



# CULTURE EQUITY MODEL IN ADULT EDUCATION

## CEM-AE

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Pedagogical guidelines for teachers/trainers  
of migrant women/women  
from ethnic minorities

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PEDAGOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS / TRAINERS OF MIGRANT  
WOMEN AND WOMEN FROM ETHNIC MINORITIES

By the consortium of  
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**Name:** Culture Equity Model in Adult Education (CEM-AE)

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## PREFACE

The '**Culture Equity Model**' - **Pedagogical Guidelines for Teachers / Trainers of Migrant Women and Women from Ethnic Minorities** was compiled by the consortium of ALMA-DC Grundtvig project between 2012 and 2013.

The 'Culture Equity Model in Adult Education' addresses teachers/trainers whose learners are women migrants/women from ethnic groups and contains innovative methodology characterised by the principles of liberal adult education such as learner-centred approach, course design emphasising on the success of the learner in achieving their goal rather than the transmission of the content to the learner. The model CEM-AE focuses on culture-friendly and gender-friendly approaches in adult education.

Representing the European dimension, the consortium consists of the following organisations:

**'EPICENTRE' S.A.(EL)**, established in 1995, is an accredited National VET Organisation. It designs, coordinates and implements vocational training courses in Environment, Civilisation, Athletics, Mass Media, Economy, Administration, IT Skills, Technical, Transport, Health, Tourism, Farming, and Education. It has implemented several EU projects. It specialises in adult education addressing the unemployed, employed, and disadvantaged groups especially migrants/refugees at national level. It has implemented 3 major projects for immigrants/refugees. It has developed training methodologies for trainers concerning equal opportunities & gender equity, and has published innovative practices and job profiles in VET. It has accumulated experience mainly in designing educational guidelines for courses leading to qualifications in new job profiles, designing and developing e-learning tools and pedagogical methodologies in VET. EPICENTRE S.A. was awarded with Helsinki Award in 2006 as partner in ESO-CSA LdV project.

**ATHENA (CZ)** is an NGO located in the region Moravia – Silesia and focused on empowerment and all-round support, training and coaching of women including guidance for self-directed learning for middle-aged women, and development of e-learning courses for

women. ATHENA is a member of a regional network of adult education providers and cooperates with relevant regional institutions (development agencies, universities, municipalities, employment offices, etc.) and with umbrella organisations in Prague on national projects supporting women. ATHENA's training know-how meets the learning needs of disadvantaged groups such as seniors and ethnic minorities with the aim to support their integration into society. These activities include the support and training of ethnic minorities (i.e. courses and guidance for people with different cultural backgrounds and their teachers and trainers); general training and courses of self-defence for older women; methodologies for teachers of seniors; training supporting the development and maintenance of the creativity and mental skills of seniors. ATHENA was awarded with Helsinki Award in 2006 as partner in ESO-CSA LdV project and with the winning award Quality Seal 2011 for the project LdV-partnership "Competences for Culturally Sensitive Care" by the National Agency for European Projects in Czech Republic.

**IBS (DE)** is an SME in Brandenburg dealing with software development, further education of university graduates, further education & management consultancy for SMEs. It has long experience with EU programmes. The further education courses offered include IT, commercial management, and language acquisition. IBS coordinated the LdV pilot projects EMES, CEMES, ESO-CSA and ESO-CRS. In the LdV project CEMES, a certification system for management competences in SMEs was developed. The ESO-CSA project intends to create a system which can identify, assess, and acknowledge specialist competences in SMEs, also acquired through non-formal learning. This project received the Helsinki Award 2006. In the ESO-CRS project, an internet-based solution for the recognition of competencies was created. IBS has the quality management system DIN EN ISO 9001. IBS has realised a project for migrants from the former Soviet Union which was funded by the ESF with co-financing from the ministry of economics.

**INVESLAN (ES)** is a private research company, specialised in the fields of training, employment and management. The main working fields are: training, professional training and adults education; ICT mainly those applied to learning environments and management; Gender Issues; Employment; Knowledge Management; Disadvantaged collectives; Evaluation. It leads, coordinates and participates in the development and experimentation of training itineraries, contents and methodologies that promote social and labour inclusion of vulnerable collectives. The entity is certified by the Regional Government in the field of

Gender Issues. One of the main fields of activity is the research and development in the field of innovative training methodologies, including those based on ICT. Currently it leads a learning partnership, DeinTra, looking for cooperation for innovative training methodologies deployment in the European labour market.

**Staff Consult s.r.l. (IT)** works in training young people for SME and social companies. It has trained and coached more than 600 companies, in Italy; the most part of those was founded by women.

It supervised the Italian railway company to select and to train their first level personnel during the company privatisation. During the last 10 years Staff Consult s.r.l. collaborated in many vocational training projects addressed to women.

Staff Consult s.r.l. took part in the development of an Equal project approved in Campania country and joined other public and private organisations to develop equal opportunity and to facilitate the gender culture. Staff joined international partners (CPI Bilbao - Spain) in order to provide consultancy on the differences between Italian and Spanish legislation regarding the approach to gender differences. Staff Consult s.r.l. was a partner in the project CREDUTIA - Creative Education through Innovative Approaches approved and financed by ISFOL (Leonardo da Vinci programme).

**CEDA (SK)** is a Civic Association, established in 2005. Some of the main aims of the Association are:

- Support of sustainable development in rural areas
- Promotion of tourism
- Preparation and implementation of national and international projects in collaboration with Slovak and foreign organisations, focusing on cultural and educational activities
- Cooperation with wide range of organizations, institutions and social partners within the European Union
- Development and organisation of educational activities for target groups of disabled and unemployed people

The founder members of the Association have significant experiences with preparation and implementation of international projects from the field of culture, education and regional development: Lifelong Learning EC Programmes Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig (Multilateral Projects, Mobility, Partnerships), ESF, INTERREG, SlovakAid, OLAF and different bilateral cooperation projects.

The **Group for European Integration - GIE – (RO)** is a NGO that has as main goal to actively contribute to the integration process of European Union, by educational actions, cultural actions or other types of actions. Areas of specific expertise and competence: Life Long Learning applied research, field research, comparative studies, development of the strategies and methodologies for LLL, training action and evaluation. It represents an educational and training factor for the socio-economic actors in the region. It has a reliable network of collaborators (University of Pitesti, Arges School Inspectorate, Arges Employment Agency, etc.). It has experience in EU financed projects. It has implemented projects for disadvantaged people (women, prisoners, un-employed, persons with disabilities).

## INTRODUCTION

Today migration is a structural phenomenon in all countries. It is an issue of great complexity that is not a simple, linear movement: leave-return - leave again – return again, and so forth. Strong contradictions surround advances in transportation and facility of mobility. As all barriers to the free circulation of goods and capital are progressively abolished, barriers to the free mobility of people become increasingly rigid.

An increasing number of countries are simultaneously affected by significant migratory movements, with increasing diversification of areas of origin. In other words, we observe a progressive growth in the number of countries affected by this phenomenon. Moreover, there is no clear distinction between countries of origin and destination. Many countries, as in the Mediterranean region, are both territories of emigration and immigration. Another interesting aspect of the globalisation of migration is that a larger number of destination countries receive immigrants from diverse economic, social and cultural contexts.

In all regions of the world, women hold a significant role in migration. Since the 1970s this has meant a significant increase in the incidence of females within migration flows and in immigrant communities. However, we must emphasise the fact that women are often the drivers of the initial phases of the migratory experience.

On the other hand, an important fact is that migrant workers are structurally necessary to the economy of European countries from several points of view:

- Demographic: low birth rate; ageing of the population;
- Economic: a future issue for highly-skilled and low-skilled workers alike;
- Social: young Europeans are increasingly less willing to accept low-skilled employment.

In this respect, migrants affect, and inevitably transform, all spheres of life in society. Contemporary issues such as migration, the diversity of multicultural societies, as well as social, cultural, economic and political relations that take place on a global scale present a great challenge to **Pedagogy in adult education and its tools**.

Migrants come from different countries, social backgrounds, and educational status. Their approach to integration is different according to these backgrounds, and also their learning

demands are different; a highly qualified professional has different learning requirements from an unskilled worker.

The **Culture Equity Model** is a tool for teachers/trainers of multicultural groups of migrant women and women from ethnic minorities and VET organisations with the main objectives to:

- help teachers to work effectively with migrant women/women from ethnic minorities enrolled in vocational training programmes
- introduce ways to manage multi-cultural classes
- introduce teaching techniques to stimulate learning and encourage inclusion, a model team-building and class crisis management
- acquaint them with principles of culture and gender equity in the learning process

## CHAPTER 1 - TARGET GROUPS' PROFILES

### 1A. TEACHERS / TRAINERS IN ADULT EDUCATION

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the role of the teachers and trainers in adult education has changed. The traditional passive lectures of the past have mainly been substituted by active student participation and the trainers are now facilitators of learning. Teachers and trainers have gradually adopted a learner-centred approach. Their "new" role is defined as *mentor* and *motivator* for the students to set solution-centred activities and to activate students' self-directedness. According to this new teaching paradigm, teaching methods and trainers' attitude have also changed.

### 1B. MULTI-CULTURAL STUDENTS' PROFILE

One of the challenges in designing an effective learning environment is that it reflects both our diverse society and individual differences among learners.

Since the EU has passed the law on "Freedom of mobility for workers" the movement in Europe has increased and new workers and job seekers from one country move to another country. In the labour market arise new challenges; workers and learners from different countries bring their traditions, practices, and expectations into the new working environment – new teamwork and learner group constellations are formed. In both cases coaches and trainers have to be aware of the learners' diversity, needs, and concerns in order to work effectively with them.

Apart from this movement in Europe, the constant change of our society has influence on the students' profile as well. Usually it is not sufficient any more to attend an initial training programme and to have the opportunity to work for the next 30 to 40 years in one job. Job requirements have changed and the intention to develop new skills along with the ability to acquire new competences is becoming increasingly intense. Additionally, the lifelong learning concept has become more and more a current issue.

Furthermore, training does not only occur in the classroom with only young people. The students' profile has changed enormously and has become diverse. Younger and older people, people from different countries and from different social and educational backgrounds work and learn together in one learning environment.

### 1C. LEARNERS' TRAINING NEEDS VS. SMEs' EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

According to the results of the ALMA-DC survey among SMEs, the European enterprises are interested in skilled and qualified workers with some years of work experience. In the past it was very easy for the enterprises to hire new staff since there was an oversupply of skilled labour that was sufficient for their needs. But since the countries now have to overcome the lack of skilled labour among the available workforce, it is becoming more difficult and, consequently, the job training and adult education have become more important than ever.

On the other hand, lots of people, including migrants, look for new opportunities in the labour market. If their competences do not cover the job profiles, they have to be educated and trained. According to the ALMA-DC survey among migrant women in the 7 countries of the consortium, migrants are interested in specific training, related to upcoming jobs as well as learning languages and ICT.

Usually bigger companies support their new employees to improve their skills and offer continuing training programmes, but this is not the case with all SMEs. It is felt that all SMEs should commit themselves more to training their employees. Two thirds of the labour market consists of small and medium enterprises; it is assumed that continuing training still depends on the financial responsibility of the individual and the state, i.e. the funded programmes for the unemployed offered by the state. The companies are interested in employing skilled workers and, therefore, they should facilitate the continuing vocational training of new employees to a greater extent.

Apart from the situation in the labour market, from the viewpoint of learners and enterprises, adult education is absolutely necessary in our changing world, because a lot of

things have changed and keep on changing globally due to the development of the new technologies and also due to the change of requirements related to the new policies in the business world and the highly technological equipment that a lot of businesses use.

The demand and advancement of adult education is an issue of competitiveness for both potential employees and enterprises.

## CHAPTER 2 - CULTURE EQUITY IN MODERN TEACHING – GUIDELINES A

### 2A. Changes in the learning environment

#### Aim

This chapter aims to outline the transition from traditional education to non-formal learning by emphasising on the changes in the level of certain specific elements.

(a) The first part presents a brief description and the main features of traditional education, formal education and non-formal education.

(b) The second part argues on the signs and reasons for the transition from traditional to non-formal education.

(c) The third part offers explanations and examples of changes in the teaching-learning environment when shifting from traditional to non-formal education at the level of:

- The learner
- The teacher
- The requirements
- The schedule
- The teaching methods and provisions (materials)
- The settings for delivering the teaching/training
- The recognition of achievements/learning outcomes

(a) Education was and remains a constant preoccupation in human society. Modern-day communities cannot be imagined outside the educational systems. Within the European Union, education and training are placed at the core of community policies and strategies.

From the Lisbon Strategy that targeted to achieve the most efficient knowledge-based economy in the world, to the Europe 2020 Strategy, which is EU's growth strategy for the coming decade, education and training are recognised as the basis for the society's development and the forerunner in achieving a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. Education is one of the five objectives that Europe wants to reach by 2020.

In time, along with the progress of society and technological development, educational systems have changed and the teaching environment has also been affected by different factors.

Traditional (formal) education is planned in cycles, levels and years of study and it is a structured, systematised and officially organised system. It includes instructional and pedagogical activities chronologically graded from kindergarten to university. It is designed, implemented and administered based on a given set of laws and norms. It is a rigorous process that involves three basic elements: the learner, the teacher/trainer and the institution (the education provider). Thus, formal education is institutionalised and it is based on study plans, curricula, textbooks, courses, teaching and learning materials. It has aims and objectives, achieved with the help of professionals (specialised teaching staff) that work in an organised methodological context to reach the educational goals.

Non-formal education also consists of instructional activities and actions performed within an organised and institutionalised framework, but it is achieved outside the formal educational system, outside the school system. Its activities are systematic and intentional and target at the needs of the learner as an individual in society, to adapt to his/her special contexts, in order to achieve optimal knowledge and to reduce as much as possible the difficulties and challenges generated by the more formal systems. Its character is less formal; the instructional activities are flexible and customised to the learner. Often these activities are extra-didactic, optional or facultative. Non-formal education differs from the formal one through its content and modes of achievement. In non-formal education the central role belongs to the learner, attention being shifted from teaching to learning. Usually, non-formal education fits very well to categories of people who have less or no access to formal education; the illiterate or those with low level of education, the elderly, the disabled, the poor, the isolated, the economically disadvantaged, etc.

(b) When defining or identifying the type of education, one searches for its features. In the case of formal education these characteristics are clearly defined and precisely set. The transition to non-formal or informal education appears when some of these features become flexible or disappear.

Both formal and non-formal education systems intersect at some point, but the transition between them relies on the format in which the act of learning and the educational approach are provided and obtained. For example, we shift from formal to non-formal education when the learner's attendance of the educational activities is not compulsory all the time, when face-to-face training is supplemented (or replaced to a certain extent) with other types of activities that do not involve 100% direct contact between learner and teacher, when the majority of the teaching-learning activities are achieved outside school or the education providing institution (these activities may include individual study at home or at the library, reading, homework, etc.).

The transition also allows less rigid duration of learning and the adaptation of learning to the learners' own pace, different settings from the classroom, possibility for the learner to choose the best place in the classroom, selection and utilisation of educational means and materials that are external to the school/institution, in order to better fit the learner's needs and interests and for the learner to comprehensively understand the topics/subjects taught and studied.

When we change from traditional to non-formal education, the whole "construction" also changes: the educational objectives, strategies, methodologies, programmes and curricula become more flexible and more adapted to the learner, as a result of transferring the weight from the teacher/school to the learner.

