



Journey to Increase your techniques of
eMotional Intelligence, digital awareNess
and entrepreneurship lifestYle

Project No: 2019-1-RO01-KA204-063136



JIMINY SELF-HELP HANDBOOK

2020



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INTRODUCTION



Erasmus+

JIMINY Self-Help Handbook has been developed within in the framework of the project JIMINY (Journey to Increase your techniques of eMotional Intelligence, digital awareNess and entrepreneurship lifestYle), No.: 2019-1-RO01-KA204-063136, financed by the EU through the Erasmus+ Programme, Key action 2 (Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices), Strategic partnership for adult education and implemented by a consortium of 7 organisations in 7 partner countries – ADES (Romania), CWEP (Poland), Symplexis (Greece), Mindshift Talent Advisory (Portugal), INNOHUB (Spain), CCS DIGITAL EDUCATION (Ireland) and LABC (Italy).

The main goal of the project is to increase the techniques of emotional Intelligence, digital awareness and entrepreneurship lifestyle among the disadvantaged groups' members (low qualified persons, unemployed, adults at poverty risk, etc.) and adult educators from the partners' countries.

This goal is achieved through the development of the

1. Present JIMINY Self-help Handbook, which provides different techniques for improving the emotional intelligence, digital awareness and entrepreneurship lifestyle
2. JIMINY Personal Trainer, which will be an artificial intelligence-driven personal trainer capable of acting as an end-to-end solution securing and supporting the whole learning and upskilling processes. JIMINY Personal Trainer will be able to diagnose individual needs and provide a customized learning path as an instant remedy.

The target groups of JIMINY Project and beneficiaries of its results are members of disadvantaged groups (low qualified persons, unemployed, adults at poverty risk, etc.) and adult educators.

Through the activities of the project, the seven partners seek to improve the situation of the disadvantaged groups' members increasing their employability on a rapid changing and high demanding labour market, as well as to create tools for the institutions which support and take care of disadvantaged adults, such as: adult education centres, social welfare institution, schools for adults, third age universities, associations supporting disadvantaged adults and fighting with social exclusion, local and regional self-government education departments and adult educators.

The Self-Help Handbook includes three main Chapters which mirror the three topics tackled by JIMINY project. Each Chapter has different subchapters:

1. Emotional Intelligence:
 - 1.1. What is Emotional Intelligence, Self-Awareness, Self-Management
 - 1.2. Social Awareness, Social Management, Action Planning
2. Digital Awareness:
 - 2.1. What are Digital Skills and why do we need them? How to use digital resources/content?
 - 2.2. How to create digital resources/content? How to use social media?
3. Entrepreneurship Lifestyle:
 - 3.1. What does it mean to have an entrepreneurship lifestyle/ thinking? How to take economically safe decisions?
 - 3.2. Why we need to assume the responsibility of our own experiences? How to connect our dreams with our skills and a market opportunity? How to maximize our resources and effort to achieve the goals we desire?
 - 3.3. Validation of the competence "Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship" of adults with fewer opportunities.

The structure of the curriculum consists of the following parts:

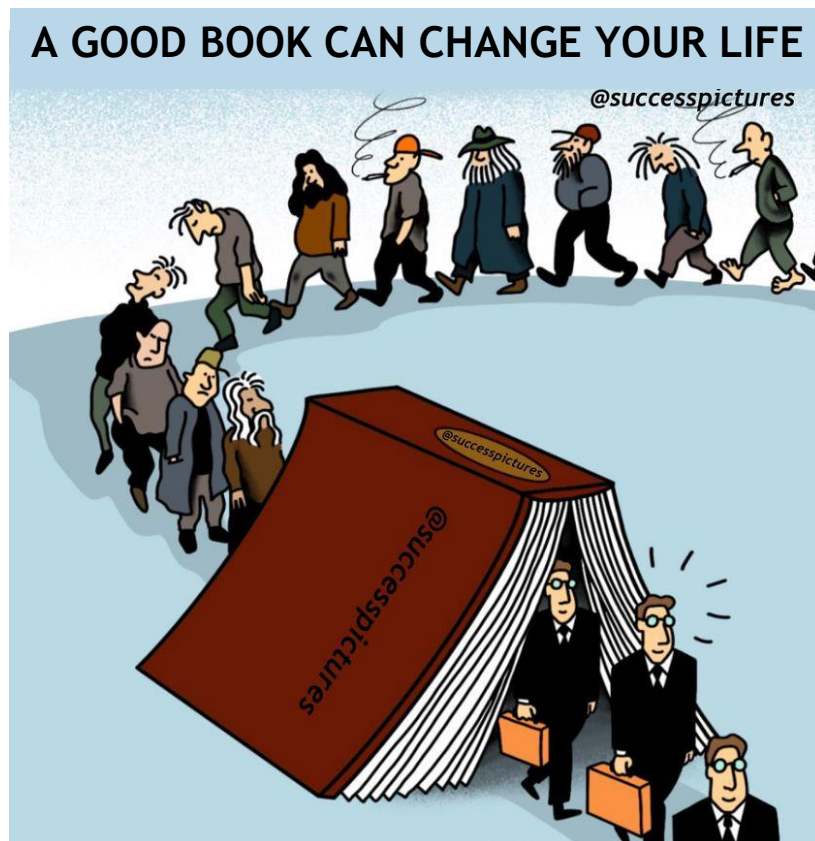


1. Educational objectives
2. Theoretical background
3. Exercises, quizzes
4. Further reading, further development
5. Tests verifying the increase of knowledge.

JIMINY Self-Help Handbook plays three roles:

1. It could be used by disadvantaged group members to increase competencies in the three topics and, consequently, to increase their chances of (re)integration in the social and economic life of their communities.
2. It could be used by adult educators as a standalone textbook for classes aimed at increasing competencies of the three topics.
3. It is an analogue basis for the digital Self-Help Handbook that will be posted on the platform developed during JIMINY project.

JIMINY Self-Help Handbook is accompanied by JIMINY Training Plan for Adult Educators that includes training methods, materials/ resource documents that can be used by adult educators when they prepare and deliver the content of the Handbook to their trainees.




Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/SuccessPicturesVerified/photos/a.1665552403579301/1795500837251123/>
<https://www.facebook.com/SuccessPicturesVerified/photos/a.1665552403579301/1795500837251123/>




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Module 1 - EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



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1.1. What is Emotional Intelligence, Self-Awareness, Self-Management



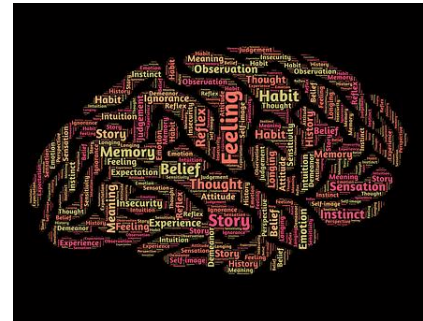
1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Aim of the Module

The definition of intelligence as “the ability to adapt” to change was attributed to Stephen Hawking, the brilliant theoretical physicist and cosmologist, but it appears to go back at least to 1905.¹

John F. Kennedy, president of the United States stated that “Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

So, in order to be able to enjoy the wonders that the future will provide us, we have to be *equipped* with the knowledge and abilities that might help us to adapt to and to contribute to the change we want to create. That is why the first Module of JIMINY Self-help Handbook, namely “Emotional Intelligence”, aims at setting the grounds for perceiving the importance of emotional intelligence and the ways we can improve and use it in our personal and professional life.



Source: <https://cdn.pixabay.com>

There are more types of Intelligence, but it is generally agreed that the ones that contribute to the quality of our day-to-day life are:

- Intelligence Quotient (IQ) - a measure of the intelligence of an individual derived from results obtained from specially designed tests of an individual's capacity to learn
- Emotional Intelligence or Emotional Quotient (EQ) – we are going to discuss about it within this Chapter
- Relational intelligence – which is about being connected and the ability to stay connected amid tasks
- Educational Intelligence – given by the ability to use the school education in managing daily living and employment tasks, as well as being an active member of the own group and community
- Financial Intelligence – which is about dealing with own money, taking good decision regarding the way we generate and use our money.

While the first one is inherited to some degree and cannot be developed, all the other types can be developed. We grow with our intelligence, based on our ability to change, based on the knowledge and abilities we acquire.

The first part of this Module presents general information on Emotional Intelligence, its components, benefits of having a high EQ, as well as tool for scaling and improving our emotional maturity. This first part tackles also the first two components of the EQ, namely Self-awareness and Self-management, their importance and ways to increase our abilities in these two areas.

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/03/29/stephen-hawking-famously-said-intelligence-is-the-ability-to-adapt-to-change-but-did-he-really-say-it/>

1.2. Learning Objectives

- A. Understand that emotional intelligence can be learned, educated and constantly improved
- B. Understand what Emotional Intelligence is and identify the benefits of having higher emotional intelligence
- C. Be able to relate more effectively to colleagues and to others
- D. Master tools to regulate and gain control of one's own emotions
- E. Be aware how emotions affect our behaviour and performance
- F. Define and practice self-awareness and self-management, in order to be able to really improve and function better in a team and to create a better work environment for oneself and co-workers

Competencies: emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Emotional Intelligence

What is Emotional Intelligence and its importance

There is no consensus in the literature on a definition of emotion. The term is taken for granted in itself and, most often, emotion is defined with reference to a list: anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, interest, surprise and shame. Emotion refers to a feeling and the thoughts it engenders, to psychological and biological states and to the extent that we are inclined to act.

Emotional intelligence has started receiving the attention it deserves only in the beginning of the years 2000, most probably as a result of the publication in different languages of Daniel Goleman's book – "Emotional Intelligence", in 1995. By 2016, it became so obvious to everyone that emotional intelligence is linked to personal and professional success that in that year the World Economic Forum included it in a list of 10 main skills¹ necessary in the modern and rapidly changing job market.

"Anybody can become angry - that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy."

Aristotle

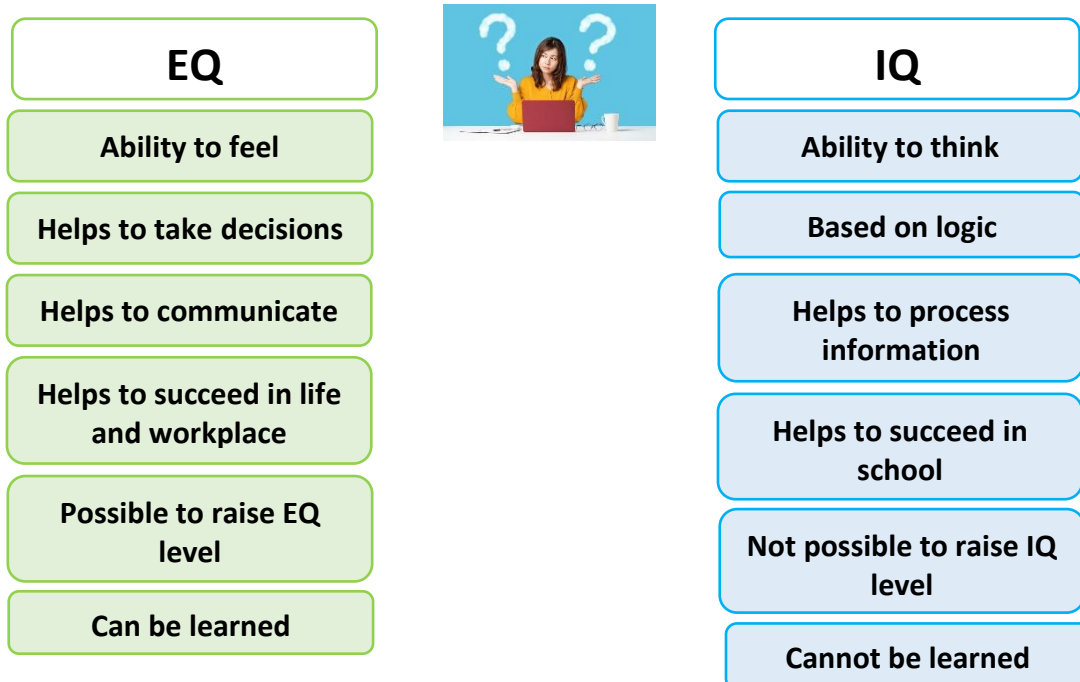
¹ *The Future of Jobs*, 2016, World Economic Forum – p.6

Emotional intelligence is generally defined as the ability to (a) recognize, understand, and manage our own emotions; and (b) recognize, understand, and influence the emotions of others.

“Emotional intelligence is what we use when we empathize with our co-workers, have deep conversations about our relationships with significant others, and attempt to manage an unruly or distraught child. It allows us to connect with others, understand ourselves better, and live a more authentic, healthy and happy life”¹.

In essence, an employee with high emotional intelligence can manage his or her own impulses, communicates with others effectively, manages change well, solves problems, and uses humour to relieve tension. As psychologists show, EQ is not determined by personality or by the Intelligence Quotient (IQ).

Compared to the intelligence coefficient IQ – the analytical intelligence which changes very little after adolescence, emotional intelligence EQ seems to be largely learned and continues to develop as we go through life and learn from experience.



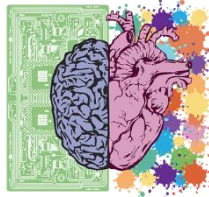
Source: Adapted from Dreamstime.com

Different aspects of EQ started to be studied in 1930s, when Edward Thorndike, an American psychologist described the concept of "social intelligence" as the ability to get along with other people. In 1985, Wayne Payne introduces the term emotional intelligence in his doctoral dissertation and in 1990, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer used the term “Emotional Intelligence” in their homonymous article. Daniel Goleman, the emotional intelligence “godfather”, is a science journalist who brought

¹ <https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-eq/>

"emotional intelligence" on the bestseller list in 1995 with his book "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ" and has authored a number of books on the subject, later on.

"It is very important to understand that emotional intelligence is not the opposite of intelligence, it is not the triumph of heart over head – it is the unique intersection of both." - David Caruso



Source: <https://pixabay.com/ro>

Components of Emotional Intelligence

In 1995, Goleman agreed with the 5 components of EQ proposed by Salovey and Mayer:

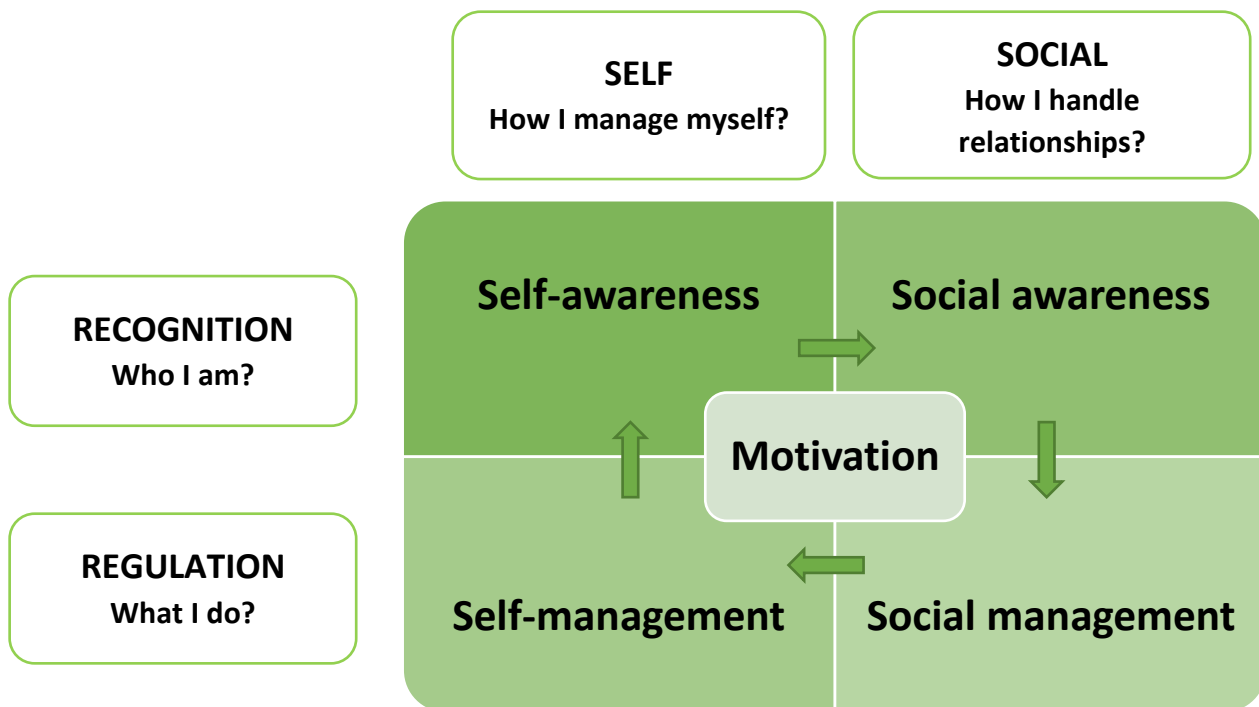
- Knowing own emotions (being aware of oneself - being able to recognize an emotion while experiencing it)
- Managing own emotions (to be able to manage own emotions in a constructive way)
- Motivating oneself (managing one's emotions to achieve a goal)
- Recognizing the emotions of others (empathy and social awareness)
- Relationship management (social skills and the ability to manage the emotions of others)

Then, in 2002, Goleman proposes the next 4 components in his book "Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence":

- **Self-awareness** (Emotional Self-Awareness, Accurate Self-Assessment, Self Confidence)
- **Self-management** (Emotional Self-Control, Transparency, Adaptability, Achievement Orientation, Initiative, Optimism, Conscientiousness)
- **Social awareness** (Empathy, Organisational Awareness, Service Orientation)
- **Relationship management** (Inspirational Leadership, Influence, Developing Others, Change Catalyst, Conflict Management, Building Bonds, Teamwork and Collaboration, Communication)

These four components of emotional intelligence are going to be presented in this Handbook, two intra-personal ones (Self-awareness and Self-management) and two interpersonal ones (Social-awareness and Social/ Relationships management).

The next figure presents the connection between these 4 components and includes the Motivation which is considered to be a component needed by all the other four, because Motivation is about striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence, aligning with the goals of the team or company/ organization, readiness to act on opportunities and persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks. Emotionally intelligent people are characterized by having the willpower and inner strength required to achieve own goals with constructive optimism.



Source: Adapted from pinterest.com

Self-awareness is about recognizing and understanding own emotions and their effects on others, knowing own strengths and limits, being sure about self-worth and capabilities.

Self-management is about self-control, managing own moods, adaptability and transformation.

Social awareness/ Empathy is about understanding how other people are feeling and recognizing, on an intimate level, how you would feel if you were in their position. It does not mean you sympathize with, validate, or accept their behaviour, but just that you can see things from their perspective and feel what they feel.

Social management is about managing relationships, building networks, working with others toward shared goals, interacting socially with one another and to successfully navigating social situations.

Benefits of having a high EQ

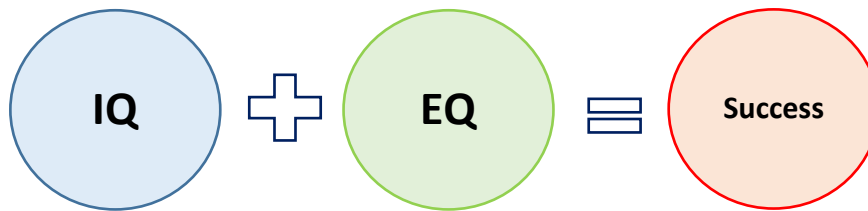
Emotional intelligence is the source of such competencies as influence, initiative and achievement drive, which we generically refer to as job performance. Ultimately, these social and emotional competencies are the conditions that define a productive and psychologically comfortable place of work.

