



# Erasmus+

## NEW-D GUIDELINES

prepared by  
Jugend am Werk Steiermark, AT  
with the support of and contributions by the  
NEW-D Project Partnership

**Project title:** New Didactical Models for Initial VET  
Training of Young Disadvantaged Persons to Reduce  
Drop-Out

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**New Didactical Models for Initial VET Training of  
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**NEW-D**

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## Introduction

**E**arly exit from education and training can have negative consequences for the European economy, for society and for the individual citizen. Often, insufficient skills or education and training levels lead to joblessness and, finally, poverty and social exclusion with all its problems. In particular, it is disadvantaged young people that are at risk of not being in education, employment or training (NEET).<sup>1</sup> In the process of keeping (disadvantaged) young people in formal education and training, a lot of pressure is being put on those responsible for teaching, training and tutoring this target group in schools, training institutions and companies. This is where the NEW-D project sets in. Based on the assumption that, very often, teachers/trainers/tutors have not been sufficiently equipped with adequate methods, instruments and tools, the NEW-D project aims to develop a 'new approach to education' for disadvantaged youth.

In the first phase of NEW-D, project partners undertook a research process to gather data from each partner country to gain insights into the experiences, opinions and sensitivities of young people towards formal education opportunities and appreciate the reasons why education drop-out occurs amongst this target group. Based on these research results<sup>2</sup>, the project consortium identified seven potential areas to support teachers/trainers/tutors in their work. Subsequently, the seven NEW-D Guidelines, which acknowledge the needs and views of the learners themselves, were

developed to provide practical hints on how the learning processes can be organised and implemented when dealing with disadvantaged young persons.

Addressing teachers/trainers/tutors in schools, training institutions and companies, the topics covered by the seven guidelines range from basic knowledge in learning theories and adaptations to the learning environment to classroom- and non-classroom-based work, the educator's role and conflict resolution. Each guideline follows a logical structure: A core-description of the guideline is followed by a more detailed description and a description of the foreseen implications of the guideline on the VET process. One or two practical examples are given and the background from the NEW-D research phase provided. Finally, the graphic design provides easy access to the information in this booklet, which is available in all partner languages<sup>3</sup>.

These NEW-D Guidelines are the basis for the ten units of the NEW-D Curriculum for a thirty-hours' training programme as part of the final project phase. The training programme will provide teachers/trainers/tutors with more in-depth information and possibilities of enriching their teaching/training/tutoring process to better react to the needs of (disadvantaged) young people. If you are interested in this training programme, do not hesitate to get in touch with the project representative from your country or with the project coordinator.



<sup>1</sup> Cf. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/de/events-and-projects/projects/early-leaving-education-and-training>.

<sup>2</sup> Available for download at <http://www.new-d.eu>.

<sup>3</sup> Partner languages are Danish, English, German, Italian, Slovenian, Turkish.

## Guideline 1 ON LEARNING

**In order to understand how young people learn it is essential to know how they process information; this includes some knowledge on the external and internal learning processes and the associated three core dimensions of content, incentive and interaction.**

*(Partner: Fritid & Samfund, Denmark)*

### How Young People Process Information<sup>4,5</sup>

The modern concept of how we learn includes a very extensive and complicated set of processes. Learning can broadly be defined as 'any process that in living organisms leads to permanent capacity change and which is not solely due to biological maturation or ageing'.<sup>6</sup>

When a person learns something new it implies the integration of two very different processes: an external interaction process between the learner and the environment he or she is living in, and an internal psychological process of elaboration and acquisition in which new impulses are connected with the results of prior learning. It is important to know these processes because both of them must be actively involved if any learning is to take place. Many theories about learning only deal with one of these processes and, therefore, do not cover the entire field of learning. When a person learns something new it implies the integration of two very different processes: an external interaction process between the learner and the environment he or she is living in, and an internal psychological process of elaboration and acquisition in which new impulses are connected with the results of prior learning. It is important to know these processes because both of them must be actively involved if any learning is to take place. Many theories about learning only deal with one of these processes and, therefore, do not cover the entire field of learning.