Many scholars and researchers in the field of education have stated that nowadays we are witnessing the extension of non-formal education over the traditional one, as it seems that non-formal learning succeeds to better motivate and stimulate the learners. The contemporary world issues faced by education are addressed and managed more successfully through non-formal education, as this type of education allows the relaxation of teaching-learning contents, diversification of optional educational offers, increase of alternative educational pathways, the possibility for education providers to design and develop their own curricula according to local training needs.

Non-formal education does not exclude synergetic combination between all types of education: formal, non-formal and informal. It ensures a high quality of the instructional and

learning process through the content of curricula, didactic evaluation and recognition of learning outcomes and also through quick integration of ICT.

(c) In more concrete words, the changes in the teaching environment may be observed at the level of:

- The learner
- The teacher
- The requirements
- The schedule
- The teaching methods and provisions (materials)
- The setting for delivering the teaching/training
- The recognition of achievements/learning outcomes

Today the learners are busier and more burdened with daily duties; they have less free time, but at the same time they are better informed, and they have greater access to information and knowledge due to the Internet, ICT-based means, web-based platforms and e-Learning opportunities.

A general trend observed in trainees is that they are - to a certain extent - demotivated and harder to be made interested in learning or instructional demarches. Tired, engaged in many social and professional activities that occupy all their time and which allow them to spend only a relatively short time on learning and training, the trainees today have to find their own balanced solutions. But, paradoxically, the modern learners find themselves constrained by society and professional environment to learn, to update their knowledge, skills and competencies, to acquire new qualifications. This is also due to the high mobility allowed and required by the EU labour market but also due to the generalised current crisis (in all fields of activity: economics, politics, culture, health, education, military) that Europe and the whole world is passing through, a crisis that imposes changes on personal and professional life in the quest for adaptation and survival solutions. To such learners, a new, motivating and modern teaching-learning environment should be offered, hence, the changes of the teaching methods, contents and materials.

In the change of the teaching environment, the greatest burden is on the teachers. The teachers have the difficult task of transforming the learning aims and objectives into reality. Consequently, the teachers have to identify the real needs of people and provide for them.

The teachers have to train themselves so that they are capable of reaching these standards and holding a level of expertise far beyond the learners' level (e.g. regarding new technologies, especially ICT, with which the current generation of learners is well acquainted with).

Since in our times we can see advanced forms of non-formal systems emerging, adaptation of trainers to such systems is required according to the needs and interests of those who are learning (the learners), therefore the trainers have to adapt themselves to the new situation and to learn in their turn how to provide learning through non-formal methods. So, this is a challenge for teachers, too, which they have to face! Therefore, the teacher needs training, by first learning how to offer education within a non-formal environment!

The teachers/trainers working in non-formal education (adult education, lifelong learning, continuing education, etc.) need to possess good skills in Internet navigation and in using PCs and software (mainly Microsoft Office and certain educational software).

Another challenge for them is to master at least at the level of "satisfactory" certain foreign languages of large circulation (English, French, German, Italian and Spanish) in order to access scientific literature and educational provisions and materials in foreign languages, pertaining to the disciplines/subjects that they teach.

As modern teachers within non-formal and lifelong learning contexts are working with different marginalised and disadvantaged categories of people (immigrants, ethnic minorities, unemployed, etc.) the ability to manage mixed teams, with different cultural and religious backgrounds, reflects another evidence of the changes that have taken place in the teaching environment.

The qualities and professional training of such teachers should lead them to even more specific skills, like pedagogical skills for differentiated groups of learners. Modern teachers must master exhaustive knowledge in the field of youth pedagogy or the pedagogy of adults,

as in their work they are confronted with different age groups. It is largely admitted that teachers and trainers have to accordingly approach the young and the adult trainees, by taking into consideration the particularities of their age (in terms of resistance/reluctance to learning, duration of classes/teaching sessions, teaching-learning methods and approaches, frequency of breaks, types and complexity of tasks/homework, etc.).

Our discussion about how the change of learning environment affects the teacher and which changes have been made in the teacher himself cannot be complete without analysing the teacher's ability to manage group dynamics and the knowledge, skills and competencies s/he has in the field of Multiple Intelligence Theory. The teacher should be able to apply the Multiple Intelligence Theory efficiently by identifying and valorising each type of intelligence of his/her learners.

Additional teacher skills refer to his/her capacity of applying new and modern teaching methodologies (e.g. embedded learning, Open and Distance Learning, courseware, online courses and e-platforms) and methods (e.g. critical thinking, brainstorming, heuristic conversation, devil's advocate, role play, simulation, etc.).

Operating with handheld technologies and organising learning through outdoor activities could be an added value for a really professional non-formal teacher.

The requirements of non-formal education are not the same as for formal learning. First of all, the presence of the learner is required to a smaller extent: the programme is restructured so the learner has flexibility in attending courses and allocating more time to external activities outside the institution that provides the learning: only face-to-face activities, team/pair work or experiments are implemented in school, while the other tasks are performed at home or in environments outside the school.

Nowadays there is a general request for alternative educational pathways, aside from the formal learning rigid standards, options to be successful in offering more and better education at all levels, for all individuals, from *"cradle to the grave"* as stated by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) in its policies, strategies and programmes for education and training.

The requirements of non-formal education envisage meeting the needs of learners in terms of personal development, professional needs and socio-cultural needs. This is why it has to be relevant to the individual's development and compatible with the realities of the society and the labour market. In other words, non-formal education should be practical, efficient and oriented to the life needs and values of the people. It should also target at maintaining the best benefit-cost ratio for the learner, especially if we think about those categories of learners with low incomes or with weak economic/financial opportunities.

Multi-, inter- and trans-discipline are other key words in defining non-formal education requirements. Such approaches make the learner's development more easily achievable, more valid and vivid.

Last but not least, non-formal learning is required to produce not only short-term effects but also long-term consistent achievements.

The schedule of educational offers is one of the elements that have also been changed in time. Compared to formal education providers, the institutions providing non-formal education need to adapt in order to face the actual competition on this specific market – the educational market - because for the majority of them, the clients (learners) display a large range of needs and characteristics in terms of backgrounds, contexts, and geographical locations and require implicitly adapted, customised, flexible programmes and timetables. These depend on the distance between the education provider's premises and the learner's home and on the time availability of the latter. Of course the role of the teacher is a major one in planning the instructional programme and in elaborating the timetable, since the teaching environment in general has considerably changed.

Evening classes or weekend classes are possible in non-formal education to better fit the availability of learners. Intensive courses could also be designed when the learners request them.

These are only a few examples worth being mentioned here of how the learning schedule has changed.

The teaching methods and provisions (materials) embrace a multitude of possibilities in non-formal education. To mention only a few of the most known, we can name here:

- narration / lecture
- brainstorming
- problem-solving
- case study
- demonstration
- explanation
- discovery
- test-teach-test
- learning by doing
- plenary session
- pair-work
- group-work
- individual work
- role-play
- debate
- controversial debate ("devil's advocate" technique)
- problematic
- heuristic conversation
- critical thinking/analysis
- exposition

Lectures in front of the class, blackboard and chalk are still in use, but nowadays teachers like to largely supplement them by using, in a combined way, PCs and data projectors, plus educational materials and provisions on different types of support: paper (booklet, maps, textbooks, dictionaries, guidelines, reviews, etc.), CDs and DVDs, Internet provisions, web-based tools, video-audio, PC-tablets, eBooks and other gadgets. Handheld technologies are not negligible as teachers use them more and more often in their practices in the classroom.

Settings for delivering the teaching/training have known great progress since we shifted from traditional to non-formal education: instead of organising the teaching by having the teacher in front of the class and all the learners being seated in desks in rows, modern classes (due to modern teaching technologies and modular adapted furniture and

equipment) work in different arrangements, such as rectangular, circular, U-shaped desk configuration, cluster of desks, etc.

Teachers should pay close attention to classroom settings as it is proven that these arrangements influence the learners' attitude towards learning, their behaviour during the teaching process and their learning patterns.

Duration of the class is a matter of "negotiation" – in the good sense – and could be of 50 minutes but also less. Break allocation depends on the learners' learning style, pace and psychological profile.

The location of the class is also atypical, as courses may be delivered not only in schools, but also in libraries, in research units, in collaborative centres, in conference halls, at NGOs premises, in training organisations, etc.

The recognition of achievements/learning outcomes is a sensitive issue in all types of education, since reaching high objectivity is always a difficult task. In traditional education the learners' assessment is rather built on only one (or few) evaluation types and endeavours, taking place at the pre-defined moments. But in non-formal learning this is achieved through a diversity of methods and tools that ensure increased correctness, objectivity and findings closer to the real performance of the learners. In non-formal education, teachers usually apply a combination of evaluation and assessment types, both qualitative (interviews, focus-group, open-ended questions, essays, stories, case studies, field notes, document review, etc.) and quantitative (close-ended questions in tests, surveys, desk research, etc.), that displays more accurate results on the achieved learning outcomes. In non-formal learning, the pre- and post-testing, the observation during the teaching/training, the ongoing evaluation, the initial and final assessment and the self-evaluation are often used as a "battery" of assessment resources. To these assessment tools corresponds a multitude of tools and instruments that – again – can be assembled in a large variety of combinations.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and even of prior experiential learning (RPEL) as well as compatibility of the learning between different providers of education, from different countries represents one of today's concerns in non-formal education. In order to support

this compatibility, the non-formal educational systems have started borrowing from the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) the use of a more detailed description of the learning outcomes, divided into three categories: knowledge, skills and competencies. There is a general trend in Europe and advanced development and progress in acquiring a compatible and transparent system for validation and recognition of learning achievements. Education providers along with EU jointly work to conclude Learning Agreements and to further implement Memoranda of Understanding based on Transcripts of Records. Any learning experience achieved in an institution abroad can be validated through the Europass Mobility Certificate (if it is about professional training) or through a Youthpass Certificate (if it is an experience acquired by a young volunteer).

All in all, we have to agree that there have been tremendous changes in the teaching environment. We may also conclude that non-formal education is all about the learners; it is an enriched teaching and learning environment!

## **2B. Culturally responsive teachers / trainers (cultural diversity awareness)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Teachers and trainers who teach and train people who come from a different cultural background usually prove what their vocational competences concern. Sometimes there might be some training or education activities where the pedagogical knowledge is missing. Other times the teacher may be an expert in the field of expertise but without sufficient pedagogical knowledge and/or experience.

Trainers and teachers are expected to have the appropriate pedagogical competences.

Teaching individuals and groups of people with a different cultural background is, however, more demanding. Teachers and trainers have to be aware of some specific elements which may crucially influence the outcome of their activities and turn them into success or failure.

The set of such elements is called "Cultural diversity awareness". Not many materials for this purpose have been developed yet.

### **2. WHAT IS "EQUITY" IN EDUCATION /VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

All people are equal as human beings. They may look very different – their clothes, shoes, hair, jewellery, amulets, tattooing on their skin, their smell...

All these things are elements of their own culture, they form their own personality and support their self-confidence and they are even more important to them if these people are outside their normal environment.

Therefore the basic, and most important, rule for culturally responsive teachers and trainers is RESPECT.

There is no excuse like very short time for the preparation of lessons or training or another reason.

*Equity* means that the ideal situation is when every actor in education / training respects all other partners. A culturally sensitive teacher trainer plays the role of the facilitator in such a situation and supports all kind of contribution to reach equity.

Education/training of people with a different cultural background is the education/training plus the on-going support of feelings of all actors who are all equal.

Such cases have to be treated individually – just for the basic principle: everybody should feel equal.

The best way how to keep equity between a teacher / trainer and her / his learners / trainees is:

- to explain some basic rules during the teaching or training process which is appropriate for all,
- to listen carefully to all observations and comments. If it is not possible to deal with all of them immediately, it is worth spending some time individually with an individual who does not feel treated fairly,

- to always praise the learners for their efforts when there is any opportunity to do so and to do it sincerely.

Thorough communication between a teacher / trainer and the learners / trainees as well as allowing them to express their opinions are the most important elements of equity in adult education / training.

Culturally sensitive teachers and trainers should be aware of the following:

- My learner / trainee is not strange – he / she is a unique person defined by all elements of her / his original culture which are visible or invisible but somehow striking for me - I must not express any astonishment or shock,
- My learner / trainee is proud of her / his origin and culture – I must respect it,
- I may look strange from the point of view of my learner / trainee,
- My behaviour may look strange to them, too.
- Our relation is a two-way relation. I should anticipate and predict more things than in the communication with people of my culture. Therefore I should verify the situation at the very first moments of meeting with a person or people with a different cultural background and try to agree with some points made by my learners / trainees which may contribute to equity in our relationship.
- As a teacher /trainer I am aware that the understanding of equity among people with a different cultural and social background may be influenced by:
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Religion
  - Social status
  - Ranking of values

Furthermore, the educational process is mainly influenced by lack of some language competences (both by teachers / trainers and by learners / trainees) as not all education or training must be provided necessarily in the language of a teacher / trainer.

Sometimes it is better when a teacher/trainer tries to encourage understanding and communication for learners/trainees using for example English or French as a language which is native to the learners or at least more understandable by learners / trainees. When

such education/training runs in a country with a “minor” language (Czech, Romanian, Slovak, etc.), the language barrier can be a big obstacle. Such approach by a teacher/trainer is a practical implementation of respecting equity of people.

**Gender** is understood and valued in different cultures differently. It might be impossible for some male learners / trainees to be taught / trained by a woman. Equity has got another dimension in other cultures away from Europe. A culturally sensitive teacher / trainer must be aware of this fact and must be able to explain what kind of benefit he/she may bring to the learner / trainee. A learner / trainee must come to the understanding willingly, any force or intense persuasion by the teachers' / trainers' side cannot bring any positive result.

The **age** of a teacher / trainer might be considered as a problem for learners / trainees coming from countries with a different perception and ranking of values. Traditional stereotypes prefer an older person as a teacher / trainer because of more acquired knowledge and years of experience. But new technologies have contributed to a well-balanced expertise among teachers / trainers of various ages. A culturally sensitive teacher / trainer should be aware of this fact and he/she should be equipped with some examples how a younger teacher / trainer may bring a lot of benefit in the field concerned.

**Religion** is a very sensitive matter and the best and only recommendable approach how to manage this diversity is to respect all kinds of behaviour of learners / trainees which do not influence the educational / training process negatively. Equity in this area means that all actors in the educational / training process respect all other actors equally. A culturally sensitive teacher / trainer should create such an atmosphere where all the actors will consciously contribute to the equity of the others, i.e. the teachers / trainers will not be the only ones who respect the others but he / she prepares lessons and training sessions in such a way that ALL will be interested to contribute actively, to achieve and keep equity. Learners / trainees will do it only when they are persuaded that it will help them. It is then the question of a teacher's/ trainer's/ mastery what kind of ice-breaking activities, exercises, games, tasks or other pedagogical instruments he / she will use to keep equity in the group.

Various learners / trainees may have various social status brought from their original society or environment. One must consider that they were brought up to have a certain position in their former society. After coming to Europe, the situation changed for them just at this

point and sometimes it is very difficult for them to explain the changes even to themselves. They try to cope with this problem and many of them are not able to manage it.

A culturally sensitive teacher trainer has got a good opportunity to strengthen his / her professional relationship with a learner / trainee: to help him / her to overcome this hardship and to learn to accept a new social status and to actively work on the improvement of this new social status.

### 3. MONITORING OF EQUITY BY THE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE TEACHER / TRAINER

A culturally sensitive teacher / trainer must be aware of the fact that at any moment of the educational / training process some negative contributions or external influences may worsen the educational / training process and negatively influence its impact.