Pure intelligence is not the key to success. According to Goleman, high IQ is only capable of predicting 20% of the

"If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far."

Daniel Goleman

factors for success. TalentSmart¹ tested emotional intelligence alongside 33 other important workplace skills, and found that emotional intelligence is the strongest predictor of performance, explaining a full 58% of success in all types of jobs.



Source: Adapted from Dreamstime.com

There is growing evidence that EQ plays a key role in determining success – both in one’s personal life and in the workplace. A high EQ helps anyone to communicate better, reduce own anxiety and stress, become more resilient, defuse conflicts, improve relationships, boost performance at work, empathize with others, and effectively overcome life’s challenges. Our emotional intelligence affects the quality of our lives because it influences our behaviour and relationships.

“According to Rhett Power’s article on www.success.com/ (2017), there are seven qualities that best describe employees and leaders with a high EQ²:

1. They aren’t afraid of change. They understand it’s a fact of life, and they’re quick to adapt;
2. They’re self-aware. They know what they’re good at, what they can work on, and what kinds of environments suit them best;
3. They’re empathetic. They can easily relate to others and understand what they are going through;
4. They’re committed to quality but understand that perfection is an impossible standard;
5. They’re balanced and able to have a healthy professional and personal life;
6. They’re curious and open-minded, and they love to explore the possibilities;
7. They’re gracious, grateful, and happy.”

Our emotions and beliefs can be the cause and cure of our diseases. Dr. Travis Bradberry reveals on the site of World Economic Forum³ that the “EQ can save your life”.

When someone represses their own feelings, an uncomfortable sensation of tension, stress and anxiety builds up. The unaddressed emotions stretch the mind and the body, they raise blood pressure, increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes, contributes to infertility, and speeds up the aging process. Stress, anxiety and depression overwhelm the immune system and make our body vulnerable to everything from a common cold to cancer. High EQ skills enable the spotting and tackling of tough situations before things escalate, they reduce the perception of stress in response to challenging situations and strengthen the brain’s ability to cope with emotional distress, which keep the immune system strong and protect the body from diseases.

Dr. Ryke Hammer, a German oncologist, who was the originator of Germanic New Medicine, declared that “The differentiation between the psyche, the brain, and the body is purely academic. In reality, they are one.” He analysed over 10,000 cases and he could demonstrate that there was a clear connection between an unexpected shock/ stress the part of the brain it affected and the diseased

¹ Provider of emotional intelligence (EQ) - <https://www.talentsmart.com>

² <https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-eq/>

³ <https://www.weforum.org/>

organ. However, the academic and medical colleagues refused to further research and “despite the fact that his scientific work had never been disproved, he lost, at the age of 54, his medical license on the grounds that he refused to renounce his findings on the origin of cancer and to conform to the principles of official medicine.”¹

EQ skills can also speed the body’s recovery from diseases, even if they are taught during the treatment of different diseases, including heart diseases and even cancer. “Teaching emotional intelligence skills to people with life-threatening illnesses has been shown to reduce the rate of recurrence, shrink recovery times, and lower death rates.”²

Friedman Scale of Emotional Maturity

As emotions do play central role in our life, we are expected to have higher emotional maturity in order to lead an effective life. It is also true that our behavior is constantly influenced by our emotional maturity level. Emotional maturity allows handling life’s ups and downs without over reacting. Emotional maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health. Emotions exert an incredibly powerful force on human behavior. Strong emotions can cause us to take actions we might not normally perform or avoid situations that we generally enjoy³.

Maturity is not just a chronological step, it is a state of mind and a matter of attitude.

Emotional maturity has nothing to do with supposed biological maturity; there are two phenomena at opposite poles. Emotional maturity has nothing to do with age, but rather with experience, self-knowledge and personal development. If emotional maturity is a conscious decision, it can easily exceed the number of years in ones ID card.

“Maturity begins to manifest itself when we feel that our concern is greater for others than for ourselves.”

Albert Einstein

Emotional maturity is a decision, not a consequence of life. Any individual can reach emotional maturity or can live his whole life as a teenager without responsibility and independence on any level.

Emotional maturity is defined by how well we interact with others, how we manage to control our emotions and how we respond in critical situations or that take us out of our comfort zone.

In short, we can consider ourselves emotionally mature if we manage to control our emotions rather than let ourselves be controlled by them. This does not mean that we should hide or repress what we feel, but that we are able to recognize what we are experiencing and do our best to respond in a positive and constructive way even in the face of disaster, that we have high EQ.

Emotionally mature people are those who know how to use their full range of emotions. They are the ones who can express their emotions without fear, without malice, sincerely and responsibly.

A mature person has, first of all, a good relationship with herself/ himself. This means that (s)he knows herself/ himself well enough to know her/ his strengths and weaknesses, to know how to receive and accept criticism. We no longer assume that someone is criticizing us for humiliating us; when we make a mistake, we understand that there are aspects that could be improved and we no longer supply

¹ <https://learninggnm.com/>

² <https://www.weforum.org/>

³ The International Journal of Indian Psychology: Volume: 01 | Issue: 04 | July-Sept, 2014 www.ijip.in, pg 80



unnecessary tensions. We learn that we can listen to criticism and survive it - without arming ourselves and without denying that there has ever been a problem.

An emotionally mature person is a person who takes full control of her/ his life. It can be easily noticed that an emotionally mature person does not try to complicate her/ his own life or that of those around her/ him.

Emotional maturity is certainly a significant predictor of the level of success that an individual can achieve, whether we are talking about personal or professional plan. So it becomes very important to know at what level you are at the moment and, who knows... maybe we are ready to change something.

The best known test for identifying the present emotional maturity level is Friedman Test for Evaluating Emotional Maturity. It is a test with 25 questions with YES and NO answers and each answer has a number of points associated with it. You tick your answer and, after you finish the test, sum all the answers and divide the final result by 25, then look down to see what it means¹.

No.	ITEM	YES		NO	
		Your answer	Points	Your answer	Points
1.	I am easily discouraged and I have occasional moments, states and crisis of depression.		11		21
2.	I like to dress stylish and I am happy when I receive attention for my clothes and manners.		7		20
3.	I am master of myself and cold-blooded in unpredicted and dangerous situations.		26		7
4.	I tend to be irritable and rigid (dogmatic, stubborn) when I support a point of view against a strong opposition.		12		30
5.	Solitude is agreeable and I like being alone.		40		8
6.	I often say things that I later regret.		10		20
7.	My relationship with my family is peaceful and harmonious.		31		9
8.	I often feel emotionally hurt by other people's words and actions.		11		20
9.	I am ready to admit that I made a mistake when I realize that.		26		10
10.	I tend to blame others for my errors and mistakes.		7		26
11.	I think I am the most gifted or the most successful among all my relatives.		6		25
12.	I think I don't have luck in life.		11		29
13.	I tend to live beyond my means.		13		26

¹ <https://onlycuriosity.wordpress.com/2015/01/22/emotional-maturity-test-friedman-scale/>

14.	I have an accentuated feeling of inferiority or a lack of self-esteem that I try to hide.		7		25
15.	I tend to cry when I see a play or I watch an emotional movie.		5		30
16.	The small annoyances make me to lose my cool.		11		28
17.	I like impressing others with my superiority.		7		25
18.	I am dominator, I like to stand out among other people.		12		30
19.	I almost always try to get other people's sympathy.		7		24
20.	I am angry when I have trouble or displeasures.		5		20
21.	I am overwhelmed by fury, I have a strong antipathy for some people.		7		21
22.	I become envious or jealous when other people have successes.		11		21
23.	I pay much attention to other people's feelings.		22		7
24.	I am often furious and upset and I have arguments with people.		10		20
25.	I often think about suicide.		5		20
Scoring		Yes =		No =	
		Total = Yes + No =			
		Score: Total / 25 =			

The interpretation of the results:

- 25 and above 25 – Perfectly mature emotionally
- 22-24 – Good level of maturity
- 20-21 – Adequate level of maturity
- 18-20 – Medium level of maturity
- 16-18 – Tendency towards imbalance
- 14-15 – Slightly immature emotionally
- 12-14 – Youthful reactions
- 10-12 – Infantile, puerile reactions
- 0-10 – Infantilism



Methods/ Tools for Developing the EQ

When thinking of methods for developing the EQ, based on the main four dimensions of EQ described in chapter 2.1.2, we should seek to improve the way we:

1. Notice and understand emotions in ourselves
2. Notice and understand emotions in others
3. Manage effectively the emotion in ourselves
4. Use emotions to facilitate performance



Source: <https://images.unsplash.com>

1. Notice and understand emotions in ourselves involves the ability to understand our deep emotions and to be able to express them naturally. It means that we have to learn:
 - how to be aware of thoughts and physical sensations
 - how to allow emotions to be present
 - how to be able to label our emotions.
2. Notice and understand emotions in others relates to the ability to perceive and understand emotions in other people. It means that we have to learn:
 - how to be aware of emotional signs
 - how to deduce emotions from verbal and non-verbal signs (e.g. body-language, facial expressions, tone of the voice etc.).
3. Manage effectively the emotion in ourselves involves the ability to effectively deal with our own emotions (for example, when experiencing anger, we'll be able to manage it in such a way that we do not say or do anything that we may regret later). It means that we have to learn:
 - how to choose the way we respond to emotions
 - how to think before acting
 - how to separate of emotion from logic.
4. Use emotions to facilitate performance relates to the ability to make use of emotions by directing them toward constructive activities and personal performance. It means that we have to learn:
 - how to use positive emotions to enhance performance and manage difficult circumstances
 - how to use emotions to influence the social environment.

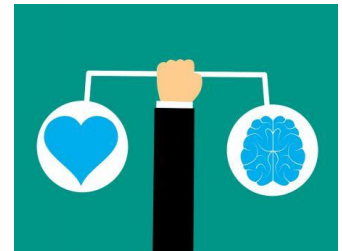
“When we think of someone who’s emotionally mature, we typically picture a person who has a good understanding of who they are.

Even if they don’t have all the answers, an emotionally mature individual gives off a sense of “calm amid the storm.” They’re the ones we look to when going through a difficult time because they

perform well under stress. They know how to respond to tough situations and still keep their cool. It's a skill set they can consistently work on over time".¹

In order to develop our emotional maturity, we can:

1. Take responsibility – don't blame others (or ourselves) when something goes off-course/ wrong.
2. Show empathy – we put ourselves in someone else's shoes, we feel more concern for others do as much good as we can and supporting those around us.
3. Own mistakes - apologize when we've done wrong, admit our mistakes and try to find ways of rectifying the situation, acknowledging that we don't have "all the answers."
4. Be unafraid of vulnerability – be willing to open up and not interested in being seen as "perfect" all the time.
5. Recognize and accept needs – admit when we need help.
6. Set healthy boundaries – it is a form of self-love and respect and we know how and when to define a line and won't allow others to cross it.



Source:

<https://www.stockvault.net/>

2.2. Self-Awareness

What Is Self-awareness and Its Importance

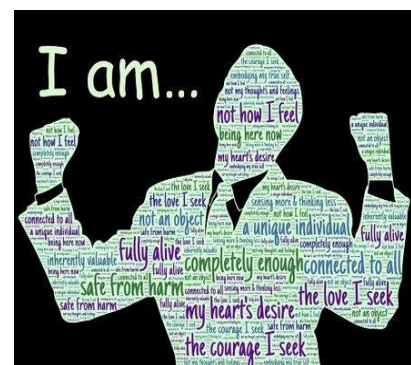
Self-awareness is the foundational building block of emotional intelligence.

Self-awareness is about recognizing and understanding own emotions and their effects on others, knowing own strengths and limits, being sure about self-worth and capabilities.

Self-awareness was first defined, in 1972, by Duval and Wicklund. In their book "A Theory of Objective Self-Awareness", they noticed that:

"When we focus our attention on ourselves, we evaluate and compare our current behaviour to our internal standards and values. We become self-conscious as objective evaluators of ourselves."²

"Put more plainly: Self-awareness can be best viewed from the standpoint of personal development. It typically means having a deep understanding of your values, strengths, weakness, habits, and "your why." While you accept your faults, you are also constantly focus on different strategies for self-improvement."³



Source: <https://cdn.pixabay.com>

When we are self-aware, we can see where our thoughts and emotions are guiding us. It also allows us to take control of our actions so we can make the necessary changes to get the outcomes we desire.

Self-awareness is a fundamental tool for self-control.

¹ <https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/emotional-maturity>

² <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/self-awareness>

³ <https://www.developgoodhabits.com/what-is-self-awareness/>



Some of the benefits of being self-aware are:

- It strengthens work and personal relationships by managing emotions.
- It can make us better at our jobs, better communicators in the workplace and enhance our self-confidence and job-related wellbeing
- It helps us become a happier and more productive employee and leader, and can help us align our current life with our passions.
- It leads to better decision-making and it allows us to see things from the perspective of others, work creatively and productively, and experience pride in ourselves and our work as well as general self-esteem

Johari Window and How to Use It

The Johari Window model is a simple and useful tool for illustrating and improving self-awareness, and mutual understanding between individuals within a group. It was created by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955 and it was named after combining their first names, Joe and Harry.

The model shows a four-paned window. Looking at the four panes in terms of columns and rows, the two columns represent the self; the first contains “things I know about myself,” and the second contains “things I do not know about myself.” The rows represent the group one is in or others, the first row being “things they know about me,” and the second being “things they do not know about me.”

	Things I know	Things I don't know
Things others know	<p>Open/ free area</p> <p><i>Information about you that both you & others know</i></p>	<p>Blind area</p> <p><i>Information about you that you don't know, but others do know</i></p>
Things others don't know	<p>Hidden area</p> <p><i>Information about you that you know, but others don't know</i></p>	<p>Unknown area</p> <p><i>Information about you that neither you nor others know</i></p>

The premise behind the window is that we are often unaware of how others perceive us, how we present ourselves to others, and even how well we know ourselves. Luft and Ingham created this model because they believed that what happens in our life depends upon our own self-awareness, and the awareness others have of us.

From a practical point of view in implementing the Johari window we need to look at two steps:

1. The place to start in the Johari window is in the open area. We make some notes about ourselves. What are our strengths and our weaknesses? What are we comfortable with and willing to share with others? We must be honest and clear about what we know about ourselves already.
2. Involve other people and ask for feedback about ourselves. We should be prepared to seriously consider it. That doesn't mean that we have to do everything that's suggested, but we should at least listen and think about it. Then we should give the person who provided the feedback some acknowledgement or thanks for making the effort. When receiving feedback, we must be respectful, listen and reflect on what has been said.

Categories of Self-Awareness and Methods/ Tools to Increase It

In an article published in Harvard Business Review, Tasha Eurich, a researcher and organizational psychologist, and her team of researchers came up with two categories of self-awareness¹:

- Internal self-awareness – which is about to how clear we see our values, passions and aspirations, or more practically, it is about recognizing if our current job matches our true passion or if we feel dissatisfied with a heated conversation we had with a colleague which conflicts with our beliefs.
- External self-awareness – which is the ability to clearly see how other people view us. People who know how others see them are more empathetic, more effective and have stronger relationships with the colleagues, friends and family.

Self-awareness is a beneficial thing for the full affirmation of who we are and can help us to be, at any moment, authentic and courageous. There are a many ways to increase self-awareness and a lot of useful sites, but the first steps that we can take are:

1. Ask “What?” instead of “Why?”

Usually, when we assess our current emotions and state, we often ask “Why am I feeling angry? Why did I received such feedback? Why isn't my project the way I'd hoped?” We forget very often about the psychological factors (tiredness because of lack of sleep, low blood sugar because of not having a breakfast, etc) when we're trying to understand our behaviours.



Source: <https://images.pexels.com>

“What” questions are more productive and focus on objectives and future goals, rather than past mistakes.¹

For example, if we feel frustrated at work, the “Why am I feeling dreadful?” will lead us to focus on negatives and will leave us feeling more depressed. “What are the situations at work that made me feel bad?” will lead us to identify the factors that are out of our control and that don't align with our passions, beliefs and goals and will help us to think of a strategy to adjust the situation.

2. Create time and space for ourselves (spend time with ourselves)

Just avoid distractions for half hour a day and connect to ourselves. Practicing a solo activity might help, besides reading, meditating, writing a journal.

3. Become a better listener and ask for feedback

¹ <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/self-awareness>

We should listen carefully to the feedback of our family, friends and colleagues and use it as a mirror. We should allow our friends to feel safe while they give us an honest point of view.

16 personalities test for self-discovering

Another way to increase self-awareness is taking personality tests that help us understand our traits. There are no right or wrong answers in these tests. They are instruments that help us to identify differences in the ways in which we perceive and judge the world around us. Perceiving means obtaining an awareness of a situation and the factors involved in it. Judging means deciding what to do about it.

Some people form perceptions of what is going on around them primarily by using their senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch). Their perceptions are based on perceived realities or facts. They tend to be realistic and practical. Other people are more skilful at using intuition (feelings, possibilities, hunches) as their primary means of forming opinions about what exists and what might be done about it. They value imagination and inspiration. They generate new problem-solving approaches and solutions and they envision new possibilities, new ideas and ways of doing things. We all use both ways of perceiving, but we tend to favour one or the other in most situations.

Some people decide what to do by thinking about it, predicting the logical effect or outcome of any particular action, and deciding on that basis. Such people have confidence in the thinking process. They are skilful in using logic and function best in logical situations (e.g., with machinery). Other people make decisions on the basis of their feelings about what is important. They trust their feelings and are more concerned with personal values than with logic. Most of us employ both thinking and feeling, but not at the same time or with the same amount of confidence.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator™ (Briggs & Briggs Myers, 1977) is a well-known instrument that measures personality types and preferences, based on Carl Jung's descriptions of psychological types.

The <https://www.16personalities.com/> site allows us to take a free Myers-Briggs Personality Test and get a description of who we are and why we do things the way we do. It is available in 37 languages. The test offers research-based information about personality type tendencies. It opens the door to objective self-awareness, helping us see aspects of ourselves that could be improved and how to use our existing strengths even better. That can reduce stress and help us engage in beneficial opportunities, get along with others, and generally do our best work.



Source:

<https://media.istockphoto.com>

2.3. Self-Management

What Is Self-management and Its Importance

Self-management is another building block of emotional intelligence

Self-management is about self-control, managing own moods, adaptability and transformation.

Management is not just for managers, we all manage in different situations. Self-management means taking responsibility for our own actions and doing things as well as we can. It's about being the boss of ME, not the boss of a team or company!

Self-management skills allow us to maximize our productivity, improve our workplace performance and efficiently achieve professional goals. Improving our self-management skills can help us increase our employability and better manage our career path.

