HANDBOOK FOR ADULT TEACHING STAFF

BASIC TEACHING PRINCIPLES FOR ADULTS WHO BELONG TO VULNERABLE SOCIAL GROUPS
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Handbook for teachers of adults who belong to vulnerable groups

Adult education contributes positively to the development of skills and competences which adults need throughout their lives. Additionally, it contributes to the development of active citizenship. Adult education also helps to overcome the challenges faced by vulnerable social groups, such as early school leavers, low-skilled adults in literacy, numeracy and ICT, senior citizens, adults with special needs or adults who face social exclusion due to limited participation in education.

Taking into account adult education as an integral dimension of Lifelong Learning and in an effort to further promote the field, the European Commission has adopted the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Education (2012–2014). The Renewed European Agenda seeks to continue to strengthen and complement the ongoing work in the field of adult education, based on the objectives set out in the strategic framework “Education and Training 2020”.

Cyprus is participating in the initiative of the European Commission through the Cyprus Action Plan, which is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture in cooperation with other departments of other Ministries, directorates and authorities. The Action Plan is co-funded by the European Commission and the Republic of Cyprus.

One of the activities of the Action Plan is the development of the present handbook, which includes basic guidelines for teachers of adults, especially those adults who belong to vulnerable social groups. The handbook is the final product of the two Peer Learning Activities that were organised by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute in December 2013 and February 2014.

Undoubtedly, adult educators play a significant role in creating the appropriate conditions in order to enforce adults’ attempts to re-join the educational system and to enter fields that require the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. By enabling adults to enter or re-enter the education system, their personal development and social integration are also attained. Simultaneously, social inequalities are reduced and marginalisation and social exclusion are prevented. Adult educators can help low-skilled adults to improve their skills and competences and acquire further qualifications that will enable them to respond effectively to the current demands of the labour market. By achieving the above, the social consequences of the crisis, such as the current levels of unemployment, might be tackled to a certain extent.

It is my belief that the systematic training of adult educators is a key for success. Adult educators need a wide range of training opportunities, which can help them upgrade their skills and competences and thus respond to the demands of their profession. This is one of the aims of this handbook, which we hope will be useful for enriching your knowledge in the specific field and a useful tool for your everyday work with adult learners.

Egli Pantelaki
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education and Culture
EU: RENEWED EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR ADULT LEARNING 2012-14

In an effort to promote the participation of adult population in lifelong learning and to address the challenges of today’s society, the Council of Education Ministers of the European Union voted, on the 28th of November 2011, the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning. The Agenda complements and consolidates the ongoing work being carried out in the field of adult education, in accordance to the strategic objectives set out in the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training, ET2020.

The Agenda defines the focus for European cooperation in adult learning policies for 2012-20. Taking into account the specific conditions in each Member State and in accordance with national priorities, Member States are encouraged to focus their actions on the following:

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality.
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training.
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning.
- Enhancing the creativity and innovation of adults and their learning environment.
- Improving the knowledge base of adult learning and monitoring the adult learning sector.

Cyprus participates in the promotion of the Renewed Agenda for Adult Learning with the implementation, among others, of the Cyprus Action Plan, which will be completed in August 2014. The Action Plan is co-funded by the European Commission and the Republic of Cyprus.

All the information concerning the Agenda, the Cyprus Action Plan and useful material on adult education, are posted on the project’s web site and can be found on the link [http://www.moec.gov.cy/aethee as well as on the European Commission’s web site for the Agenda on the link http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/adult_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/adult_en.htm)

**The Cyprus Action Plan aims, among others, at:**

- Informing adults of their fundamental right to education throughout their lifetime.
- Providing information on the educational opportunities adults have, especially those adults who belong to vulnerable social groups and are faced with multiple problems due to their limited participation in education (i.e. low skilled individuals in regards to reading-writing-ICT, unemployed, senior citizens, early school leavers).
- Strengthening the cooperation between key partners (stakeholders) on Adult Education in Cyprus and in Europe, through participation in relevant activities.

The ultimate objective of the Action Plan is to increase adult participation in education and training opportunities.

**Peer Learning Activities**

Within the implementation of the Cyprus Action Plan for the promotion of the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning 2012-14, the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus implemented two Peer Learning Activities, on the 4th and 5th of December 2013 and on the 26th and 27th of February 2014.

The main aim of the activities was to bring together adult trainers who work in second chance schools in Cyprus and other experts in the field of Adult Education, such as academics, adult education trainers and representatives from other Member States, in order to exchange experiences and good practices with each other on issues relevant to teaching adult learners. Particular emphasis was placed on teaching techniques, methods and strategies that are appropriate for teaching vulnerable adults, as well as on ways to work with adult learners, according to current literature on adult education.

Finally, the activities were aimed at informing the participants on current issues concerning the training of adult teaching staff, their accreditation and generally the professional development of this group of practitioners. It should be noted that guest speakers in the activities included experts in the field, from both Cyprus and abroad.
1. BASIC CONCEPTS IN ADULT EDUCATION

Despite the fact that international organisations have defined the term ‘adult education’, the field is so diverse that it is still subject to a wide array of interpretations (UNESCO, 2009, 11). Due to the limited space of this guide, we will not attempt to analyse all the relevant terms. In this section, the terms of adult education, lifelong learning, formal education, non-formal education and informal learning are examined.

1.1. Adult Education

The most widely used definitions of adult education are provided by UNESCO and OECD. In particularly, according to UNESCO (1976, in UNESCO, 2009, 13):

"The term ‘adult education’ denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development."

Cyprus adopts European Commission’s (2001) definition of lifelong learning which includes “all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective” (Planning Bureau, 2007, 2).

We can therefore view lifelong learning as an umbrella definition which encompasses, among others, General Adult Education. General Adult Education is primarily found in more structured and formal settings. In Cyprus, for example, general adult education is provided by adult education centres, by evening high schools and evening vocational/technical schools (second chance schools), by institutions of tertiary education, by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, and by public and private universities. At the same time, lifelong learning includes, beyond formal learning activities, the accumulated knowledge one gains throughout their life as a result of their experiences and interaction with their surroundings. In that sense, we can define informal learning as the “learning activities that occur outside formal educational settings, throughout the lifespan, in the context of one’s leisure or professional, social and cultural activities” (Greek General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning, 2013).

1.2. Lifelong Learning

Of equal importance to the term ‘adult education’ is the definition of lifelong learning, which is much wider since it encompasses all types of learning, including learning developed in less structured and formal environments (Kokkos, 2005). According to the Greek General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (2013), lifelong learning refers to:

“all forms of learning activities that take place over the lifespan, that aim at the acquisition or the development of knowledge, skills and abilities, which contribute to the formation of an integrated identity, vocational integration, personal growth and fulfiment, social cohesion, active citizenship and to the social, economic and cultural development”.

Cyprus adopts European Commission’s (2001) definition of lifelong learning which includes “all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective” (Planning Bureau, 2007, 2).
Listed below are some definitions which relate to lifelong learning, as referred to in the 2000 Greek Law (Law Nr. 3879/2010) on Lifelong Learning (Greek General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning, 2013).

**Formal Education:** Education provided within the formal educational system, which leads to the acquisition of certificates recognized at the national level by public authorities, and which is hierarchically based (‘ladder’ system). In this category, general formal adult education is included.

**Formal Educational System:** Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education.

**Non-Formal Education:** Education that takes place within a structured educational setting, outside the formal educational system and can lead to a recognised, at a national level, certificate. It includes initial vocational training, continual vocational training and general adult education.

**General Adult Education.** Includes all organised learning activities, directed to adults and aim at enriching their knowledge, development and improvement of their abilities and skills, development of their personality and enhancement of active citizenship, as well as the alleviation of educational and social inequalities. It is provided by institutions of formal and non-formal education.

### Activity 1

Based on your experiences as adult educators, list the type of informal knowledge that your adult learners possess, and think of ways you can utilise that knowledge during the educational process.

### Activity 2

List four characteristics that signify adulthood in Cypriot society.