This is why it is necessary to monitor the atmosphere in the group, the quality of relationships between a teacher / trainer and his / her learners / trainees. If any warning appears that equity is endangered, he/she must incorporate further pedagogical instruments to his / her activities which are expected to support equity for further education / training.

A teacher / trainer may monitor equity regularly, for example starting each lesson or a training session with some games contributing to equity and a friendly spirit in the group. Another possibility is to always react to any observation of any learner / trainee whenever it appears. In this case it is recommended that the teachers improve the rules of communication so that the other learners / trainees feel comfortable.

What is it that does not bring good results for education / training of people with a different cultural background?

- unawareness of possible complications at any moment of the teaching process,
- lack of monitoring of the quality of education / training for individuals or groups of people with a different cultural background.

A culturally sensitive teacher / trainer can even enrich his / her pedagogical activities by monitoring the improvement of the communication with his / her learners / trainees. Naturally, people are happy when somebody is interested in their situation or their problems. They are relieved when they find a good listener.

In some cultures the best speaker is even the person who can well and actively listen better than a person who speaks a lot. It is very useful when European teachers / trainers know about this fact, respect and implement it in their pedagogical activities.

A very important activity of a culturally sensitive teacher / trainer is **appraisal**. Any human being outside his/her cultural and social background is more sensitive to all elements which concern him/her and is usually more in doubt, cannot be oriented properly in his/her new environment and very often suffers from the lack of friends or not having some people around who might be interested in his / her problems. A culturally sensitive teacher / trainer must be aware of this fact and must try to learn more about his/ her learner / trainee so that he / she is able to evaluate the quality and quantity of effort which the learner / trainee brings to education / training. Many things, which are easy for national learners / trainees, may be very difficult for people with a different cultural background and often with a language barrier. The teacher/trainer should try to imagine herself / himself in the position of the learner / trainee. This way he/she will be able to assess the effort made.

Appraisal must be sincere otherwise it can bring about the opposite – negative results. A culturally sensitive teacher / trainer should know that all the above mentioned matters require a lot of patience, positive attitude to people and repetition of many things. Finally, the behaviour of a teacher / trainer supports the success of the training.

### 4. CONCLUSION

A culturally sensitive teacher / trainer must be aware of various difficulties which may appear in communication with learners who come from a different cultural and social background. To create, keep, support and enrich equity in various kinds of relationships among all actors in education, a culturally sensitive teacher / trainer:

- Respects
- Positively explains

- Is patient, determined and transparent both in thinking and behaving
- Sets a good example how to deal with equity

## 2C. Culture equity teaching approaches

The structure of classes of learners is the most important factor which may influence the success of education / training of people with a different cultural and social background.

### 1. INDIVIDUAL APPROACH – EDUCATION OR TRAINING OF ONE PERSON

There are some cases when such activity is running. In some cases the individual approach to a learner / trainee is especially recommended.

It is clear that a teacher or trainer has to use some sensitive approaches because it is obvious that a learner may perceive information in an unexpected way.

Teachers/trainers should know in advance about the nationality and the cultural and social background of the person who will be educated /trained. It is not difficult – such information is readily available and from many resources.

A more important element is the social position of such a person in his/her prior society/community.

#### Example 1:

A wife of an Indian manager working in a high position in a branch of an Indian company situated in Czech Republic may expect manners that are fit to the work and social position of her husband. It is not possible to know about the hosting culture in advance. She lives in a world where social shifts are strictly divided and she naturally expects certain behaviour.

#### Example 2:

A refugee from a country where there is civil war is very grateful for many things which are normal for a teacher or trainer. He / she brings to his / her teacher / trainer some small gifts or

thanks him/her very often and it is sometimes very difficult to explain that this is not necessary. Such a person might consider his/her teacher's refusal to accept gifts as rejection and might feel frustrated.

#### Example 3:

An immigrant has got a lot of bad personal experience and does not trust people. His / her approach brings barriers to the relationship with his/her teacher/trainer.

There are many other elements which derive from a different culture such as:

- another perception of time
- another perception of space
- other sets of values
- other norms

Education/training for one person individually is not very common in adult education but in some cases it is necessary or it is the only possibility. This person might be:

- The only person from her / his country to be educated / trained
- A person with unexpected reaction
- An extremely shy person
- A very lively, dominant person who does not want to be a member of any group

The individual approach requires the pedagogical mastery and outstanding human character of teachers / trainers. It requires:

- Respect,
- Thinking about the partner in communication,
- Awareness of own values,
- Competence to solve problems and difficult situations,
- Patience,
- Positive thinking when facing new obstacles in communication.

The individual approach should, therefore, be a combination of some psychological aspects which have to be applied first and then of an appropriate pedagogical method.

Taking into account all the facts mentioned above, education / training of groups of people with a different cultural and social background requires attention to some additional aspects.

## 2. **HOMOGENEOUS GROUPS OF PEOPLE WITH A DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUND FROM THE TEACHER**

When there is a group of learners / trainees of the same culture and only the teacher/trainer comes from another culture, then the teacher / trainer has to know about the peculiarities of the learners' culture. He / she must prepare lessons / training sessions accordingly and respect their culture.

### Example 4:

The group are Gypsies. This ethnic group has got different perception of time from other nations living in Europe. It is difficult for them to participate in long training courses. They want to see immediate results. The teacher/trainer should divide lessons or training sessions into some smaller parts where a concrete output will be produced in the end of each session.

### Example 5:

The group of learners are Gypsies. A trainer / teacher should know that Gypsies perceive information better when it is performed practically than when it is brought forward as a theory because they appreciate reaching concrete results and not to have too much theory. But theory is necessary, too. The best way how to bring them some knowledge is to join together theory with a follow-up practice. In other words: another structure of the pedagogical process where the practical part is preferred to the theoretical part.

A natural opinion-leader is often hidden in a homogeneous group. It is very useful to recognise him / her at the beginning of education / training and to collaborate with such a person. He / she may vitally contribute to the success of education / training and its results.

Thus, it is very important to learn a lot about all members of the group and let them communicate spontaneously at the very beginning of any education / training. Any interaction among people in a homogeneous group may show the opinion leader. Keeping equity principles makes an opinion-leader respect the teacher / trainer as an equal partner. Such a person often

has a natural charisma but has not got any pedagogical competences. Understanding all these matters is an element of a successful approach to education / training of a culturally homogeneous group of learners / trainees.

A homogeneous group offers another positive tool to a teacher / trainer: the discussion about the values and interests among the members of the group. This discussion should be a part of ice-breaking activities. Sometimes some prejudices might be removed or reduced. Teachers/trainers should take into consideration the experience of their colleagues in similar situations.

An experienced culturally sensitive teacher / trainer can assess this matter and work on the support of useful elements of approaches and communication of all group members.

A group can be homogeneous in one aspect but heterogeneous in other aspects. When the group is homogeneous like in examples 4 or 5, the gender aspect is not important. But when people should be trained in a field which is more appropriate for certain gender or age, then this factor must be taken into consideration, too.

### Example 6:

There is a training programme for gardeners with low educational background. Gypsies are such a group of people. Gypsy women prefer this profession more than men. A culturally sensitive teacher / trainer can imagine how to organise the training if he / she has both men and women as trainees in one group. The mystery of mastery is always in thinking about the target group and its habits.

## 3. **HETEROGENEOUS GROUPS OF PEOPLE WITH A DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUND FROM THE TEACHER**

Appropriate pedagogical approaches for heterogeneous groups of learners / trainees always depend on the analysis of a group:

- Who are these people?
- Why are they here?
- What kind of problems are they facing?

- What is their original culture and social status?
- What do I know about such cultures?

Is there any experience available from education / training of such people in heterogeneous groups?

Is there any experience showing that some people should be educated / trained individually because of their cultural and / or social differences?

Before a teacher/trainer starts his/her preparation, he/she should know a lot about the potential participants of his / her courses and should:

- choose the appropriate way of communication,
- speak in simple sentences for better understanding about what he / she wants,
- show a sincere interest in his / her learners / trainees.

If possible, it is very useful to speak with his / her future learners / trainees before the course starts. The aim is to learn as much as possible about their knowledge, skills, competences, hopes and worries.

#### Example 7:

Training of nurses: A group of learners is homogeneous – all are women but heterogeneous from the point of view of their cultural background. In some countries men and women are treated by a person of the same gender in hospitals or in ambulances. Women with such a cultural background will probably refuse to deal with patients – men. A culturally sensitive trainer can recommend to train such a woman for another job or to train her only for a part of this job.

Members of very heterogeneous groups act with restraint for a longer time because they do not know who they can trust. Ice-breaking activities for such groups should be open to all the above mentioned aspects of cultural and social diversity of group members. A properly organised but free discussion may open many doors. Teachers / trainers should recognise which aspects may help during education / training and which may become rather an obstacle.

The most frequent aspects of cultural and social diversity:

There are some gender sensitive topics here like in Example 7 when both trainees and trainer should be the same gender (women).

On the other hand, there are lots of trainings where just young teachers / trainers are more experienced than older ones. The typical example is in the IT area.

Mutual trust between teacher/trainer and learners/trainees is absolutely necessary. One is allowed to make some mistakes in educational activities but loss of trust should never occur.

In other cases a very old teacher / trainer might fail in contacts with people with a different cultural and social background because his/ her expertise might be old-fashioned or tailored rather on young learners. Adults are sensitive to pedagogical approaches used in initial education of pupils.

#### **Social status**

Some learners / trainees may have difficulty in being members of a group because of their former social status. They may refuse to be together with the opposite gender, they might not like to be treated equally regarding age. These factors are closely associated with their social status in their former society / community. Culturally sensitive approaches require some preparation by such a learner / trainee and only after some private sessions can a teacher integrate such a person into a group.

#### Example 8:

A woman communicated always as the example above. Her social status was very low and she was not allowed to speak before another person of a higher status. A culturally sensitive approach should recognise such obstacles and take into account that such a person socially interacts in this way not only during training, but also in everyday life. It is nearly impossible to behave in one way during education / training and in another way in private life. A teacher / trainer should not embarrass this person to behave suddenly in a quite different manner, instead he/she should choose for this person a private learning / training plan with more individual tasks and exercises to avoid any possible conflicts in a class discussion.

Generally, it is difficult for learners/trainees to change their behaviour only during education/training. Culturally sensitive approach enables teachers/trainers to connect education/training with normal life and incorporate education/training into everyday life

activities of people with a different cultural and social background who are being educated /trained for a new life in Europe.

#### Example 9:

Women from Turkey had been living for many years in a big European city. They only stayed at home and did not have any contact with their new environment. Some of them met other women from the respective EU country. These women would like to spend some leisure time with them together in some courses like sewing, cooking, painting, etc. The women with a different cultural background were, however, very shy and explained that their men had to approve of their participation in such courses. After contacts and communication with the leader of the community, they agreed and the women attended courses together with European women. The men came several times to observe the courses and were satisfied with their progress. In the end, even the men were happy that they had women who were happy and felt more independent. Eventually, life quality within this community improved by the careful preparation of courses and by culturally sensitive approach to trainees – women with a different cultural background.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Culturally sensitive approach is highly recommended when learners / trainees are people with a different cultural background. Such people have a different ranking of values from Europeans and are very sensitive to some aspects of communication or behaviour. They are prevalingly unaware of the fact that their own communication or behaviour may cause a negative impression to Europeans. Such differences contribute to their position on the edge of society; they suffer social exclusion.

Pedagogical approaches which respect their peculiarities and try to understand the reasons of their manners may contribute to social inclusion in the European community of such marginalised people.

## CHAPTER 3 - CULTURE EQUITY IN MODERN TEACHING - GUIDELINES B

### 3A. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING PROCESS

In the teaching process where the teacher and the learners are involved, psychological aspects are the factors that prepare, encourage, facilitate or obstruct the learning process in many different ways. A teacher/trainer in adult education must know about these, must be aware of their importance and must be able to discern them so that s/he can coordinate the class and design courses that can be successful regarding the set objectives.

While it is true that each individual learner needs a different approach to open up to learning, there are teaching approaches that can apply to a whole group and affect their learning to the right direction and accomplishment of their targets.

The teaching process, which involves designing, preparing and coordinating a given class, must be at the level that will generate accurate predictions for the outcome of teaching and integrate the widest possible range of psychological aspects to the benefit of all actors involved in learning. Whatever the setting is, a classroom, a computer laboratory or an exterior setting, these aspects can be predicted and controlled accordingly to maximise the effect of teaching and lead the learners to success.

In this unit we will attempt to describe the most common psychological aspects that are involved in adult education to enable the teacher/trainer to recognise them and appreciate their value.

#### **1. TRUST**

Trust is a moderator of positive association between the teacher and the class. First of all, it can achieve good rapport between the teacher and the learners who may come to education with certain fixed ideas and suspicions. Secondly, it forms the social dimension of teaching because it improves the quality of the teacher's social relationships with the learners. Moreover, it boosts up the teacher's job satisfaction in the workplace.

To gain the learners' trust, a teacher/trainer must be sincere, determined, and collaborate with the learners on the basis of a teaching-learning contract that can be established from the beginning of a course. If the learners have to pursue their targets in learning so has the teacher hand in hand with them to pursue the set targets on their behalf.

## 2. AFFECTIVE SUPPORT

It is known that outside class and between teaching sessions students communicate with each other either in person or by using social media to collaborate, exchange ideas, and express their feelings or share experiences. In this way they strengthen the peer affective support and this keeps them together in an informal setting. To sustain this affective support during the course, a teacher must encourage them to work on projects, which is an authentic task that will sustain the peer support.

## 3. GROUP DYNAMICS & TEAMWORK

When the short-term or mid-term projects are designed in small groups, then the group dynamics emerge; one learner from the group inevitably leads the group and the other members contribute accordingly to accomplish the task. For any following project the teacher reshuffles the groups and many more dynamics can emerge from the 'new' members of the group projects that were not the 'leaders' initially. The teacher can use the results of the projects to praise their work and boost up their confidence sending a direct signal that teamwork is valued. There are several ways to do so: the teacher can invite some colleagues to class to attend the presentation of the projects and evaluate them. Another way is to choose the best project or the best three projects and publish them in the school's/institution's newsletter. In all cases the teacher must give some publicity to this and praise them for their work. These simple activities can not only reinforce the value of teamwork but they can also enhance the relationship between teacher and learners.

## 4. WEB-BASED E-LEARNING – MOTIVATION OF LEARNERS

When a course involves e-learning, when time and space are not restricted and the traditional affective support is missing, the teacher must use motivation to sustain the rapport that has been established with the learners. This motivation aspect, which is fundamental at all stages of learning, can be achieved if the teacher regularly communicates with his/her students by sending them group-mailing messages, for instance, if this is

asynchronous teaching material. In synchronous type of e-learning, the teacher is there during tutorials and can motivate them in the way that s/he would do if they were in a traditional class either by audio or video messages; praising them, designing a motivational message and showing it on screen, for example.

If the class practises interactive activities in the computer laboratory, the teacher can motivate them and reinforce teamwork by setting small projects to work in pairs. In any case the teacher must use the laboratory time to sustain the unity of the class.