Daniel Goleman and his co-authors define self-management through these six traits: self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative, and optimism. Robert Kelley includes a full chapter on self-management in his book "How to Be a STAR at Work". Kelley's research highlights the following key elements in self-management:



Source: <https://cdn.pixabay.com>

- "Making a commitment to lifelong learning in support of both the organization's goals and our own goals
- Learning how to make certain that our projects add value to the organization
- Developing our personal productivity skills to manage both our time and our commitments
- Building broad personal networks that allow us to tap expertise in and out of the organization for complex problems
- Being willing to embrace change and rethink both organizational structures and work definitions as new opportunities arise."¹

Self-Management Skills and How to Develop Them

Self-management skills definition refers to our abilities to control our feelings, emotions, and activities. They play a decisive role in our personal and business life. The site <https://www.businessphrases.net/self-management-skills/> offers a very intuitive free infographic about self-management skills:

¹ <https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2015/9/power-to-the-people-why-self-management-is-important>

Self-Management Skills and Tips

Stress Management

- Enjoy your body
- Enjoy yourself, rest yourself as regularly as possible
- go to vacations and holidays with the people you love
- take walks in nature
- do hobbies



Self-motivation

- find and list your motives (needs and desires)
- find different sources of motivation and inspiration (music, books, activities)
- think expansive thoughts
- live fully in the present moment
- dear to have big dreams
- dream often – every day
- remember that nothing is impossible



Self confidence

- get rid of the negative thoughts in your head
- think positively
- be happy with small things
- do not forget to tell yourself that you are smart and intelligent
- chat with positive people

Time management and organizational skills

- set and prioritize your goals,
- create a schedule;
- make lists of tasks;
- balance work and leisure;
- break large tasks into smaller tasks

Have a healthy lifestyle and a balanced diet

Healthy eating and physical activities are extremely important when it comes to increasing your mind and body power.

www.businessphrases.net



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3. EXERCISES AND QUIZZES

3.1. Exercise 1

For increasing your self-awareness, you should monitor consciously the things you are doing. Please, make a list of everything you do in a day and reflect on the following:

Things I've done today	<i>Why am I doing that: for me, for someone else, what's the purpose?</i>	<i>Is it in accordance with my values and deep beliefs? Am I doing it for wrong reasons? Is it taking up most of my time?</i>	<i>How do I feel at the respective moment? What is my emotion? Is it anger, sadness, fear, joy, love, surprise, disgust, shame?</i>
.....			
.....			
.....			
.....			

3.2. Exercise 2

Determine personal Strengths and Weaknesses – Please, think through, and check all your strengths and weaknesses as you see yourself. You can go further with this exercise and identify other strengths and weaknesses, as well as you could think how you can build on your strengths and how you can work on your weaknesses and improve yourself.



Source: <https://cdn.pixabay.com>

Strengths	My Strengths	Weaknesses	My Weaknesses
Ability to understand other's point of view			Do not stick to my plan
Creativity			Insecure
Flexibility			Self-criticism
Taking initiative			Extremely Introverted
Honesty			Extremely Extroverted
Integrity			Too detailed oriented

Strengths	My Strengths	Weaknesses	My Weaknesses
Continuous Learning		Too sensitive	
Self-control		Lack of financial literacy	
Good communicator		Bad at report and letter writing	
Good in decision making		Laziness	
Problem solving		Procrastination	
Speaking to the point		Talk too muck	
Accountable		Easily lose confidence in oneself	
Ambitious		Reluctant to work alone	
Hard-working		Time management issues	
Well organised		Sometimes get demotivated	
Patient		Overthinking	
Respectful		Defensive	
Punctuality		Reluctant to change	
Focused in all situations		Confrontational	
Able to work independent		Always neglecting own needs	
Good listener		Low self esteem	
Open-minded		Give up easily	
Trustworthy		Impractical	
Logical		Unconcerned	
Detailed-oriented		Dull	
Good negotiator		Bad at public relations especially when talking to new people	
Willing to teach/ share experience and knowledge		Hesitant	
Forgiving		Reluctant to read long passages	
Caring		Aggressive	
.....		

3.3. Exercise 3

When you feel overwhelmed with emotions and you are going to react negatively, go through the next steps until you are able to react differently¹.



- RED:** 1. Stop, wait, pause, and think before you act
- YELLOW:** 2. Name the problem, say what you feel
3. Set a positive purpose
4. Think of as many as possible solutions
5. Think to consequences
- GREEN:** 6. Go ahead and try the best plan

¹ Adapted from "Emotional Intelligence" by Daniel Goleman



4. FURTHER READING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- “A Theory of Objective Self Awareness”, Shelley Duval, Robert A. Wicklund - Academic Press, 1972
- “How to Be a STAR at Work: 9 Breakthrough Strategies You Need to Succeed”, Robert E. Kelley, (New York: Times Books, 1998)
- “The Emotionally Intelligent Manager: How to Develop and Use the Four Key Emotional Skills of Leadership”, Caruso D. R., & Salovey P., (2004)
- <https://www.talentsmart.com/> - resources available in 25 languages
- <https://www.emotionalintelligencecourse.com/> -
- <https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-scales/>
- <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/young-professional-training/self-management-skills-young-professional/>
- <https://www.ihhp.com/meaning-of-emotional-intelligence?fbclid=IwAR1DLhCzIKbe7-3kyJHADk-PGInpoAwYEo5BtunCJ3Sz5gPtpxrMj-67FuM>
- <https://www.fastcompany.com/90469087/how-to-work-with-someone-who-isnt-emotionally-intelligent?fbclid=IwAR3sLmW8SzETPthXkzmHa7PKeeB02auijUbfu5V9aSX4q1zJtoAvyQ6AXQ>
- <https://markmanson.net/emotions/emotional-intelligence-skills?fbclid=IwAR1m39TGFrcpiq0KeioHVgVwKOo0eAmVCQdeM9HWftM5mAA0YUSaOBR0ces>
- https://hbr.org/2017/01/the-downsides-of-being-very-emotionally-intelligent?fbclid=IwAR0l2DahVqcrAQY3gyKiJGF0b0QqQzSLyK359p5Bp_DLyM9WLB5c_9SNy9k
- <https://www.iberdrola.com/talent/what-is-emotional-intelligence>
- <https://hbr.org/2017/01/the-downsides-of-being-very-emotionally-intelligent>



5. TESTS VERIFYING THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

5.1. Initial Assessment

Evaluate each statement as you actually are, rather than as you think you should be¹.

		Not at All 1	Rarely 2	Some- times 3	Often 4	Very Often 5
1.	I can recognize my emotions as I experience them					
2.	I don't lose my temper when I feel frustrated					
3.	People have told me that I'm a good listener					
4.	I know how to calm myself down when I feel anxious or upset					
5.	I enjoy organizing groups					
6.	I don't find it hard to focus on something over the long term					
7.	I don't find it difficult to move on when I feel frustrated or unhappy					
8.	I know my strengths and weaknesses					
9.	I don't avoid conflict and negotiations					
10.	I feel that I enjoy my work					
11.	I ask people for feedback on what I do well, and how I can improve					
12.	I set long-term goals, and review my progress regularly					
13.	I don't find it difficult to read other people's emotions					
14.	I can easily build rapport with others					
15.	I use active listening skills when people speak to me					
	Total per column					
	TOTAL SCORE					

¹ Adapted after <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/ei-quiz.htm>

Score Interpretation

Score	Comment
15-34	<p>You need to work on your emotional intelligence. You may find that you feel overwhelmed by your emotions, especially in stressful situations; or, you may avoid conflict because you think that you'll find it distressing.</p> <p>It's likely, too, that you find it hard to calm down after you've felt upset, and you may struggle to build strong working relationships.</p> <p>Don't worry – there are plenty of ways that you can build emotional intelligence.</p>
35-55	<p>Your emotional intelligence level is... OK.</p> <p>You probably have good relationships with some of your colleagues, but others may be more difficult to work with.</p> <p>The good news is that you have a great opportunity to improve your working relationships significantly.</p>
56-75	<p>Great! You're an emotionally intelligent person. You have great relationships, and you probably find that people approach you for advice.</p> <p>Researchers have found that emotionally intelligent people often have great leadership potential. Realize this potential by seeking opportunities to improve even further.</p>

5.2. Final Assessment

Reflect on the following statements and give your genuine answer.

	<i>Statement to reflect on</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Some-times</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>How can be improved</i>
1.	I am good at identifying how I am feeling				
2.	I know well whether I am happy or not				
3.	I am able to notice when I am angry, sad, bored etc.				
4.	I am good at identifying emotional swings in myself				
5.	I know why I have certain feelings				
6.	I am good at finding the right word(s) to use to express my feelings				
7.	I am good at identifying how I am feeling				



	<i>Statement to reflect on</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Some- times</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>How can be improved</i>
8.	I am good at identifying how others are or might be feeling				
9.	I know well whether others are happy or not				
10.	I am good at identifying emotional swings in others				
11.	I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others				
12.	I am able to notice when others are angry, sad, bored etc.				
13.	I understand the emotions of the people around me				
14.	I am able to prevent my emotions from taking over				
15.	I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally				
16.	I am able to control my own emotions				
17.	I am able to calm down quickly when I am very angry or upset				
18.	I am good at responding to an unexpected event when I am "caught off-guard"				
19.	I am able to self-regulate my behaviour even under very difficult circumstances				
20.	Emotions influence my performance				
21.	Positive emotions encourage me to keep doing what I am doing				
22.	Negative emotions after a setback cause me to stop trying				





1.2. Social Awareness, Social Management, Action Planning



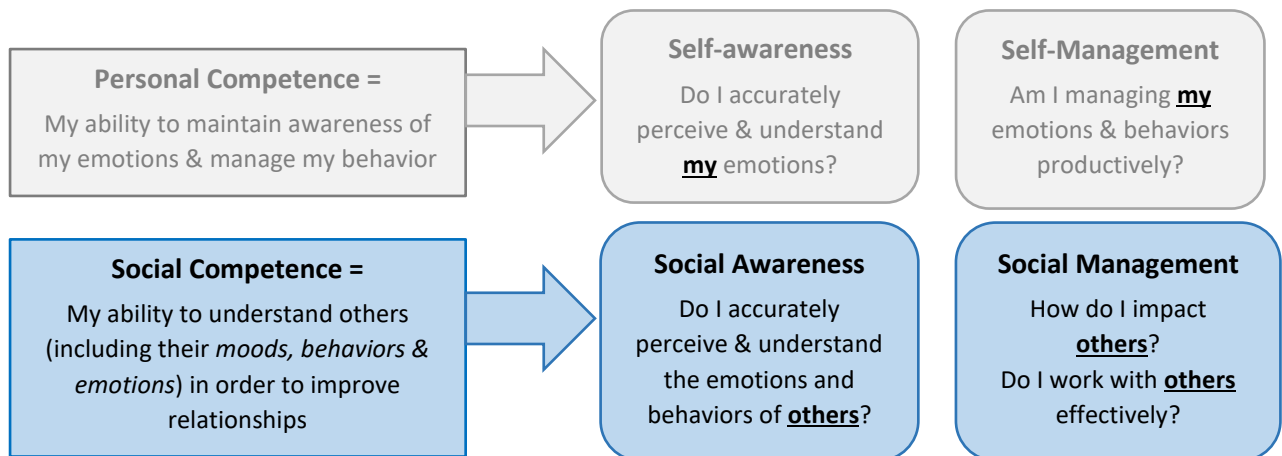
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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Aim of the Module

The aim of the module is to present the part of Emotional Intelligence competences and skills related to the Social aspects of it. The Social Competences our target group needs to develop, to improve its position in the labour market. The same time it will facilitate the adult educators in their day-to-day efforts to educate the targeted population in the required fields.

As mentioned in module 1.1 there are two key competencies in EI: The Personal and the Social one and each of them has 2 core skills/aspects.



Following Goleman's definitions, the Social Competences are analyzed further to the below areas.

- Social Awareness (what we need to **know** -understanding, what we see). For this Competence we will refer to:
 - Empathy
 - Organizational Awareness
 - Service Orientation
- Social/Relationship Management (what we need to **do** -actions, changing behaviour). For this Competence we will refer to:
 - Influence and Leadership
 - Developing Others
 - Communication
 - Change Catalyst
 - Conflict Management
 - Building Bonds
 - Teamwork and Collaboration

1.2. Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of the Social Competences in Emotional Intelligence
- Understand the role of Empathy in working environments
- Learn basic techniques to improve Empathy in our target group of trainees
- Provide examples of empathic workers of our target group

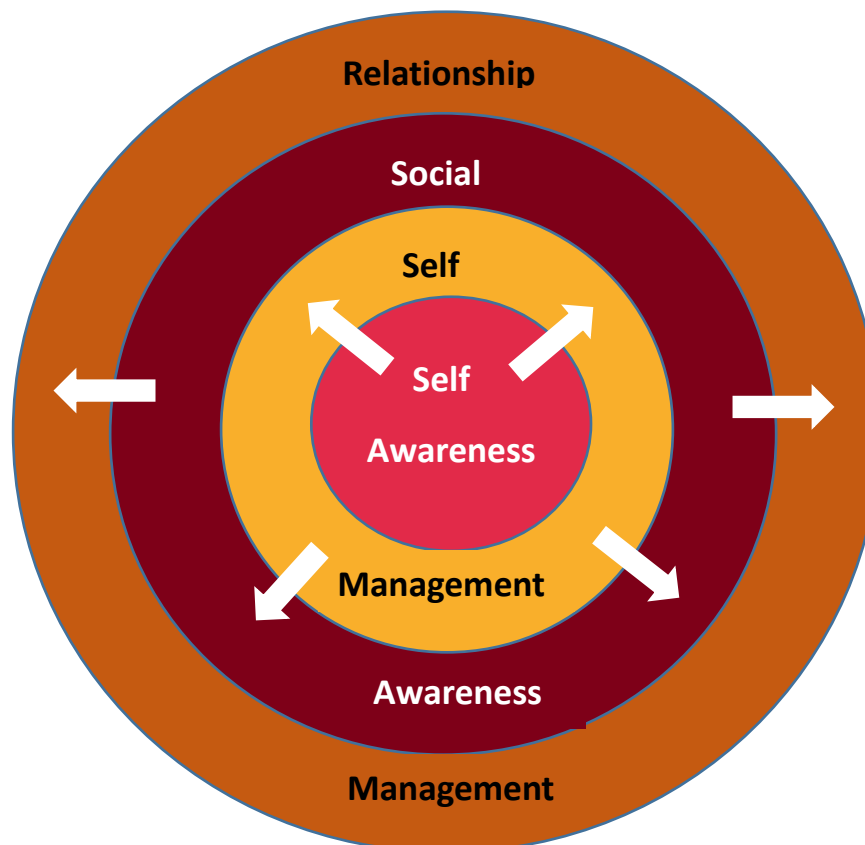
- E. Understand how Organizational Awareness can relate to our target group
- F. Provide examples of Action Planning for the improvement of EI competencies

Competences: Taking others' perspectives, demonstrating empathy and compassion, developing positive relationships, practising collaboration & teamwork.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There is extensive literature for Emotional Intelligence that in our days comes in various formats and there are also different points of viewing the matter, some more academic and other more business related. In the related section at the end of this module we provide some ideas for further reading targeted to the educators and generally the professionals providing help to the marginalized groups. Regarding the target audience of this project, we will try also to provide some ideas for approaching the subject in a way that is probably closer and more relevant to them.

Under this perspective we found the way experienced Counsellor William G DeFoore PhD talks about EI quite interesting, for giving a first glimpse about the subject to low-skilled people not familiar to it. He calls it 'Emotional Intelligence Circle of trust'¹.



¹ <https://www.goodfinding.com/circle-of-trust.html>

1. It begins with **self-awareness**. Health, and the quality of relationships all hinge on the depth and accuracy of self-awareness. And self-awareness is essential to self-trust, which is essential to trust in others.
2. Self-awareness is almost useless, however, without **self-management**. For example, a lot of alcoholics know that they have a drinking problem, but don't have the self-management to control their drinking patterns.
3. Next comes **social awareness**, which absolutely requires self-awareness and self-management. Our view of others - our social awareness - is actually seen through the filter of our self-awareness and our ability to manage ourselves.
4. And finally, our **relationship management** skills, or our ability to create and maintain lasting, fulfilling relationships, totally depends on our self-awareness, self-management and social awareness.

2.1. Social Awareness

Social Awareness is the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others. It should be built starting in the family environment and evolve through the years as we enter education where we meet others from diverse backgrounds and cultures and need to understand social and ethical norms for behaviour. Having social awareness is a crucial component of appropriate classroom behaviour, which contributes to an environment conducive to learning. Social awareness is crucial then in adult life after education. Regarding the workplace, it has been established as an important factor in workforce success. One recent employer survey conducted by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills demonstrates that four of the five most important skills for high school graduates entering the work force are linked to social awareness: professionalism, collaboration, communication, and social responsibility. In general, in any kind of situation, whether professional or personal, success and well-being largely depend upon how we manage and communicate with people. And this is centered around the skills and competences that build a robust social awareness.

What is Empathy

Understanding others (their emotions, their perspective). Learning to 'read' them by actively listening to what others say (both their words and non-verbal signals). Showing understanding and appreciation to others' views or issues. Focusing on attaining the goal. Understanding where emotional boundaries start and end.

Empathy is not only the core competence in the social awareness domain but also the core in the relationship management domain of Emotional Intelligence, the basis for more complex relationship management skills, including influencing other people or having a positive impact, mentoring other people, managing conflict, inspiring them as a leader, and teamwork.

In the workplace it is easy to point out cases where the Empathy Competency is lacking. The "classic" example is the brilliant systems analyst of a tech company that can solve the most difficult of the problems but it is impossible to communicate with humans without insulting them. So, it is easily understandable that empathy is important to work effectively with other people, especially in sales and client management, on teams, and in leadership.

Empathic leaders and executives get along well with people from very different backgrounds and cultures and can express their ideas in ways the other person will understand. As an example, they do

better at overseas assignments because they can quickly pick up on the unspoken norms for behaviour and the mental models of that culture. Executives with high empathy are better at keeping employees engaged, and employees with empathy give customers the very best experience. Relevant research at the Center for Creative Leadership found that empathy predicts better job performance for managers and leaders.

But empathy goes much beyond the working life. Fostering empathy is important because it helps to resolve conflicts and improve the connection between each other. Furthermore, it leads to a broader awareness and more openness to new insights.

This is confirmed by literature because research has shown that being empathic with each other and listen to each other leads to conflict resolution and a bigger connection between individuals (Davis & Oathout, 1987; Long, Angera, Carter, Nakamoto, & Kalso, 1999). Moreover, empathy leads to a broader awareness (Rogers, 1982).

Lastly literature confirms that fostering empathy is important because it reduces bullying, prejudice and racism and increases the will of individuals to help others in need (Dixon, 2011; Gordon, 2012; Davis, 1980; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). In short, Empathy is a building block for a better society.

The three stages Empathy develops through and its boundaries

“Cognitive Empathy” – is the ability to know how persons feel and what they are thinking. Using cognitive empathy alone can cause one to become detached, cold, and show indifference rather than caring as the person tries to understand another person’s situation without internalizing his or her own emotions. As a mostly rational, intellectual, and emotionally neutral ability means that some people may use it for negative purposes (to manipulate people who are emotionally vulnerable).

“Emotional Empathy” – is the ability to physically feel what others feel, to create an echo of the state of others inside our minds. Again, emotional empathy alone can lead to the inability to manage our own emotions, cause psychological exhaustion and many times paralyze us so that we are unable to act.

“Compassionate Empathy” – is the ability not only to understand a person’s difficult situation and feel with them, but to move into action and help, which will bring some sort of relief, comfort, or confidence that things will get better. Like before, compassion empathy alone can lead to persons feeling guilty or looking negatively upon themselves if they are unable to assist the person in the predicament.



https://sizzo.xyz/photo_84360538_support-of-colleague.html



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An example of empathic workers in our target group

Since we need to focus on JIMINY's target group (and not only to managers and executives) we must think the industries where low-skilled and marginalized workers is easier to find work and evaluate if EI and especially Empathy can play a role to that. Our research confirms that the hospitality industry is one of these cases.

In this industry many tools have been developed to measure quality, but what now emerges in e.g., the hotel sector, is the emotional aspect of guest feedback. While aspects like the standardised (non-fluctuating) service, a good quality and clean product have always a positive and cumulative impact, it is the employees who are real the differentiating factor for a hotel; they are in the best position to shape and influence the emotions of their guests, and therefore to drive decisions like to return to and recommend the hotel.

The approach of having employees asking their guests 'how do you feel?' may not seem a very targeted or relevant approach in many industries, but it is important in hospitality. This is why it is essential not to overlook the emotional intelligence of employees and guests alike. It is driven by the need to be understood. Human beings have an underlying desire to be understood and that is what empathy is all about. If a hotel's guests feel consistently understood, the establishment is already quite likely to outdistancing its competitors.