The term ‘adult’, like the ones previously discussed, allows a range of interpretations and may vary according to the social and cultural context in which the term is examined. According to Rogers (1999), many people think of adults in terms of the chronological age of the individual, thus providing a very limited scope, since the age criterion varies from society to society and can change over time. UNESCO having realized the ambiguity that surrounds the term ‘adult’ has adopted the phrase ‘youth and adult education’ when referring to the learning and training of those after school age pertaining to the 15+ age group (UNESCO, 1997).

In addition to the chronological age and the legal definition of adulthood, the term ‘adult’ can be determined in terms of social and psychological criteria. From a social perspective, adulthood can be linked to the social roles one is expected to assume, like those of an employee, a spouse, a parent and so on. What happens however, when a thirteen year old child becomes a mother? Is she considered to be an adult? From a psychological perspective, and based on Erikson’s psychosocial stages of development, the adult (age 19+) is expected to manage the conflicts of intimacy vs. isolation, generativity vs. stagnation, ego integrity vs. despair (Malikiou – Loizou, 1998).

According to Kokkos (2005, 39) an individual is considered to be an adult “if they are in a state of adulthood” whereby others and the individual identify in them elements of maturity and self-determination. Rogers & Horrocks (2010) distinguish three clusters of ideas within adulthood: the sense of perspective, the full development and maturity, and the idea of autonomy. These features become more apparent when adulthood is contrasted with childhood. Furthermore, Rogers (1999) explains that what differentiates adult education from childhood education is the extent to which these three clusters of ideas are taken into consideration when planning adult education. Table 1 presents this notion.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1: Adulthood and Education</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adulthood / Maturity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal growth/full development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective/mature judgements regarding self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy/self – determination/decision making</td>
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Rogers & Horrocks (2010, 49).
Other definitions of the term ‘adult’

“The idea of ‘adult’ is not, therefore, directly connected to age, but is related to what generally happens as we grow older. That is, we achieve physical maturity, become capable of providing for ourselves, move away (at least in most western societies) from our parents, have children of our own, and exercise a much greater role in the making of our own choices” (Tight, 2002, 15).

“We become adults from a social perspective when we begin to adopt adult roles such as working full-time, being a spouse and a parent, a voting citizen, etc. […] From a psychological stance, we become adults when we realise that we are responsible for own lives, when we become self-determined individuals” (Knowles, 1998, 64).

“Adult is any person aged 16 years and older who has completed the initial education and training system” (European Commission, 2008).

On an end note, we can appreciate that any attempt to develop a universal definition of the term ‘adult’ is not feasible. Perhaps that is why the definition of ‘adult education’ provided by UNESCO does not specify exactly who is considered an adult, but merely refers to those “persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong”.

1.4. Characteristics of Adult Learners

In the previous section we analysed the term ‘adult’, particularly entwined with the issue that is of concern, adult education. It appears that the agreement on a single, universal definition of what constitutes an adult and who is considered to be an adult learner is not possible. Perhaps it would be more helpful in understanding who the adult learner is if we presented the characteristics, which distinguishes adult learners from the typical learner.

Generally we can assume that adult learners are engaged, at a given time, in multiple roles, which impact the time and energy they can devote to their role as a learner (Polson, 1993, 1). A challenge that the adult educator is presented with, is the fact that in the adult classroom there is much less homogeneity than in a traditional classroom, in terms of the learners’ developmental stage, age group and life transitions (Polson, 1993). In this section, adult learners’ characteristics are presented as they have been developed by Kokkos (2005), Knowels (1970) and Rogers (1999).

Activity 3

Based on your experiences so far as adult educators, list 5 characteristics of the adult learner and then proceed to compare them with the ones listed below.

According to Kokkos (2005, 86-93) adult learners:

- **Have established clear goals prior to their entry in the educational process.**
  Most adults, in comparison to younger learners for which education is a given based on their age and developmental stage in which they are in, decide to enter in an educational programme for specific reasons and because a specific need has been identified. Possible educational goals include the following:
  - Professional
  - Fulfilment of social roles (e.g. parenting classes)
  - Personal development
  - For status

- **Have more life experiences.**
  As adults, it is expected that adult learners bring to the educational programme more life experiences than the average typical learner. According to Polson (1993), this can be simultaneously a strength and a barrier. It is a strength since these life experiences can be a foundation upon which to build new knowledge (Kokkos, 2005, 88). It can become a barrier though, because the adult learner has used these life experiences to form their set of values and beliefs, which if they are rigid may not be willing to accept the new knowledge and experiences learning has to offer to them (Polson, 1993).

- **Have developed their own preferred learning style.**
  Adults are in a continual process of learning (formal, non-formal, and informal) and they have settled on the learning styles that suit them the most. Rogers & Horrocks (2010, 91) state that as adult educators “we must remember that our learner participants all have their own ways of learning which may differ from our ways of learning, and opportunities to exercise these have to be created if new learning is to take place”.

|Activity 3|
• Have a tendency for active participation and expect to be actively involved in the learning process. They need active rather than passive learning experiences and demand to be treated as mature and responsible individuals. Since adult learners enter education with specific goals, they are more likely to challenge the educational content and/or the learning methods used.

• Face barriers to learning. Kokkos (2005, 89) classifies barriers to learning according to the following three categories:
  • Barriers that are a result of the poor organisation of the educational activity.
  • Barriers as a result of the learners’ social obligations and responsibilities.
  • Intrinsic barriers that relate to pre-existing knowledge and values, as well as barriers that stem from psychological factors.

The above categories will be further analysed:

• Develop defence and withdrawal mechanisms. This may occur when internal barriers lead to resistance to accept new set of information and knowledge and to redefine previous knowledge, values and habits.

Example:
Andreas had great support from his educators and despite the fact that he studied hard for the final exam, he failed. He says to the other learners in class “I don’t understand why I should keep on trying, no matter how hard I try they will never help me pass the exam” (defence mechanism of rationalisation).

Finally, in Table 3, six additional adult learner characteristics, as they were developed by Knowles (1970) and form the basis of the Andragogy model, are presented.

| Table 3: Adult Learner Characteristics according to Knowles |
| Concept of the learner | Adults have the need and the ability for self-directness and self-determination. Educators have the responsibility to encourage and nurture this tendency (Knowles, 1970). |
| Role of learners’ experiences | The experiences and knowledge adult learners bring to the educational process is a rich resource for learning for themselves and for others. Adult educators respond better to learning that occurs through their active rather than their passive participation. The use of experiential techniques is therefore more appropriate (Knowles, 1970, 44). |
| Adults are goal-oriented | It is important for adult learners to perceive that the educational programme’s goals converge to their own. |
| Readiness to learn | People become ready to learn something when they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems (Knowles, 1970, 44). Adults need to understand why they are learning a particular topic. |
| Orientation to learning | Emphasis must be given to skills that learners can apply to real-life situations and not to abstract concepts (Kokkos, 2005). Adults are more problem-centered than content-centered. |
| Learning incentives | Learners’ ‘persistence’ to learn is encouraged when their incentives for learning are intrinsic rather than extrinsic. (Knowles, 1970, Kokkos, 2005, Abdullah et al, 2008) |

Table 2 – List of Adult Learner Characteristics by Alan Rogers (1999, 92)

| 1 | Participants are adults by definition. |
| 2 | Adult learners are in a continuing process of growth, not at the beginning of the process. |
| 3 | Adult learners bring with them a set of experiences and values. |
| 4 | Adult learners come to education with intentions and needs. |
| 5 | Participants bring expectations about the learning process. |
| 6 | They have competing interests. |
| 7 | They have developed their own patterns of learning. |
2. ADULT LEARNING THEORIES

The formal definition of learning, describes the process as a relatively permanent change in behaviour based on an individual’s interactional experience with their environment. Thus, learning is an important form of personal adaptation.

The fields of Cognitive and Developmental Psychology, together with the field of Education, have contributed to the construction of various human developmental stages. Our understanding of the process of learning is guided by these stages, taking into account the respective individual differences. Adult education is different from the typical education in respect to adult learners' characteristics and to differences in regards to learners’ developmental cognitive stages.