## 5. SELF-ESTEEM

In a class the teacher is bound to meet the 'good achievers' and the students who do not score high marks. In this case if the teacher decides to sustain the class as it is, the 'achievers' and the 'non-achievers' will finish their course with the same high or low self-esteem. A teacher must know that all students have strengths in some areas. Not all of their strengths, however, are visible or felt. On the one hand, the seven characteristics that may pave the road to success for the 'high achievers' are intelligence, perseverance, creative thinking, resourcefulness, openness to new experience, the desire to learn, and the drive to excel. On the other hand, the 'non-achievers' may have other strengths such as creativity or flexibility and these must be first discovered by the teacher and praised so that the 'non-achievers' are encouraged to foster the desire to learn and set goals and thus narrowing the gap between the 'high achievers' and the 'low achievers'. In this way and by boosting up their self-esteem, a teacher can transform the class into a class that will accomplish their goals to the maximum.

## 6. GENDER STEREOTYPES

In a class where females feel outperformed by males because of fixed ideas and stereotypes, the teacher's role is to eliminate this attitude. It is known that learners tend to act in ways that are in line with social identities such as gender. This unfortunately can be sustained in education if one subconsciously follows the same line. For the equity teacher everyone must be equally treated thus reinforcing equity in gender. To do so, first of all, the teacher must know about these stereotypes that can affect the female learners. Additionally, the teacher must be free of these fixed ideas and see the class with the same potential in all subjects. Body language is also very important because no matter what theory a teacher can support, his/her body language will betray his/her attitude. To achieve an equity gender class, a teacher must equally distribute tasks to males and females and assign projects with the

same difficulty to all learners. Regarding projects, the teacher can in turns appoint leaders males and females and pay equal attention to them.

### 7. INHERENT PATTERNS OF TEACHER BEHAVIOUR

The perception of international education and how this is interpreted in pedagogy can affect adult education especially in multi-cultural groups where learners come from developing countries and from developed countries. Some teachers reveal inherent patterns of behaviour when teaching a multi-cultural class which can affect the interaction between them and their individual learners. In most cases this can be detrimental for the learners who come from developing countries not because they cannot learn in the same way but because of the behaviour and attitude of their teachers. Consequently, an equity teacher must think in terms of international education and apply techniques that will involve all the learners in an international context avoiding any conscious or subconscious discrimination.

### 8. REINFORCEMENT OF SHORT-TERM GOALS

Each individual learner comes to education with some short-term and long-term goals. Many, though, lose their goals during the learning process due to a variety of reasons. It is the duty of the teacher to help the learners sustain their short-term goals and every time these have been achieved to help them set new short-term goals until they achieve them all and feel they have developed personally.

The psychological aspect of achieving their goals is of paramount importance for the learning process; a learner who lacks goals is uncertain about his/her presence in the course and consequently does not make any efforts to learn. An alert teacher who follows certain standards and assessment criteria cannot fail to notice this. To encourage a learner to set new goals or to set again the original goals, a teacher must have good relationship with the learners. In a student-centred education it is easy for the concerned teacher to notice the sustainability or not of the learners' goals. An open discussion with the class can help a lot if the teacher has succeeded in making his/her class a team. An open discussion where both parties, the teacher and the class, can assess the class progress, predict the outcomes, identify the weaknesses and set new goals is an important new beginning and can decide on a new milestone that everyone will want to reach. Having goal-directed learners is the dream of all teachers because this can ensure the accomplishment of their aspirations and will add to the teacher's job satisfaction.

### 9. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A classroom or a computer laboratory, which are the most usual place settings (as this is described in the section *Space/Facilities*), are the physical places where learning occurs. The learners can be affected positively or negatively by the way the place setting is arranged or decorated, by the distance from the other learners, by the teacher who may be sitting away from them or is among them and close to them, and other factors that define the learning place setting. The psychological aspect here, although it may not be regarded as important by some educators, is essential. The learners may feel 'accepted' or 'rejected' merely by a room environment. A friendly and accessible atmosphere can sometimes gain them by 50% to open up to learning. On the other hand, a neutral or 'cold' classroom can make them more reserved and, no matter how interestingly a lesson has been planned, they may have negative perceptions about both the teacher and the material.

### 10. GUIDANCE

Learners need guidance during the presentation and the post-presentation phases of the new teaching material to be motivated to learn and be willing to make their own efforts. The acquisition of new and sometimes complex knowledge and the development of skills in a new thematic area require willingness and perseverance from the learner. Proper guidance from the teacher to lead them to learning is essential in the same way that happens in the internship practices where the new employees are instructed and monitored by a trainer/supervisor. While guided, the learners have the sense of security and are confident that should errors occur, their teacher/trainer is there to help them go ahead. Gradually, and after the first guided stages are accomplished, the teacher can expose them to free practice and then can assess the results of their efforts while dealing with the newly acquired knowledge and the newly developed skills. Consequently a lesson plan must include guidance as well as free practice stages.

### 11. EMOTIONAL FACTOR

In the teacher's/trainer's profile (read below in 3C) we have added 'humour' as this is an essential element to approach the learners more easily. People learn better and more effectively when the teaching material is appropriate to their cognitive level and is presented in an enjoyable and interesting way. The emotional factor can make them more approachable when they enjoy their tasks and more open to desire to learn. If they are

pressed by a stern educator they are more likely to resist and to be in constant denial. In any case the teacher must not reproduce stereotypes of parental behaviours (strict / bossy / despotic / uncompromising) that may have in the past affected some of the learners' attitude to learning. Interesting graphics, humorous remarks, relaxing atmosphere – without losing any of the goals of the tasks – can gain the students' attention better than merely applying stern rules.

## 12. SOCIAL INTERACTION

Learning can be affected to a great extent by social interaction, interpersonal relations, and communication with others. Collaborating with the other learners while working on given tasks reinforces their interpersonal relations while respecting cultural diversity or other personal differences in learning. Pair-work and group-work activities are ideal to practise their interactive skills and enhance their social competences. Quality interpersonal relationships provide the sense of stability and mutual trust. Moreover, it is bound to increase the learners' sense of being a member of a team, being respected and being accepted thus creating a positive learning environment.

## 13. LEARNERS' PREFERENCES IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

Adult learners come to education with an already formed concept how they want to learn and at what pace they are willing to learn. For instance they may not be used to working in pairs or in groups or they may not like to do many writing activities.

At the beginning of a course it is wise to consider their learning preferences and try to incorporate the positive ones in the delivery of the course without sacrificing the aims or the objectives of the course or the pedagogical methodology.

Since not all learners' preferences are useful in helping them reach their goals, a teacher can persuade them about the benefits of pair-work, for instance, by setting a small task so that they feel the benefit. Gradually the teacher can incorporate more student-centred tasks to serve the goals of the course but in all cases the preferences of the learners which do not halt the progress of the class must be valued and respected. This strategy will enhance the relationship between the class and the teacher.

## 14. DIVERSITY OF LEARNERS

A teacher/trainer of a multi-cultural group should take into account the various differences of the learners to instruct them in an effective way. These differences in culture, ethnicity, race,

language, religion, socio-economic status, which can influence learning in various ways, must be taken into account before a course starts. The role of the teacher is to first value their differences but encourage them to function as a team in an appropriate learning environment with strong common goals. In this way their differences will not be on the surface and will not affect their learning process negatively.

## 15. STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT

In a learning environment where challenging standards have been set, the learners have the feeling of security since this can motivate them pursue their goals. Assessment systems have also proved to trigger rather than constrain progress since they function as a framework that helps the learners monitor their own progress. Absence of assessment, however, or a rather relaxed way of learning has proved to affect the learners negatively as they have no measure of assessing themselves and setting new short-term goals. Ongoing assessment of the learners ensures their understanding of the teaching material and provides information to both the teachers and the learners about the right course of the sessions, the degree to which the new knowledge has been acquired, and the achievement of their goals.

All the above factors play their role in the teaching and learning process. As one easily understands, the profile of the teacher is very demanding to be able to combine good teaching with good rapport; just like a conductor who has to coordinate a multi-cultural orchestra for an excellent result.

## 3B. MAKE YOUR CLASS A TEAM

Extremely essential factors in the learning process are the learners who form your class and what relationship you will establish with them. It may be important to have good and hard-working students, or students who are a pleasure to teach, or competitive ones who will fetch high scores in their examinations, but you should equally or even more importantly see them as different personalities, attitudes and behaviours who must unite their potential and dynamics into one team for the common good and this must be done at the beginning of a new course, not later.

## 1. MAKE YOUR CLASS A TEAM

Before starting instructing a new class and before even starting your first lesson, it is essential to see who are in your class: new faces, different personalities, and different backgrounds. All teachers normally prepare small cards with the names of the students to get to know each other, which is a very good step. We will suggest something beyond this. Make your class a team. How?

Introduce yourself and state your expectations from this class. Explain what this class entails: subject to be covered, objectives, theoretical part, practice, projects, type of assessment, and evaluation of the course.

Write a few questions on the board:

1. What do you want to achieve by attending this course?
2. Is there anything that we should discuss about your timetable and amount of homework?
3. What do you expect from me?
4. How would you like to be taught?

Leave these questions on the board as visual stimulus during the ensuing discussion.

Start an open group discussion. By having your students answer these questions where each one speaks up, you gain the following:

- i. They state their targets in front of an audience – this may function as a personal learning contract which can commit them,
- ii. They can ask you to set less homework on a certain day if they have other evening classes, etc. on which point you make an agreement. This shows you respect their needs that are associated with workload and, in turn, they are likely to respect the amount of homework you will set on the other days.
- iii. They will express their expectations from you. This information will clarify indirectly their objectives regarding this course.

You will realise that new feelings are being created in class during this group discussion where you and your class are drawing up a kind of learning contract and cooperation which will make it easier to have class control and good class management.

You may need to spend the whole first hour of the new course. It is fine as this hour will prove precious in establishing some bonds between you and your class; they are becoming a team with you as a leader.

## 2. MAKE YOUR ETHNIC GROUP OF ADULT LEARNERS A TEAM

If you are a teacher/trainer in Vocational Educational Training (VET), you may face difficulty with classes of adult immigrants. Making them feel they are a team with common goals will facilitate your course with them if you do it at the beginning that is during the introductory hour(s).

I will share my experience as a trainer in the Vocational Training Organisation "EPICENTRE" in Greece. I had seen unemployed immigrants several times attending co-funded seminars because they wanted to stand a chance to find employment. Their trainers complained that they were hard to manage and they were mainly distrustful. I had seen quite a few groups of them from my position as a director of the Organisation before it was my turn to undertake a new group as a trainer.

My class were immigrants from the Balkans and other countries from Asia, Africa and Australia and they would attend a seminar lasting for 350 hours training in Sales Techniques. The course was to be taught via the Greek language (L2<sup>1</sup>) applying CLIL<sup>2</sup> methodology.

The night before, I started preparing myself for the introductory lesson. It was then that I prepared some simple material to attempt to make them a team that would hopefully make them open up and become more communicative. Since then almost all our trainers have been using the cards I am presenting below either for national or for ethnic groups who attend vocational training courses.

My objective was to help them overcome their negative attitude ('unemployment stigma') and their reservation. So after introducing myself and being faced by too quiet an audience, I distributed Cards A to each one and asked them to write down the information needed.

<sup>1</sup> L2: target language

<sup>2</sup> CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning

Then I asked them in turns to talk about them. The cards seemed to be working as a visual stimulus to overcome their shyness and any other negative feelings.

CARD A	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Why did you move here?</b>
_____	_____
<b>Country of origin:</b>	_____
_____	<b>How long have you lived here?</b>
<b>Marital status:</b>	_____
_____	_____

Then I distributed Cards B and asked them to answer these questions and then discuss their answers with the person sitting on their right. It was only then that they looked at the people sitting next to them. I felt they had gradually accepted to open up so I left them talking to each other for some time while monitoring the pairs by moving around while playing classical music by Verdi in the background.

CARD B	
<b>Likes:</b>	<b>What do you like doing in your free time? Why?</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____
<b>Dislikes:</b>	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I went on with Cards C. First, I asked them to answer the questions and then I asked some people at random to talk about themselves to the class. I invited them to the front of the class and talk to all of us. It felt very good when they addressed the class. After each participant I asked the class if anyone else of them had the same aspirations/competences, and so on. A very constructive discussion followed.

CARD C	
<b>Competences:</b>	<b>What would you like to do in the next six months?</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
<b>Talents:</b>	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Cards C revealed a lot about the attendants. The more they thought about the answers the more they discovered they could do things that they did not consider as important and they were happy in the light of this small discovery. This showed to a discerning eye that they had low self-esteem. After completing cards C they became more confident to talk about their competences. This led to a discussion about their aspirations regarding the next 6 months.

We did the same with Cards D.

CARD D	
<b>Studies:</b>	<b>IT skills:</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____
<b>Qualifications:</b>	<b>Employment status:</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____

We spent more than two hours with that group of 20 immigrant women dealing with the cards. Actually the cards were the stimuli to make them communicate with the others, to exchange and share information, to listen to the others, to trust the others and to look at the teacher as someone who would help them make that big step to attend a 350-hour seminar before going out to the labour market.

These cards can be used with any age group and any type of learners provided that they are adjusted to the group. They can be used in various ways: one card per pair to encourage communication, for example, or one card per individual as described above, or cards C can be filled in, collected, reshuffled and put up on the board making it a small exhibition board – then the learners stand up and find their card – when they find it they must talk about their competences, talents and aspirations.

These cards were created in 1999 and are still very useful for the purpose described above to make a multi-cultural and multi-lingual group feel they are a team and will pursue the same goals within a course.

### 3C. TEACHER'S / TRAINER'S PROFILE IN A MULTICULTURAL CLASS

What is the profile of the teacher/trainer in a multi-cultural class? Is it the same with the teacher's who teaches adults or young learners of the same culture with him/her? Certainly not. While the profile of an efficient teacher in adult education is demanding already, the profile of a teacher/trainer of a multi-cultural group is even more demanding.

A lot of different factors are different in a multi-cultural class which are **not present in a national** class; the learners are different in such a way that they may comprise another class each and they come to the class, as it has been explained in this model, with different expectations, superstitions, hopes, background, phobias, aspirations, behaviour and attitude. Consequently, the teacher should have some generic and specific knowledge and a lot of competences and qualities that naturally exceed the profile of the 'traditional' teacher in adult education. We have illustrated the main characteristics of this profile in the graph below:

**Graph 1: teacher's/trainer's profile in adult education**



This profile, however, which at first glance meets the general requirements, may not be sufficient to effectively manage a multi-cultural and diverse class. Let's see the analysis of this profile assisted by some elements that are required to manage multi-cultural and multi-lingual classes.

#### GENERIC

##### The teacher/trainer should know about:

- the aim of the course
- the objectives of the course
- the length of the course
- the objectives of the vocational organisation which offers the course
- the proportion of theory and practice
- the assessment procedures of the learners
- the evaluation procedures by all factors involved
- the profile of the learners' cultural background
- the psychological aspects that can motivate a diverse group

#### SPECIFIC

##### The teacher/trainer should know about:

- his/her subject area
- suitable teaching methodologies and techniques
- the employment status of his/her adult learners
- the peculiarities of the learners' culture
- the peculiarities of the learners' social status in their original country

- the different perception of time and space of the learners in a certain group
- the general values of the culture of the learners in a certain group
- the learners' needs for flexible schedule to combine family life and adult education
- the local and regional labour market at the time of the education
- the EU priorities in combination with the national priorities concerning adult education and employment (in case of co-funded programmes)

**The teacher/trainer should be able to:**

- plan his/her lessons to meet the objectives of the course
- effectively communicate his/her ideas to the learners
- organise the tasks in an efficient way
- use teaching methodologies suitable for adult learners
- use teaching techniques by incorporating the learners' life experience to motivate them
- apply the teaching techniques that suit the certain group's needs
- instruct them in a comprehensible way
- use up the class time effectively
- apply techniques according to what psychological aspects arise among the learners
- avoid sensitive areas such as age, religion or stereotypes in the originating countries

**The teacher/trainer should be:**

- organised
- methodical
- flexible
- resourceful
- punctual
- friendly
- understanding
- communicative
- experienced in managing diversity in a group
- humorous (it helps a lot)

In adult education one can find experienced and excellent teachers who efficiently teach adults and lead them to employability. Teaching adults, though, of the same culture with the

teacher/trainer, is one side of the coin. It is governed by other rules. The other side of the coin is that an experienced teacher/trainer in adult education needs more qualifications to be able to teach with the same efficiency adults who come from many diverse social, political, educational, cultural backgrounds. The aim of this *Culture Equity Model* is to assist the teachers/trainers of such classes to optimise their knowledge, develop their skills to a greater extent and be able to smile at the end of the day when they have delivered excellent lessons that will be remembered by their learners.

