whom they can share their dreams. One of the best ways to learn about the hopes, dreams, fears and aggressions of oneself is simply telling a dream to a person who listens with attention and gives feedback without judgment or projected interpretation. Even if the only result is that they remember their dreams vaguely from time to time, they have taken huge steps to connect with their hidden emotions and source of self-knowledge. And again... it's great fun!

■■■ Some Notes about the Evaluation of Training Courses

Liudmila Mecajeva

Social Innovation Fund, Lithuania

Evaluation is essential at the end of the course. It should be used to review several aspects of the program, for example, organisation, teaching methods, trainer's performance, importance of using the CD-ROM for self-study etc. Evaluation is good tool for quality control, it is important that the high standards of such courses are not only maintained, but also gradually improved.

Another aspect of evaluation is trainee's performance and involvement itself. It is very important to give an opportunity to review after the trainees had been given such an amount of the information. The aim of such review/evaluation is to help women see their current situation, examine their strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly, overview their possible future options. The outcome of such reviews should form a basis of an action plan identifying a possible progress for each trainee.

What to evaluate?

- ✓ Trainer's strengths and weaknesses; methodical support; methods of delivery;
- ✓ Self- progress (learning how to balance work and home situation; identifying possible problems into looking for a job, etc).

For evaluation we suggest using a questionnaire to receive feedback from participants as well as using it for self- evaluation and personal self- assessment to check participant's own progress. Evaluation can also take place in a form of discussion/interview. Interview can take part in an individual form or in a group situation.

Note that this curriculum is only a framework for the Mobility Training Courses that can be used in any country. Trainers can only use parts that better fit the situation in the country and not use the whole module. That's why we suggest trainers to create a questionnaire that would better fit the group or an individual in the state or country.

Key questions can be used for developing a questionnaire for self-evaluation:

- ✓ Why did you attend this seminar?
- ✓ What were your expectations and hopes from this course?
- ✓ Did the seminar, as a whole, fulfil your expectations?
- ✓ What is your opinion of the sessions presented?
- ✓ Which parts of the course were the most useful and relevant for you?
- ✓ Which parts were new?
- ✓ What was difficult or troubling?
- ✓ What was enjoyable?
- ✓ Did you find the organising and course leading appropriate and satisfying?
- ✓ In a few words: What improvements would you like to see in the next course?

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