So how can a hotel reap the benefits from emotionally fulfilled guests and employees? As we will see later in the document active listening and observing are the main techniques. It is understandable that in the heat of a busy service the employees' instinct can be simply "to get the job done" but, while they may not have the time to stop, they should make a conscious effort to pause, look and listen to each individual guest. Not listening can be the single biggest cause of service errors and the prime source of guest frustration. In addition, by not looking, opportunities to pick up on cues that would allow staff to provide personalised service, may be missed. These observations are not only related to hotel managers, awarded chefs or just the receptionists. Every single employee who communicates with a guest can affect his/her experience and that's why all the companies in the sector provide targeted training for the required soft-skills which are mostly related to EI and Empathy.



[by Andrea Piacquadio on pexels.com](#)

Key Techniques to improve Empathy

We may struggle to show empathy initially or feel unable to do so but there are techniques and training to help us do so. To use empathy effectively, we need to put aside our own viewpoint and see things from the other person's perspective, then, we recognize behavior that initially appears



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awkward as simply a reaction based on a person's prior knowledge and experiences. Regarding our target group and to improve understanding of others, which is the base of empathy, we will focus on giving full attention in listening, in decoding emotions by observing speech, body, and face and in making questions.

Listening

A well-known quote about listening from expert Dr. Stephen R. Covey is "Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply". He also provides a categorization of listening in the following five levels:

1. Ignoring – not listening at all
2. Pretend listening – not listening, but occasionally saying “mmhm” or “okay”
3. Selective listening - only hearing part of what someone says
4. Attentive listening – can use mimicking and paraphrasing, but that type of listening is viewed from our frame of reference
5. Empathic listening - attempting to read and understand the emotions of others – listening to understand

Many people reach until level 3 and consequently, decide prematurely what the other person means before he/she finishes communicating.

Some proposed steps/techniques that will help us reach levels 4 & 5 are the following.

Step 1: We must concentrate on not talking, while the other person is talking. We must be sure to pay attention and to look directly at the speaker.

Step 2: It has been found that multi-tasking does not really work, so if someone is talking to us, we must our phone down, turn away from our computer monitor, and just listen.

Step 3: It is about listening to the other person when he is talking, instead of preparing our reply.

Step 4: We are paying attention to how the person is behaving.

Step 6: We must be aware of the body language of the other person.

Step 7: We let the other person know that we're listening. For example, by shaking our head.

Step 8: When the other person stops talking, we try to paraphrase or translate what he said. Reflect what we think we have heard. This technique helps to ensure if there is a clear understanding.

Step 9: We try to recognize the individual's feelings. For example: “You sound angry” or “you seem to be upset” etc.



<https://unsplash.com/photos/lp1AKIUV3yo>

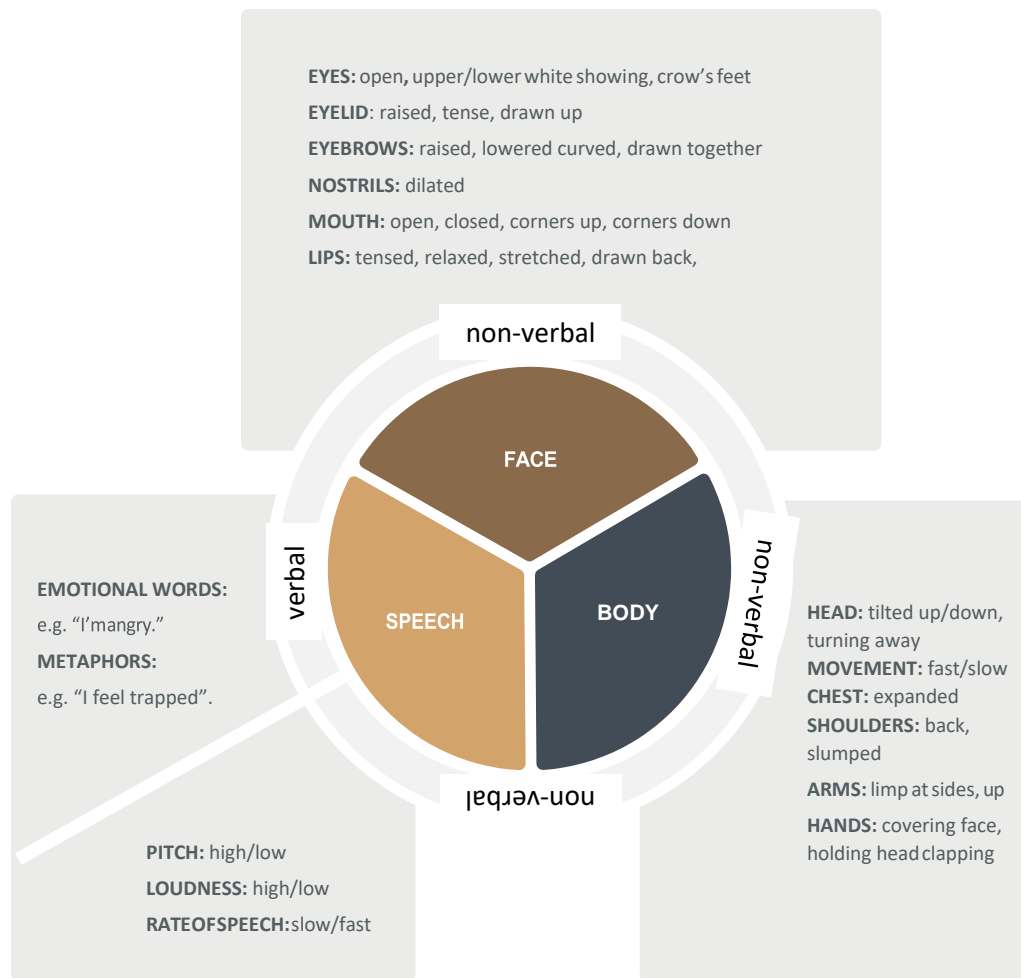
Decoding Emotions

Appraisal and recognition of emotion in others relates to the ability to perceive and understand the emotions of the people around us. Past research [like Friesen (1972)] has provided strong evidence for the universal facial expressions of seven emotions – anger, contempt, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise, although cultural differences do exist.¹



The ability to accurately decipher emotional expressions plays a key role in social interaction (Kilts, Egan, Gideon, Ely, & Hoffman, 2003) as it facilitates appropriate responding and bonding (Isaacowitz et al., 2007). There are different ways to “read” other people’s emotions, including paying attention to speech (i.e., vocal inflections, tone of voice, word use) and body movements and facial expressions. [by Positive Psychology Program B.V]

¹ <https://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2011/05/facial-expressions>



Decoding emotions by deciphering three different forms of emotional expression

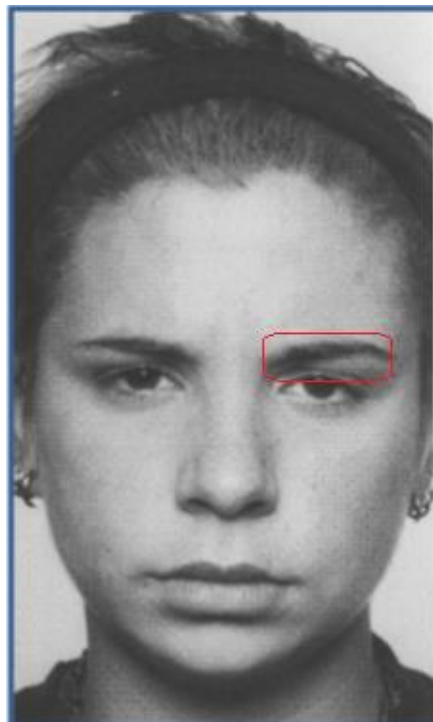
Facial expressions

The face is a dynamic canvas on which people display their emotional states, and from which they decode the emotional states of others (e.g., Willis & Todorov, 2006). When a single emotion emerges and the individual does not attempt to modify or conceal it, facial expressions typically last between 0.5 to 4 seconds and involve the entire face (Ekman, 2003). These expressions have been referred to as macro expressions; they take place when people do not try to conceal their emotions. Macro expressions often take place when people are alone and with close others (i.e., family and friends). Macro Expressions are relatively easy to detect. Micro expressions, on the other hand, are expressions that take place in a fraction of a second, sometimes as fast as 1/30 of a second. Because of their speed, they are more difficult to detect. Micro expressions can take place when the individual tries to conceal his emotions. In an attempt to control the emotional expression, the individual fails to conceal the immediate (uncontrollable) facial reaction, causing a quick, fleeting leakage of micro expressions. For example, a person who tries to hide anger when her manager makes a snide remark, may very briefly press her lips firmly together (immediate reaction), but quickly cover up this reaction by smiling. The existence of micro expressions is based on the hypothesis that facial actions that cannot be controlled voluntarily may be produced involuntarily, even if the individual is trying to control his or her expressions. Research by Porter and ten Brinke (2008) showed that micro expressions occur when participants attempted to be deceitful about their emotional expressions. Micro-expressions may also be signs of rapidly processed but unconcealed emotional states.

Facial cues can be a rich source of information about the emotion another person is experiencing. Here are some areas of the face you can observe and things you can learn about a person from them:

- The eyes. The degree to which people maintain eye contact can indicate how much they believe in what they are saying. Someone who is repeatedly breaking eye contact, for instance, may indicate he or she is slightly anxious or is hiding something. Comparatively, someone who maintains a steady gaze, looking directly at you without backing away, likely feels confident and self-assured.
- The mouth. The position of people's mouths can be indicative of how they are feeling. A person who is happy will likely be smiling, perhaps with teeth showing. Pencil-thin lips, a scowl, or a grimace, on the other hand, can indicate anger or discomfort.
- The forehead. A person's forehead can also give away how a person is feeling. A wrinkled forehead may indicate confusion or being perplexed; a sweating forehead can be a sign of anxiety; a lined raised forehead may indicate feelings of surprise or delight.
- The eyebrows. The position of the eyebrows may also provide clues as to how a person is feeling. Lowered eyebrows can signal deception or displeasure; raised eyebrows can signal surprise or questioning; moving the eyebrows up and down quickly can be part of a greeting or welcoming gesture.

We give below three examples from the book: 'Emotions Revealed' from Paul Ekman (2003).



Upset, unhappy, perplexed miserable etc. These are all possibilities. All of these refer to the anger theme of having an obstacle in the path of a goal. It might even be highly controlled anger. The lowered tensed eyelids and the lowered brows signal anger.





Surprise or fear—or just rapt attention. It's difficult to be certain when the clue is limited to just the raised upper eyelids. If it is surprise or fear, it would be either slightly felt or highly controlled stronger feelings.



3

Disdainful, contempt or smug, the tightening of one lip corner in this picture signals this set of related emotions.



Bodily expressions

There is evidence to suggest that numerous emotions, including pride, shame, anger, fear, and disgust (e.g., de Gelder & van den Stock, 2011; Keltner, 1995; Tracy, Robins, & Schriber, 2009) can be accurately deciphered from nonverbal bodily displays. Pride, for instance, is typically signaled by an expanded chest, upward head tilt, and arms akimbo—either spread out from the body with hands on hips or raised above the head with hands in fists (Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008; Tracy & Robins, 2004). Past research has identified consistent bodily expressions for the emotions, joy and happiness, pride, shame and embarrassment, fear, anger, disgust, and sadness (see Witkower & Tracy, 2018 for a review). It is likely that bodily expressions of emotions are universal, as studies have shown generalization across race and disparate cultures (Edelmann et al., 1989; Haidt & Keltner, 1999; Tracy & Robins, 2008)

Speech

People use hundreds, if not thousands, of terms to express emotional states. In some cases, the words that are used point directly to the emotion one is experiencing. For instance, the experience of fear may be expressed by saying “I am afraid”. In other cases, figurative expressions are used, so that rather than literally naming the emotional state one is in, one relies on metaphors or analogies to express his or her subjective experience. In the English language, there are hundreds of linguistic expressions commonly used to talk about emotions. For example, “trembling like a leaf”, “feeling trapped” and “hitting rock bottom”. Obviously, in order to accurately decode emotion from language, one must know the meaning of the words or expressions used to communicate an emotion. Obviously, deciphering emotions in a non-native language is harder than doing so in one’s own language. In addition to the verbal information in speech, emotions are also expressed by the non-verbal qualities of speech, such as pitch, volume, and rate of speech.

These three characteristics of emotional expression (facial, bodily and verbal) operate together rather than in isolation. For instance, focusing only on words to decode the emotion of another person is unlikely to be accurate, given nonverbal cues modify, augment, illustrate, accentuate, and contradict the words they accompany. The following table shows two examples of the integration of facial and bodily expressions required to capture the full essence of an emotion.

Emotion	Body	Speech	Face
Joy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • head tilted up • chest out • arms out • upwards movement • fast and energetic movement • Jumping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased pitch • increased loudness • increased rate of speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corners of the lips are drawn back and up • teeth exposed • raised cheeks • crow's feet near the outside of the eyes
Anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • head tilted down • arms forward • fist clenched • hitting motion • forward lean • stomping • fast movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased pitch • increased loudness • increased rate of speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tensed lower eyelid • bulging eyes • firmly pressed lips • corners of lips down • flared nostrils • lower jaw jutting out

Two examples of how facial, bodily and verbal expressions of emotions work synergistically together

Making Questions

A basic categorization are open and closed questions

A closed question usually receives a single word or very short, factual answer e.g. a "Yes" or "No". Open questions elicit longer answers. They usually begin with *what*, *why*, *how*. An open question asks the respondent for his or her knowledge, opinion, or feelings. From that it is understood that when it is to develop empathy firstly through understanding others, it's good to use open questions and without being prejudiced or judgmental.

Open questions are good to describe the circumstances in more detail, to develop an open conversation and to finding out the other person's opinion or issues. We may then utilize closed questions for testing our understanding and concluding a discussion or making a decision.

Organizational Awareness

Daniel Goleman describes it in his book "Organizational Awareness: A Primer" as the skill to understand the rationale behind an organization and its structure. To know how to get things done within the organization - formally and informally. To understand both client and vendor organizations. To act with the client's best interest in mind.

Organizational Awareness means having the ability to read a group's emotional currents and power relationships, and identify influencers, networks, and dynamics within the organization.

Leaders who can recognize networking opportunities and read key power relationships are better equipped to handle the demands of leadership. Such leaders not only understand the forces at work in an organization, but also the guiding values and unspoken rules that operate among people. People skilled at the organizational awareness competency can sense the personal networks that make the organization run and know how to find the right person to make key decisions and how to form a coalition to get something done.

One of the examples of lacking organizational awareness is when a company's purpose of business (the mission statement) is not related to the way people operate day-to-day within the organization. The leaders and the external consultants who prepared that statement are obviously failing in their responsibility to make sure the company's operations are in line with its mission.

Researchers at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management found that, the position of a potential changemaker in the hierarchy of a company, matters less than his ability to read and mobilize the informal networks needed to make change occur.

The Radar Effect

Kate Leto (an organizational design consultant) gives a nice example of a low-ranked person who embodies Organizational Awareness. It is the fictional character from TV show M*A*S*H: Walter "Radar" O'Reilly (the elder in JIMINY's focus group may relate better to that). For those not familiar with the show, Radar was a young corporal and clerk for the M*A*S*H hospital. Typically, someone in that role would be the low person on the totem pole, simply doing what they were told.



Radar was different. He had an amazing ability to get things done; to maneuver the human networks of the military to get supplies, Jeeps, passes, medicines – you name it. He knew how to work the unwritten, unmapped human system to get the unit whatever it needed. He sensed a problem and had a solution before anyone else in the camp even had a clue it existed (thus the name "Radar"). He was a perfect example of how Goleman describes Organizational Awareness: *"The ability to read the currents of organizational life, build decision networks and navigating politics."*

Even though the character was fictional, those who have worked in larger organizations can remember such a colleague, "low-ranked" many times, with extreme abilities of delivering difficult tasks against the internal bureaucracy being positive, pleasant and without breaking the rules as well.

So organizational awareness helps guide strategy to accomplish goals in any organization or network, no matter the setting.

Going back to role of leaders in organizations we should also consider the term 'attentional bandwidth' which roughly means 'who should pay attention to what and for what reason'. It is obvious that the attentional bandwidth of a group of people can be greater than that of any one person alone. The leader with high organizational awareness can see to the efficient distribution of that bandwidth so the correct levels of attention are applied and properly delegated, information is taken in and understood, and finally strategic decisions are made about how best to respond to a challenge.

The best leaders display their organizational awareness by helping workers put their focus on what has meaning, then by capturing and directing the collective energy toward the strategic goals that matter most. Such leaders know where that energy seems well-directed, and where in the organization it could be better utilized—and put their own energy into upping the game as needed. Highly successful leaders have also ‘holistic awareness’ capabilities. Inside the organization they can catch the emotional climate and people’s collective enthusiasm (generally, things that cannot be accurately measured by metrics, gauges, indicators etc.). In the ‘ecosystem’ the organization operates, they understand how the organization relates to others (suppliers, competitors, key operators). Finally, they can also understand the big picture of the larger systems in which the organization exists (the economy, technological shifts, social trends, and political changes and more).

On the opposite side is the “organizational attention deficit” where missing data (like getting too little attention in the marketplace) and not devoting enough attention to where it should go, leads to bad decisions.

Service Orientation

Regarding our target group Service Orientation is about anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers’ needs.

A person is service-oriented if he/she:

- Understands customers’ needs
- Seeks ways to increase customers’ satisfaction and loyalty
- Gladly offers appropriate assistance
- Grasp a customer’s perspective – acting as a trusted advisor.



We are using the term ‘customer’ in its broader meaning: everybody we want something from, is a customer – the product we are selling is ourselves.

The basic technics to increase our customers' satisfaction and loyalty are:

1. Form relationships with them. Why? Because this helps you to stand out from the crowd and lubricates business going forward. This is easily done by treating your customers with respect – be punctual, greet, use “please” and “thank you” liberally, admit when you are wrong and fix your mistakes and be motivated to serve.
2. Know ourselves. Why? Service orientation does not equate to selling our soul to the devil. Once we have established that the relationship is in line with our values and goals, we need to know our strengths and weaknesses so that we can sell ourselves with confidence.
3. Communicate effectively because we may be the perfect fit for whatever our customer needs but if we can’t decipher what they are looking for and how we fill that need we are going to lose the opportunity. We must use our listening skills to find out what’s really important to the customers and our non-verbal skills to affirm that we are deserving of their time/ money/ job/ service. This needs also an energetic and enthusiastic attitude.
4. Take responsibility and ownership of customers, situations, and problems for both the good and the bad, being proactive, accountable and available.



2.2. Social/Relationship Management

The target of this section is to show how we can use emotions to facilitate performance.

Influence and Leadership

The ability to win over and persuade others. To offer support and gain support. To inspire and guide individuals and groups.

As Terry R. Bacon, describes in the 'Elements of Influence: The Art of Getting Others to Follow Your Lead', there can be no leadership without influence because influencing is how leaders lead. In their classic book on leadership, 'Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge', Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus echo this point: "There is a profound difference between management and leadership," they wrote, "and both are important. 'To manage' means 'to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct.' 'Leading' is 'influencing, guiding in direction, course, action, opinion.'" They add that "an essential factor in leadership is the capacity to influence."

People respond best when they are treated like human beings, they work best when they have a voice in how the work is done, and they remain loyal and engaged when they feel respected, trusted, well informed, and cared for. So, solely rational approaches by managers are not enough, they need also to lead through the social and emotional approaches to influencing.

Leaders lead by mobilizing people around a compelling vision of the future, by inspiring them to follow in the leader's footsteps. The best leaders are teachers, mentors, and role models--and they accomplish the vast majority of their work through influence, not authority.