**3D. Advice to the teacher/trainer in a multi-cultural class**

**PROVIDE SUPPORT**

Your class consists of participants from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. As a teacher, it is important that you make each student who enters your classroom feel at home. Some students from different ethnicities may feel out of place or uncomfortable. However, there are a number of ways that can help you make all participants feel comfortable in your class in the learning process:

- Encourage creative atmosphere in the classroom,
- Urge the creation of a climate of trust and cooperation,
- Formulate current and exciting topics,
- Set brief and formulated specific tasks,
- Ensure that each participant has the time space to express themselves,
- Pay attention to each participant,
- Work out solutions to conflicts – don't run away from them,
- Demand clear expression of their views,
- Devote enough time to activity evaluation.

To achieve effective multi-cultural education, it is particularly important to be aware of the impact of the socio-cultural environment in which participants live to meet their different requirements of learning culture and family culture.

Besides personal and intellectual assumptions, a teacher must take into consideration the fact that the participants - from whom the teacher wants the same performance and evaluate all participants according to the same criteria - are different in some aspects:

- previous experience,
- what attitudes and skills participants bring from home (in the family they appreciate more comfort and self-reflection ...),
- interests (sports, music, literature, movies, etc..)
- needs (learning, physical, psychological, etc.),
- which cultures their families come from (what language they speak at home, how they dress, what their life plans are).

The role of the teacher in a multicultural class is to:

- Build on those assumptions, which are developed,
- in the learning process to help them find the relationship between new and old information to be submitted in order to find meaning and relevance of experience,
- add new knowledge and experience in association with situations they have already experienced,
- reflect and communicate their symptoms and consequences of unequal social and cultural competence,
- help them to adopt life skills that help them manage and resolve conflict situations.

### INVOLVE STUDENTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

There exist plenty of activities in which a teacher can involve his/her students in the class in a substantial and overtly active way:

- **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION** - An excellent tool to build student involvement in a class is to have them discuss a topic or question with a partner or a few other students. More introverted students will often comfortably discuss as long as the group is small. The teacher can then ask small groups to report their findings to the class as a whole.

- **CASE STUDIES** - In this method, often used in adult education courses, a situation is described in some detail. Students work in small groups to solve a problem posed by the case.
- **ROLE PLAYING or SKILLS PRACTICE** - When students need to learn a skill, have them practise the skill through role playing either in front of the class or in small groups.
- **SIMULATIONS or STRUCTURED EXERCISES** - Specially designed games can help students to better understand a concept from a course.
- **INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA UNITS** - various technologies can be used to support meaningful learning from a constructive perspective. Spend a little time looking through the resources on the Internet and searching for tools that would be appropriate for your class.
- **SOCIAL NETWORKING ACTIVITIES** - cell phones, laptops, and iPods can be used to engage students with each other and those outside the classroom through instant pooling and action research activities.

Learning a new task, skill or concept can be an exciting and compelling experience. A teacher plays a significant and pivotal role in the learning process and has the unique and rewarding ability to successfully motivate his/her participants.

Motivate Students to Learn and Make it Relevant: The material being taught in any class has to be relevant to the students attending the class. A teacher needs to find out why a student has registered in a particular class or determine what each student would like to have accomplished by the end of the class.

- Find out what each student wants to learn and make notes of each student's response. At the start of each week review a few of the responses with the class.
- Let the students know what they will gain from the course, why the information being taught is important and how they can utilise or incorporate this information into their work or home life.
- Thoroughly explain the course aims, objectives and requirements.

The students will show more interest in the course and remain committed to the learning process when a teacher has taken the time to explain the relevance of the course material and has allowed them to verbalise or write down their goals and the reasons why they have chosen to register in the course.

Motivate Students to Learn and Provide Positive Feedback: Positive feedback is a powerful tool that encourages willingness to learn and creates a sense of excitement about the learning process. Positive feedback can occur as a simple word of encouragement, recognition of hard work or a reward for providing correct answers.

- Thank students for their hard work.
- At the beginning of each class praise the students who have performed well, who have had excellent attendance or who have helped others in class.

Avoid being accused of favouritism by encouraging all students regularly and finding a reason to recognise each student at some point in the course. Having students involved in the class, working in teams and assisting the teacher can create a sense of ownership and team work. Teachers who utilise motivational techniques can propel students to want to learn and create a sense of comfortable atmosphere in the classroom.

#### **USEFUL TIPS HOW TO INVOLVE STUDENTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS:**

1. **Use cooperative small groups.** Divide your class into groups and have them teach a skill, concept, or strategy to the rest of the class. Students learn much more when they are responsible for teaching someone else.
2. **Ask your students about their needs.** Ask them what they need to be successful in your class. What do they expect to gain while in your class? What is it that will motivate them to do their best? Honour their responses and tailor lessons to meet their needs.

#### **CONSIDER THE LEARNERS' EXPERIENCE**

Most of the participants have some useful experience and a wealth of information. Tap into learners' experience and knowledge to add enrichment to the class and to engage the students in active learning:

- A. Ask open-ended questions,
- B. Focus on the students' strengths,
- C. Establish dialogue with students and treat them as resources of information,
- D. Build team/group activities during the course.

Adult participants come to the learning environment with a variety of life experiences; jobs they have held, parenting experiences they have had, cultural values they have grown up with, negotiating life's ups and downs. All these and more have contributed experiences that translate into expertise useful in an instructional setting. Learners appreciated by their teacher and their classmates for their strengths are validated and respected as individuals with something to offer, and their self-confidence and willingness to take a chance are enhanced.

Adult learners are likely to have opinions and to prefer making their own decisions. They may have been taking care of themselves and/or their families, may have had a variety of jobs, and often may have hidden skills that could be an asset to learning. Instructors can use adult students as resources in the classroom to provide information and expertise to the rest of the class. Relying on them in this way serves as a great confidence and esteem-builder for the students.

Adult learners bring a wealth of experience and accomplishment to the learning situation. Using learners' life experiences is an effective way for the adult education instructor to motivate learners and to help them see a connection between their own lives and the things they are learning in class.

#### **MATCH TASKS TO LEARNERS' SKILLS**

One of the key factors in teaching is getting the *right* balance between teacher's and learner's input. That is why it is necessary to prepare tasks checklists which will help both parties to match the tasks set by the teacher and the learner's skills.

Example:

Tasks checklist:

1. Does the task address the participants' educational goal?
2. Is the task multi-modal?

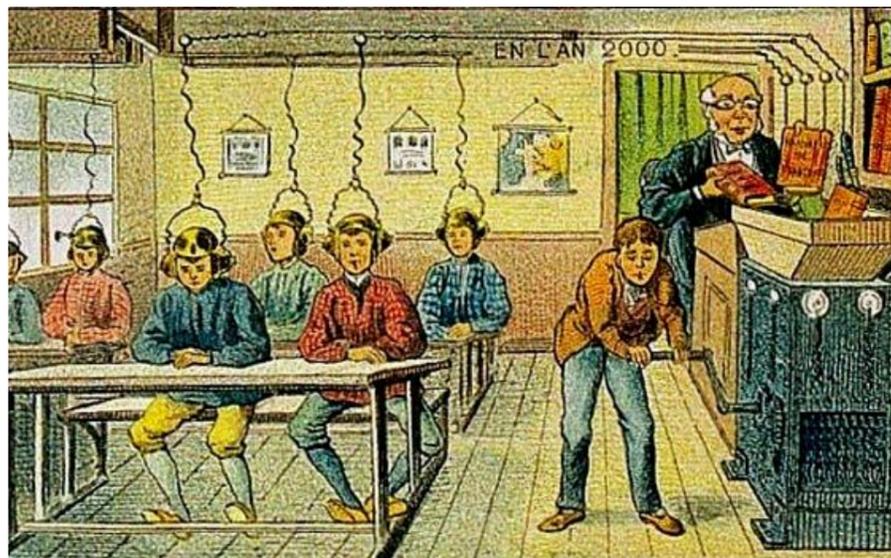
3. Does the task incorporate the participants' interest and strengths?
4. Have I prepared the task in a systematic way?
5. Is the task designed so that the participants can manage it independently?
6. Have the participants managed the task?

The teacher can use formal and informal assessments to determine the participants' level of performance. Additionally, the teacher must identify the participants' abilities, goals and objectives to teach them to become independent learners.

Using the learners' present level of performance should identify the prerequisite skills that are necessary for the learner to have in order to develop the target skill. Often this is done by collecting **baseline data** on performance of the target skill. The skills that are already mastered do not need to be included as part of the matching process.

### 3E. EFFECTIVE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Let's take a moment to examine the following picture.



In 1886 Jean Marc Côté imagined the XXI century school. We can see a classroom using "new methodologies" of XXI century. The learners are sitting and waiting for the lesson to start. Meanwhile the teacher/trainer has put all the subjects in the machine that gulps down

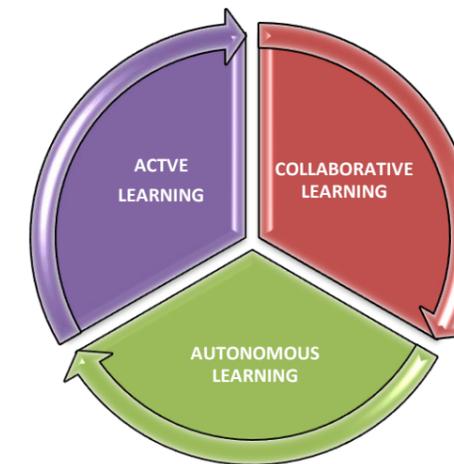
all the knowledge and will transmit it (the knowledge) to the learners (who receive the lessons). More than 100 years have passed since this prophetic picture and new methodologies have been developed as Côté supposed but these new methods have totally changed the teaching approach.

### Teaching approach of using ICT - General description

The introduction of ICT has changed our life. Now we can go shopping from our living room, or pay taxes on the way to our working place. It is enough to connect our mobile device and solve it!

Learning and training as components of the development of our society have changed with the introduction of ICT. From a unidirectional approach where the teacher/trainer introduced subjects or learning contents to the learners, we have formed a new paradigm of teaching that builds a specific environment that promotes learning via three different approaches:

- AUTONOMOUS LEARNING
- ACTIVE LEARNING
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING



**1. Autonomous learning:** The new devices based on ICT could offer several contents and learning objects, which answer to the specific needs of the learner. Thus, the learning could be focused more on the learner and not on the learning object.

**2. Active learning:** The promotion of autonomous learning (learning focused on learner's needs and goals) will motivate the learner, thus promoting active learning. The learner could incorporate more knowledge to the offered training, continuously improving the learning

outcomes. Besides, this active process will promote the concept “learning by doing”, a new approach of the learning process.

**3. Collaborative learning:** The learning process allows collaboration between the different learners, the creation of common knowledge and the promotion of new learning needs.

So, the teacher/trainer has to be more a facilitator who supports the new learning environment.

In this scenario, we can find new learning methodologies that will enrich the training/learning process and could be supported by the use of ICT devices. Let’s consider the following modes of learning:

**Collaborative learning:** It is a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together<sup>3</sup>.

**Constructivism:** Constructivism is the theory that we learn most effectively through experience<sup>4</sup>.

**Problem-based learning (PBL):** it is a student-centred pedagogy in which students learn about a subject through problem-solving tasks. Students learn both thinking strategies and domain knowledge. The goals of PBL are to help the students develop flexible knowledge, effective problem-solving skills, self-directed learning, effective collaboration skills and intrinsic motivation<sup>5</sup>.

**Learning by doing:** gaining knowledge or development of skills through direct experience of carrying out tasks, usually under supervision and as part of a training or induction process<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Dillenbourg, P. (1999). Collaborative Learning: Cognitive and Computational Approaches. Advances in Learning and Instruction Series. New York, NY: Elsevier Science, Inc.

<sup>4</sup> Read more: <http://www.alleydog.com/glossary/definition.php?term=Constructivism#ixzz2ADN7nYkn>

<sup>5</sup> Hmelo-Silver, Cindy E. (2004). "Problem-Based Learning: What and How Do Students Learn?". *Educational Psychology Review* 16 pags. 235–266.

<sup>6</sup> DC- Dictionario central <http://www.dictionariocentral.com/>

**Peer learning:** Peer learning is an educational practice in which students interact with other students to attain educational goals<sup>7</sup>.

Before introducing any ICT device, find some tips that could help you decide:

- **Think if a technological solution is appropriate.** Before choosing any device, programme, etc, think if it’s appropriate for your learners. Will it be familiar? Will it be friendly to use?
- **Avoid distractions:** Try to do it casually; don’t focus the relevance on the device itself but on the solution. You and the learners should focus on how this device could help you.
- **Don’t forget old methods:** ICT based devices and methodologies will help the teacher/trainer, but “old” methods will continue being valid. Use new methodologies but combine them with the old methods.
- **Combine different ICT based methods:** Don’t focus your teaching process on one device or on one programme alone. Try to use different devices and different programmes depending on the learners’ needs and/or on the learning contents.
- **Ask your learners:** ask them about the devices they use; the process will be easier.

**Different ICT based devices**

Before we begin, it is useful to discuss the nature of ICT devices available. These ICT devices can be broadly categorised as follows:

<b>Desktops</b>	Computers that are not inherently portable and are designed to sit on a desk.
<b>Laptops</b>	Larger portable devices with screens ranging from 13” and upward, normally fully configured with DVD drives.
<b>Tablet PCs</b>	Laptop devices with swivel screens that can be rotated over the keyboard and written on using a stylus.
<b>Netbooks</b>	Lower power laptops, usually without a DVD drive and with a smaller screen, usually 10”. These devices are characterised by lower prices and

<sup>7</sup> O'Donnell, A. M; A. King (1999). *Cognitive perspectives on peer learning*. Lawrence Erlbaum

	lesser performance compared to that of laptops.
<b>Tablets</b>	Characterised by a smaller form with touch screens, using mobile-derived operating systems. These devices are 'instant on' and generally have wireless, 3G or both forms of connectivity. iPads are the ultimate example of these devices and have essentially created this market space.
<b>Smart Phones</b>	These are cellular phones that have significant computational capability such as web browsing, text-based note-taking, static and moving image display and a raft of downloadable custom applications.
<b>Smart Devices</b>	Devices such as iTouch, PSP and Nintendo DS which, whilst they do not have telephony capabilities, have many of the computational capabilities of smart phones.
<b>Interactive whiteboard</b>	It is a large interactive display that connects to a computer. A data projector projects the computer's desktop onto the board's surface where users control the computer using a pen, finger, stylus, or other device. The board is typically mounted to a wall or is placed on a floor stand.