As a part of both the external interaction process as well as the internal psychological process, learning will generally involve the following three dimensions:

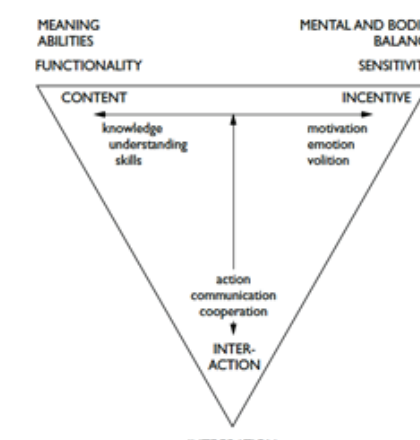
1. the content dimension;
2. the incentive dimension and
3. the social dimension of communication and co-operation.

The Danish researcher Knud Illeris, one of the leading thinkers on the way people learn, has

developed a coherent overall theory about the three dimensions of learning and a model to illustrate the content of the three dimensions. In vocational education, the focus usually lies on the learning content. However, the incentive function is also crucial; it is very important how the learners experience their learning situations. In addition, the value of the teaching/training/tutoring also depends on the interaction process between the young learners and the social and cultural environment they are a part of. If the interaction in the lesson/at the workplace is not adequate and acceptable to the learners, this might create problems in the classroom/at the workplace, and students could get a negative impression of their teachers/trainers/tutors or of school/work in general.

In his work, Knud Illeris is inspired by the Swiss philosopher Jean Piaget, who is famous for his studies on cognitive development. Piaget argues that people produce knowledge and form meaning based upon their experiences<sup>7</sup> According to him, there are two ways in which children and young people can learn: assimilation<sup>8</sup> and accommodation<sup>9</sup>.

The way that young people learn is a combination between the assimilation and accommodation processes in an effort to create meaning and consistency in their lives.



<sup>4</sup> Cf. Illeris, Knud (2008): Transfer of Learning in the Learning Society. International Journal of Lifelong Education (In press).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Illeris, Knud (2013): Transformative Learning and Identity. Routledge. New York.

<sup>6</sup> Illeris, Knud (2007): How We Learn: Learning and Non-learning in School and Beyond. London/New York: Routledge, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Piaget, Jean (1952 and 1936): The Origins of Intelligence in Children. New York: International Universities Press.

<sup>8</sup> Assimilation describes a learning process where the learner adapts new information and incorporates it with his/her existing knowledge and skills; he/she expands his/her understanding and knowledge of the subject.

<sup>9</sup> Accommodation describes a learning process in which new information a learner is taking in does not fit to his/her existing knowledge and skills; he/she needs to rethink and change his/her understanding of the world and his/her self-perception.

As has turned out in the NEW-D research study, many learners in the VET system see it as a major problem that too many teachers/trainers/tutors only focus on the learners' abilities to pass an examination; they do not sufficiently take into account the personal needs and problems that their students have.

One of the explanations for the high drop-out rate in VET may, therefore, be that many teachers/trainers/tutors are not adequately aware of how important the incentive and the interaction dimensions are for young people's learning and motivation.

Not focussing on one of the three above-mentioned dimensions can be one reason for young people to drop out of the educational system. Therefore, if teachers/trainers/tutors manage to incorporate the three above-mentioned dimensions and consider the two forms of learning, they will be able to support

the learners' engagement in the entire learning process.  
The young learners will find themselves more involved and empowered; learning will not happen to them but take place with them.

Example: Preparing a Course in Creating a Website



The students learn how to work together and how to deal with their resistance to learning.



PC for every student.



Depending on the size of the classroom/seminar room.



The planning must always include the following dimensions: (1) The content dimension: What kinds of skills and knowledge do the students need to learn (e. g. according to the curriculum)? (2) The incentive dimension: What kind of motivation can the students have? Ask them about their attitudes towards IT-training. Try to find out what resistance there can be in relation to the training. (Some of the students, for instance, might find it difficult to create websites, some of them might not see the purpose of it, some of them might be afraid to show that they are not used to working with websites, etc.) Try to find a way to overcome this resistance. (3) The integration dimension: Find out how the students can work together and teach each other.

Example: Word Training



The students learn to pass their knowledge on to their peers.



No specific material is needed.



Depending on the size of the classroom/seminar room.



Before the teacher/trainer/tutor starts the training he/she asks the students what they know about the subject and to what extent (= content dimension). Then he/she will try to integrate the existing knowledge into the training process by asking the ones who know more to assist those who know less: Learners who know more can show what they are able to do and pass on their knowledge to their peers (rewarding sensation = incentive dimension). The learners who know less are being taught new knowledge by their peers (gaining knowledge = incentive dimension). The two peers work together and, later, talk to their colleagues and/or the teacher/trainer/tutor about it (= interaction dimension).