Historically the following models of adult education were developed (figure 1):

- The Model of Andragogy
- Paulo Freire's Theory of Social Change through Education
- The Model of Transformational Learning

2.1. The Model of Andragogy

Andragogy as a study of adult learning originated in Europe in the 1950s and was then pioneered as a theory and model of adult learning from the 1970s by Malcolm Knowles an American practitioner and theorist of adult education, who defined andragogy as “the art and science of helping adults learn”. Andragogy makes the following assumptions about the design of learning: (1) Adults need to know why they need to learn something, (2) Adults need to learn experientially, (3) Adults approach learning as problem-solving, and (4) Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value. In practical terms, andragogy means that instruction for adults needs to focus more on the process and less on the content being taught. Strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are the most useful. Educators adopt a role of facilitator or resource rather than lecturer or grader (Kolb, 1984).

The model includes six basic principles where the theory of andragogy differs from pedagogy:

- Adults are internally motivated and self-directed.
- Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences.
- Adults are goal oriented. Adult learners become ready to learn when “they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems” (Knowles, 1980, 44).
- Adults are relevancy oriented. Adult learners want to know the relevance of what they are learning to what they want to achieve.
- Adults are practical. Through practical fieldwork experiences and their real life situations, learners move from classroom and textbook mode to hands-on problem solving where they can recognise first-hand, how what they are learning can be applied to life and the work context.
- Adult learners like to be respected.

The educator’s role is to facilitate learners’ movement toward more self-directed and responsible learning as well as to foster their internal motivation to learn.

We focus our attention on the following three models:
- The Model of Andragogy
- Paulo Freire’s Theory of Social Change through Education
- The Model of Transformational Learning
2.2. The Theory of Social Change through Education

The Theory of Education for Social Change was developed by Paulo Freire in Brazil, in order to fight the massive illiteracy of the population. Freire proposed that the use of his “see-judge-act” learner-centered methods could lead to critical consciousness, that is, an awareness of the necessity to constantly unveil appearances designed to protect injustice, which serves as a foundation for action toward equality and democracy. For Freire, no form of education could be neutral. All pedagogy is a call to action. In a society animated by inequality and authoritarianism, he sided with the many, and exposed the partisanship of those who claimed to stand above it all.

The three major stages of the method are:

a) The investigative
b) The thematisation and
c) The problematisation

The most important stage for Freire was the final one, in which the individual learns to read and write. Freire expresses his ideas on teaching and consciousness raising as “cultural action for freedom”. He emphasises the fact that the subject and object in the educational process are not static i.e. the teacher is also a learner and the learner is also a teacher. According to Freire, there are only active people who together are trying to learn more than they already know.

2.3. The Theory of Transformational Learning

Mezirow developed Transformative Learning Theory during the past two decades and evolved it into a comprehensive and complex description of how learners construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience. In order for learners to change their meaning schemes (specific beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions), they must engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which in turn leads to a perspective transformation. The meaning schemes that make up meaning structures may change as an individual adds to or integrates ideas within existing scheme and, in fact, this transformation of meaning schemes occurs routinely through learning. Perspective transformation leading to transformative learning, however, occurs much less frequently. Three common themes of Mezirow’s theory are: the centrality of experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse in the process of meaning structure transformation. It is the learner’s experience that is the starting point and the subject matter for transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991). Experience is seen as socially constructed, so that it can be deconstructed and acted upon.

It is clear that the evolution of adult learning theories coincide with the development of learning theories in general. The more recent approach accepts the fact that the adult learner is an active learner, who recognises their mistakes and weaknesses, who has developed clear learning goals and who actively pursues them.

3. BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Having already studied in the previous section the characteristics of adult learners, one can come to the conclusion that adult learners face several obstacles to learning. According to Kokkos (2005) these obstacles may be external or internal, but it is the internal ones which play a crucial role in the learner’s decision on whether or not to remain in the educational programme and whether or not to invest in learning.

Rogers (1999) argues that internal barriers play a key role in the process of adult learning and further classifies these barriers as ones that derive from pre-existing knowledge and ones that relate to emotional factors.

Pre-existing knowledge
“Adult learner participants have already invested emotional capital in acquiring this knowledge and experience. They will expend much more in defending the integrity of this knowledge, so new learning changes will sometimes be strenuously resisted” (Rogers & Horrocks, 2010, 268).

Emotional Factors
Rogers (1999) refers to anxiety as an emotional response that is often found in adult learners and can be attributed, among others, to the following:
- negative self-image
- fear of failure
- fear of criticism
- fear of disappointing oneself and/or others and
- fear of the unknown.

In addition, the anxiety experienced by adult learners may relate to situations that arise as part of the social or situation-specific roles they assume at a given time (e.g. parent, unemployed, refugee, service user, etc.).
“For months before this training started I used to dream about looking stupid on it. I was astonished at myself – a Cambridge First- being so worried about going ‘back to school’, but I used to think to myself, oh well, in another three months, two months, one month, it’ll all be over.”

“I opted to go on a special course for chief executives. The publicity emphasized that it would be very stretching – it was being run by a university business school. I know it was silly, but I felt that there was a severe risk of being out of my depth.”

“I enrolled for a basic graphic design course at the local adult education place, but was very nervous about going – in fact I nearly didn’t. I’d been working as a web designer already without any formal training and I really thought I was likely to be shown up as a fraud.”

“My department is very keen on ‘awaydays’ but I dread them. It always seems to me that you are put on the spot and have to speak. What if I say something silly?” (Jenny Rogers, 2007, 7).

Finally, we present Cross’s (1981) taxonomy of adult learners’ barriers to participation:

• **Situational barriers** – those that arise from one’s situation at a given time (e.g. lack of time, lack of money, lack of childcare).
• **Institutional barriers** - those practices and procedures that exclude or discourage adults from participating in learning activities (e.g. poor organisation, facilities, schedule and so on).
• **Dispositional barriers** - those related to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner (in Abdullah et al, 2008; National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2005; Karalis, 2013).

Activity 4

Identify an example of each of the above three categories of barriers to participation that you have experienced as a learner in a seminar or training programme.

Activity 5a

Think of possible situational barriers that could negatively affect adult learners’ participation and record these ideas in the column on the left. Then think of ways to address these barriers and record them in the column on the right.

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<tr>
<th>Situational Barriers</th>
<th>Ways to address</th>
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Activity 5b

Think of possible institutional barriers that could negatively affect adult learners’ participation and record these ideas in the column on the left. Then think of ways to address these barriers and record them in the column on the right.

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<tr>
<th>Institutional Barriers</th>
<th>Ways to address</th>
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Activity 5c

Think of possible dispositional barriers that could negatively affect adult learners’ participation and record these ideas in the column on the left. Then think of ways to address these barriers and record them in the column on the right.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dispositional Barriers</th>
<th>Ways to address</th>
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From National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2005.
4. THE ADULT LEARNER AS A MEMBER OF A VULNERABLE SOCIAL GROUP

The term ‘vulnerable group’ is highly linked to the concepts of poverty and social exclusion. Individuals who belong to socially disadvantaged groups are ones who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Kontiades and Katrougalos (2005, 373) characterise the definitions of socially vulnerable groups as vague that “do not constitute legal concepts adequately defined”. We can thus identify vulnerable groups as those groups experiencing social exclusion in the society in which they live. What is social exclusion then?

Social Exclusion can be defined as:

“the process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day to day lives” (Eurostat, 2010, 7).

Tsiakalos (1998, 58) states that social exclusion “is a different concept than those of poverty and marginalisation. Social exclusion is the prevention of access to social and public goods, e.g. education, health care system, etc., the lack of which usually leads to economic deprivation and marginalisation. The term ‘social exclusion’ refers to both a situation as well as a process”.

It should be noted that poverty differs from social exclusion, as the former refers primarily to the lack of income and resources that prevent an individual, a family or group from satisfying their basic needs. An individual who is socially excluded may not necessarily be living in poverty (e.g. mentally ill individuals).

Between 2008 and 2012 about 8.7 million people were at risk of poverty or social exclusion; 4.6 million people fell in the risk of monetary poverty between 2008 and 2012; A further 9.6 million people were living in conditions severely constraint by a lack of resources (Eurostat, 2014).