**Promote ICT in the learning process**

Different researches show that ICT benefits the learning process in two complementary directions: the learner and the teacher. In the next lines we propose different aspects that could promote the use of ICT in the learning process.

**Shared learning resources:** The ICT devices allow sharing different resources that could be used in different learning processes and for different learners. It could be very useful during the learning process.

**Shared learning spaces:** At the same time you can collaborate with different groups in different areas and environments, creating and exchanging knowledge continuously. It will promote collaborative learning, and learners could meet with others that have the same learning goals, thus improving the learning process.

**Promotion of collaborative learning:** Reil (2000) argues that much of what we now see as individual learning will change to becoming collaborative in nature. It's important to

include the experiences of learners in the learning process, as well as to ensure the continuous exchange of experiences and knowledge.

**Moving towards autonomous learning:** the use of ICT defines specific learning pathways for each learner thus attending to their learning goals and needs. In short, the main objective is to promote autonomous learning.

Additionally, and as we commented in the previous paragraphs, the teacher or trainer will have another role in the learning process. He/she will be a facilitator in the use of these technologies, but at the same time he/she will have to coordinate the process.

Consequently, some issues must be changed:

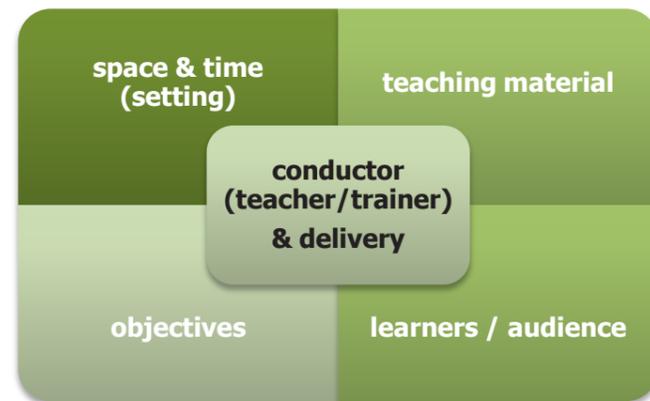
- The role of the teacher must change. She/he is a facilitator, who has enough knowledge about the use of ICT devices, it is no longer sufficient for teachers merely to impart content knowledge.
- ICT may also make some assessment methods redundant. Low level (factual) knowledge for example, has been traditionally tested by the use of multiple-choice questions. In an ICT environment, on-line tests can easily be used which instantly provide the teacher with a wide range of information associated with the learner's score.
- These facilitators must begin to reappraise the methods by which they meet the learners' learning needs and match curricula to the requirements of human thought.

## CHAPTER 4 - TRAINING ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS

### 4A. SPACE/FACILITIES

#### 1. COMPONENTS OF THE CLASS

A successful lesson at all levels depends on its components and determining factors. Whether you decide to have a teaching session during a field trip, or in a classroom, you need to have all the determining elements present. The components of an effective lesson are:



Just like a good performance in the theatre, which needs a good script, the right setting, well coordinated cast, lights, background music, and an efficient director, a successful lesson must have all its components and factors in tune to be effective for the learners and rewarding for the teacher.

#### 2. PLACE SETTING

The place setting in adult education can be a) the classroom, b) a field trip, or c) a workshop in an enterprise where the adults will do the practical part of their education to mention only the most common. Whatever the place is, the class and the trainer must collaborate well, based on good preparation from the teacher/trainer in order to have the desired result. Our main objective here is to describe some settings for a class session and to provide some examples.

#### a) Place setting: classroom

A classroom is the most usual setting but for most of the teachers who undertake the theoretical part of the education it is the only setting where learning occurs.

First and foremost, a classroom should be spacious enough to have an ideal seat arrangement which will enable the learners to have various activities that need mobility in class. It must also be well decorated/ventilated/air-conditioned. Nothing can be more demotivating than a cramped and cold / hot classroom. On the walls or cork boards there should be motivational posters and other posters preferably created by the learners. Humorous cartoon figures can help a lot to change the learners' mood and to pass messages effectively. You can find a lot of motivational / inspirational posters on the Internet which can be printed for your purposes.

#### Standard classroom equipment

The standard classroom equipment should be:

- ✓ desks / tables and chairs,
- ✓ a white board (that can become interactive)
- ✓ markers,
- ✓ CD, DVD player,
- ✓ data projector, PC
- ✓ a cork board for the learners' projects and various announcements
- ✓ some plants to create a cosy environment

#### b) Place setting: field visit

In adult education a part of paramount importance is the hands-on-the-job practical part when the theory becomes practical application and the teacher/trainer monitors the learners' ability to do the real job; to observe other people at workplace or to apply the techniques they learnt while attending a course.

Field trips that are materialised with the monitoring of the trainer are also lessons which involve most of the components of the class; the teacher, the learners, the teaching material and the place setting.

Good preparation from the teacher/trainer is essential. The learners must be divided into small groups of 3-4 and be given some instructions to follow so that their field visit meets the trainer's expectations.

### **Example of a field trip to a city area with historic interest**

An example deriving from the Vocational Training Organisation 'EPICENTRE' in Greece was a field visit to the city area where the heritage buildings are located. The adult learners had completed the theoretical part of a seminar, which had lasted for 350 hours, on a Restoration / Conservation project with the objective to find a job in similar projects on completion of their education and were about to start their practical training in restoration/conservation firms.

Their trainers, qualified and experienced architects, took them to field trips before sending them to various construction firms for their practical training. The first trip was as follows:

#### **Preparation by the trainers:**

- Map of the tour which was distributed to the learners,
- Instructions to the learners (distributed in a handout)
- Questionnaire addressing the learners with 20 open questions (distributed to the participants)
- Permit issued by the Mayor allowing the visit to the interior of certain heritage buildings,
- Forming small teams of 3.

Guided by two of their trainers, the 25 learners toured the city area where the neoclassical mansions were located and took notes of what they saw. During the trip, the learners, who had been living all their life in that city, were surprised to see *'for the first time'*, as they said, the features of the buildings and recognise the parts they had learnt in the classroom: arched windows, rosettes beneath the marble balconies, attics, tiled roofs, inscriptions on marble plaques, grand marble staircases, the monumental size of the buildings, panelled and louvered shutters, grand facades, and elaborate front doors. At the same time the trainers took the opportunity to teach them some historical facts.

The groups worked in small teams of 3 adults. They had to identify the various features and write in their notepads the various parts of the buildings they visited and their function. After inspecting each building, their trainers sat them at a small park in a way so that everyone had eye contact with their trainers and discussed their findings.

In the end of that field trip they visited a quarry where the learners had to identify the various stones and their role in building that is if they could be used to carry a weight in main walls or for decorative or secondary purposes.

The class, which was in the open air, had these characteristics:

- Trainers,
- Students,
- Objectives (lesson plan),
- Instructions and other helping material (map of the area)

The outcomes of that class were:

- Recognition of the various features,
- Identification of the various functions,
- Further understanding of the theoretical part,
- Raising awareness of the importance of the historic buildings,
- Real setting,
- Learning the history of the city heritage.

### **3. THE CLASSROOM SETTING – SEAT ARRANGEMENT**

The arrangement of the seats in the classroom is very important to define the degree of coordinating the group and the effectiveness of the learning process.

While some seat arrangement can encourage the participants to actively get involved in the learning process, other seat arrangement can hinder participation and demotivate the participants from getting actively involved.

Let's examine closely the various arrangements and their effect on both the learners and the trainer.

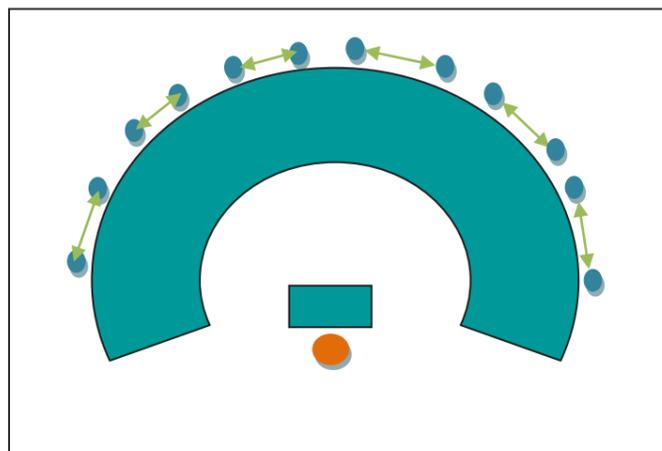
**A. MOTIVATING SEAT ARRANGEMENT**

**A.1. SEMICIRCLE SEAT ARRANGEMENT**

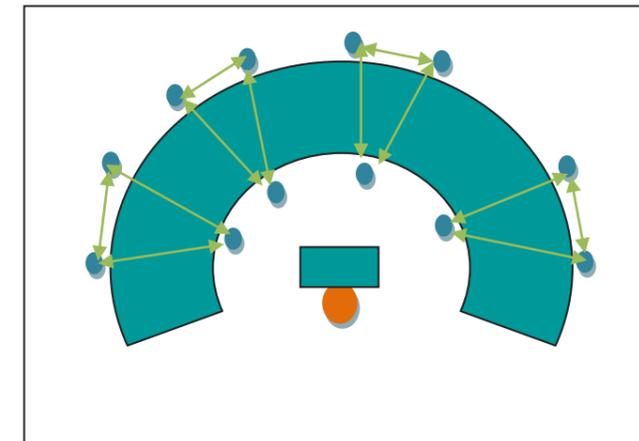
The most effective arrangement of desks is in a semicircle or in a  $\Pi$  formation. The learners are at the same level, they all have eye contact with the teacher/trainer and the latter can move either internally or externally thus creating the effect of immediacy. Moreover, when one of the learners speaks, everyone can hear them, see their facial expressions, and interact more naturally.

At the same time the teacher/trainer has immediate information about the learners' participation and can coordinate the group more effectively while being aware of his/her audience. It is not accidental that in the business world in all board meetings the seats are arranged in this way to encourage communication. This formation, apart from being ideal for attending lectures and presentations, it is ideal for pair-work and group-work activities both of which reinforce the learning process. Below are some suggestions and drawings of a classroom that a trainer in adult education should consider.

*Figure 1: seat arrangement in a semicircle to facilitate pair-work*

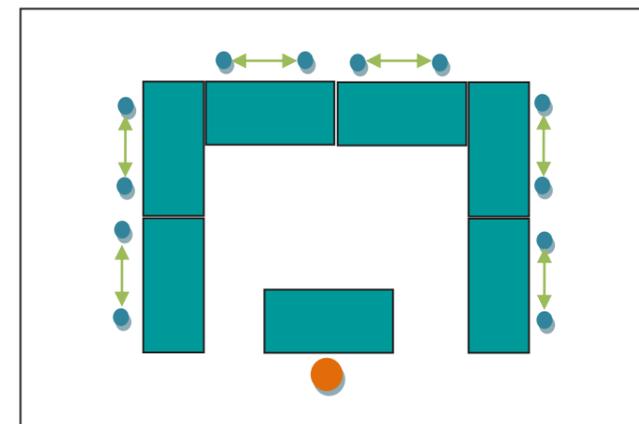


*figure 2: working in small groups of 3 (move 4 learners to the inner circle)*

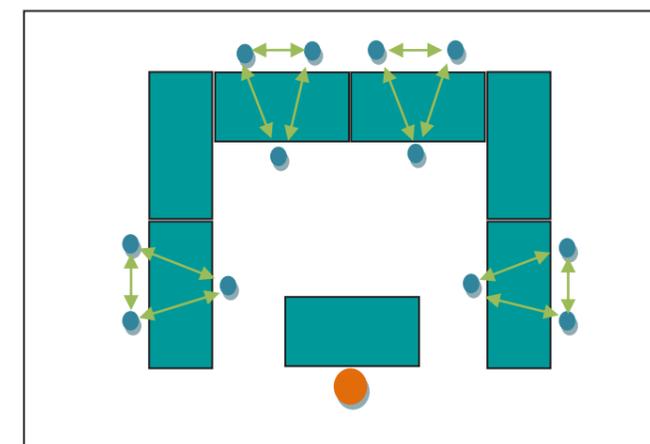


**A.2.  $\Pi$  SEAT ARRANGEMENT**

*figure 3: pair-work*



*figure 4: working in groups of 3 (move 4 learners to the inner side of  $\Pi$ )*



**Examples of pair-work / group-work activities:** in either the semicircle or the  $\Pi$  seat arrangement, you can set various pair-work or group-work activities that can promote collaborative learning in an effective way.

Below are some suggestions about this kind of activities which can be used, for example, when your class of adults learns a new foreign language. They can also be used to discuss case studies, act out interviews, etc. You can adjust them accordingly.

#### **PAIR-WORK EXAMPLES – PART A** (to enhance speaking skill/communication)

- a. they **narrate** to each other an experience related to a given topic → speaking skill – it strengthens their communication skills.
- b. **jigsaw reading** of a certain text and narrating their part to each other - information gap - (speaking skill → reading comprehension, narrating skills, asking questions, reaching a logical conclusion) - this is an ideal activity for comparing causes and effects in a case study.
- c. **discuss** a set of pictures assisted by a given set of questions → speaking skill (interpret the images, describe the situation(s), justify their answers, agree, disagree, conclude) - this is an ideal activity for comparing situations at workplace, for example.
- d. **role-play** to enhance communication and interactive skills: interviewing a candidate employee; salesman and potential customer; client and bank manager.
- e. **role-play** in front of the class: one is the 'interviewer' and the other is the 'applicant interviewee' → the 'interviewer' must finally report to the class his/her assessment and justify it. Then they exchange roles. Before another pair plays their role, the teacher praises them for their positive points and advises them how to improve their negative points, for example how the interviewees to better promote themselves during a job interview. This is an ideal simulation activity at the end of a vocational seminar and before the beneficiaries start looking for a job in the labour market.

**PAIR-WORK EXAMPLES – PART B** (to enhance reading, speaking, listening and writing skills)

- a. **form collocations** from a given list of lexical items → speaking and writing skills (identify, form meaningful collocations)
- b. **reconstruct idioms / phrases** from 2 lists containing the idioms/phrases cut in half and jumbled → speaking and writing skills (identify, form idioms/phrases, recall meanings)
- c. **summarise** from a given set of points so that their partner, who must not see the information, can form an opinion and make a recommendation → speaking and writing skills (paraphrase, summarise, note-taking)
- d. **role-play:** act out a dialogue → reading and speaking skills → follow-up: each pair acts out the dialogue in front of the class without books and if they forget their line(s) they can improvise (great fun)
- e. **role-play:** the teacher prepares some situations and distributes roles. Examples: arranging to meet and go to the cinema; ordering at a restaurant; shopping; re-arranging a meeting; making an appointment. This activity can take place in front of the class by a pair of learners as an example and then all of them pair up and do it simultaneously while the teacher moves around and monitors them.

#### **GROUP-WORK EXAMPLES – PART A**

##### **Working in groups of 3 or 4:**

- a. discuss a case study and find solutions,
- b. write an application letter,
- c. plan a formal letter of accepting a job offer,
- d. design an advertisement of a new product,
- e. discuss the pros and cons of 2-3 selling techniques.