## Guideline 2

# LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

**Creating a comfortable learning environment suitable for practical activities, including the use of interactive learning tools such as ICT and digital media resources and allowing for work in small groups can help increase the learners' motivation and retention.**

*(Partner: EGECED, Turkey)*

### Room, Workplace, Smart Classroom

In VET, schools and the workplace are amongst the most important learning and living environments for young learners. Factors such as the school/work environment, the relationship between teachers/trainers/tutors and the learners, (school) work, and peer interaction can have a significant influence on the learners' success and motivation; therefore, these factors should not be underestimated.

Studies have shown that learning environments are closely related to a number of aspects of learning, such as personal achievements, motivation, and goal achievement. Good environments can promote students' learning motivation and behaviour and they can affect students' academic efficacy and adaptation. A positive environment can not only boost the learners' self-esteem, but also facilitate the acquisition of social skills and stabilise social groups. A healthy environment at school and work contributes to a relaxed-learning environment, thus helping the learn-

ers develop confidence and mutual respect. It can help increase their participation and their sense of belonging.<sup>10</sup>

Every learning experience occurs within an environment in which the learner interacts with the content, knowledge, skill, and/or expert. By ensuring multiple channels of communication, engagement and collaboration within the design of a course, teachers/trainers/tutors provide a richly textured environment that can accommodate a full range of student needs and learning styles.<sup>11</sup>

From that perspective, ICT can serve as a mediator between individuals and the social environment. The use of ICT and its integration into educational institutions makes it possible to cover the same material with different types of learners in mind. Students are able to work at their own pace and, even, select the kind of exercise, which they find suits them best.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/josh.12263/pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Cf. [https://www.bemidjistate.edu/its/elearning/resources/articles/files/Ten\\_Core\\_Principles-Boettcher.pdf](https://www.bemidjistate.edu/its/elearning/resources/articles/files/Ten_Core_Principles-Boettcher.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Cf. [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0958344000000215](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0958344000000215)



The NEW-D project aims to develop a new approach to education for disadvantaged youth. The empirical research conducted via questionnaires, focus groups and face-to-face interviews in partner countries helped to understand what young people need in terms of their learning environments.

The NEW-D research results on the VET process showed that learners in partner countries look for the following qualities in a 'perfect learning environment' in VET:

- comfortability;
- suitability for practical activities;
- use of interactive learning tools; and
- suitability for work in small groups.

There are many other qualities related with the learning environment that can be added to this list. However, this list represents the actual needs of the research participants from the NEW-D partner countries.

As has been described above, the 'suitable' environment can be an important factor for the success of the learning process.

The following examples demonstrate such kinds of 'suitable' physical environments for VET learning.

Example: Integrating interactive learning tools



Integrating interactive learning tools and digital media resources into the physical learning environment to increase the effectiveness of the teaching/training/tutoring process and to improve the learners' motivation and learning. The use of ICT and digital media resources can help teachers to convey subjects more effectively while keeping students' attention alive. Interactive learning tools increase students' involvement in the learning process.



ICT resources.



According to group of learners.



Teachers/trainers/tutors should be comfortable using a range of modern technologies. New technologies are interesting for young people; to ensure their interest in the learning content computers, laptops, smart devices, and interactive whiteboards should be used where available to deliver the teaching/training/tutoring.

A very practical example for classroom lessons can be to use the wallwisher.com website for 'online' brainstorming. Ask participants to use their own cell phones and post their ideas about the topic of 'using smart devices in the classroom' and share their findings through this website.

Example: Think-pair-share method<sup>13</sup>



Suggest to participants small group work methods which stimulate interaction with other learners.

Young learners seem to prefer smaller groups with more familiarity, solidarity, collaboration, and comprehension (active listening) amongst all the members (both learners and teachers/trainers/tutors). Research suggests that a deeper learning requires motivation and active participation of the learners as well as interaction with others<sup>14</sup>. Creating a learning environment that is suitable for work in small groups and stimulates interaction with other learners can be a supporting factor. Work in smaller groups also allows learners, based on their skills and abilities, to work cooperatively with their peers. Furthermore, teachers/trainers/tutors will be able to motivate, encourage active learning and help develop critical thinking, communication, and decision-making skills.



No particular material needed.



According to group of learners.



First, ask your learners to think about a particular issue (agreed before) on their own. Then, ask them to pair up to discuss and compare their ideas. Finally, ask the learners to share their ideas in a large group discussion.