Activity 6

Based on your experiences so far as adult educators, which vulnerable groups were the learners you have taught members of? Can you think of some negative stereotypes about these groups?

Some vulnerable groups are considered to be the following:

1. Unemployed
2. Juvenile delinquents, minors with delinquent behaviours
3. Early school leavers
4. Single-parent families
5. Prisoners and ex-prisoners
6. Ethnic minorities
7. Refugees, asylum seekers, repatriates
8. Individuals with physical disabilities
9. Individuals with mental disabilities
10. Individuals with chronic illnesses
11. Dependent or rehabilitated individuals
12. Individuals who experience learning difficulties
13. Illiterate individuals
14. Elderly
15. People living in remote or disadvantaged geographical areas
16. Individuals with language / cultural / religious / sexual differences
17. Adults and minors living in institutions
18. Specific categories of women (e.g. victims of abuse)
19. Trafficking victims

Characteristics of adult learners as members of vulnerable social groups

- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of learning incentives (incentives are primarily external)
- Barriers to learning (multiple problems, multiple roles, lack of time)
- Biological/physical barriers (lack of memory, unable to concentrate, undiagnosed learning difficulties, burnout)
- Lack of a learning culture
- Trouble expressing themselves in writing and even speaking

(In Papaioannou, 2014).
It is therefore agreed upon that a large number of adult learners are also members of an at-risk or vulnerable social group. We can also assume that as a member of an at-risk group, the adult learner encounters additional obstacles to learning. If we study Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943), we can understand why. Maslow argued that the most basic – fundamental level of needs must be first met in order for the individual to be motivated by a secondary or higher level need (concept of pre-potency). So, if an adult learner faces difficulties in meeting a lower level need (i.e. basic or safety needs), this will prevent them from attempting to satisfy higher level needs and invest emotionally in the process of learning. In this instance, the individual will be struggling to meet their basic needs and will not be able to proceed to the fulfilment of higher level needs like self-respect and self-actualisation.

In relation to adult learner motives, we can assume that the learner’s need for participation in an educational programme can fall on any of Maslow’s level of needs. For example, for some, learning is motivated by safety needs (e.g. work demands or finding a job), developing social relations and building self-esteem, and for others learning is motivated by their need for self-actualisation.

Rogers & Horrocks (2010,108) state: “For the teacher, Maslow’s work will be a reminder that within any group of adult learners, there will be a wide variety of needs, and within each participant there will be a different mixture of needs. This mixture will be constantly changing as the learning proceeds and as the individual’s life situation changes. This is why predetermined and uniform learning outcomes can never be achieved in adult learning programmes. Each adult learner will take away from any learning situation what they require; learning is unique to each learner and uncertain”. At the same time, the adult learner, who belongs to a vulnerable social group, may experience the following negative emotional reactions as they enter a training programme:

- Fear of criticism by the rest of the group
- Anxiety and depression
- Alienation and marginalisation
- Negative self image, low self-esteem, feelings of obsolescence
- Passive or even aggressive attitude that results from previous experiences with formal organisations (e.g. welfare services)
- Discouragement

However, the adult learners may also experience positive emotions such as hope for the prospects education has to offer, optimism and high self-esteem if they encounter a supportive mentor who respects their individuality and has faith in their abilities. That is why more often than not, the educator is expected to adopt additional roles like that of counsellor and enabler. At the same time, the educator needs to examine their expectations (self-fulfilling prophecy) and personal attitudes towards people of specific vulnerable groups. Finally, it is also important that the educator is familiar with important sources of support in the community (formal and informal support networks) so that they can inform or even refer the learner, when necessary, in order to meet their basic and psychosocial needs.

We can safely assume that lifelong learning is a very important component for the social inclusion of at risk individuals. The term ‘second chance schools’ stresses that point, since adult education if realised and utilised correctly can lead to social cohesion, the alleviation of social exclusion and economic and cultural development (Kokkos, 2011). Educators should therefore ensure the equal participation of all to education and challenge social and other barriers that prevent any individual from exercising their fundamental right of education.
Activity 7

As educators of adults who belong to a vulnerable social group, it is important to identify personal beliefs and values regarding these groups. Read the following statements and then answer whether you agree or disagree:

- People on welfare are lazy.
- Drug addicts should be imprisoned.
- Teenage mothers cannot raise their kids.
- Foreigners are to blame for high unemployment rates.
- People with severe mental disorders are dangerous.
- The older someone gets, the more they resemble a baby.
- We should feel sorry for people with disabilities (physical and mental).
- Women victims of abuse are to blame to an extent, for their abuse.
- Delinquent youth almost always become criminals as adults.

Learn about Strategy “Europe 2020”

Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. In a changing world, we want the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.

Concretely, the Union has set five ambitious objectives - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy - to be reached by 2020. Each Member State has adopted its own national targets in each of these areas. Concrete actions at EU and national levels underpin the strategy.

1. **EMPLOYMENT**
   - 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed

2. **R&D / INNOVATION**
   - 3% of the EU’s GDP (public and private combined) to be invested in R&D/innovation

3. **CLIMATE CHANGE / ENERGY**
   - Greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30%, if the conditions are right) lower than 1990
   - 20% of energy from renewables
   - 20% increase in energy efficiency

4. **EDUCATION**
   - Reducing school drop-out rates below 10%
   - At least 40% of 30-34 year-olds completing third level education

5. **POVERTY / SOCIAL EXCLUSION**
   - At least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion

Learn more about “Europe 2020” by visiting http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
A learning contract

A learning contract is a document of written agreement, developed by the learner and the educator which is based on what the educator and the agency can teach, what the school expects the learner to learn, and what the learner wishes to learn.

Elements to be included in a ‘learning contract’ are:

- Respecting others’ opinions and point of view.
- Respecting confidentiality.
- Avoiding generalisations for specific groups of people.
- Sharing the time for discussions.
- Informing the group of any absences.

Learners should play an active role in the development of a learning contract in order for the contract to be respected.

The first meeting

The first meeting between the educator and the adult-learners is vital for the whole learning process, as it constructs the basis for the group work and the development of the learning contract.

Purposes of the first meeting:

- minimise learners’ fear and anxiety,
- gain learners’ confidence,
- provide the opportunity for learners and the educator to meet one another,
- develop the learning contract and present the rules of conduct,
- understand learners’ motivations, aims and expectations.

It must be noted that the adult learners come to the first meeting with feelings of anxiety and fear, without being sure about their decisions. The educator must spend time explaining the course outline to them, the aims of the programme and discussing their opinions, expectations and feelings with them.

Techniques - activities for the first meeting:

- **Self-appraisal:**
  All the members of the group are seated in a circle. The educator introduces themselves by giving emphasis on their own learning background. Sharing personal experiences helps to “break the ice” and promotes the feeling that everybody can safely express their thoughts in the group.
• **Work in couples:**
Learners are divided into couples and take turns role playing the roles of the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer will gather information from the interviewee on the following: educational background, professional experiences, and goals for attending the programme. Then each one presents their partner to the other members of the group.

• **Chain:**
Learners introduce themselves to the group by presenting their name and the names of those who presented themselves earlier.

• **Characteristics:**
Learners write some information about themselves on a piece of paper. These can include their favourite food, animal, game, sport, music, etc. Then they are asked to try and locate another member of the group with similar interests. Once they have proceeded to exchange information about one another, the group comes back together and each member shares their interests/characteristics with the group.

*For further information Archontaki - Philippou (2003)*

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### 6. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication is considered as one of the most basic human functions. The survival of all living organisms (humans, animals, plants), is based on their ability to communicate. As adult educators, particularly of adults who belong to vulnerable social groups, it is important to recognise what constitutes effective communication and the role it plays in achieving the objectives of adult education. It is no surprise that we often encounter the phrase ‘the art of communication’ since it is a “process of interaction, of mutual understanding and of influence between people or groups, a process which makes it vital for all living organisations” (Josien, 1995 in Vardakosta, n.d.).

Communication can be defined as:

“The art of effective exchange of information, which is established by a mutual understanding, between two or more individuals, between an individual and a group, or between two or more groups” (Piperopoulos, 1996, in Kandylaki, 2004, 37).