**GROUP-WORK EXAMPLES – PART B**

(especially effective in a language course where the national language (L2) is being learnt by a multi-cultural and multi-lingual class)

- a. write sentences by using given vocabulary items
- b. narrate an experience they have in association with a given topic (one narrates and the other 2 take notes)
- c. planning an activity together; first orally then in writing
- d. problem-solving situations (oral practice)
- e. choose the best option from a given list of situations → prioritise, explain, agree/disagree, conclude
- f. discuss a social/environmental issue and propose solutions
- g. design the structure and the content of a leaflet promoting their town to visitors/tourists
- h. write an article together on a given topic → they plan together, choose which part each one will write and then they read all parts and make the necessary changes so that it looks as if it was written by one person. Extra time is needed to write all parts in a single article. This is a demanding and very rewarding exercise provided the teacher/trainer has planned it properly.
- i. design the content of the Vocational Centre Newsletter (where they are attending their course) → the teacher/trainer gives them the template and they plan which kind of news will appear on each page by making notes on the template → communication skills (suggest, agree, disagree, justify, conclude). This activity can also be done in the computer laboratory – after they have decided as a group which parts to contribute to the task, they undertake to fill in their parts using a different PC each) and then they put the content together.

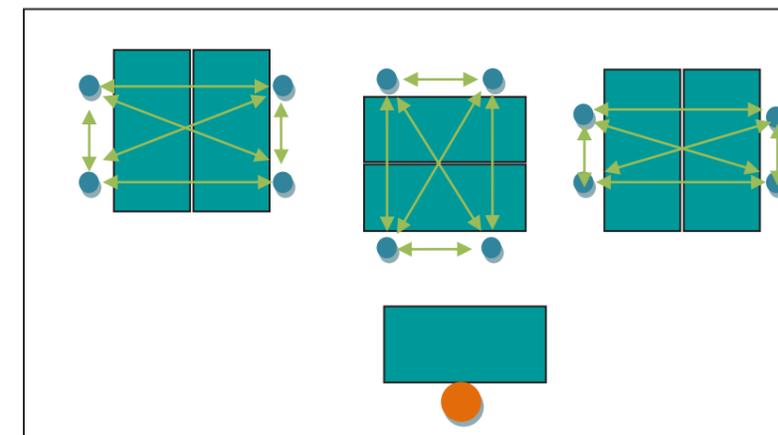
It is of great importance that the pair-work or group-work activities be followed-up by activities that will exploit the positive energy of the students. An activity that will be done either in pairs or in groups merely to use up class time is a pointless activity. Once the learners are motivated, they need follow-up activities to sustain the motivation and so sustain the learning, such as reporting to the class and choosing the best solution regarding an activity on case studies, for example, or writing a certain task based on oral activities. A resourceful teacher is expected to have pre-planned some follow-up activities for each pair-work / group-work.

**Advantages and disadvantages of semicircle and/or Π seat arrangement**

SEMICIRCLE / Π SEAT ARRANGEMENT	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourages and sustains realistic communication between the learners and the teacher/trainer;</li> <li>▪ The learners feel they are members of a team;</li> <li>▪ The teacher/trainer has easy class control - can move outside and inside the formation;</li> <li>▪ Participants have eye contact with the teacher/trainer;</li> <li>▪ It is flexible for pair-work / group-work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A large classroom is needed;</li> <li>▪ If not monitored closely during pair-work / group-work, the learners may be talking about other things.</li> </ul>

Group-work in other seat arrangements: if your class situation does not encourage the previous flexible formations, you can move the students' chairs so that you form 3 groups like in the figures below. Look at this possibility:

**figure 5:** working in groups of 4 (move the tables/desks to form separate groups)



The above arrangement is easy even if there are compact desks with 2 seats each. What we need is natural sitting of 4 learners facing one another and working on a certain task.

### B. DEMOTIVATING SEAT ARRANGEMENT

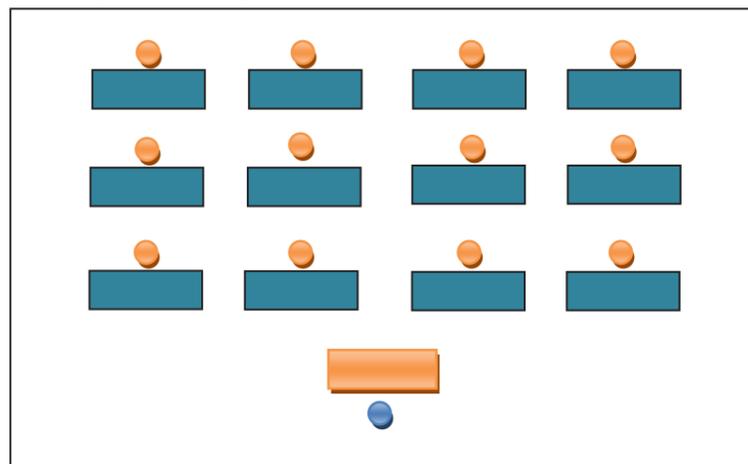
Despite the importance of the seat arrangement to ensure an encouraging environment where learning occurs, a lot of teachers/trainers pay little attention to it. One should realise that a seat arrangement can influence the learning effectiveness. It is, therefore, of paramount importance to secure an encouraging seat arrangement that will optimise the learning process and effectiveness before you start your lesson. It takes a couple of minutes to change the desks if the previous teacher had another arrangement that does not facilitate your lesson plan. You can even ask the students to help you change the desks/tables when you shift from demonstration, for example, to a pair-work / group-work activity.

Let's consider a fact: what kind of desks arrangement do we ensure when our students sit term / mid-term / final examinations? We arrange the desks apart and away from each other, right? We do this to ensure that:

- the students **cannot** communicate with each other
- there is a safe distance **to discourage** them from cheating

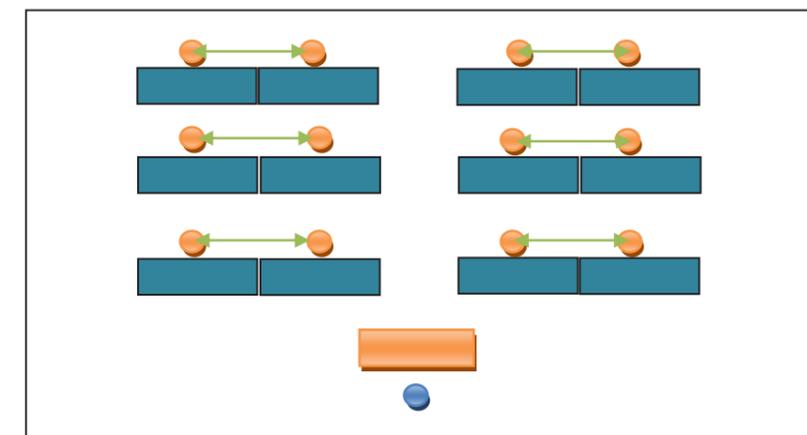
Overall, we discourage any communication among them. Well, this arrangement, while it is right for examination purposes, should be avoided in our regular classes where communication and learning from each other is essential.

**Figure 6:** demotivating seat arrangement

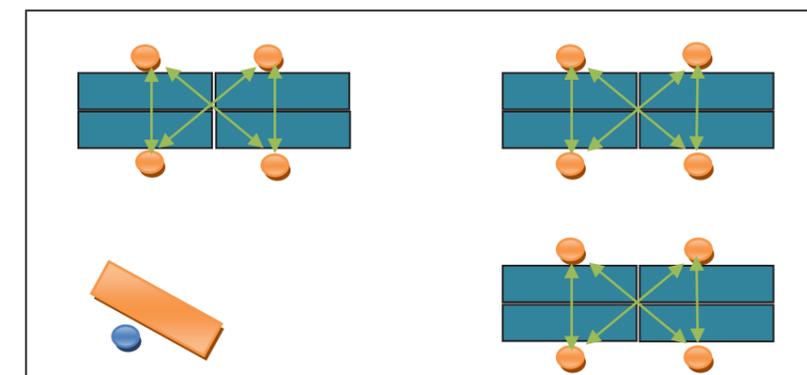


While the seat arrangement depicted in *figure 6* is fine for lectures and examinations, the seats establish a formal environment and distance between the learners. In tutorials it may encourage 'backbenchers' and 'trouble-makers' to be distracted and not focus on the lesson and 'good students' – the ones sitting in the first row to try and focus on what is being presented / taught. If you have this kind of desks arrangement, make sure that you put two desks together for each pair (*figure 7*) and move the chairs for group-work as shown in *figure 8*. In either case make sure that you mobilise yourself a lot and have eye contact with all students. Do not stay always at the front of the class as this will encourage the students who are sitting at the back of the class to be distracted from your lesson and start fidgeting and, no matter how carefully you have been prepared, your lesson will be less effective.

**Figure 7:** re-arrange the desks for pair-work activities

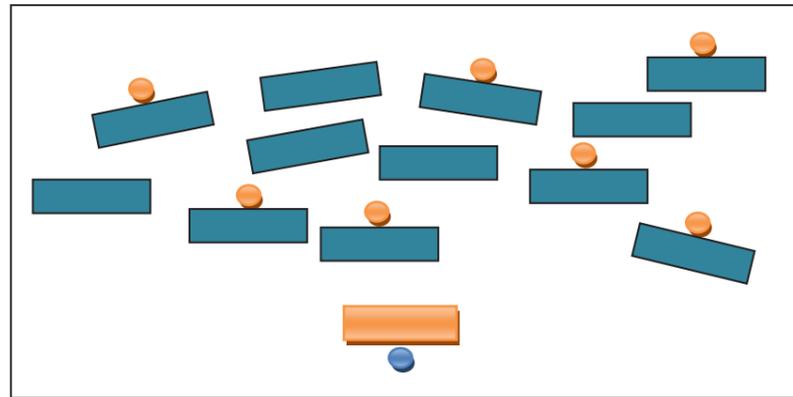


**Figure 8:** re-arrange the desks for group-work activities



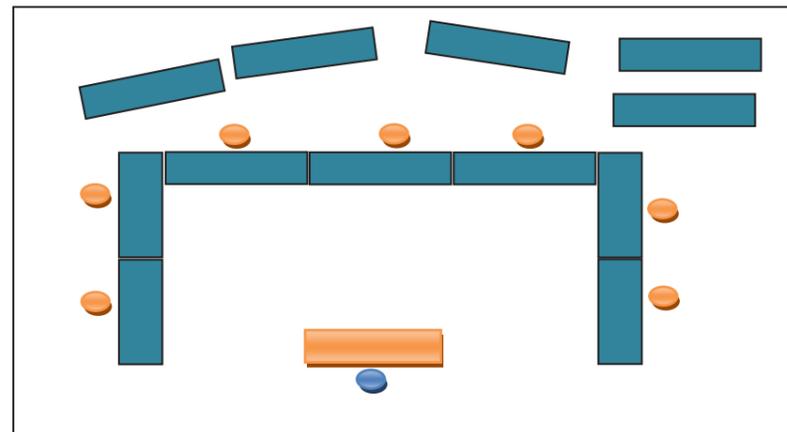
Sometimes you may be confronted with two different challenges: a) you find the desks in complete disarray because either the teacher before you did not tidy the desks after his/her lesson or the classroom had been used for a certain activity other than a lesson, b) you have fewer attendants in your session and the students choose to sit as it is shown in *figure 9*. If you allow this, it will be very difficult to establish good communication as the element of group dynamics is missing; everyone is sitting aloof.

**Figure 9:** demotivating seat arrangement – dribs and drabs



In this case use your flexibility and ask them to sit as close to you as possible and re-arrange the desks as shown in *figure 10* to have an encouraging formation that will facilitate your lesson. The time that will be 'wasted' to do so is negligible if you consider the benefit of having an effective lesson.

**Figure 10:** re-arrange the seats to accommodate the attendants

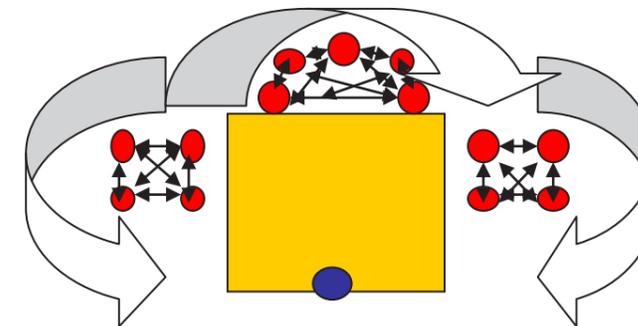


Now you have your class in front of you in an organised arrangement that facilitates eye contact and voice projection to cover the space between you and the learners. The dynamics of the class can be boosted as there is a defined 'learning space' and interaction is immediate and effective.

**C. THE TEACHER'S ROLE DURING PAIR-WORK / GROUP-WORK ACTIVITIES**

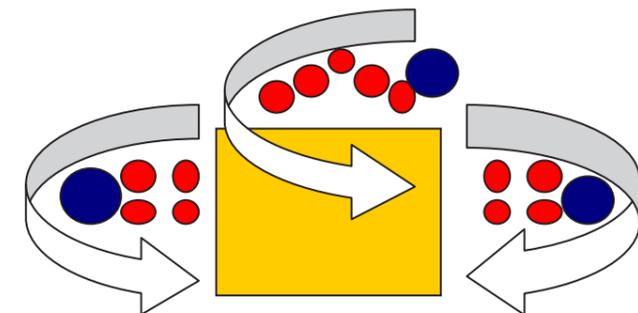
Merely planning pair-work / group-work activities beforehand is not sufficient to ensure success in itself. The role of the teacher during these activities determines success or failure. Let's examine the role of the teacher and the effect(s).

**Figure 11:** group-work activities – the teacher/trainer monitors the class from his/her domain



In this case the students may become bored after the first few minutes and not complete the task. Being aloof, the teacher is likely to send a signal that s/he is not interested in their actual task. Naturally these learners don't find the activity motivational for further practice. It is certain that they will be reluctant to do similar activities in the future.

**Figure 12:** group-work activities with the participation of the teacher / trainer



In this case the students are continuously motivated by the teacher/trainer who moves from one group to another participating in their discussion. These students are likely to complete the task with a spirit of competition. It all depends on the teacher who is the 'conductor of the orchestra'.

Pair-work / group-work activities coordinated and monitored by the teacher/trainer	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realistic communication</li> <li>Interesting &amp; creative activities</li> <li>Participants feel members of a team</li> <li>Learning from each other</li> <li>Easy control of the pairs / groups</li> <li>Participants practise social skills while practising on the new knowledge</li> <li>Learners develop social skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher/trainer cannot monitor all pairs/groups at the same time</li> <li>Each pair/group has different pace</li> </ul>

#### D. E-CLASS

Last but not least, more and more learners choose to attend e-classes either synchronous or asynchronous and it will not be long before this practice will be widely used to cater for the students' needs, such as attending the entire syllabus of their chosen course online and being assessed on line while studying at their own pace easily and comfortably from home.

##### D 1. ASYNCHRONOUS E-CLASS

Teachers/trainers are the ones who prepare the materials for asynchronous e-classes: presentations, slides, graphics, files (audio/video). The teachers who are involved in the creation of these materials must be aware of the fact that some elements are missing from the asynchronous e-class compared to the live classroom sessions.

##### Missing elements of asynchronous e-class compared to live classroom sessions:

- Physical presence of teacher and learners
- Team goals and team spirit

- Face-to-face collaboration of learners
- Questions by the learners
- Answers by the teachers who have created the material
- Interaction between teacher and learners
- Motivation techniques
- Psychological support to the learners by the teachers
- Rapport between teachers and learners

##### Preparing material for e-classes must meet certain requirements; it must:

- define clear aims and objectives
- address certain target groups
- be well structured
- include clear and effective graphics
- include clear instructions per unit
- cover the subject/module step-by-step
- include effective interactive exercises per unit as part of the learners' self-assessment
- be assisted by a self-assessment system to test the acquired knowledge
- include interpretation of scores and advice for revision (module or sub-modules)
- include reliable links to further relevant material

The teachers, therefore, must prepare high quality products predicting any difficulties that the learners may face since it is not a live lesson in the classroom where the teacher can flexibly confront the various challenges.