Teachers/trainers/tutors should think about the advantages of this method. This method might suit shy people better since they have the possibility to present their result in a smaller group before presenting them to the entire group.

In order to create a learning environment that is suitable for work in smaller groups, teachers/trainers/tutors should allow these groups to work independently and without interrupting other groups. This can be maintained by providing enough space for each group. Teachers/trainers/tutors should also be aware of the disruptive behaviours inside a small group and always pay short visits to the groups in order to direct them in 'actual' group work.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. [www.teachervision.com](http://www.teachervision.com)  
<sup>14</sup> Cf. <http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLT0021.pdf>



## Guideline 3 WORKING OUTSIDE

**Well-planned, non-classroom-based work can help to provide learners with a form of learning that answers to their needs and requirements as stated by themselves and by scientists.**

*(Partner: Jugend am Werk Steiermark, Austria)*

### Pedagogy, Tools, Approaches Outside the Seminar Room

'Non-classroom-based work' means to provide young learners with the possibility to gather abilities and knowledge outside their indoor learning environment. Although teachers/trainers/tutors guide and supervise these kinds of activities, their presence during the activity is not always necessary during the entire activity.

A 'field trip' is a typical form of non-classroom-based work and was widely demanded by young learners in the NEW-D research. It can be defined as any teaching and learning excursion outside the classroom/seminar room. There are two types of field trips: physical and virtual ones. Physical field trips, on the one hand, can take place just outside the training building, in outdoor education centres, parks, protective wet lands, science centres, museums, stores, fire stations, clinics, agricultural facilities, etc. Therefore, numerous activities can be summed up under the

term of 'field trip'. They include excursions, study visits, going on a trail, outside team building activities, etc. Virtual field trips, on the other hand, are computer-based trips and need special software.

Very often but not necessarily, non-classroom-based work is associated with group work activities. Small sub-groups solve tasks and make the results available to the entire group for utilisation. Group work activities are purposeful and targeted, they involve social interaction and mutual understanding. They focus on cooperative learning, on learning from each other and on team skills. In addition, learners get the possibility to actually experience things, to think out of the box and to broaden their horizons. They practice their communication and social skills, everyday behaviour patterns and can gain factual knowledge on certain topics.

The research conducted as part of the NEW-D project has shown that drop-out is higher in countries that rely heavily on academically-oriented second-level education. The need is emphasised to focus on the use of less formal, alternative methods such as work placement, practical workshops, etc. This is backed up by good practice examples. These VET programmes concentrate on a combination of classroom and non-classroom-based work, on practical workshops, role-play and simulations, on excursions and field trips in the form of both individual as well as group work exercises. Students are encouraged to use knowledge gained from project work, everyday life, past experiences and their social and cultural backgrounds to build their competences and enhance their employment prospects.

Teachers, trainers or tutors in this process should take on the role of activators or change managers, as John Hattie puts it. Therefore, instead of con-

tinuously asking students to study worksheets, vocabulary lists and long-term assignments with no short-term goals, teachers, trainers and tutors should try to use learning resources that are practical in nature.

Field trips are recognised as important moments in learning; a shared social experience that provides the opportunity for students to encounter and explore novel things in an authentic setting. Among the many potential outcomes, research has shown that field trips expose students to new experiences and can increase interest and engagement in science regardless of prior interest in a topic<sup>15</sup>, result in affective gains such as more positive feelings towards a topic<sup>16</sup> and are experiences that can be recalled and useful long after a visit<sup>17</sup>.

Field trips provide a connection between theory and reality and can be deployed as an introduction to a subject or as a culminating activity. Field trips deliver an authentic learning experience. They offer the opportunity to experience things and to learn with all senses.

This information from the NEW-D desk research was confirmed by the project's empirical research. When participants in the partner countries were asked to reflect on their preferred learning method, the majority said they preferred practical project and group work exercises, engaging in debates and group discussion, experiential, authentic and interactive learning, experimenting and trying new things and individual as well as small-group learning. Also research work, study visits and field trips were mentioned as favourite ways to learn. Being active, learning by doing and experiencing success in challenging situations is what disadvantaged learners in VET want and need.

In that, it is a methodology entirely different from classroom-based learning.