#### 6.1. Communication Process

The communication process is divided into a number of stages and it is further broken down into four basic components: A **sender** codes a **message** and that message is sent through a **channel** to the **receiver**. In general we can say that communication is achieved by transmitting and receiving messages (Verderber, 1998). Figure 3 below demonstrates the process of communication.

Put simply, the process of communication is initiated by a sender who encodes a message by converting it into a symbol (i.e. words and/or non-verbal communication). The message is sent to the receiver via various channels. The receiver receives the message, which they decode (interpret). Decoding refers to the process whereby the receiver interprets a message as it is “filtered through their own internal dialogue, personal attitudes and prejudices, past experiences and cultural values” (Kandylaki, 2004, 73).
The other important feature is the **feedback cycle**. The receiver through feedback tries to convey to the sender information regarding the received message. In that way, the sender can know whether the receiver properly interpreted the message or if it was distorted. The feedback thus contributes to effective communication. Demopoulou successfully states (2011, 195):

“Feedback helps to resolve problems caused by communication barriers, or by insufficient encoding or decoding of the message or by the use of the wrong communication channel. For example, A sends a message to B, which B receives. Is it certain however, that B received the exact same message as A intended?”

**Activity 10**

Think of a lecture you have given to your students. What forms of feedback did you encounter (verbal and/or non verbal)? What message are the following students sending you: a student who is taking notes, a student who is playing with his mobile phone, etc? Do you pay attention to these types of feedback? If yes, in what ways do you alter your teaching approach?

Another important dimension of communication is the context in which communication unfolds. In particular, Venderber (1998, 29) refers to four variables regarding context:

1. **The physical environment**, which in our case refers to the classroom setting. Factors such as: location, lighting, room arrangement, outside noise and others, greatly influence the communication process. It is important, to the extent to which it is feasible, to arrange the classroom setting in a way that is conducive to learning, teamwork and positive interaction among group members. The ideal classroom arrangement is one in which the chairs are placed in a circle. Seating in a circle offers the following advantages:
   - Encourages all students to participate.
   - Enables better visibility among members.
   - Helps facilitators to observe non-verbal communication.
   - Achieves a balance in participation.
   - Creates a sense of equality.

2. **Historical**. Refers to the meaning attached to other communication experiences.

3. **Psychological**. The individual’s self-perception and the way they perceive others, affects communication. For example, if the learner is characterised by low self esteem and negative self-image, a constructive criticism regarding that person’s performance in front of the rest of the class, it might be perceived as rejection, ridicule or an attack by the instructor.

4. **Culture** defines a communication pattern, that is the ‘unwritten’ laws that guide our ‘communication’ behaviour. For example, in the Greek language, an unwritten communication rule is that you address your elders in plural.

**6.2. Verbal and non-verbal communication**

Verbal communication refers to the spoken and written word. Although it is the most conscious form of communication, only 7% of any message is conveyed through words. The main form of communication is non-verbal communication, which is defined as "the process through which one person influences others (at the level of emotion, thought), using one or more non-verbal channels" (Kandylaki, 2004, 80).

**Activity 11**

List all types of non-verbal communication you can think of and then compare them with the list that follows.

**Types of non-verbal communication**

- **Paralinguistics (38% of communication)**
  - Tone of voice
  - Inflection
  - Pitch

- **Body language (55% of communication)**
  - Facial expressions
  - Gestures
  - Posture
  - Eye contact
  - Movement
  - Touch
Non-verbal communication also includes symbolic communication (personal appearance – clothing, the physical environment in which communication occurs, time management, punctuality), as well as what is considered appropriate in a given culture, in terms of the physical distance between individuals (proxemics).

What we must be aware of are the contradictions that are often observed between verbal and non-verbal communication. Contradicting is sending a non-verbal message that disagrees with what is being said. For example, the adult educator may say to the students that they genuinely care about them, but their body language demonstrate the exact opposite. Therefore, paying attention to the non-verbal communication of your students is vital because as a more spontaneous form of communication (in relation to verbal) it often conveys the real emotions behind words.

### Activity 12 A & B

A. Try to convey a message to someone else by using only non-verbal communication.

B. Ask one of your students during class to assume the role of the observer for 20 minutes and list all the types of non-verbal communication that are taking place in the classroom. This activity is important both to you as a teacher, in order to appreciate the role of non-verbal communication, as well as to your students who may not realize the role non-verbal communication plays in their relationships.

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### 6.3. Basic Communication Skills with Individuals who Belong to Vulnerable Social Groups

In this section the following basic communication skills are presented: open-ended and closed-ended questions, listening and active listening, paraphrasing, reflecting content, and empathy.

#### (i) Open-ended and closed-ended questions

Open-ended questions allow the respondent to speak freely and to share more information, especially regarding their thoughts and feelings (Trevithick, 2005). Open-ended questions elicit a broad range of responses, are particularly useful at the beginning of a conversation, and demonstrate to the respondent that we are interested in hearing what they have to say.

On the other hand, closed-ended questions limit the type of response and are usually answered with either a single word (e.g. yes or no) or a short phrase (Demopoulou, 2011). Closed-ended questions are particularly helpful when we seek specific information, like identifying information (What is your name? How old are you? Are you married?). Closed-ended questions must be used carefully, since too many closed-ended questions at a time may resemble an interrogation. To avoid that, a balanced combination between open and closed-ended questions must be obtained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closed-ended Questions</th>
<th>Open-ended Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many kids do you have?</td>
<td>What are your choices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you ok?</td>
<td>How are you feeling today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you disappointed with your grades?</td>
<td>What did you think when you saw your grades?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think it would help to change groups?</td>
<td>What do you think would be helpful in order for you to get a better grade?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last two closed-ended questions on the left hand column are also examples of leading questions. According to Demopoulou (2011, 222) these type of questions “predetermine the answer or subtly prompt the respondent to answer in a particular way”. As a general rule, leading questions should be avoided and questions should be stated in a neutral way.

#### (ii) Listening

Listening carefully to what the other person is saying, is perhaps the most essential communication skill (Ivey, Gluckstern & Ivey, 1996). According to Demopoulou (2011, 213), listening carefully refers to “the appropriate social and cultural verbal and non-verbal communication of the listener” that demonstrates to the speaker that we are present and really care about what they have to say. While listening has a therapeutic value, it also contributes to the self-confidence and self-respect of any person (especially those who belong to vulnerable groups) since they feel that the listener expresses genuine concern and interest in what they are sharing.

Ivey, Gluckstern & Ivey (1996) explain that listening and attending behaviour, is comprised by the following four dimensions:

1. Good eye contact.
2. Attentive body language.
4. Verbal following.
Activity 13

Select a programme on TV to watch. Watch for at least 20 minutes without being really focused on it. After about 20 minutes, quickly write down a summary about what you have heard and watched. Now, decide to focus carefully, for another 20 minutes, on the same programme you were watching. Remove any distractions. After 20 minutes, write down another summary of what you have watched.

Compare your notes. Is there any difference between the quantity and quality of the information you have collected in both instances? By performing this activity you will be able to identify your own attending behaviour.

From Venderber, 1998

(iii) Active Listening

The next stage in listening is understanding the other person’s verbal and non-verbal messages and demonstrating to them that understanding. Active listening is our ability to provide accurate feedback to the sender regarding what they said and expressed through non-verbal cues. Active listening “combines talking and listening skills in such a way that others feel both understood and encouraged to share more” (Cournoyer, 2013, 212). Active listening includes different skills that help the listener demonstrate their understanding. Two such skills are paraphrasing and reflecting feelings.

(iv) Paraphrasing

Through paraphrasing the listener restates and reflects back to the speaker the essence of the information (content) that the speaker shared. For instance:

Example:
A: “I am so worried about how my kids are spending their time while I am in class. I know that they are with my husband, but I am still worried that he will not be able to handle a crisis if one occurs”.

B: “Even though the kids are with your husband, you do not feel confident that he can handle something unexpected” (paraphrasing).

For paraphrasing to be effective, we should try to avoid just repeating what the other person said (parroting), but instead, identify and give feedback to the speaker about the key points of the message. Paraphrasing is useful as it allows the speaker to hear the essence of what they said through someone else, ensures that we have accurately heard what was said, and also demonstrates that we have understood what was said in a way that helps build rapport.