The art of management and leadership is to know when to act as a manager and when to act as a leader, when to use authority and when to use influence, when to ask and when to tell, when to take over and when to let go. In every case, it is crucial for leaders and managers to understand the range of influence techniques they can use, know when and how to use them, build their power bases so that they have the capacity to be influential, and sharpen their skills so that they can influence people effectively.

The same author has described in 'Power and Influence' 28 skills associated with the effectiveness of influence. The ones related to Emotional Intelligence form the major part of this skillset.

The EI-related skills affecting influence effectiveness are:

Listening: skill at actively listening to others; being engaged in others when they are speaking and accurately hearing and retaining the essence of their thoughts

Being friendly and sociable with strangers: skill at opening up to and engaging with people one does not know; being outgoing and conveying warmth, acceptance, and interest in strangers. A critical skill in the influence technique of socializing.

Showing genuine interest in others: Skill at conveying genuine interest in other people; being authentic in showing care, concern, and curiosity in other people; skill at making others feel important. A critical skill in socializing and appealing to relationship.

Having insight into what others value: Having a strong, intuitive understanding of other people and what is important to them; skill at discerning what others value without them having to say what it is; interpersonal perceptiveness.

Being sensitive to others' feelings: Skill at understanding others' emotions and empathizing with them.

Building rapport and trust: Skill at building harmonious and sympathetic relationships with others; skill at conveying trust in others as well as causing them to feel that one can also be trusted; establishing trustful connections with others.

Building close relationships: The ability to create trusted friendships and close relationships with other people; skill at sustaining intimate and friendly relationships with others over a period of time.

Convincing people to help you influence others: Skill at enlisting others' support and assistance in influencing others; skill at building agreement and cooperation and a unified sense of purpose, particularly in approaching others and trying to persuade them as well. The most critical skill in the influencing technique of alliance building.

Resolving conflicts and disagreements among others: Skill at managing conflict; the ability to identify core issues, find creative and mutually acceptable solutions, and reduce the emotion in situations that prevents resolution; skill at mediation.

Supporting and encouraging others: Skill not only at helping and encouraging others but conveying that attitude as well; giving aid or assistance to others; and promoting, advancing, inspiring, or stimulating others and encouraging them to forge ahead.

While the above describe qualities and skills executive should possess to lead effectively it's more than clear that any worker who has or can be trained in those skills will have a successful working life even he will not climb the stairs of hierarchy.

Communication

It is about being persuasive, well presented, and objective. People having good level in this competence can adapt to the emotional context of the exchange. They acknowledge and demonstrate empathy and appreciation of others' views or issues but also keep focus on attaining the objective of the communication.

Conflict Management

In general, it refers to the ability to recognize, prevent or manage areas of conflict to a positive resolution. For high-skilled workers, that means they:

- Meet potential or actual conflict from a point of knowledge and strength
- Have the ability to read underlying emotions within groups
- Are open-minded and willing to embrace different perspectives.

For the target group of the project we need to focus on the last two characteristics that will help them in negotiating and resolving disagreements.

Teamwork and Collaboration

It's the natural aptitude in creating a cohesive team. Managers and leaders with this competence:

- Ensure the objective is defined and understood by all



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- Behave in a way that others adopt as their own
- Demonstrate that they value all contributions.

For the low-skilled marginalized workforce is more about building the ability of working with others in general and especially toward shared goals.



[by fauxel on pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com/photo/group-of-diverse-professionals-in-meeting-room-shaking-hands/)



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KEY SOCIAL/RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SKILLS



COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Listening skills
Written and spoken
Verbal and non-verbal abilities
Patience and understanding
Friendliness
Being supportive

Confidence
Open-mindedness
Respect
Feedback
Presentation skills
Public speaking



CONFLICT-RESOLUTION SKILLS

By learning conflict-resolution skills, you can keep your personal and professional relationships strong and productive.



TEAM-WORKING SKILLS

Collaborative skills
Care for others
Building confidence
Creative thinking and idea exchange
Patience

Supportive attitude
Friendliness
Empathy
Enthusiasm
Friendliness
Taking criticism



LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Proactive
The ability to inspire and motivate
Being confident
Strategic Planning
Conflict-resolution skills
Effective delegation skills
Open-minded

Negotiation skills
Optimistic and positive thinking
Planning and analytical skills
Coaching and mentoring
Diplomacy
Talent management



INFLUENCING AND PERSUASION SKILLS

These skills are a great power! Why? Because people believe what you say and you can make them follow or you can influence people in the most beneficial way for you.



2.3. Action Planning

The Covid-19 pandemic-related crisis and the fast advancement of automation in production has unfortunately created large numbers of job-seekers and unemployed. It is there where EI competences will play key roles.

For the unemployed, low-skilled, and marginalized people we need to keep in mind two aspects.

For the unemployed, research indicates that EI matters in tough times. A study for EI related to, mental health, physical health, and suicide risk in short-term and long-term unemployed individuals, showed that emotional intelligence was positively associated with mental and physical health and negatively associated with perceived stress and suicide risk.

Additionally, automation and AI will make thousands of repetitive/mechanical jobs obsolete and the only foreseeable workforce needs after that, are the positions related to human interaction. There EI-competent people will have far better chances for employment.

For those in organizations supporting the unemployed (educators, social workers, all those providing help) the research indicates that improving empathy through training to first-line workers, improves the services the organization offers.

In other words, investing in EI training and not only in technical skills is important for the wellbeing of our societies.

To suggest Action Planning of improving EI in the two distinct groups of JIMINY, adult educators and marginalized persons, we need to have some key characteristics of action plans in mind:

- Action plans are based initially on an understanding, an observation, a metric (like a survey), a rationale that show us we need to program an intervention to change something (or to maintain an activity that proves successful);
- The intervention needs first to have a clear target (a business objective to impact);
- Then a series of actions (usually divided in steps), each of them with a dedicated impact;
- The people responsible to carry it out;
- A timeframe;
- A description of what success looks like (We will know we are successful if...);
- The way we will measure the success/progress.

Action Planning for Adult Educators

Although we believe adult educators (especially those in the areas related to JIMINY's focus group of learners) will already have a level of competence, self-awareness and training, it is sure there is room for action and improvement (as the survey prior to this project indicated). Then planning for self-improvement includes:

Self-evaluation

As we know, any learning starts when we are aware that there is something in us that needs to be changed or improved, and we are ready to make those changes happen. Summarizing the previous modules and chapters, Emotional intelligence has five components in it: Self-awareness – the knowledge of what we feel and why we feel so, Self-regulation – the ability to express our feelings in the right way, Empathy – the ability to relate to others' emotions and see the world from their perspective, Social skills – the power to communicate effectively and build strong connections at home or in the workplace, and to make all these things work, Motivation – the internal drive to change the way we feel and express. Learning EI starts with gaining insight into which aspect of EI someone should

work on. Some may have solid social skills but lack in self-regulation while others may be high on motivation but poor in self-regulation. The learning process begins with the knowledge of which aspect of EI to develop first.

A way to know where we stand in EI terms as individuals is by taking the EI tests which are widely available online. Positive Psychology provides [here](#)¹ a detailed listing and categorization of such tests and this can be also useful in Action Planning for marginalized people.

A quick pick from this resource is the following list:

1. Emotional Intelligence Test (2019). Psychology Today. Access [here](#)².
2. Test your EI Free EQ quiz (2018). Institute for Health and Human Potential. Access [here](#)³.
3. How Emotionally Intelligent are You? Boosting Your People Skills (2019). Mind Tools. Access [here](#)⁴.
4. Emotional Intelligence Test (2019). Psych Tests. Access [here](#)⁵.
5. Emotional Intelligence Test Free – EQ Test Free Online (2019). Alpha High IQ Society. Access [here](#)⁶.
6. How Emotionally Intelligent Are You? (2017). My Frameworks. Access [here](#)⁷.

Training

The assessment from the previous phase will provide the areas we should focus on for self-improvement. Then there are numerous resources, educational institutions, consulting agencies (to name a few) that provide a wealth of knowledge and practical guides for anyone to enhance their competences and address their deficiencies in all kinds of formats (online courses, masterclasses, face-to-face workshops, seminars etc.).

The above training should not only address the areas someone feels (or measures) they have weaknesses. It should also address the expected needs, the deficiencies and the problems they will most probably face with a certain audience.

As we said before we can categorize the adult educators for marginalized people in the broader category of social workers where research proves that interventions in enhancing emotional intelligence in them can be especially effective.

Social workers have some of the most difficult situations, challenging interactions, and heavy emotional labor of all professions to face. EI/EQ can be applied to improve one's skills and abilities in five core social work tasks:

1. Engagement of users/clients
2. Assessment and observation
3. Decision making
4. Collaboration and cooperation

¹ <https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-tests/>

² <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/tests/personality/emotional-intelligence-test>

³ <https://www.ihhp.com/free-eq-quiz/>

⁴ <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/ei-quiz.htm>

⁵ <https://testyourself.psychtests.com/testid/3979>

⁶ <https://www.iq-test.net/eq-test.html>

⁷ <http://www.myframeworks.org/testmyeq/>

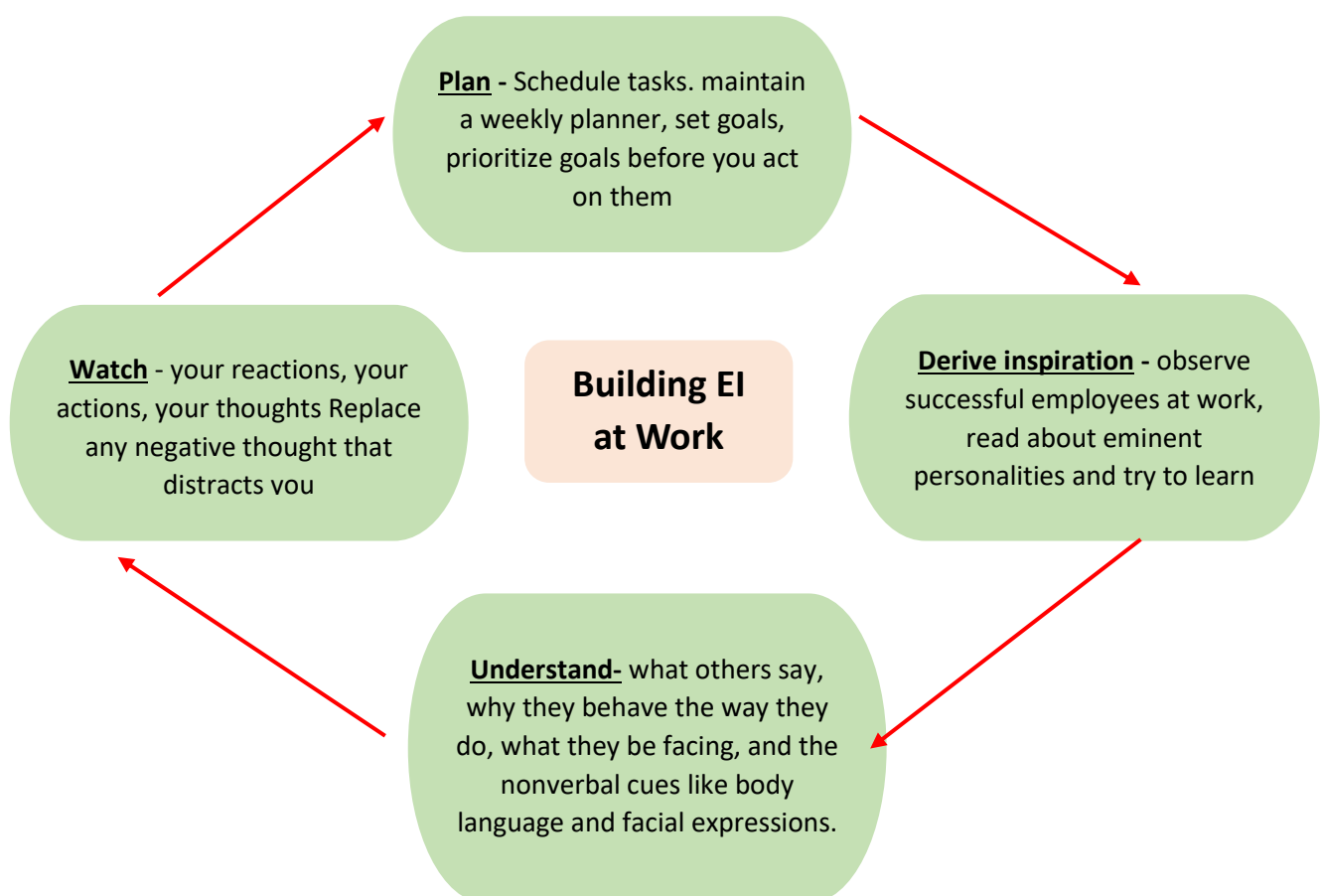
5. Dealing with stress (Morrison, 2007)

Improvements in these five tasks will not only allow the social worker to work more effectively but will also improve their clients' experience and help social workers feel more positive, fulfilled, and satisfied with their job (Morrison, 2007).

Application

The final and the most critical stage of learning emotional intelligence is incorporating the chalk talk in real life. The exercise and self-help activities that structure EI courses are productive only when we can implement them in real-life situations. To paraphrase a trainer's recommendation to job advisors, "don't leave your EI at home"

Like many things also in real life, it is not a one-off procedure. Whether we speak of building and enhancing EI in our personal life or in the working environment it is a continuous process.



Action Planning for Learners

Assessment

As with adult educators and any other group or individuals we first need to assess the status of our trainees. The organization/facility and the group of people it usually addresses can help us design interventions better, through previous knowledge which was gathered from years of operations or from the international experience in the specific groups. As an example, young low-qualified unemployed have different characteristics from elder workers who were pushed to unemployment

because of advances in automation so they are expected to have some different deficiencies that need to be addressed accordingly.

The assessment tools and metrics mentioned in the previous part do have an application also with JIMINY's focus group of learners but there are things to consider as well. If e.g., the literacy level of a group is quite low, putting them to written tests and lengthy questionnaires may alienate them further (because some were probably skeptical in the first place).

Although this is an assessment phase, things work similarly to the validation of competences phase that will be discussed later in this handbook. We will see there that people who gathered most of their knowledge during their life and not from formal education feel stressed in a written theoretical test. For them observation in "real-life conditions" (e.g. a simulation) or unstructured interviews are more suited and they are more fair.

Furthermore, a series of evaluation tools are not only targeted to more experienced and educated audiences (e.g. to help an organization pick a frontrunner for a higher position in the hierarchy) but require extremely experienced and qualified auditors to read and evaluate the results (e.g. a PhD-carrying psychologist with specialty in EI)

Following the above, structured or unstructured interviews or discussions may prove an easier way to gather information and find or certify the expected gaps of the targeted group are there and need to be addressed in the actions phase.

For that task various sets of questions are available from multiple sources, depending on the experience of the interviewer and how deep he/she needs/wants to go in examining the learner's EI/EQ level.

The six questions below were identified by Karla Cook, editor and team manager at HubSpot Marketing, as some of the best ones to get an indicator of EI/EQ:

1. Can you tell me about a time you tried to do something and failed?
2. Tell me about a time you received negative feedback from your boss. How did that make you feel?
3. Can you tell me about a conflict at work that made you feel frustrated?
4. Tell me about a hobby you like to do outside of work. Can you teach me about it?
5. What would your co-workers say is the most rewarding thing about working with you? What about the most challenging thing?
6. Can you tell me about a time you needed to ask for help on a project? (Cook, 2017).

Planning the Interventions

Whatever the techniques we use for assessing the situation and setting the objectives of the intervention, experience and literature show that addressing key areas like active listening, understanding expressions and moods, conflict resolution and more, will strongly benefit the targeted learners of JIMINY. This can help us be proactive in the preparation of the materials and the design of the activities. Keeping in mind that whatever we design should not be too elaborated, we can also prepare sets of different levels of difficulty to adjust to the results of the assessment phase.

We can see below excerpts from three types of interventions for EI related topics:

- a. A poster for conflict resolution techniques (<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>).

Conflict Resolution Techniques

When you are dealing with a conflict, the following ideas are useful, no matter which technique you are using.

Agree together to work with facts rather than fiction or assumptions.

Don't rush to comment back. Take time to think about their ideas and thoughts before responding.

Use active listening techniques to ensure they feel heard and understood.

- 1 Work together to discuss a resolution technique and ensure both parties are wanting to resolve the issue.
- 2 Together, agree the facts of the situation.
- 3 Together, identify what the problem is.
- 4 Negotiate a solution to the problem together and a way for all parties to move forward. This might take some time together to fully ensure every aspect of the problem is being addressed and resolved for both parties.
- 5 Ensure every party agrees with the resolution that is happening and feels it resolves their part of the conflict.
- 6 Everyone involved should feel proud and happy with the resolution and be part of suggesting ways to prevent a future situation getting to this point.
- 7 Through following a methodical approach to conflict resolution, you expend less emotional energy and protect your wellbeing. Conflict resolution can be a process to follow rather than a battle to take part in.

See the problem or situation separately of the person



Respect the other person and their opinion and feelings.



- b. An excerpt of an exercise by www.positivepsychology.com for helping the trainee develop a bigger “vocabulary” of emotions by rating the pleasantness of an emotion (1 = very unpleasant and 10 = very pleasant) and the energy levels at the time the emotion occurs (1 = very low amount of energy and 10 = a very high amount of energy)

ENERGY ↑	10	ENRAGED	PANICKED	STRESSED	JITTERY	SHOCKED	SURPRISED	UPBEAT	FESTIVE	EXHILARATED	ECSTATIC
	9	LIVID	FURIOUS	FRUSTRATED	TENSE	STUNNED	HYPER	CHEERFUL	MOTIVATED	INSPIRED	ELATED
	8	FUMING	FRIGHTENED	ANGRY	NERVOUS	RESTLESS	ENERGIZED	LIVELY	ENTHUSIASTIC	OPTIMISTIC	EXCITED
	7	ANXIOUS	APPREHENSIVE	WORRIED	IRRITATED	ANNOYED	PLEASED	HAPPY	FOCUSED	PROUD	THRILLED
	6	REPULSED	TROUBLED	CONCERNED	UNEASY	PEEVED	PLEASANT	JOYFUL	HOPEFUL	PLAYFUL	BLISSFUL
	5	DISGUSTED	GLUM	DISAPPOINTED	DOWN	APATHETIC	AT EASE	EASY GOING	CONTENT	LOVING	FULFILLED
	4	PESSIMISTIC	MOROSE	DISCOURAGED	SAD	BORED	CALM	SECURE	SATISFIED	GRATEFUL	TOUCHED
	3	ALIENATED	MISERABLE	LONELY	DISHARTENED	TIRED	RELAXED	CHILL	RESTFUL	BLESSED	BALANCED
	2	DESPONDENT	DEPRESSED	SULLEN	EXHAUSTED	FATIGUED	MELLOW	THOUGHTFUL	PEACEFUL	COMFY	CAREFREE
	1	DESPAIR	HOPELESS	DESOLATE	SPENT	DRAINED	SLEEPY	COMPLACENT	TRANQUIL	COZY	SERENE
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		PLEASANTNESS →									

- c. A part of a group activity by www.positivepsychology.com to teach trainees how to Decode Emotions by Analyzing Speech, Body, and Face. In the table below the trainee writes down every facial sign of the emotion that they notice while the speaker shares a story and at the end makes an informed guess as to what emotion the speaker talked about.

Scoring	
Eyes	
Eyelids	
Eyebrows	
Nostrils	
Mouth	
Lips	

Scoring	
Other	
The speaker's emotion is:	

How Success Looks Like and How We Measure It

In the business environment there are many indicators to use. If e.g., a company decides to train customer-facing employees in EI they can observe employee turnover, customer satisfaction and customer complaints before and after the intervention.