Apart from acquiring job- and knowledge-related skills, field trips can have a very positive impact on the learners' soft skills. They improve self-confidence, self-assurance and self-responsibility, they deepen the feeling of being part of a team and encourage team communications and they stabilise teacher-learner confidence and the feeling of reliability. Moreover, field trips can support the development of processes to reach individual and/or common goals and give a sense of immediate achievement. Last but not least field trips can help learners to find out more about themselves and the roles they prefer to take on, such as leaders, followers, opponents, outsiders etc.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Kisiel, 2005; Bonderup Dohn, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995 and Nadelson & Jordan, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Salmi, 2003 and Falk & Dierking, 1997 and Wolins, Jensen, & Ulzheimer, 1992.

## Example: Fröbelturm



The Fröbelturm activity is a good practice for team building at any training setting. It can also be a starting point for team-based learning. In a team, it is crucial for all individuals to trust each other. This activity also fosters mutual support in problem-solving situations.<sup>18</sup>



6 pieces of wooden logs; 1 bow with a metal rod; 1 plate with 12 holes and 24 strings of 2 metres in length.<sup>19</sup>



Up to 24.



The learners need to construct and reduce of a tower in a companionship. First, they form a circle, in which the wooden logs are built up in such a way that the indentation is in the upper third. Then, every participant takes one or more strings and tightens it so that the hanger is positioned above the wooden logs. Now the bow must be connected with the wooden logs; those are raised and then placed on the next wooden log. It is very important that the participants hold their strings on the back end without reducing the length of the string. The group decides initially if a log of wood is allowed to be built up once it has fallen down, or if it has to be removed. Possible variations could be to rebuild the tower; not to allow for speaking during the exercise or working with one hand/their left or right hand only.

## Example: Scavenger Hunt



A scavenger hunt can be integrated in the learning process for young people with different focusses in mind. Learners might be asked to collect information and to pass it on to their peers. A question for the group of learners could, for example, be: 'What are the most popular apprenticeship trainings in your Province?' In order to answer this question, teenagers will need to go to the chamber of commerce and enquire about the topic. In addition to the actual knowledge gained, the scavenger hunt activity also aims at achieving peer-to-peer education/learning.



Depending on the activity. For example, a list with questions for every group/individual; a mobile phone to take pictures of the interview partners; a map of the city.



Up to 20 participants (working individually or in small groups of two learners).



Learners are asked to find answers to several questions by exploring their city/region/etc. in small groups. They (either individuals or very small teams) compete to see who can obtain the most items from a list. These 'items' can be just about anything (incl. information) that is linked with the teaching/training/tutoring topic. To make things harder, teachers/trainers/tutors can think of rules to be followed such as asking for evidence. The winners are those who provide the most items on the list, who return with the most valuable information (selected by the group) etc. Scavenger hunts can take place just about anywhere, from outdoor parks and neighbourhoods to indoor malls.

<sup>18</sup> For more information on Friedrich Frobel, please see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich\\_Froebel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Froebel).

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.waelder-holzspielzeug.com/de/die-welt-des-holzspielzeugs/fr%C3%B6belturm>.

## Guideline 4 WORKING INSIDE

**Experiential and authentic learning approaches packed in practical tools and methodologies can support teachers/trainers/tutors to work successfully with the target group of disadvantaged young learners.**

*(Partner: Oscar-Tietz-Schule - OSZ Handel II, Germany)*

### **Pedagogy, Tools, Approaches Inside the Seminar Room**

Using mixed methodologies for learning in a classroom setting, teachers/trainers/tutors should not just aim to improve academic but also practical skills building self-confidence, self-efficacy and engagement levels amongst young people resulting in more positive learning outcome for students. Many teach-

ers/trainers/tutors already have some experience of working in groups and on particular projects; this unit will offer further insights and advanced practices in particular for teachers/trainers/tutors working with students at risk of early school leaving.

One of the main results from the first research phase of the NEW-D project emerging from the focus groups was the value placed by young people on group and project work. Young people indicated that they are very enjoyable formats for learning, when the group dynamic is managed, appropriate and inclusive. Focus group participants in almost all countries also prioritised group work as their

preferred learning style. These young people placed a high value on experiential and authentic learning, which adds instant practical value to their acquired theoretical knowledge. In this way, young people also prioritised activity in the delivery of this type of training. They want to be active and learn in practical workshops.