(v) Reflecting Feelings

Reflection of feelings, in contrast to paraphrasing, which basically means reflecting content, is used to reflect back to the speaker the feelings that are behind what was said and how it was said (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1998). Through the use of this skill the listener feeds back to the other person the emotional elements, which are contained in the speaker’s words, helping them also realise what they are feeling. At the same time, the listener demonstrates acceptance, non-judgemental attitude and that they are not trying to minimise the speaker’s feelings.

Example:
A: “I don’t know why I keep trying. No matter how hard I try, I still won’t be able to get a job”.

In reflecting feelings, we first try to identify the emotion that is behind the speaker’s words, name it and reflect it back to the speaker.

B: “You feel disappointed at how hard it is to get a job”.
Activity 14

Use the skills of active listening, paraphrasing and reflecting feelings to choose the right response to the following statements:

**Reflecting feeling**

(Ex addict) “What can I do? I have no money, no job and no one to help me. I know I have to do something but I don’t know what.”

A. You sound like you have lost all hope.
B. You have no one to help you and you do not know what to do.
C. Don’t worry, you have me and I am going to help you.
D. You feel stressed and under a lot of pressure.

**Paraphrasing**

“I don’t feel I belong to the group. I am so much older than everybody else and I feel isolated”.

A. You are disappointed by your fellow students’ behaviour.
B. You are having second thoughts about returning to school.
C. You shouldn’t allow other people to interfere with your goals.
D. The age factor is making it hard for you to be part of the group.

**Active Listening**

“I can’t believe I have to do the paper all over again. I really worked hard for it and now I have to do it over”.

A. It is not that bad. Most people have to do a paper 2-3 times over, before they hand it in.
B. So what? That is your job as a student.
C. You should be grateful that the only thing you have to do is rewrite it. The others have to find a new topic.
D. You need to rewrite the paper you have worked on so hard. You sound frustrated.

Activity 15

Circle the appropriate empathetic response to the following statement: “I can’t take it anymore. I don’t know if I can continue with school. I feel so much pressure. Maybe I was wrong to believe that I could make it”.

A. I completely understand how you feel.
B. I am sure that everybody feels the way you do.
C. But you have come so far. It is a shame to drop out now.
D. Life is not easy. You have to fight hard for what you want.
E. You feel that you have taken on more than you can handle.

(vi) Empathy

Empathy simply stated refers to the ability to ‘put oneself in another person’s shoes’. Empathy is understanding what the person is experiencing and feeling. Carl Rogers, who was among the founders of humanistic approach to psychology, believed that a client-centered therapist needs three key qualities in order to be able to enter their client’s subjective world: genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and empathetic understanding. He defines empathy as:

“an accurate, empathic understanding of the other person’s world as seen from inside. To sense a person’s inner world as if it was your own, but without losing the ‘as if’ quality” (Rogers, 1959 in Malikiosi-Loizou, 2011, 110).

The last words of “without losing the ‘as if’ quality” are crucial in empathy. It denotes an ability to identify emotionally but briefly with the other person, and not to the extent that one becomes enmeshed in the other person’s situation. The latter will inevitably lead to emotional and professional burnout.

Important note!

Avoid using the phrase “I understand what you are feeling”. Instead demonstrate that you indeed understand what they are feeling by using the skill of Reflecting Feeling.
PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The teaching process has three important interrelated perspectives: the educator, the learner and the specific learning or cognitive task. One of the major presuppositions of the learner’s success is the positive interrelation with the other factors and specifically the respect of the particular characteristics of the adult learner, as they were presented earlier.

The effective teacher should:

• Facilitate learners’ movement toward more self-directed and responsible learning, as well as to foster their internal motivation to learn. The teaching process must have direct relation with learners’ experiences and needs.
• Show interest in learners’ thoughts and opinions. Actively and carefully listen to any questions asked.
• Lead learners toward inquiry before supplying them with too many facts.
• Give learners the opportunity to use their existing foundation of knowledge and experience gained from life experience, and apply it to their new learning experiences.
• Ask questions that motivate reflection, inquiry and further research.
• Promote active participation by allowing learners to try things rather than observe. Provide plenty of opportunities for practical work in assessment, interviewing, and intervention processes with ample repetition in order to promote development of skill, confidence and competence.
• Regard them as a colleague who is equal in life experience.
• Encourage expression of ideas, reasoning and feedback at every opportunity.

6.4. Communication barriers

- Giving orders: “You should stop doing that”.
- Threatening: “If you don’t do it, then...”.
- Assertiveness “You have to respect your elders”.
- Didactic “Honesty is the best policy”.
- Providing direct advice: “Why don’t you...”.
- Criticism: “Don’t you think it was a mistake?”.
- Interrupting: Interrupt the other and/or talk over the other person.
- Minimising emotions or problems: “Everybody feels that way”, “When you are older you will look back at this and laugh”.
- Scolding instead of providing feedback: “I do not like the way you are behaving” (Kandyliaki, 2004).

Additional barriers to communication are:

- Stereotyping, labelling, having low expectations.
- Lack of feedback.
- Communication barriers due to: personality factors, developmental stage of the participants, involuntary participation in the educational programme.
- Authoritative communication style.
- Frequent interruptions.
- Teacher’s personal values and attitudes, i.e. not approving certain behaviours or groups (Demopoulou, 2011, 202-204).

Other barriers can include:

- Noise and the way the physical setting is arranged so that it does not promote effective communication and the equal participation of all students.
- Lack of incentives for the learner to participate in the educational programme.
- Lack of training/skills of the teachers.
- Different experiences and educational levels of the learners.
- Differences in perceptions of those involved.
- Linguistic, cultural or religious differences.
- The language (i.e. technical language, difficult words) used by the teacher is not consistent with the level of understanding of the learners.
- Ignoring non-verbal communication.
Activities
• For the comprehension of a text, learners can bring with them, in the classroom, texts from the internet, a newspaper, a journal.
• For the mathematical problem solving procedure, pose a realistic non-routine problem (e.g. for negative and positive numbers use the height of different places).
• The learner feels like an active member of the group when they have an important role in the group work.
• Use inquire-based learning activities by asking learners to investigate and explore non-routine situations.

Principles of Adult Learning

A. The adult learners’ education needs to be related to everyday life experiences and needs.
Adult learners resist learning when they feel others are imposing information, ideas or actions on them. They bring life experiences and knowledge to the learning process and the emphasis on those experiences facilitates their self-directed learning motivations.

Example:
You can teach the concepts of fractions, decimals, ratios and analogical reasoning by using a realistic context such as a visit to a restaurant.

B. The adult learner needs to understand, realise and accept the goals of the programme.
The teaching and learning processes are interrelated. The purposes of the teaching procedure must be presented at the first meetings by using a course outline. The specific outline can be flexible in specific parts in order to enable you to reconstruct it with the contribution of the learners in respect to their needs, experiences and specific interests.

Example:
During the second meeting, after the initial discussion at the first meeting, present them the course outline where the purpose and the structure of the course are presented.

C. The adult learner needs to learn by doing.
According to P. Mucchielli, when we pay attention, we retain approximately:
10% of what we read
20% of what we hear
30% of what we see
50% of what we see and hear
80% of what we say
90% of what we say while doing something related to what we are thinking about and which involves us (Courau, 2000).

Example:
For the teaching of a grammatical or a syntactical phenomenon bring learners different texts so that each one can choose the text that matches their interests.

D. The adult learner needs to feel like an equal member of a group.
An adult learner needs to be accepted as an equal member of a group in which their role is necessary in order to contribute to the group’s common success. For this reason you need to organise group or collaborative activities in which each member of the group has a different role.

Example:
The success of group work depends on the different contribution of each participant.

E. The adult learner needs to overcome any cognitive obstacles during the learning process.
During a problem solving procedure a learner faces obstacles which have to be overcome. The whole learning procedure seems to be a problem solving procedure where difficulties, misunderstandings, obstacles are faced and the learner needs to develop a self-regulatory performance. The key concepts are perseverance and patience.