For the case of JIMINY and for training sessions for this type of content and audience (where we cannot have strict validation and qualification standards) a set of small and smart exercises together with 'real-life' simulations and interviews are an optimum package for evaluating the results of the intervention (assuming there are available resources). Using the above techniques, we could detect better if the trainees discovered things about them that they were not aware of, or if any basic behavior change took place because of the training. Of course, the standard methods of evaluation will always be there: questionnaires before and after the training where trainees rate initially their "readiness level" and record any possible progress afterwards, open-ended questions where they can describe freely the effectiveness of the intervention in certain topics etc.

3. EXERCISES AND QUIZZES

3.1. Exercise 1

The following is a quiz related to Social Awareness by Anthony Mersino, the author of “Emotional Intelligence for Project Managers: The People Skills You Need to Achieve Outstanding Results,” and modified by Dr. Alan Zimmerman to be applied more generally.

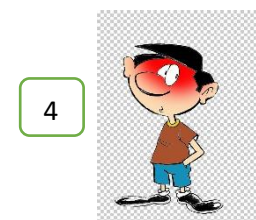
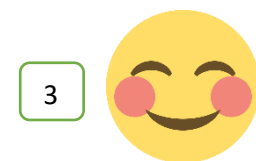
Trainees/learners need to go through the questions and answer “yes” or “no” to each question.

- Do you use sarcasm in your communications with team members, coworkers, customers or other project stakeholders?
- Do you frequently say “yes” to action items in meetings or agree to take on work ... and then regret it later?
- Do you feel the need to crack a joke or change the subject during tough conversations?
- Do you find it easier to set the record straight or vent your frustration in an e-mail rather than in person?
- Are your relationships with your team members and team leaders superficial and limited to the task at hand?
- Do you get upset or take it personally when your boss or team leader is angry?
- Do you ever find yourself dwelling on conflict with your team members or fantasizing about ways to get even?
- Do you wish you were more charismatic or had more presence as a team leader or manager?

A rule of thumb for the above could be that if they answered “yes” to three or more questions, the most probably need to work on Social Awareness & Management skills. With this and many other quizzes, exercises and tools used by the sector, it is also useful to ask these questions to five people at home or work (although it could be painful to hear the answers) that know the learners very well so they will too answer the questions for them.

3.2. Exercise 2

Match each image with the emotion it expresses.



Fear

Anger

Sadness

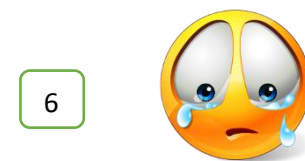
Joy

Love

Surprise

Disgust

Shame



Correct Answers:

1. Anger, 2. Disgust, 3. Joy, 4. Shame, 5. Love, 6. Sadness, 7. Fear, 8. Surprise

3.3. Exercise 3

Please select the correct answer about Empathy

1. Empathy is a positive competence and must be developed and exercised unconditionally because it can make our society better.
2. Empathy is a useful competence but there are many more important than that.
3. Empathy is a very positive competence but there are boundaries in its use.

Correct Answers: 3

Empathy is one of the most important competencies someone needs to have or develop. Still, people may use it to manipulate others, or it can cause us psychological exhaustion and feelings of guilt if we exaggerate.

3.4. Exercise 4

Please find the incorrect sentences around listening to others.

1. We must be sure to pay attention and to look directly at the speaker.
2. It's good to say occasionally "mmhm" or "okay" when someone is talking, even if we don't listen carefully.
3. We should let the other person know that we're listening. For example, by shaking our head.
4. We can select parts only of what someone says to avoid overload.
5. We should listen to the other person when (s)he is talking, instead of preparing our reply.

Correct Answers: 2 & 4

Sentence 2 describes pretend listening which is quite offensive. Sentence 4 describes selective listening that beyond offending the speaker, it can drive us to totally different conclusions of what the speaker meant.

3.5. Exercise 5

Select the most appropriate method for assessing the EI level of JIMINY's group of learners.

1. Answering extensive questionnaires (30+ questions) that can give us an in-depth evaluation of learners' level.
2. A mix of interview and small questionnaires where the trainee can answer orally if they wish so.
3. The issues of the targeted group are well documented so there is no big need for assessment.

Correct Answer: 2

The method of answer 1 could be overwhelming for our target group and too detailed for the information we wish to retrieve. Answer 3 may lead to one-size-fits-all type of interventions that limits success. Answer 2 looks the more balanced one, although it consumes more resources.

3.6. Exercise 6 (for learners)

Communication Activity - Drawing Twins (from Salt Lake County - Employee's University)

Objective: This exercise should illustrate how hard it is to give clear instructions as well as how hard it is to listen, and can also show how things are easily misunderstood and misinterpreted. **Equipment:** pencil, paper, simple line-drawn pictures

Method: Divide participants into pairs.

Round 1

- Give one member of the pair a picture which must not be shown to their partner.
- The person with the picture must give instructions to their partner so that they can draw it, but must not say what it is, e.g., 'draw a circle'. The person with the picture cannot watch the person drawing it.

Round 2

- Hand out another picture and ask participants to swap roles.
- The person with the picture can now give instructions in a similar manner as in part 1 but this time the person drawing can ask yes/no questions. The person with the picture can watch as the partner draws

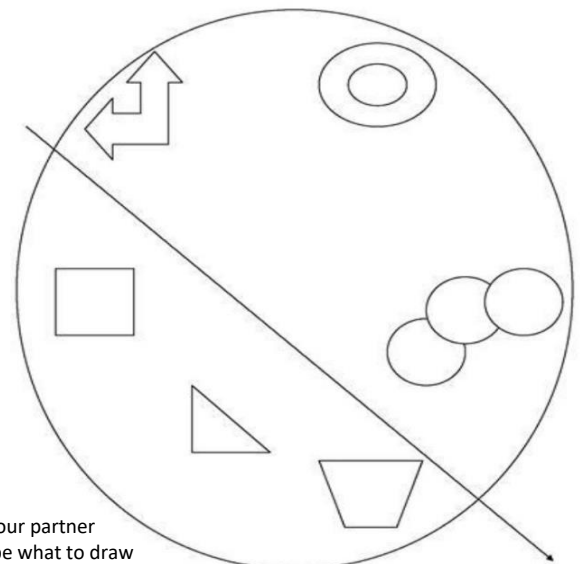
Results - Round 1

- Why most of the pictures don't look like the original? (Interpretation: everyone has a different interpretation, directions were not clear, not able to give or get feedback).
- What were your frustrations as the source of the message (giving instructions), as the receiver of the message?

Results - Round 2

- Did it help to be able to watch the person drawing?
- Did it help to be able to ask questions?
- Did it help to know what the object is ...your clear goal?

Relate this process back to communicating with your peers. Is your message always clear? Is there a channel to give and receive feedback? What noise is present that affects the message?



Sit back-to-back with your partner
One person will describe what to draw
The other person draws what is being described
The drawer should ask questions if they don't understand the instruction

Sample picture form <https://www.phillip-keddy.com/>

4. FURTHER READING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Before referring to the plethora of resources around Emotional Intelligence and since this Handbook is targeted to the trainers and educators, we would suggest the reading of:

'Helping People Change: Coaching with Compassion for Lifelong Learning and Growth', September 10, 2019 by Richard Boyatzis (Author), Melvin L. Smith (Author), Ellen Van Oosten (Author) and a relative interview at <https://beta.prx.org/stories/287075>.

In the book's short description, we read: "Helping others is a good thing. Often, as a leader, manager, doctor, teacher, or coach, it's central to your job. But even the most well-intentioned efforts to help others can be undermined by a simple truth: We almost always focus on trying to "fix" people, correcting problems or filling the gaps between where they are and where we think they should be. Unfortunately, this doesn't work well, if at all, to inspire sustained learning or positive change." The way authors suggest following is to "connect to that person's positive vision of themselves or an inspiring dream or goal they've long held...".

Daniel Goleman's *'Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ'* and *'Working with Emotional Intelligence'* are basic readings for this area, together with *'Emotional Intelligence 2.0'* (by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves) and *The Emotionally Intelligent Manager'* by David Caruso and Yale University's now President Peter Salovey. John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey & David R. Caruso developed also the MSCEIT Emotional Intelligence Test. Harvard Business Review is also a good source of relative content e.g. *'HBR Guide to Emotional Intelligence'*. For a more practical view *'Quick Emotional Intelligence Activities for Busy Managers'* by Adele Lynn and Justin Bariso's *'EQ Applied: The Real-World Guide to Emotional Intelligence'* are suggested.

There are also numerous presentations, workbooks, workshops and webinars, TEDx Talks, and YouTube Videos about EI as well as very popular courses on the major MOOCs like Udemy, Coursera and Future Learn.

Regarding our target group of learners, we have indicated earlier in this module and in the State of the Art document of the project that the sector with employment opportunities is the customer services one. There, empathy is of paramount importance:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2019/06/05/empathy-from-soft-skill-to-profitable-service-differentiator/?sh=313104a17a9e>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2020/02/16/yes-you-can-train-for-empathy-customer-service-employees-situational-empathy-heres-how/?sh=5b6d8eef7cb9>

<https://freshdesk.com/customer-service-skills/empathy-exercises-customer-support-blog/>

5. TESTS VERIFYING THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

5.1. Initial assessment

Answer 'rarely if you have basic understanding of the following meanings and practices and 'excel' if you fully understand and incorporate them in your everyday practice.

SOCIAL-AWARENESS ASSESSMENT

	Rarely 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Very often 4
Empathy				
1. I am able to understand other's feelings and re-experience them.				
2. Are you able to actively listen to what others say?				
- Do you hear their words & meaning?				
- Can you read their non-verbal signals?				
- Are you able to detect miss-matches?				
3. Do you understand where emotional boundaries start & end?				
Organizational Awareness				
1. Are you able to accurately read the current of emotions and political realities in groups?				
2. Are you aware & comprehend the logic behind the structure of your organization?				
3. I know how to formally get things done within the organization.				
4. I am aware and use informal processes & procedures to successfully perform tasks.				
Service Orientation				
1. Through my empathy with others I help to aid their satisfaction				
2. Are you able to observe behaviors and attitudes in others that indicate dissatisfaction?				

5.2. Final assessment

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following sentences.

	Totally disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Totally agree
Empathy				
1. I understand the importance of Empathy in my everyday life.				
2. I know how to be an active listener and what to avoid when someone is talking to me.				
3. I can recognize non-verbal signs of others on face and body movements.				
4. I understand why there should be emotional boundaries.				
Organizational Awareness				
1. I understand why Organizational Awareness is important in my working life.				
2. I understand that there are both formal and informal ways to get things done in an organization and they are both important.				
Service Orientation				
1. I understand that customer satisfaction depends significantly on the empathy I am showing to them.				
2. I can detect dissatisfaction more easily improving this way customer service.				

We may assume that the majority of the trainees' answers in the initial assessment will fall in the 'poor' and 'ok' categories. Increase of knowledge will be indicated if the trainees agree even partially with the provided sentences in the final assessment.

Module 2 – DIGITAL AWARENESS



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2.1. What are Digital Skills and Why Do We Need Them?



1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Aim of the Module

This second part of the module “Digital Awareness” tackles what digital skills are and why we need them, as well as how to use digital resources in a safe way.

Through the submodule we will try to answer the question why digital skills are a challenge and how they can be used for the purpose of teaching and learning. We will also mention the inclusion of digital resources for the equal access to them by any user, regardless the learning difficulty they may have.

The second part of this submodule relates to dangers behind Internet usage, followed by the basics of both device and Internet safety. We provide good practices and recommendations on protection before going online and while online. Important parts concern the protection of personal and sensitive data, and careful information sharing across networks.

The submodule also includes information on copyright. We will consider what copyright is, what information can be freely shared across networks, but also remark on copyright infringement.

Throughout the module we mention the Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu) of the European Commission, which among others is a roadmap on digital competences for educators and learners, including how to create, manage, share and protect digital content.

The module is split into the following submodules and subsections:

2.1. What are Digital Skills and Why Do We Need Them?

- 2.1.1. Introduction to digital skills
- 2.1.2. Digital resources and skills in teaching and learning
- 2.1.3. Inclusion of digital solutions

2.2. Internet and Safe Usage of Internet Resources

- 2.2.1. Dangers behind Internet usage
- 2.2.2. Basics of device and Internet safety

2.3. Copyright

- 2.3.1. What is copyright?
- 2.3.2. Copyright infringement

1.2. Learning Objectives

- A. Identifying digital skills.
- B. Understanding the importance of digital skills.
- C. Exploring the challenges in relation to digital skills.
- D. Getting to know different types of digital resources for the purpose of teaching and learning.
- E. Learning how to make digital solutions more inclusive.
- F. Understanding the dangers behind Internet usage and online activities.
- G. Comprehending the process of online protection before going online and while online.

- H. Implementing solutions for safe device and activity protection while on the Internet.
- I. Evaluating what copyright is.
- J. Differencing between open educational resources and copyright infringement.

Competences: Self-reflecting, identification of opportunities, exploring new possibilities, learning by doing, adaptability, flexibility, taking initiative, creativity, risk assessment, effective decision-making, problem solving, information seeking, implementing of new solutions, instructing, critical thinking.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. What are Digital Skills and Why Do We Need Them?

Every day millions of people around the world share photos over the Internet, upload and archive documents and files to network drives, make money transfers from their online bank account, communicate with each other and also learn online. To be able to complete any of these activities necessary are some kind of digital skills. In this submodule we will study what digital skills in fact are, why are they nowadays essential and how adult educators can make effective use of them while teaching to disadvantaged groups, but also what accessibility means in terms of learning platforms for the equal participation and use of digital skills regardless the conditions of a human being (disability, impairment, learning difficulty or other type of disadvantage).



Source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/3uKEDMU5J7k>

Introduction to digital skills

We live in a society of dynamic changes concerning many areas of human activity. We observe a wide range of changes occurring in the economic, social and technological sphere related to the **transformation towards an information society**. These changes are of a long-term nature and lead to a fundamental increase in the ability to use knowledge. The economy and social life has been mastered by technology and automation and the constant pursuit of innovation in every field. Just as in the information society, the development and **spread of information and communication technologies (ICT) plays an important role** in the concept of a knowledge-based economy. However, the emergence and development of new information and communication technologies are not indifferent to the labour market. The development of new, very important **digital skills**, enabling efficient and conscious use of new technologies and active participation in the information society, is observed.

A key factor in increasing prosperity is productivity. In order to make things simpler, more efficient employees earn more, experience higher living standards (sometimes also as a result of the possession of specific digital skills). Many research studies indicate that the reason for the significant differences between countries in terms of economic growth in recent years has been differences in ICT investments. The use of ICT is widely recognised **as a key factor in improving the competitiveness of the economy**. These technologies also affect many aspects of social life, both professional and personal. Their important role as general-purpose technologies is marked in so many spheres of life that it would be difficult to calculate them.

The use of **ICT** is one of the main factors **influencing changes at home work and education** over the last few decades. The spread of ICT is the subject of many scientific studies, including statistical research. Despite the increase in the use of ICT in everyday life, there is a mismatch or at least difficulty in matching the skills offered on the labour market with the demand of enterprises. This situation may worsen as labour market requirements increase, but also **technology is changing at fast pace**, introducing newer solutions and **the need for digital upskilling**. Undoubtedly, this requires building and implementing up-to-date training programmes to increase digital skills among all adults.

What in fact what are these **digital skills**?

Every skill and competence should be developed while adapting to changes in the society environment. The best way is to start from the earliest years. The earlier you assimilate the principles of technology and its role in everyday life, the easier it will be to adapt to the constantly appearing transformations. Assimilation of digital skills will also allow for fully safe functioning and operation in the network.

Digital skills are a broad set of skills that determine the efficient and conscious use of new technologies and active participation in the information society. They are not limited to operating the equipment itself, but also include information skills, reaching and using new information from different sources, expanding one's knowledge through ICT.

According to the definition of the European Council Recommendation 2018 "digital skills involves the critical and responsible use of digital technologies and an interest in them for learning, working and participating in society". It is a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Digital skills include:

- the ability to use information and data,
- communication and cooperation,
- media literacy,
- ability to create digital content (including programming),



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- security (including digital comfort and cyber-security competences),
- intellectual property issues,
- troubleshooting,
- critical thinking.

Why do we need them?

As you already know, digital skills underpin almost every aspect of living. **The more digitalized you are opens doors to more opportunities in various aspects of life.** This fact is necessitated by globalisation and the increasing requirements of many jobs. Your learners are not necessarily aware about this or that updating skills is a critical factor determining competition on the labour market. You can explain to your learners the various aspects of digitalization in their lives.

Digital skills are important as a set of skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to understand and use the **basic functions of ICT**, including such devices as: personal computers, laptops, tablets, cell phones, and smartphones. **IT skills are often confused with informational skills** that allow users to search, evaluate and skilfully use information from different sources.

ICT competencies are essential for participation in an increasingly digitalized society. **Digital skills enable continuous development, increase society's ability to adapt to changes on the labour market.** Digital skills and their wide use by the society are an opportunity for further development of the economy and enable to increase its competitiveness. They increase access to knowledge and information, promote the acquisition of skills necessary in all periods of life and areas of social and professional activity.

Digital skills are also essential for effective use of digital media for professional, educational and recreational purposes. They consist in the ability to use digital media, the ability to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of digital media and their content and the ability to communicate effectively in different contexts. **Without basic digital skills it is difficult to participate fully in social life.** The prevalence of use and the level of advancement of digital skills in society are becoming a determinant of the dynamics of economic development.

Moreover, the European Commission's policy fosters an innovation-driven online platforms' environment in the EU and has identified key areas of interest in its Communication on Online Platforms of May 2016 to support the development of online platforms, identifying them as an important part of digital economy. These include the following guiding principles:

- A level playing field for comparable digital services;
- Ensure responsible behaviour of online platforms to protect core values;
- Foster trust, transparency and ensure fairness on online platforms;
- Keep markets open and non-discriminatory to foster a data-driven economy.

Why is this demand a challenge?

Digital skills are constantly changing. To keep up with these changes requires lifelong learning, the acquisition of innovative skills and effective use of the opportunities offered by digital networks and media. The emergence and development of new digital technologies are therefore not indifferent to the labour market. New solutions, which are created as a result of automation and efficiency increase, contribute to the emergence of new professions, which replace some of the existing ones. With such a dynamic spread of information and communication technologies, digital skills are no longer the domain of specialist IT staff. Basic skills are required in almost every area of life, as well as at work. ICTs are changing the way we work, hence the skills requirements include a wider range of activities

related to greater frequency of information access, the ability to plan, to adapt faster to changing conditions, as well as the ability to cooperate in horizontal organizations, quickly exchange information and share knowledge among employees. There is also a clear correlation between the percentage of people without experience in using ICT in their work and other indicators of the development of the knowledge-based economy. The demand for employees with more advanced skills has been growing rapidly in recent years. There is a concern that the market may encounter shortages in this area, which on the one hand will cause a relative increase in salaries of this group of employees, and on the other hand may prove to be a barrier to development.

Skills in information, media, information and communication technologies, data, and networking play an important role in shaping people's ability to perform tasks related to education, work, culture, and life. These competence areas are related to the **cognitive skills necessary for critical thinking**. Unfortunately, research indicates that many people are at a disadvantage in this regard, which makes this problem an important issue of socio-economic development policy. Indeed, **digital literacy** is listed among the most important issues and policy objectives for the development of the digital economy, such as: economic and social benefits of an open Internet, stimulation of ICT-related innovation, improvement of communication networks, the Internet of Things, trust, digital security and privacy protection. **The lack of adequate digital skills puts at risk social exclusion**. The reasons for this exclusion may be different: no or difficult access, no use of ICT or low skills. The use of digital technologies and Internet services, covering all sectors of the economy and the public sector, is becoming an essential policy element. Increasing the use of ICT at work means increasing demand for new skills. Changes in the demand for skills present, on the one hand, introduce major challenges for the education system and, on the other hand, new opportunities improving learning in and out of school, thanks to, for example, **open educational platforms** and access to high quality resources.