For teachers to work in this way, they need to be open-minded, flexible with the methods and break from the perceived traditional ways of doing things in the classroom. Like trying anything new teachers also need to be supported and encouraged and not be fearful of introducing new approaches and methodologies within the classroom. It is recommended that teachers, in the first instance, find appropriate tasks for their chosen subjects (not every subject is suitable for this approach); therefore, some examples of appropriate activities are detailed in the section below. Based on our research, we recommend that, where possible, teachers involve young people in the planning and execution of the tasks within the classroom, starting small with simple tasks and exercises and then building them up over time. When working in a group setting, this work needs to be moderated and facilitated by the teacher to ensure that there is fair and bal-

anced contribution for all students and that the roles within the group work are defined from the outset, preventing one or two students from taking over. Teachers need to be given time to plan lessons in this way and encouraged to experiment with these methodologies and, in turn, evaluate the experience of both the learner and the learning outcomes achieved. Coaching through the practical exercises and good classroom management can help change young peoples' behaviour in a way that supports their own goals. The main goal should be mutually agreed on and there should be a balanced relationship between students and students as well as students and teachers that foster the autonomy of the students. In this approach, the teacher helps the students to explore the issues and the possible options available, but does not direct the activity solely.

Example: Setting Up a Mini Company



Setting up a mini company, preferably in their field of expertise, will provide your learners with a very authentic picture of how things really work. The students will have the possibility to utilise their (acquired) skills and knowledge, their creativity and their talents. This activity can be a perfect example for integrating theoretical knowledge into the practical world.



Depending on the activity.



Various group sizes are possible.



Detailed planning on the part of the teachers/trainers/tutors and good cooperation amongst them will be necessary to guide the students through the activity. Subject areas like maths, languages, sciences, business studies, arts, etc. can all be covered by this exercise. Depending on the actual activity, students need to brainstorm ideas, develop plans, set goals, create time schedules, do the budgeting, etc. Finally, a little start-up might emerge and find its way onto the market.

More Ideas for Activities

- Campaign for a social issue (Social and Civic Competence)
- Local tour guide for new immigrants (Social and Civic Competence)
- Researching your Family Tree (History, Identify and Research Skills)
- Running a fundraiser to organise and self-fund an educational trip (cake sale, sponsored activity/event, etc.)



## Guideline 5 MY ATTITUDE

**A positive attitude and approach towards learners attributes towards creating a particularly motivating learning environment and helps to prevent drop-out from the learning pathway.**

*(Partner: FormAzione Co & So Network, Italy)*

### **The Teacher's/Trainer's/Tutor's Attitude and Approach**

Teachers might want to reflect on their attitudes towards their students and, if necessary, change them to make the learning experience more positive for young people.

A supportive, friendly and approachable

teacher who is competent and professional in his/her subject and can use a variety of methodologies taking into account students' individual needs can make a big difference in preventing drop-out.

One of the main findings of the NEW-D research study shows that teachers'/trainers'/tutors' attitudes towards their students is crucial to passing on a good education and that a supportive learning environment could prevent drop-out of young people in formal education.

The importance of teachers'/trainers'/tutors' attitudes is also shown by the results of the empirical research carried out during the initial project phase: The majority of students who had dropped out from formal education, blamed teachers for not caring about them or for not dedicating enough attention to every single pupil because of over-crowded classes. In addition, they criticise that they have not received enough positive feedback from teaching/training/tutoring staff in the course of their training.

During the research phase and the focus group interviews students described very clearly the characteristics of an 'ideal' teacher who could support them on their educational path. They said that teachers/trainers/tutors should be...

- supportive, i. e. able to create a supportive learning environment in which students are not intimidated or fearful of asking for help. Also, teachers should not show favouritism toward certain students but, instead, be interested in the personal development of all their students and their personal and professional circumstances and ambitions.
- friendly, i. e. showing patience and respect towards students, as they need to be viewed and regarded as adults by their teachers, and not spoken-down to, disrespected or their wishes ignored.
- approachable and give students the feeling that they can trust their teacher/trainer/tutor and speak to him/her if they are struggling with school or personal problems.
- motivating by demonstrating professional competence and a passion for their subjects, which comes through in their teaching styles. (Research findings show that caring teachers with high expectations for all their students' successes are associated with lower dropout rates.)

From the above-mentioned research results we can deduce that it is essential to create a welcoming and pleasant working atmosphere in the classroom/at the workplace. Therefore, we must focus on improving teachers' skills in empowerment (how to support learners in becoming self-responsible and self-determined), effective communication (with young people, also from different cultural, social,

financial, etc. backgrounds) and motivation (how to support students' wish to stay in their training pathway).