Example:
The educator can present an obstacle they faced and the ways they tried to overcome it. Learners have to realise that the whole learning procedure is a problem solving process.

Present the life and mainly the difficulties, the obstacles and the respective insistence of great scientists.
The learning outcomes are better when there are outputs of an active procedure, of inquiry and exploration of realistic social and everyday situations (Vosniadou, 2001). It is necessary to enrich the cognitive schemes under the processes of assimilation and adjustment. The cognitive processes such as the working memory and the information processing have limitations which have to be taken into consideration. The active procedures of inquiry, exploration and investigation enable the learner to systematically organise the information of the long term memory (Demetriou, 1993).

The adult learner has an individual learning style. Each learner has developed different learning strategies in respect to their individual learning and cognitive styles. The existence of inter-individual differences is inevitable and acknowledging them is a necessity.

Example:
Give different feedback to each learner and always compare them with their previous performance.

The adult learner needs to be respected. Respect can be demonstrated to your learner by:
- Taking an interest in them.
- Acknowledging the wealth of experiences that the learner brings to the educational process.
- Regarding them as a colleague who is equal in life experiences.
- Encouraging expression of ideas, reasoning and feedback at every opportunity.

The basic principle of adult learning is the respect and use of the major educational values which have been fashioned by the contribution of human and social sciences such as cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc. In this context the recent pedagogical practice and theory suggests the use of technology as an efficient tool during the learning and teaching processes.

The use of technology can be used for individual study and for the presentation of the learning task. Nowadays it can be used in order to find information, as a tool for investigation, as a valuable source of knowledge and as a tool for social interaction.

Example:
The learners are expected to use social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Create a place (a blog, a wiki, or a facebook page) where only the members of the group have access to and ask them to share their thoughts, feelings, questions, etc.

8. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING STRATEGIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING PROCESSES

We have already presented the particular characteristics of the adult learner and their differences with a child learner (especially in respect to the developmental stages). The major difference is the necessity to develop in a shorter term the individual strategies of self-learning, self-regulation and lifelong learning processes. All the adult learners have spent many years in the typical educational system and they have not developed the necessary strategies in order to construct their knowledge by investigating the realistic situations and by using their experiences, skills and knowledge in order to solve the problems they face.

It is important for a person to realise, understand and accept their strengths and limitations in order to act creatively and critically in real life situations. It is necessary to:
- Highlight the strengths of each person.
- Develop a precise self-image in order to realise the strengths which have to be used and the limitations which have to be self-regulated.
- Develop the metacognitive abilities in order to know the cognitive system, realise the necessary strategies in respect to different tasks and develop the self-regulatory strategies.

Example:
Ask learners to study a text and highlight the basic ideas. After that discuss with them the different strategies they have used: underline a few words, write a few words, repeat the major points, construct a diagram, etc.
9. METHODS FOR THE EVALUATION OF ADULT LEARNERS

The whole educational procedure is actually “towed” by the processes of assessment and evaluation.

The initial assessment is necessary in order to develop the teaching plan concerning the whole course. We focus our attention on the formative and summative assessment. Both of them should be related to the recent objectives and principles of the learning processes and they should be used as feedback for both the learner and the educator.

Formative assessment
Formative assessment techniques monitor learner learning during the learning process. The feedback gathered is used to identify areas where learners are struggling so that educators can adjust their teaching and learners can adjust their studying. Techniques which can be used are the following:

- **Polls/ Surveys.** Data on learner opinions, attitudes, behaviors or confidence in understanding can be gathered either during class (e.g. with a classroom response system) or outside of class. This can illustrate learner engagement with the material as well as prior knowledge, misconceptions, and comprehension.

- **Comprehension Checks.** Pausing every few minutes to see whether learners are following along with the lesson not only identifies gaps in comprehension, but helps break up lectures (e.g. with Clicker questions) or online lessons (e.g. with embedded quiz questions) into more digestible bites.

- **Wrappers.** “Wrapping” activities, such as using a set of reflective questions, can help learners develop skills to monitor their own learning and adapt as necessary.

- **In-class activities.** Having learners work in pairs or small groups to solve problems creates space for powerful peer-to-peer learning and rich class discussion.

- **Quizzes.** Gauge learners’ prior knowledge, assess progress midway through a unit, create friendly in-class competition, review before the test - quizzes can be great tools that don’t have to count heavily toward learners’ grades. Using quizzes to begin units is also a fun way to assess what your learners already know, clear up misconceptions, and drive home the point of how much they will learn.

- **Online assessment.** Many online learning modules have built-in assessments where learners solve problems or answer questions along the way. This can provide you with analytics on learner responses and class performance so you can tailor your instruction to their particular learning needs.

- **Class Deliverables.** In-class activities are designed, usually in groups, where learners are required to submit a product of their work.

Summative assessment
Summative assessment techniques evaluate learners’ learning and measure the extent to which learners have achieved the desired learning outcomes.

- **Exams.** This includes mid-term exams, final exams, and tests at the end of course units. The best tests include several types of questions – short answer, multiple-choice, true-false, and short essay – to allow learners to fully demonstrate what they know.

- **Papers, projects, and presentations.** These give learners the chance to delve deeper with the material, to put the knowledge they have acquired to use or create something new from it. This level of application is extremely important and often overlooked in the learning process. These types of projects also give learners, who do not test well, a chance to shine.

- **Portfolios.** Submitting a portfolio at the end of a course can be a powerful way for learners to see the progress they have made. Apart from a collection of learners’ work from the semester, good portfolios also include reflections on their learning. Asking learners to spell out the concepts or techniques used with each piece, the themes addressed, and hurdles faced also brings a sense of completion to the learning process.
The evaluation as part of the whole teaching and learning process has to include the attitudes, the skills and the knowledge.

9.2. Self-assessment of adult learners

Learner self-assessment occurs when learners assess their own performance. With practice, they learn to:
• objectively reflect on and critically evaluate their own progress and skill development,
• identify gaps in their understanding and capabilities,
• discern how to improve their performance and
• learn independently and think critically.

The main aims of self and peer assessment are to:
• increase learner responsibility and autonomy,
• strive for a more advanced and deeper understanding of the subject matter, skills and processes,
• lift the role and status of the learner from passive learner to active learner and assessor,
• involve learners in critical reflection and
• develop in learners a better understanding of their own subjectivity and judgement.

Use self-assessment to develop the learning skills learners will need for professional competence, and to make them aware of and more responsible for their own learning processes (Rogers, 1999). The self-assessment is the pre-supposition for an accurate self-representation and consequently the development of the metacognitive abilities, of knowing what, when and how to learn.

10. THE ROLE OF THE ADULT EDUCATOR

Activity 16

List five characteristics that the adult educator should possess.

As already discussed in a previous section, the adult educator is required to assume apart from the teacher role, the roles of the counsellor, the enabler and the facilitator of the learning process. For the latter, Corey 1990 (in Tsimpoukli, 2012, 68-69) states that the adult educator should:
• be emotionally involved with the group
• be empathetic
• be able to identify their own mistakes
• accept criticism from the learners
• exhibit genuine interest towards the learners and their learning experience
• be guided by their own values and not by other people’s expectations
• have faith in the group-process as an important vehicle of knowledge
• be creative in utilising learners’ experiences
In addition, Rogers (1999, 219) explains the four roles a teacher has to play within the learning group:

- As the leader of the group
- As the teacher – agent of change
- As a member of the group (a model of learning and a learner)
- As a member of an audience, outside the group – as the evaluator of the new knowledge the learners have acquired.

According to Kokkos (2005, 121) the adult teacher must:

1. Genuinely care for and accept the learners.
2. Communicate with them effectively.
3. Coordinate and organise the learning group.
4. Properly identify the teaching modules and materials.
5. Be flexible in the teaching methods they use.
6. Link the educational content to the local or broader labor market, and with the conditions of the local community.

As adult educators of at risk learners it is important to engage in a continuous process of developing self-awareness in order to identify and challenge their possible negative stereotypes, prejudices and expectations for specific groups of people. This is crucial for being able to build rapport with the learners. The adult educator should demonstrate self-control, appreciate the impact the contact with learners has on them, and develop empathy and understanding for them and the situations they are experiencing. Finally, the adult educator should identify the barriers to learning and attempt to overcome them both within the classroom setting and on a broader macro level. For the latter, the adult educator may also assume the roles of advocate and representative of this group.