Digital Resources and Skills in Teaching and Learning

Digital skills play an important role in education, especially with more resources available online. The [European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators](#) classifies digital resources under digital tools and digital content, which constitute digital technologies.

The following types of digital resources are listed as examples within the mentioned framework:

- Online information, website, platforms
- Multimedia content (images, audio, video)
- Learning materials
- (Online) games, quizzes
- (Education) software, apps, programmes
- Virtual Learning Environments
- Social networks

Although, all the listed types of digital resources are useful and can be applied to various learning conditions, **Virtual Learning Environments**, with the shift from traditional classroom learning to blended learning and online learning, are especially powerful in today's digitalized world. This web-based digital environment is usually for the interaction between trainers and learners, learners among each other or for the access of comprehensive learning paths through one platform. In this respect any educational content that is published within a Virtual Learning Environment (or online) is a digital content/resource. But this type of environment also fosters the organisation of online learning circles, assessments or the presentation of resources, among others.

In the case when the digital resource (or learning environment) is made public and can be adapted or reused by others without limitation we call it an **Open Educational Resource**. UNESCO defines Open Educational Resources (OER) as: “teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.” Open educational platforms are an important means of support not only for trainers, seeking online tools for their classes, but also for any learner. Due to the fact they are open, more learners will benefit from their use. **The second JIMINY project output entitled JIMINY Personal Trainer is an example of an Open Educational Resource.**

Although the Internet provides a vast majority of ready-made online platforms, you can take the initiative of creating your own learning platform with material especially tailored to the needs and expectations of your target group. For this purpose, you can choose between a few platforms, including [Moodle](#), [Kahoot!](#) or [Google Classroom](#).

Yet, as many technology-related solutions, **OER creation also imposes certain obstacles for individuals**, which may include (Open Educational Resources, Conversations in cyberspace, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2009):

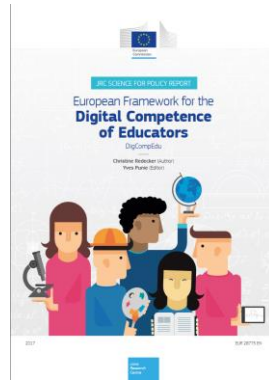
- 1) Lack of time and skill;
With poor skills in the use of ICTs, this time is hard to define. For academics this is still an additional task in traditional teaching environments (schools), therefore the development of OERs takes place after teacher working hours.
- 2) A rigid pedagogical culture, with little innovation;
OERs fall outside of the traditional teaching curriculum, still considered by most educational systems as an additive to the teaching process.
- 3) Lack of a reward system for OER production;
OERs are not credited as a publication for documenting in one’s professional career.

This is why upskilling is crucial. Helpful in this respect is the already cited European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators by the European Commission (also known as DigiCompEdu). The framework aims to promote and assist in developing digital competences of professionals in education to afterwards be better prepared to support your learners, also in terms of inclusion. It comprises of educator’s professional and pedagogic competences, as well as learners’ competences. Within these competences focus is placed on professional engagement, digital resources, assessment, teaching and learning, empowering learners and facilitating learners’ digital competence. Moreover, this framework introduces a progression model to help educators and trainers in developing their digital competence (from newcomer up to pioneer – the last stage meaning being equipped not only with the knowledge, but also ready to develop digital practices).

The six DigiCompEdu Framework areas are specifically aimed at equipping educators with the following skills (European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators, p.16, 2017):

- Using digital technologies for communication, collaboration and professional development.
- Sourcing, creating and sharing digital resources.
- Managing and orchestrating the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning.
- Using digital technologies and strategies to enhance assessment.
- Using digital technologies to enhance inclusion, personalisation and learners’ active engagement.
- Enabling learners to creatively and responsibly use digital technologies for information, communication, content creation, wellbeing and problem-solving.

A detailed and more explicit overview of these skills are subject of the DigiCompEdu Framework:



Inclusion of Digital Solutions

When you are the co-designer of a digital solution you are in a better position of adapting it to your learner(s), their abilities or disabilities. Otherwise, you should try to make it **as inclusive as possible**.

But what does this mean?

Inclusion relates to the involvement of people to the greatest possible extent. **Digital inclusion means that digital resources and tools are available for everyone.** The term covers both usability and accessibility, taking into consideration digital skills. Usability refers to user experience, and although addressing low-skilled learners, not necessarily disabled ones. Accessibility on the other hand refers to people with disabilities and making resources and tools adjusted for them to use.

How can I make a digital solution inclusive?

There are a few ways of doing this.

1. If the digital resource you want to use is opened through a browser, you can install a plug-in that will work across various websites.
2. You can also check if a website has an accessibility widget, that will improve the online experience of an individual.
3. If the solution you are going for is for download, either to the desktop or smartphone, then assist your learners in the downloading process, but also instruct on switching on accessibility features in the settings of their devices.
4. If you are in fact interested in checking the accessibility features, then you should use an online tool for this purpose, e.g. [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#).
5. If you are the designer or developer of a learning platform, there are many adjustments to the content that you can do yourself. An accessibility widget or adjusting device and browser settings will not solve the problem of illogical training content or lack of video subtitles. But also, pay attention to:
 - Choose colours carefully for: users to be able to distinguish between different elements on the page, text to be readable against the background, providing a clear colour contrast, the colour palette not to be too intense.
You can even check this aspect with an online [Contrast Checker](#).
 - Use headers to make your content more structured, which also enables easier navigation across the page.
 - Focus on the design, which should be interpreted as providing information in a clear way and readable layout.



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- Use a limited number of fonts and font variations, but all the use of ALL CAPS, difficult for reading especially from screen readers.
- Make sure links are recognizable, do not use any images for links and avoid general text as “click here” or “more” but make link text make sense.
- When selecting images, make sure you provide an alternative description and do not overdo with the number of images, but also audio and video.
- Provide clear instructions on using video and audio, including play and pause buttons, but subtitles, preferably accessible through alt ways.
- Avoid automatic media playing, which results in pages loading longer and the user being unprepared for experiencing such sensation, resulting in their confusion or the even fright.

The above provided list includes only some basic steps to making content more inclusive for disadvantaged learners. **Remember that it is easier to control inclusiveness of digital content if it is of your own authorship.**

What is more you can make teaching and learning more inclusive by:

- Involving learners in developing or choosing the digital resources.
- Explaining the instructions on how to use a digital resource not to the learner, but also their guardian/spouse/mentor/supporter.
- Asking the learner to review the educational content prior to using it in the process of education.
- Gathering feedback from the learner on a regular basis regarding the learning experience.

There are also a few **digital adaptive learning methods** that have recently been gaining in popularity and which are motivating alternatives to consider: Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Reality technologies, gamification or mobile apps for education – introducing learning by doing and experimentation to the learning process. Hence easier for the implementation by trainers themselves will be video tutorials and whiteboard storytelling as alternatives to traditional presentations.

2.2. Internet and Safe Usage of Internet Resources

The Internet is certainly one of the most important inventions of the modern world. This is evidenced by the number of users, which is counted in billions, or the fact that without the Internet many areas of life would not function. Permanent connection to the network gives us constant access to an incredible amount of information. We can watch any movie, listen to music, chat with friends, play online games and much more. However, the Internet, in addition to being a source of data and entertainment, also has a dark side. We may come across various viruses or scams. We should avoid this as much as possible. Therefore, how to take care of your safety on the web?



Source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/VO5w2lda70s>

Dangers behind Internet Usage

We use the Internet every day for various purposes. It gives us quick access to the information we need. At the same time, however, it is worth remembering that **the Internet carries many risks** - the network is not fully controlled, so there is no room for any negligence on the part of users. Many times, in the media there is information about data theft, virtual violence and other negative phenomena, to which anyone using the Internet may be exposed. Many people assume that the threats do not affect them, because they only browse websites or contact their friends, yet each of us is a potential victim of virtual threats. The number of emails sent by fraudsters is frightening. Sometimes emails from scammers are “perfectly fake”, they look the same as emails from the institution they impersonate. We should also beware of suspicious sites or sites that try to imitate well-known ones. All this has one purpose, which is to obtain data, because it is valuable for both advertisers and, unfortunately, fraudsters. **If something raises our doubts on the Internet, it is better not to click on it** or check a given page in advance using an antivirus program. Much of the Internet is unfortunately full of false ads, fake news and other elements that are supposed to attract our attention.

What is more, permanent access to the network on a smartphone or computer from any place exposes us also to completely new dangers. Using the Internet, we can fall prey to a virus, spyware or simply fraud. It is very common to experience fraud attempts. Usually the criminal wants to scam our data in different ways. The illusion of anonymity on the web is quite dangerous. It is important to remember **never to give sensitive information on the Internet without first carefully checking the inquiry source**. It could be used in an undesirable way. Unfortunately, there are many such threats and we should know how to protect ourselves from them.

Something what seems to be obvious, often is not so at all. A simple example is sending documents across networks. **Internet users should never send copies of documents online when they are not sure who receives this data**. Many people tempted by the offer of a quick loan or an attractive job



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decide to send copies of identity documents to an unknown person. This is very dangerous and irresponsible. You can never be sure what can happen with such copies later. They may be processed in a manner inconsistent with the Data General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR of the EU), or transferred between employees of financial institutions. This results in the risk of losing control over personal documents with sensitive data. You should make your learners aware of this.

What about cybersecurity?

Until they do not experience it, learners may not be aware of cyberbullying, prone to harassment or hate speech that can unfortunately be spotted more frequently across the Internet. This fact makes it crucial to **caution learners on how to identify and combat potential acts of cyberbullying**.

According to the [Cambridge Dictionary](#) cyberbullying is “the activity of using the internet to harm or frighten another person, especially by sending them unpleasant messages”.

Although it is not possible to entirely eliminate or prevent from cyberbullying, **identification and reaction are crucial steps**.

Common examples of cyberbullying include **hate speech** (direct through private messages, in emails or on chats, but also across social media or websites) or **publication of private information without the consent of that person** (these can be pictures, videos or any type of data).

What a victim of cyberbullying can do is report the activity to the provider of the service where such a behaviour took place, speak directly to the attacker, ignore the acts, ask for assistance from a trainer, block the attacker in online communication or report to the police. The type of reaction will depend on the type, frequency and impact of cyberbullying on the individual, but in any case, **such a behaviour should not be ignored**. The following section will support in the prevention of cyberbullying instances.

Basics of Device and Internet Safety

Let's start with the absolute basis, which means **checking and introducing safety measures to the digital device** you or your learner is using to connect to the Internet. Only then can you be certain that any suspicious online activity is not the result of a faulty or unprotected device.

Protection before going online

In this respect you should have an **antivirus and antispyware program**. If your computer is not equipped with them, install them immediately and instruct your learners as well (some Internet Providers offer them for free). At the same time, you must be aware that no antivirus program gives 100% certainty that we have not downloaded anything harmful from the Internet. It may have happened that we have found this type of threat, which is not detected by our program.

With antivirus software, an important element is to enable **real-time scanning**. This feature allows antivirus software to automatically scan files and programs located on the computer, downloaded from the Internet and installed at the time for viruses. In this way, you avoid fighting against viruses that have already infected the device.

It is also worth remembering about the possibility of **running a manual scan**. Manual scanning of your computer with antivirus software allows to detect threats that have not been identified during the scan in real time. Running a quick scan with the default settings is usually a few clicks. You can also create your own scanning settings by targeting selected files, folders, or disks, or hidden files and folders that are usually free of malware.

What to do if your antivirus software detects a virus? Infected files can usually be "cured" or "repaired" - the virus will be removed and the original code will be restored and the file will be as it was before the infection. Unfortunately, for some viruses, e.g. spyware, removing them may also involve removing files that have been infected; this is the only sure way to get rid of the virus.

Another very important step is to **keep your antivirus software up-to-date**. The antivirus software cannot effectively protect you from malware if it does not know what to look for. Although the best software may be installed, without regular updates, the device will not be operating properly, which will impact the user's online experience. That is why it is so important to make sure that your antivirus software has an up-to-date list of viruses and spyware that have already been defined.

Finally, network connections. Make your learners alert to **connect only to familiar networks**. Using unknown networks poses a serious threat to the security of information you share across a network, so when connecting via a hotspot should be considered whether more important is the urge to stay connected or safety of information shared across the network.

Protection while online

After connecting to a safe network, the next consideration is the **choice of a safe website, web browser or secured application** (on mobile devices).

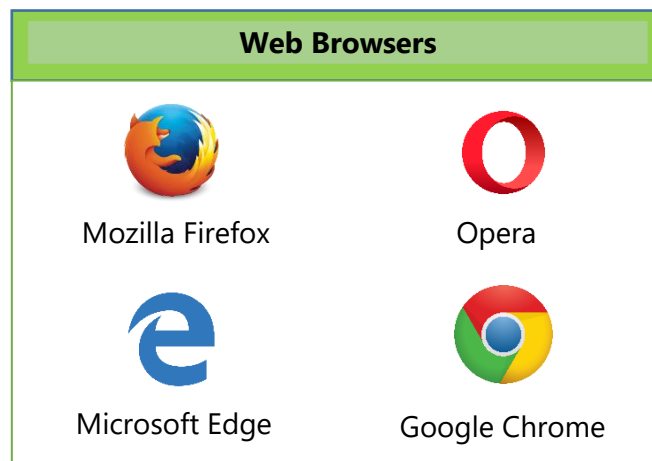
How to decide if a website is safe?

The easiest way to identify whether a website is safe is checking the address (URL bar) if it begins with **https://** and/or includes the icon of a "lock". This informs that the website has a valid certificate and links to the settings, but also includes information about Cookies and the protection of sensitive data. Messages sent between the user and a given website are then additionally encrypted. Thanks to that, data cannot be intercepted and changed by unauthorized persons.



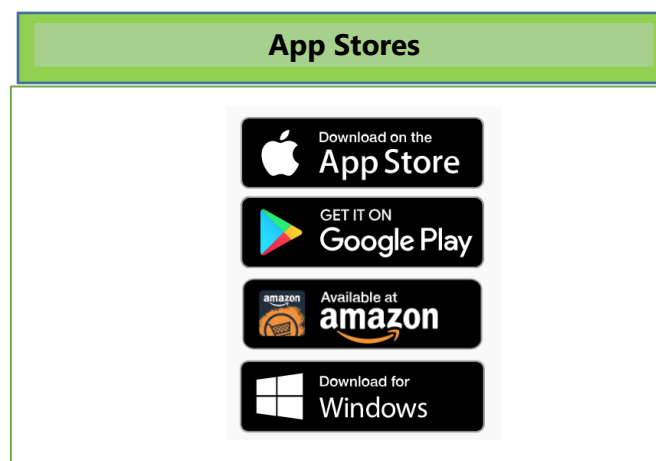
Source: <https://pixabay.com/pl/illustrations/https-strony-sieci-web-internet-3344700/>

Sometimes it happens that warnings about certificate errors appear. Do not ignore them, especially if the website is not trustworthy or the error did not appear on it before. Websites that have a long loading time, even though not necessarily related to the security of a site, should alert users and will be a constraint for persons with disabilities. Incorrect address spellings could be legitimate websites, which should be avoided. Instruct your learners to choose websites that are either a recommendation or have been previously used. The same applies to browsers. Here are good practices of web browsers:



Additional consideration is **checking privacy and security settings**, especially if the learners accept the Cookies policy of a website, they should be aware of the information they are providing and who they can contact on questions regarding their data, equally important – where this information is to be found on the website.

In terms of applications, Apple® AppStore and Google Play™ are the primary sources of apps. The first provides applications for iPhone devices and the second for Android devices. There are also some other providers, for instance Xiaomi's app store MIUI, Amazon Appstore or Windows Apps and actually many third-party app stores. However, they should be carefully chosen as they do not guarantee equal security levels and when asking for access to the data on your device, you are being exposed to increased risk. Due to the fact that Google Play is not available in all countries, there will be users that must rely on downloading apps from another app store if they are using an Android device. In any of the beforehand mentioned cases, the ratings, reviews and number of downloads in the app stores should serve as a prerequisite which apps to choose for download.



This leads to the consideration on **safe downloading**. Free programs published on popular websites are often accompanied by additions in the form of browser toolbars, site add-ons, additional applications and even malware. How to protect yourself from downloading safe solutions? It is best to follow the installation process carefully (unchecking all additional options). However, it is a much better idea to download the program directly from the developer's website.

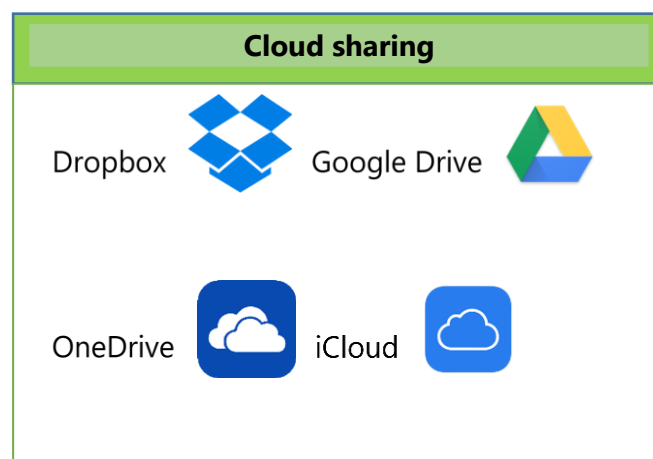
Another way to use Internet resources safely is to use the private mode ("**incognito**") in web browsers. This is a good option if you are using a computer that is shared by a few people. At the end of your session, the browser automatically deletes all its history and Cookies files. **Cookies** are small amounts of data that are collected by a website and saved in a browser. Sites make use of them to remember

the user's browsing history and match tailored advertisements or offers. You should instruct your learners to clear Cookies once in a while (and browsing history).