Moreover, teachers/trainers/tutors might want to improve their skills in orientation and guidance with a particular focus on career planning and skills assessment.

### Example: The Sandwich Feedback Model<sup>20</sup>



The NEW-D research shows that a supportive and friendly attitude by teachers/trainers/tutors could prevent drop-out of young people in formal education. This includes effective communication techniques that teachers should be aware of and apply in their daily work. Providing feedback with this model allows teachers/trainers/tutors to be positive and constructive rather than negative and criticising.



Examples and exercises to practise the model.



Any number; groups of three.



First, explain the 'Sandwich Feedback' method<sup>21</sup> in detail, provide and discuss examples. Then, divide the group in smaller groups of three persons each and ask the participants to practice their feedback technique by giving each other a sandwich feedback on a lesson/activity/etc. The third person in the group acts as an observer. Roles within the small groups can be changed. Results can be discussed in the big group afterwards.

### Example: The Headstand Exercise<sup>22</sup>



In order to show a supportive attitude in teaching/training/tutoring it can be very important to be able to change your point of view and look at persons from another perspective. This exercise can help seeing your students and things they do (or do not do) in a different light; it gives you the opportunity to think in a way different from the one you would usually think.



Paper, pens.



Any; individual work.



First, participants are asked to write down, individually, all their ambivalent thoughts regarding a certain negative issue/person. The question 'What is good about...' can help to break the ice. (E.g.: The issue is the absenteeism of Patrick, one of your students. You might want to ask yourself, 'What is good about Patrick not being in class?')

It is important that participants are honest about their thoughts and even write down things that might not be seen as something a good teacher/trainer/tutor would think/say. That way, they may detect some important hints: Maybe they even contribute to Patrick's staying away from school?

After the self-reflection the trainer can organise a group discussion (in groups of three or four, or in the entire group) in which participants can share their thoughts and ideas and get valuable feedback.

<sup>20</sup> For more information, please see <http://www.mindacademy.com/nlp/sandwich-feedback-model>.

<sup>21</sup> The three essential parts of the Sandwich Feedback: (1) Give positive feedback; praise. (2) Give constructive criticism; hints on what can help the other person. (3) End positively.

<sup>22</sup> School Inclusion project (LLP/Comenius): [http://schoolinclusion.pixel-online.org/training\\_package.php?tr1=EN&tr2=2](http://schoolinclusion.pixel-online.org/training_package.php?tr1=EN&tr2=2)

## Guideline 6 BUILDING BRIDGES

**Since their role is moving from one of a leader of education to one of a facilitator of learning, teachers/trainers/tutors might also want to implement a broader perspective into their jobs as educators.**

*(Partner: Meath Partnership, Ireland  
Jugend am Werk Steiermark, Austria)*

### Linking School, Work and Private Environment

Education is not something reserved solely for the home, school or workplace but rather seen as an ecosystem comprising all three. This ecosystem is centred within the local community, and in today's educational

environment the role of the teacher/trainer/tutor is a vital bridge linking any two of these three interconnections and also linking all three.

One of the main findings of the NEW-D research study shows that respondents would like their teachers/trainers/tutors to be interested in their students' lives and have their best interests at heart; they should prioritise the personal development of their students, as well as exam results and achieving the curriculum learning outcomes.

In addition, young people expressed an interest in labour market-oriented and industry-savvy career advice offered to young people, emphasising the importance of education in

securing a good job later in life, and making recommendations on future career paths following secondary education. In the NEW-D curriculum, this could take the form of a life road-map coupled with a stakeholder map highlighting the availability of local community and work-based services targeting and working with young people.

Linking school, home and work life provides for the improved integration of education into the life of the learners. It proposes a holistic system of education and offers relevance for the learner and, in turn, can have a motivating impact. If the young persons can recognise the value of education and link it with their future life prospects, it can help to encourage the learners to remain in education, sufficiently long enough to achieve the required qualifications.

When we manage to link these three elements within the aforementioned ecosystem, young people realise that their needs and requirements are recognised and appreciated and that the required supports are in place to help them achieve their potential irrespective of their academic performance.

Example: Life Road-Map



The aim of this activity is to link the learner's worlds of education, work and family life. This activity provides a practical tool for teachers/trainers/tutors to respond to the expressed needs of learners in terms of their future options, be it education, work or private life.



Paper, pens, markers.



This activity is best implemented within small groups of up to eight to ten participants.