**10.1. Educator’s teaching style**

There are different teaching styles which define the educator’s – learners’ relationship. The main types of teaching styles are:

- The assertive style
- The authoritarian style
- The submissive style
- The indifferent style

Especially in adult education, the educator should have the role of a facilitator who:

- Indicates enthusiasm during the meetings.
- Walks around the classroom.
- Makes jokes.
- Uses many different types of manipulative objects, tools and representations during teaching in order to keep the learners’ concentration and in order to meet their different learning styles.
- Applies democratic rules of respect.
- Transforms the place of meetings to an "open school" where specialists to specific subjects are invited and contribute to inquiry based learning and authentic context.
- Uses interdisciplinary methods of related learning tasks such as mathematics with music, art or natural sciences, etc.

**10.2. Learner’s learning style**

The learning style defines how the learner acquires and processes information. Each person has a different learning style which is related with a cognitive style (Felder, 1996; Jones, Reichard & Mohttari, 2003). Learners tend to look for their preferred style in each learning situation because they associate that style with learning success.

Visual learners tend to learn best by seeing. They think in pictures and have a vivid imagination. Seeing what it is they are trying to absorb helps visual learners build their skills most effectively. They tend to learn best through demonstrations, pictures, videos and similar methods.

Auditory learners prefer to learn by listening and talking about what to do. They acquire knowledge best through lectures or descriptions of what to do.

Effective learning opportunities take into account all learning styles.

Riding and Rayner (1998) propose a broad categorisation of style according to two fundamental dimensions representing the way in which information is
processed and represented: wholist-analytic and verbalizer – imager.

The wholist-analytic dimension represents the manner in which individuals tend to process information, either as a whole (wholist) or broken down into components parts (analytic). The verbalizer – imager dimension describes the degree to which individuals tend to represent information as words (verbalizer) or as images (imager).

An instructor who respects the different learning and cognitive styles of adult learners needs to fluently and flexibly use different teaching tools, representations, processes and manipulatives. For example, they have to use different types of representations and at the same time accept the different presented conceptions, thoughts and opinions.

During the teaching process the use of the following is important:

- Videos
- Textbooks
- Notes
- Oral explanations
- Diagrams, images, figures, tables
- Technological interactive tools (such as interactive board).

**Differentiation of teaching and learning**

Differentiation as a teaching practice can be seen and examined in different aspects of teaching (Koutselini, 2001). Some of the main areas of differentiation are the adaption of what is taught, provision of a variety of opportunities for students to demonstrate and prove what they have learned, in a pleasant environment. In this sense, instructors can differentiate their teaching aims to correspond and fulfil the needs of all the learners, according to their previous experiences, interests, learning profile.

In the case of adult learners it is important to bear in mind the self-awareness of their learning style as a part of their metacognitive knowledge when they have to face problem solving situations (Panaoura, 2009).

**Example:**

When we try to comprehend a written text we may prefer to:

- underline the basics
- write key words
- draw a diagram or a model
- use examples in order to understand a concept.

Those indicative metacognitive strategies can be taught and each one has to choose the most appropriate in respect to their cognitive or learning style and to the specific task.

### 11. EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES/ DOCUMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

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<th>Programme</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ERASMUS +</strong></td>
<td>FOUNDATION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMMES</td>
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**Description**

Erasmus+ is the new European Programme for Education Training, Youth and Sports. This new Programme, which began operating on the 1st of January 2014, replaced the current Lifelong Learning Programme, the Youth in Action and other international programmes, such as Erasmus Mundus and Tempus. Erasmus+ will continue to support activities in all fields of Lifelong Learning (School Education, Tertiary Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education) as well as Youth and Sport activities.

Erasmus+ will be an integrated programme that will be based on Key Actions rather than on sectors of Education. Specifically, it will have the following Key Actions:

a) Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of Individuals
b) Key Action 2: Co-operation for Innovation and good practices
c) Key Action 3: Supports for Policy Reform

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**Description**

Commission White Papers are documents containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. In some cases they follow a Green Paper published to launch a consultation process at European level. When a White Paper is favourably received by the Council, it can lead to an action programme for the Union in the area concerned.

The 1995 White Paper of the European Commission with the title “Teaching and Learning. Towards a learning society” was the first official paper on the issues of education and continuing education. It was also the first time the term ‘second chance schools’ was introduced.
**Programme** | **Contact details**  
---|---  
“HORIZON 2020” | Research Promotion Foundation  
**Description**  
“Horizon 2020” is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020) – in addition to the private investment that this money will attract. It promises more breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the lab to the market. Seen as a means to drive economic growth and create jobs, “Horizon 2020” has the political backing of Europe’s leaders and the Members of the European Parliament. They agreed that research is an investment in our future and so put it at the heart of the EU’s blueprint for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs. By coupling research and innovation, “Horizon 2020” is helping to achieve this with its emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.

**Programme** | **Contact details**  
---|---  
**Description**  
The ‘Education and Training 2020’ strategy sets priorities in the field of education and training. It concentrates on recent and forthcoming national reforms across four thematic areas that have a direct relevance to the Europe 2020 strategy: early school leaving (ESL), higher education, youth employment and vocational education and training (VET) and lifelong learning.

**Programme** | **Contact details**  
---|---  
**Description**  
This document remains one of the most influential political papers of the European Commission and is considered a cornerstone in any discussion of lifelong learning policies.
• According to the CEDEFOP recent study (PROFF, 2004, 34-37), adult educators generally need to have:

• updated pedagogical training
• updated professional skills
• professional versatility and performance incentive.

Each proposal, concerning professional profiles with stable and typical characteristics, should always take into account the constantly changing environment. For this very reason, the concept of updating knowledge and skills should be emphasised.

12.2. Suggested Ways for Adult Educators’ Certification

Suggested ways for adult educators’ certification should extend beyond formal and non-formal education and training. It should include any other route, through a certification system of knowledge, skills and competences, within the context of training and retraining of adult educators.

Additionally, the adult educator has to perform a wide range of professional functions, which can be identified in specific training conditions.

• The certified adult training procedure at the macro level, should answer to the “what” of learning, e.g.:
  - organisational systems
  - interaction with the labor market
  - new technologies
  - communication and contacts
  - management of human resources
  - crisis management
  - policies for social inclusion and employment
  - methodologies for the identification of social learning and of the accumulated work experience
  - intercultural skills through training on adult education specific issues

The above guidelines may be redesigned according to directions with greater flexibility, as proposed below for indicative alternative routes:

• Training with a duration of 100 hours (distance learning with face to face meetings), a programme that relates to:
  - philosophy
  - theories and principles of adult education - methodology
  - distance education
  - design of educational programmes
  - characteristics of adult learners
  - educational needs detection
  - role of the educator
  - adult learners’ group process
  - learning/teaching process
  - skills development
  - intercultural psychology and education
  - training and support of vulnerable social groups
  - design of training modules
  - production of teaching materials
  - adult education techniques and practices
  - evaluation of the training programme
  - self-assessment
  - learners’ assessment
  - certification indicators of learners’ knowledge and skills
  - educational research
  - quality assurance

• Introductory 25 hours training (face to face) with a programme that relates to:
  - frameworks for the development of operating structures
  - introduction to adult education
  - decision making - conflict management
  - new technologies in adult education
  - lifelong learning issues for adult educators
  - group dynamics
  - methodology - teaching in adult education
  - assessment of adult educators and learners
  - adult education for special social groups
  - educational materials for adult training programmes
12.3. Good Practices and Policies for Adult Education

The practices and policies that could be designed for adult education and certification should be related to:

- the development and implementation of policies on vocational qualifications at national and local level
- the existence of relevant institutional framework
- quality assurance procedures
- evaluation of certification procedures
- recognition of skills regardless of the procedure acquired
- other mechanisms that link the lifelong learning procedures with the labor market

REFERENCES

In Greek


• Tsimboukli, A. (2012). *The power of group work and communication in adult education*. INE-GSSE.


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**In English**