##### D 2. SYNCHRONOUS E-CLASS

In a synchronous e-class, which requires a live lesson and both the teacher and the learners meet in real time, the teacher/trainer must fulfil a demanding profile that will meet the new requirements.

During a web conference, which is the best means of delivering a lesson to an e-class, the teacher/trainer will have to interact with a class. This will involve a classroom or a studio with the teacher working usually on 3 monitors: one to manage/monitor the e-class, one for the texts and one for the graphics.

### Requirements to instruct a synchronous e-class:

- Competences in using new technologies
- Time management
- Step-by-step coverage of the subject
- Flexibility to confront questions raised by the virtual class of attendants
- Coordination of the questions raised by the attendants

Overall, teachers/trainers have a totally new role in adult education and to be able to have their share in this market they must not only be computer literate but also to know about and be able to use the new technological advances. To play this extended role they must acquire specific knowledge on how to create efficient material for online tutorials and use specific techniques to deliver their lessons to their virtual classes.

## 4B. Training material

### 1. DISTRIBUTION OF TRAINING MATERIALS IN CLASSROOMS: AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

The distribution of training material has an impact on the quality of team work performed by the students. Before the class begins you need to choose and organise appropriate material that students will need to carry out their tasks and work cooperatively.

Careful organisation of training material prevents a number of difficulties and behavioural issues. Reasoning on the distribution of material will help to discourage certain attitudes in the classroom, such as:

- a) *"Dominant" students.* When a student dominates discussions of the group, his/her role can be "contained" if he/she is required to learn from students who have other material, complementing his/her role to achieve a common goal for the group.

- b) *Students reluctant to get involved.* When one or more students do not participate in group work, they can be involved in distributing the material available so that the success of the group also depends on their cooperation.

- c) *Students are sitting too far away from each other to work together.* After giving each group a set of materials, its members will have to sit closer in order to work together.

An inclusive and cooperative approach in class does not require special materials other than those used in a traditional lesson. These materials can, however, be used in a special way, so as to encourage cooperation between students.

There are several opportunities to use training materials and thus promote cooperation:

**1. Give each student a complete set of training materials.** Each student may need a copy of a text or a paragraph to read and re-read to refer when answering questions within the lesson. Or, for example, each student should have a copy of the math problem that the whole class is trying to solve.

**2. Distribute the materials in different parts.** For example, you can give each student a copy of the text to be read, so that he/she can read it comfortably, and at the same time give each group a single copy of the questions to which they must respond collectively.

**3. Give each group a single copy of the materials.** Limiting the materials provided to the group is a way to establish positive interdependence among its members, and in this way the students are forced to work together. This method is particularly effective during the first meetings of the class. If all the students have their own copy of the materials, at least initially, they are likely to work separately. For this reason, you may want to distribute a copy to each student only after the group has learned how to work cooperatively. Giving a single copy of the materials to a pair of students is to have them sit side by side and think together. Or, for example, giving a pencil and a sheet for every two students is useful to let them decide together which of them and what to write. When using computers, two or three students working on a single device have to reason on how to share different tasks. In cooperative learning, groups must ensure the active use of teaching materials by all students, especially when these materials are not sufficient for all.

**4. Distribute materials with a jigsaw method<sup>8</sup> to make students interdependent.**

Give each student some of the materials needed to carry out the task. Each student is responsible for the materials received: he/she must know what their appropriate use is, explain it to the rest of the group and get information from other members of the group. In an English lesson, for example, you can give a text to translate to the first student, a sheet with the grammar rules to the second and a bilingual dictionary to a third person. This procedure ensures the participation of each member to the group's success.

**5. You can ask each student to bring a specific item to contribute to the enrichment of the materials.** For example, each student can bring a newspaper article, a narrative text or an object referring to class topics.

**6. You can prepare materials in order to create competition between groups and compare the skill levels achieved by each student.** You can set the class in heterogeneous groups within which each student must ensure that all group members have good knowledge of the assigned material. Group members study together and then all the students participate in a competition that will determine which team has learned better. For the development of competitive games, you need some cards with questions about the material studied in groups. Students pick up in turns a card and answer the corresponding question. If the answer is correct, the student keeps the card, but if it is wrong, the card is put at the bottom of the pack of cards. If another student knows the correct answer, he/she can provide it. The points earned by the students add up to the total number of points in the group, and the group that scores higher is the winner.

Finally, the choice of materials for a class is determined by the type of tasks and what students do during the lesson. You need to imagine how students could work together and then decide if you really need that students have materials available at every moment. When a group has experience and its members have reached a good level of interpersonal skills, the manner you distribute the materials becomes less important. But if the group is newly established, or if the members do not yet know how to work cooperatively, it helps to

<sup>8</sup>On this issue, Céline Darnon, Céline Buchs and Delphine Desbar have recently written the essay " The jigsaw technique and self-efficacy of vocational training students: a practice report" on the European Journal of Psychology of Education, September 2012, Volume 27, Issue 3, pp 439-449 (<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10212-011-0091-4?LI=true>)

distribute the materials in a way that it is clear that the tasks can be performed more easily with a joint effort.

**2. WORKING WITH AUDIOVISUALS**

It is important to dedicate a specific space for audiovisual materials in education because it is undeniable that the world of motion pictures is part of everyday life. Even when the major difficulty of the teacher is to stimulate the students, audiovisual materials are certainly more interesting for our audience, especially if "caught" by "their" reality. Audio-visual materials include a plurality of codes (iconic, visual, oral, sound, etc.) just like in everyday life and offer to the students samples of language and culture much closer to reality than it can be done, for example, through a written text.

Audiovisual material, just because of its versatility, allows for different interpretations (only pictures, only speech, images and soundtrack, a few words and a narrative context, images, spoken and implicit cultural information, etc.) becoming, therefore, appropriate material in classes where the students' cognitive and ethnic characteristics are heterogeneous. Decentralisation is the process by which we try to "put ourselves in the shoes" of someone else. The audiovisual medium facilitates decentralisation because it is an expression of the intersection of multiple points of view. In narrative films the passage from a point of view to another is more evident with regard to the scene or with regard to the history.

In order to work in the classroom with audio-visual materials it is essential to accurately select the piece you want to use. Below are some practical tips to find (we would say "cut") the right piece, highlighting the elements that the teacher must assess.

STUDENTS' LEVEL	The length must be adjusted to the level of language comprehension development that the piece is intended to foster.
STUDENTS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE	Students are not "tabula rasa": everyone brings experience and knowledge that are fundamental to the understanding of any given piece. The teacher must be aware of which knowledge is needed to understand the audiovisual piece in question. For example, it is difficult

	to grasp the irony and the deeper meaning of the sequence of the Roberto Benigni's movie "La vita è bella" without having even limited knowledge about concentration camps.
LENGTH OF SEQUENCE	Depending on the type of audiovisual, the piece presented can have different duration. Some are short audio-visual (short films, commercials), others have already clearly identified "scenes" (sitcoms, soap operas). Movies and documentaries need to be carefully chosen to meet the characteristics and the level of attentiveness of each student.
INTEREST OF STUDENTS	When you are involved in the situation that you are experiencing you can forget about your own learning process. If the student enters into what psychology calls "flow state", learning is guaranteed. Pieces able to emotionally engage students can grant such a learning process.
ADEQUACY OF CONTENTS	The length must be appropriate to the age of the students, in terms of visual and verbal content.
IMAGE QUALITY	Images must be "beautiful" in terms of appearance and in technical terms: a reasoned use of the stop motion is useful to focus students on certain details or narrative elements. Good sound and texture of videos lets students better appreciate the enjoyment of the moment.

Once you have found the piece that you want to use for class work it is very important to consider the stage of presentation. A good presentation of audiovisual material can stimulate the motivation of students, which is the hardest part of the whole educational work.

DURATION	The length of the selected scene should be very limited. The normal curve of attention decreases after about 15-20' if the audiovisual media is not spoken in the mother tongue of the student. If the scene has several levels of understanding, some of which require higher cognitive abilities than those of the students, the curve falls much earlier, between 5 and 10'. If you want to work on a film or on a long audiovisual, it is better to select multiple sequences of 5-10' on which you can work separately. At the end, for relaxation and aesthetic enjoyment, you can show the whole film.	
REPEAT	Each sequence should be viewed over and over again, giving each time different tasks to the class (e.g.: understanding of the vocabulary, description of the scene, character descriptions)	
SUPPORTS	The optimal solution is the sequence of digital or DVD, because it is cut exactly where required, does not require rewinding time, you can take snapshots and export them in other works. Alternatively, a VHS tape on which the precise sequence is recorded can also fit. It's really important when you pause for a break or for other activities, to remember exactly the minutes and the seconds of the scene when you interrupted it, otherwise the students will lose concentration and you will feel uncomfortable.	
METHODS (Depending on the learning objectives to be pursued)	VIDEO ONLY	To create hypotheses about the lines of the actors, the comments of the chronicler, the voice-overs.
	AUDIO ONLY	To create hypotheses about images, feelings of actors, setting of the scene.
	INTEGRAL VISION (audio + video)	To test the hypotheses created previously.
	IN ORIGINAL LANGUAGE	To create hypotheses about the state of mind of the characters, to appreciate the languages of foreign comrades, to deepen a comparative reflection on the use of spoken language, you can offer videos in different languages.
	WITH SUBTITLES	To enjoy the sounds of a foreign language and to formulate hypotheses about idiomatic expressions.

	WITH LATCH-IMAGE	To create hypotheses about what will happen next, the emotions of the characters or to describe what you see in various ways.
ASSIGNMENT OF TASKS		Every vision must be accompanied by a specific task, which can even be very simple ("raise your hand when you hear a certain word"). The lack of specific tasks during the use of the sequence makes students lose concentration and pushes them into a frustrating attempt to understand global and superficial readings of the scene. Vision without specific tasks can be adjusted only to relax, which aims to promote the aesthetic enjoyment of the material presented.
ARTISTIC VALUE		The presentation of audiovisual materials may over-contextualise the scenes seen, highlighting only their specific educational purpose and so losing the sense of the entire audiovisual as a whole. This risk can be avoided through complementary activities, richness of sources on the audiovisual (the film's plot, biography of the director or actor, highlighting on creative audiovisual components).

organisational skills, verbal skills, non-verbal skills, logical skills, technical skills, artistic skills, etc.. With foreign students, the laboratory can strongly foster communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal.

### HOW TO PROCEED

It is important to quantify the time available: however simple, design work, shooting and editing are tricky and can take a long time. Here are the main stages of processing:

**1. Subject.** By subject we mean the whole topic of the video, its history (for narrative videos) or its theme (for documentaries). If you want to shoot a narrative story, you can take inspiration from literary sources (in this case the subject is the story or the novel that inspired it), and then proceed to its synthesis and adaptation. In the case of non-narrative (interviews, documentaries, etc.), it is important to focus on the theme, because the absence of the sequence of events that constitute a story can frustrate the learners. Once focused on the theme of the video you need to decide what to shoot and what to leave out, in order to make it visually comprehensible.

**2. Screenplay.** The screenplay is the "visual story" of the film, in which each scene is planned, including dialogues, as it will appear on the screen. It is a work of fiction and it takes time, patience and precision. Scripts can be more or less detailed, from writing simple dialogues to scheduling each camera movement. A brief script can be more easily manipulated and it is preferable for small didactic works, accompanied by a simple direction plan. In this phase, just formulate the main hypotheses of the shots, few but effective ones.

**3. Shooting.** The place where the scenes will be filmed must be identified as soon as you decide what to shoot, because the place can affect the story. Once you have chosen the place, it is good to shoot a few minutes to test, if there is enough light and if the chosen place is indeed the ideal set (to the naked eye it may seem perfect). Then you can proceed with the filming. Solving these problems requires creativity and initiative. Therefore, it is important to choose a person to serve as the director (preferably familiar with the medium) to be in charge of accompanying the project in all phases. The shots must somehow predict the editing phase: the end of a scene must coincide with the beginning of the next and you should keep this in mind, even though you may want to shoot the film disrupting the chronological sequence. To help you organise your thoughts during shooting, try to look at

### 3. SOME SIMPLE CONSIDERATIONS TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO SET UP A VIDEO PRODUCTION LABORATORY

#### WHY?

It is important to establish what educational goal we want to achieve through the creation of an audiovisual product. The objectives can be classified into three training areas:

a) **Social:** you can decide to shoot a video in order to promote socialisation, without giving too much importance to what you decided to shoot;

b) **Deepening of the contents:** you can plan to make a movie to reinforce ideas, concepts, knowledge, language skills, etc..

c) **Communication:** the focus of this kind of video-making is on education, which is aimed at bringing out the talents of everyone in the making of the video. The educational objective considers the skills necessary for the creation of an audiovisual product. These skills include:

each scene to be shot like a phrase: find out how many actions there are, what the best angle of recovery is, in which way any action is connected to another. Remember that the more material you shoot, the more options during editing you will have.

**4. Editing.** The footage may seem confusing without editing activities, and without cutting the unnecessary clips. Editing is a very complex task: it requires a lot of time, a lot of patience, knowledge of the audiovisual language and good technical and ICT skills. Some video capture boards on the market are equipped with video editing software (assembly) that allows you to create small audio-visual products with satisfactory results. The interface is often simplified and helps you to move with certain flexibility in the programme. Initially, you might only require simple trimming of the head and tail of a video, or selecting only a certain portion of a long video that you want to cut. If you want to do more with video like assembling various clips, add a dissolve or wipe at a cut point in the video, and include a title graphic or insert subtitles that you'll have to step up to other video editing software. You can find a lot of free video editing software on the web, but take note of some fundamental features in a good video editor:

- a. Easy to use interface that is intuitive and has quick access to tools,
- b. Imports video, audio, graphics, as well as video directly from a camcorder (or other recording device) into the system,
- c. Handles multiple media file formats (avi, mpeg, mp4, dvd,
- d. Adds and moves video and audio easily within the movie,
- e. Can add effects like dissolves, wipes, special patterns, and fade to black,
- f. Allows colour correction, filters, and video enhancement,
- g. Is compatible with your Windows computer – CPU, RAM, HDD space, etc.

If you do not have sufficient technical expertise or information, you had better hire an expert (small local productions, amateurs, etc.). Always think of the editing phase during the shootings: ending up with a lot of shots that cannot be linked together coherently is a big problem.

Here are some simple tips to proceed:

**Footage:** starting from the early stages of filming, split the movie into parts, so that you will manage a portion of footage at a time.

**Action:** consider the main action and break down each scene according to a tripartite pattern that includes incipit, action, and conclusion. Store the scenes immediately following this pattern.

**Scene:** each part will be further divided into scenes, which must also be stored immediately in chronological order.

**Details:** take care of the details. Do not fall for continuity errors (for example, if a character runs through the shot from the right or left, in the following frame he must have the same direction, etc.).

**Quality:** do not hesitate to discard bad shootings: out of focus, overexposed, poorly managed scenes must be eliminated to avoid compromising the quality of the entire product.

**Effects:** do not overuse the visual effects available in video editing software: before you use them, ask yourself if they are needed. Overuse of special effects makes it difficult to understand the message.

**Audio:** edit the audio so that the source of the sound appears evident (do not forget to show clearly in every scene the sound source, if it is possible) and choose the music designed to highlight concepts and themes.