- Step 1: Using paper and markers, young people are invited to draw a circle in the middle of the page, and using a mind-mapping type structure identify their current and past position in terms of supports from family, friends, teachers/coaches and how they view themselves in terms of education, home and work-life.
- Step 2: Ask the young persons to describe briefly where they would like to see themselves in 1, 3 and 5 years using a timeline (taking the most positive view possible).
- Step 3: Taking into account the results of Step 1 and Step 2, ask the young person to identify what supports are available to them to achieve their desires and what challenges are in their way.
- Step 4: At the end, invite the young person to step into the shoes of themselves in five years' time and describe what their life is like – what do they see, what do they hear, what are they doing, etc.
- The initial exercise should have a series of follow-ups with further work on the individual Life Road-Maps.



## Guideline 7

# RESOLVING CONFLICT

**Resolving conflict effectively in a learning environment requires a combination of well-developed social and emotional skills, which include managing your own emotions, understanding others' perspectives, communicating clearly and engaging in cooperative problem-solving in order to reach fair decisions.**

*(Partner: Meath Partnership, Ireland)*

### Conflict Resolution and Mediation

As part of the NEW-D project and training curriculum for VET teachers/trainers/tutors, the two modules based on this guideline will focus on conflict resolution and mediation in a learning environment. Focussing on both learner-learner conflicts as well as learner-teacher/trainer/tutor conflicts, the units will deal with a variety of sub-topics:

- How conflict impacts on behaviour.
- How to deal effectively with bullying - prevention and intervention.
- The dynamic and theory of conflict.
- Successful interventions.
- Different personal conflict style.
- How to develop a better way to handle conflict.
- How to manage successfully in conflict.
- How to use mediation skills in the class-room.

That way, teachers/trainers/tutors will be supported in developing their personal conflict management skills, in exploring strategies for managing emotions, bullying and allegations of bullying, in gaining confidence in managing conflict successfully, and in reflecting on how appropriate organisational conflict resolution policies and procedures in their organisations might be implemented and/or improved.

The units will be delivered in a workshop format using reflective exercises, role play and practical activities as much as possible. Participants will be referred to the NEW-D handbook and introduced to a range of online resources and materials.

According to the NEW-D research study, young people leave education for a range of social, economic, familial and personal reasons. Through the research process, young people highlighted that exclusion from school activities, bullying, conflict, and a sense of not belonging amongst peers were some of the contributory factors in their decision to leave or drop out of school.

When asked what would have encouraged them to stay in school, an overwhelming majority of respondents answered that if the teachers have had been more patient and en-

gaged with them in a friendly and approachable manner... and if they have had been more pro-active in combatting bullying then they would have stayed in education. Student engagement theory suggests that students who perceive themselves to be connected to their school, or have a sense of belonging, are more likely to stay in education than students who are disengaged. On this basis, the NEW-D project consortium agreed to include a unit on Conflict Resolution and Mediation in the teacher training curriculum to be developed in the next project phase.

Empowering young people to develop critical judgement and participate confidently in school involves teaching personal, social and conflict management skills. These socio-psychological skills of self-awareness, empathy,

and critical judgement provide an important basis for the development of young people and can be argued as essential skills for all teachers and trainers in VET settings.

Example: Conflict Close-Up Game<sup>23</sup>



The purpose of the example is to understand our initial reactions to conflict and consider how our reactions may influence the outcome of the conflict. This is a simple exercise in the context of NEW-D to begin the conversation about conflict in a group setting. It can be introduced as an ice-breaker at the start of the session and then repeated as an evaluation exercise at the end of the session.



No particular material needed.



This exercise can be implemented with a group of five to 18 participants.



Procedure: Stand in the centre of the room and announce the following to the group: I am conflict. Consider how you typically react when you experience a personal conflict. Position yourself, in relation to me, somewhere in the room in a way that conveys your initial response to a conflict. Pay attention to your body language as well as your distance from the conflict. Tips: Use this activity twice, once near the beginning of the session and then again at the end, to get a visual picture regarding changes in positions as a result of considering conflict differently.

Discussion Questions

- 1. What are some reasons you are standing where you are?
- 2. If where you are standing signifies your initial reaction, where might you stand after taking some time to think about the conflict?
- 3. What are some things that would cause you to move?
- 4. How might our reactions influence the course of the conflict?

<sup>23</sup> The Big Book of Conflict Resolution Games: Quick, Effective Activities to Improve Communication, Trust, and Collaboration. Mary Scannell, 2010. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

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