Source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/e6n7uoEnYbA>

Sharing information across networks is also strictly linked to the safety of information across the Internet. Instruct your learners that they should not share any personal or sensitive data across networks to persons they do not know. This also implies avoiding any unknown services that require giving your ID card number, address, phone number or location, among others. Internet users should think twice before letting the application access your location or content on your phone. The same rule applies to the use of websites - do not click "I accept" or "I confirm" every time you want to get to the website as soon as possible. This is how you grant permission to access a lot of information - you should first read the rules and check carefully what you accept. Also, when sharing documents across clouds, chosen should only be trusted providers. Here are good practices of cloud sharing:



When speaking about communication online, emails are used on a regular basis, but this does not mean they are free of scams. The easiest and quickest way to find out if an email is from a fraudster is to check the sender's email address. Unfortunately, it happens that an email from a fraudster comes from a reliable email address because the fraudster hacks into someone's mailbox. In such a situation, if anything raises our doubts, it is advised to simply ignore such an email and delete it - under no circumstances should we open the email, let alone click on the links or attachments provided inside it. Never open unknown attachments and do not click on links to pages unless you are 100% sure of their source. On the other hand, when sending an email instruct learners that they can choose who sees their messages (CC and BCC). Similar precautions apply to social media - in the account privacy

settings of the channel, account owners can decide what information is made public. A little scepticism will come in handy even if the Facebook message or email in our inbox comes from a person we know. It may turn out that our friend's computer was previously infected with malware and sends out messages with a "surprise" on its own. Further speaking, things you put on the Internet will stay there forever. That is why it is worth thinking twice before clicking on the "send" or "post" button. Especially if you share your private information - photos, personal data. The pinnacle of carelessness is to upload a scan of your ID card or driver's license to a free server. "Identity thieves" will certainly benefit from such a "gift". In order to maintain security or a sense of anonymity on the network, it is worth using pseudonyms. If you don't have to give out your personal data, don't do it. **The less information about you on the web, the more secure your activity is.**

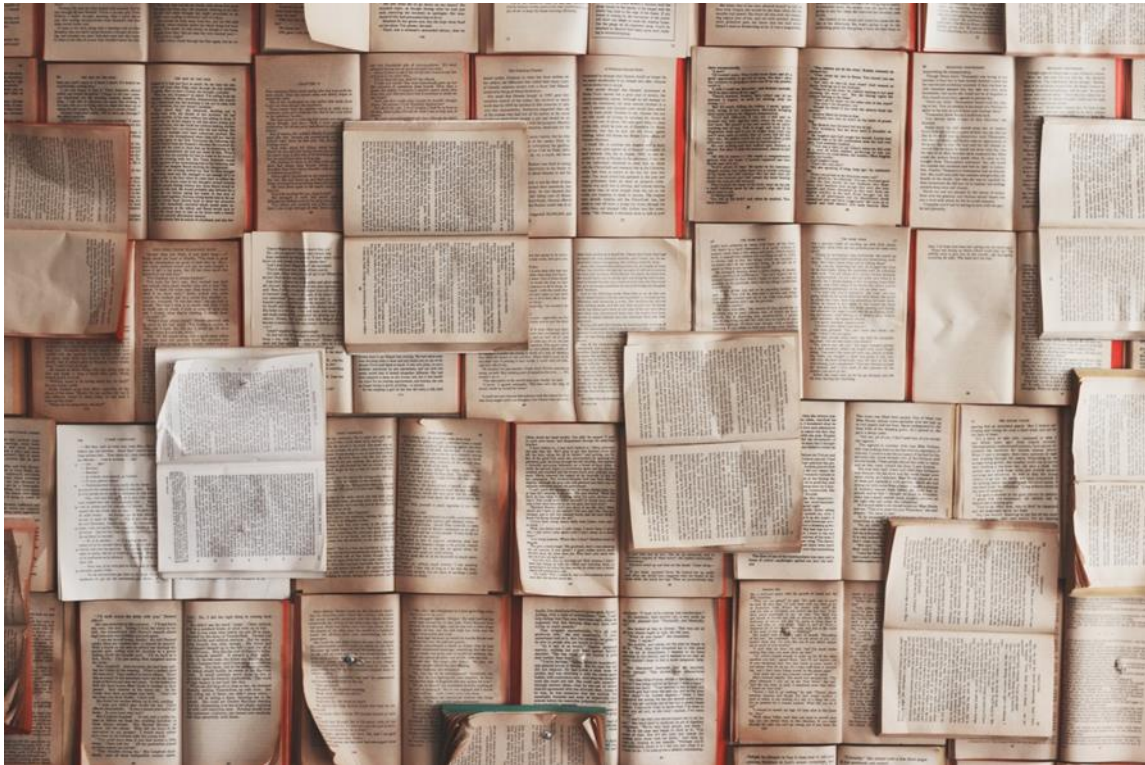
Although mentioned here as last, an important issue that should not be neglected is **password protection**. It is worth making sure that they are effective enough in case of a hacking attack. The best way to do this is to use different passwords for different pages, different for the bank service, on the mailbox and social networking sites. In this way, if the password to one page leaks, the hacker will not log on to the others. Names or dates should not be used, as guessing random characters is much harder. Learners should be alert not to share passwords with anyone else and change their passwords from time to time to avoid the theft of data and further related consequences. You should also instruct learners to **sign off accounts**.

The DigiCompEdu Framework is also a roadmap on how to protect sensitive digital content. Managing, protecting and sharing digital resources competence of the Framework addresses this topic. And marks how to: organize digital content and make it available to learners, parents and other educators; effectively protect sensitive digital content, respect and correctly apply privacy and copyright rules, and understand the use and creation of open licences and open educational resources, including their proper attribution. In this regard, additional safety is recommended when:

- Sharing resources using links or as attachments.
- Sharing resources on online platforms or personal / organisational websites / blogs.
- Sharing own repositories or resources with others, managing their access and rights as appropriate.
- Sharing administrative and student-related data to colleagues, students and parents, as appropriate.

2.3. Copyright

When using or sharing information, content and resources found on the Internet, you are required to check if the material has been created and shared by authors with licenses permitting its open use. Therefore, digital resources that are in the public domain are not necessarily available for open, free and unrestricted use, even if they are for the purpose of education. This is where the peculiarity of copyright is important. A few words will be provided in this respect.



Source: https://unsplash.com/photos/Oaak7qqNh_c

What is Copyright?

Copyright is a discipline of civil law, a set of legal norms that are part of the intellectual property law, as well as all the rights of the author of a work that entitles them to decide on the exploitation of the work and to benefit from it financially.

Copyright of online activities also implies (DigiCompEdu Framework):

- Respecting possible copyright restrictions to using, re-using and modifying digital resources.
- Including reference sources when sharing or publishing resources subject to copyright.
- Attributing (open) licenses to self-created resources.

Therefore, **copyright does not necessarily ban the possibility of making use of specific material or content, but applies restrictions, so to protect its ownership and misuse.** From the point of view of copyright law, it does not matter whether a work is considered valuable or has an aesthetic value. Indeed, a work is any manifestation of creative activity with an individual character, established in any form, regardless of the value, purpose and manner of expression.

Anyone can create content, with better or worse results. A creator can only be a natural person with legal capacity - so far, legal persons, animals, artificial intelligence cannot create a work under the law. The name of the creator should be shown on the work or made public when it is distributed. If we are not sure about the name of person, the source of that material is to be provided.

The very process of creating a work should be characterized by the creative contribution and intellectual effort of the author. For example, a photograph of an image viewed in a museum that will be used for educational purposes is not a work, unless it has an artistic element, e.g. unconventional framing was used when taking the photograph.



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Although the Internet provides multiple opportunities for collaboration and sharing information online, its users should not be misled by the information provided by external websites. Also, in the case when you receive contents through clouds – the fact that someone shares files with you does not give you automatic permission to continue freely sharing them. **File sharing, in fact, involves the exchange of intellectual property.** When you are sharing your own work, consider the rights you want to grant to users, i.e. to view, download, edit, share or amend the content. When you are sharing any content that is not of your primary ownership, revert to the original source for confirming the ownership rights and further sharing possibilities.

Personal copyrights are unlimited in time, non-transferable, and are held without any registration or fee. Copyright protection arises when the work is established, i.e. the author decides to share his work with others. The author always has a connection with his or her work - therefore, we cannot tag a work, e.g. a book, with someone else's name, or attribute it to ourselves, as it will constitute plagiarism.

The solution to be on the safe side is **creating your own content with only some meaningful additions** in the form of YouTube videos, pictures from open sources or audio clips from the news, for instance. As a trainer you have control over the process of training and should adjust the type of content to the peculiarities, difficulties, disadvantages and type of your learner(s).

Copyright infringement

Copyright infringement occurs every time we use a work outside the scope of permitted use without obtaining the required permission. Criminal liability may be the result of plagiarism or other personal copyright infringement (lack of authorship information, public distortion of the work, preventing or hindering control of the use of the work). In addition, it is an offence to distribute the work or fix the work for distribution, or to fix the work for distribution, without authorization.

The easiness of copying information that **communication technologies** give us, may tempt to commit plagiarism. The same technologies, however, make it easier to **detect plagiarism**. If the text has been copied from the Internet, plagiarism can be detected by anyone using most Internet search engines. Anti-plagiarism programs can compare texts with Internet resources and databases. However, if we limit plagiarism detection only to mechanical text comparison, plagiarists will easily avoid responsibility - popular text editors offer, for example, automatic word changing options. Therefore, with the current state of the art, plagiarism detection still requires the active involvement of people. One should pay attention not only to direct “borrowing” of text or fragments of visual or musical works, but also to impersonating others' ideas and discoveries.

Moreover, according to EU law, making temporary copies on the user's screen or in the user's cache is not, in itself, illegal (5 June 2014, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), British Meltwater case).

One more consideration is the difference between copyright and patent. If you can show that your work has been developed from a different path and that you did not copy someone's work, that's a defence to the allegation that you have infringed their copyright.

3. EXERCISES AND QUIZZES

3.1. Exercise 1

Exercise for adult educators

Step 1: Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of your learner/group of learners based on the following criteria:

- Visible/easily noticeable disabilities that will impact their participation in learning with the use of digital technologies
- Learning difficulties that will impact the way they learn and perceive information
- Digital skills that have been previously assessed
- Any other strengths/weaknesses communicated by the learner/group of learners

Step 2: Match the type of digital tools that you will make use of during the lesson and the type of digital skill(s) of your learner(s) you are aiming at improving.

Step 3: Explain to your learner(s) the purpose of the selected digital tool(s) and how they will benefit from the usage (what new digital skills they will acquire).

3.2. Exercise 2

Exercise for adult educators and disadvantaged learners

Step 1: Identify the types of digital skills necessary for different professions and sectors.

Step 2: Quiz learners on the professions they see themselves in. Assist learners that do not have a clear vision of their future job/position on the labour market, which professions they could try.

Step 3: Define what digital skills are and provide some examples to learners. Afterwards learners create a mind map around the term “digital skills”.

Step 4: Ask learners to share their ideas and write them down on the whiteboard.

Step 5: Learners match necessary digital skills to their future job.

Step 6: The trainer individually assists learners on the definition of learning paths to assess, validate or acquire the digital skills learners need for the job.

3.3. Exercise 3

Exercise for disadvantaged learners

Step 1: The trainer explains the difference between usability, accessibility and inclusion. With access to the Internet, the trainer then shows a website that conveys all three of these features.

Step 2: Learners are then asked to evaluate two websites (chosen by the trainer) in terms of usability, accessibility and inclusion. Some learners may need assistance.

Step 3: Learners share their feedback and provide recommendations what improvements to introduce/settings to change in order to facilitate their online experience.

3.4. Exercise 4

Exercise for disadvantaged learners



Step 1: Learners are asked to identify the dangers behind using the Internet. To following questions will help them to come to some important conclusions:

When did I last update my antivirus software?

How often to I use hotspots?

How do I identify that a website is safe?

Which browser to I use?

How to I share files across networks?

Where do I download applications from?

How often do I change my password?

Do I sign off accounts?

Do I control the data I share online?

Step 2: Learners share their considerations and together with the trainer create a list of recommendations entitled "Basic steps to Internet safety".

4. FURTHER READING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The following additional resources are available in English:

[Digital Skills & Jobs Coalition initiatives repository](#)

[European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators](#)

[Digital Skills: Rethinking education and training in the digital age: Digital skills and new models for learning](#)

[Introduction to Web Accessibility](#)

[Copyright & Online Resources: It Doesn't Have To Be Complicated](#)

[Copyright Resources to Support Publishing and Teaching](#)

5. TESTS VERIFYING THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

5.1. Initial Assessment

Question 1

Do you know what digital skills?

a) Yes

b) No

c) I am not so sure

Question 2

Do you know why digital skills are important?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I am not so sure

Question 3

Would you be able to mention at least 5 examples of digital skills?

- a) Yes, definitely
- b) Yes, but I wouldn't be so confident about my answer
- c) No

Question 4

Do you know the difference between “informational skills” and “digital skills”?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I can guess

Question 5

Would you be able to describe why digital skills are constantly changing?

- a) No, it seems quite difficult
- b) Yes, but I am not sure if I understand the reason for this
- c) Yes, I could describe a few reasons

Question 6

Would you be able to mention at least three different types of digital resources?

- a) I could guess, but I wouldn't be sure about my answer
- b) Yes
- c) No



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Question 7

Do you know what digital inclusion means?

- a) Digital inclusion means that digital resources and tools are available for everyone.
- b) Digital inclusion means including as many possible digital resources for the purpose of education.
- c) No/I am not sure

Question 8

Do you know the difference between different types of protection before going online and while online?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I could guess, but I wouldn't be sure about my answer

Question 9

Would you be able to mention at least 5 different type good practices for increasing Internet safety?

- a) I could guess, but I wouldn't be sure about my answer
- b) No
- c) Yes

Question 10

Who do you think needs the most to learn more about file sharing, creating content and document ownership?

- a) People who want to create content or share existing content
- b) People who wish to improve their situation on the labour market
- c) Both answers a) and b) are correct

Correct Answers

1-A

2-A

3-A



4-A
5-C
6-B
7-A
8-A
9-C
10-C

Level of the class matrix:

0-4	The learner lacks basic knowledge and skills regarding digitalization, safe use of the Internet and competences to benefit from the participation in a digitalized society. Required is guidance and assistance from the trainer to improve this situation.
5-6	The learner will benefit from the contents tackled in the module What are Digital Skills and why do we need them? How to use digital resources/content? – improving knowledge and skills for more responsible use of digital resources and the Internet.
7-8	The learner only has some knowledge and skills gaps on the topics addressed in the module What are Digital Skills and why do we need them? How to use digital resources/content?
9-10	The learners possess a good level of knowledge and skills on digitalization and safe use of the Internet.

5.2. Final Assessment

Question 1

You want to improve your digital competences to change/get a job. What do you do?

- You ask your friends and relatives to make a decision based on the majority's preference.
- You work on a variety of digital skills, including the ability to use information, communication and critical thinking, to better match your competences to the peculiarities of the constantly changing requirements of the labour market and be better prepared to upskilling on demand.
- You chose those competences that include the newest technologies simply because they will continue to impact our life.

Question 2

You want to download and share an online publication? What do you do?

- You make your copy of the publication and make it public regardless the consent of the author.

- b) You check if the digital resource is an open educational resource and that its author had given permission to reuse and share it without additional permissions required.
- d) You make improvements to the publication and publish it as your own to receive ownership rights.

Question 3

You want to check that a website is safe? What do you do?

- a) You search in a random browser for information about that website.
- b) You check the address (URL bar) if it begins with https:// or includes the icon of a “lock”.
- c) There is no effective solution to find out about the safety of a website.

Question 4

You want to improve your safety/privacy within your mailbox activities. What do you do?

- a) You distinguish between reliable and unreliable email addresses before opening attachments.
- b) You choose who sees your messages (CC and BCC).
- c) Both answers a) and b) are correct.

Question 5

You want to protect your sensitive digital data. What would you do?

- a) Make sure you are signed in to accounts and remember browsing history.
- b) Change passwords, delete Cookies and review information published online.
- c) Delay the decision until it becomes urgent

Correct Answers

1-B

2-B

3-B

4-C

5-B



2.2. How to Create Digital Resources/ Content? How to use Social Media?



1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Aim of the Module

This second part of the module “Digital Awareness” tackles the creation of digital resources and contents, together with the use of social media and networking.

Through this subchapter we will try to answer the following questions: Which software do our learners need to master in order to prepare get ready for a professional environment? How can they learn to use it? Do they need to know how to create multimedia content or other graphic elements? What is a network?

The business world today is mostly digital: documents, reports, presentations, conferences, business calls, advertisement, management... everything is developed through personal computers, internet and electronic devices. Therefore, it is crucial for the professionals of the future to understand the digital “world”, not having any kind of problem when working with digital documents or through digital platforms. Getting into this rapidly changing world is the key to success professionally.

1.2. Learning Objectives

- A. Getting to know different alternatives of free software specialized in office work
- B. Getting to know different alternatives of free software specialized in multimedia content creation
- C. Gaining access to free resources in order to master the given software
- D. Understanding the concept of network in today’s world
- E. Learning how to properly use LinkedIn
- F. Learning how to properly manage social media

Competences: Problem solving, communication skills, adaptability, flexibility, presentations, written communications, hosting meetings, collaboration, strategic planning, networking, creativity.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Creation of Digital Resources and Content

Business is nowadays a digital world. Traditional paper, fax and even phone calls have been replaced with office software suites, emails, online voice calls and, essentially, an online environment. In this subsection we will study several software applications that any professional need to master and apply to his/ her activity.

We will talk about each type of content independently, providing a free software solution to use professionally and/or academically. A brief explanation of the provided options will be added, but we highly recommend checking out the “Further reading” section of this document in order to access to more detailed information, free courses, tutorials and Q&A regarding each program. This kind of resources can be really useful to use them in class with a given group of students.

On the other hand, we will check the basics of Multimedia contents, providing some open access solutions as, even if not every profile of professional will need them to conduct their activity, the power and usability of this kind of contents makes them highly recommended to understand.

Office Suites

Word processors are the basic tool of most businesses today. In large office buildings, thousands of employees use this type of software every day to write reports and generate documentation, among other purposes. But this is not the only thing they use: often, in the business world, it is necessary to make presentations (whether to present a new product, explain a project to a potential client, present the balance sheet of the previous year...) as well as organizing spreadsheets to automatically manage certain elements of a given business, such as expenses, suppliers, client portfolio, etc.

These functions usually come together in the so-called Office suites: sets of programs created to do a useful work within an office. The best known, due to its great capacity and recognition, is Microsoft Office, a paid suite that includes specialised programmes for these and other functions. However, there are completely free alternatives to this suite, such as Open Office, Google Suite or Libreoffice.

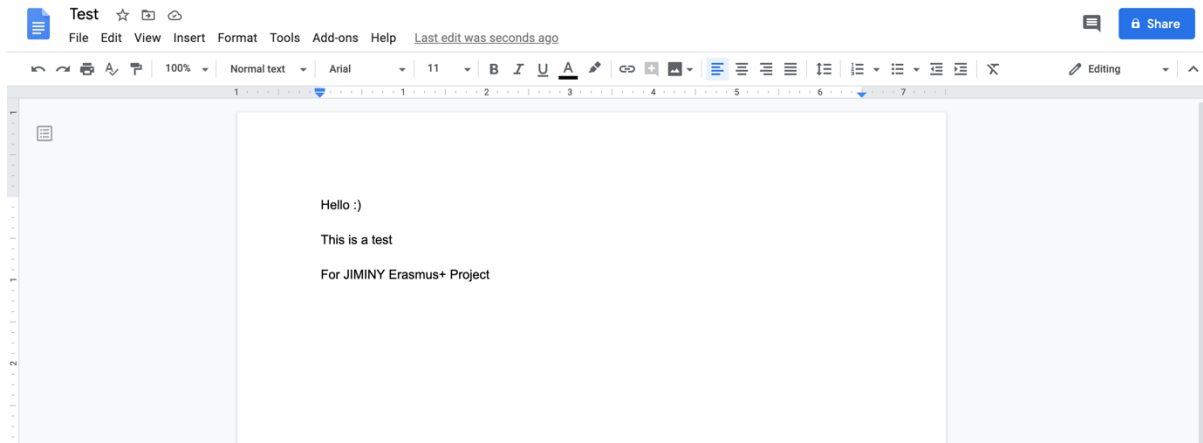
For the purpose of this module, we will present Google Suite as our chosen free office suite, due to its capability to work completely online and store your work and documents in the cloud, something that is considered by most experts the future of computers. Please, notice that only a brief glimpse of the functions and possibilities of this software is presented now, but further reading links and resources will be available at its correspondent section in this document.

Starting with **Google Docs**, it is a free online word processor owned by Google that offers it for free along with other programs for spreadsheets, presentations, etc in their Suite. As it is multiplatform, we can use it both on the computer and on the tablet or smartphone. It is particularly suitable for computers with little power because it is Google that does the most work running this software in the cloud.

It is a very powerful tool, compatible with various types of files such as .doc, .docx, .txt, .rtf, .odt, etc. so we can see (and convert) Microsoft Word files without any problem. Another added advantage is that, being an online word processor, we can share the document with several people at once in real time for revisions, modifications, etc. In order to freely use this software, we only need a Google account.

We can check its user interface in the following screenshot:





Source: Valencia INNOHUB Database

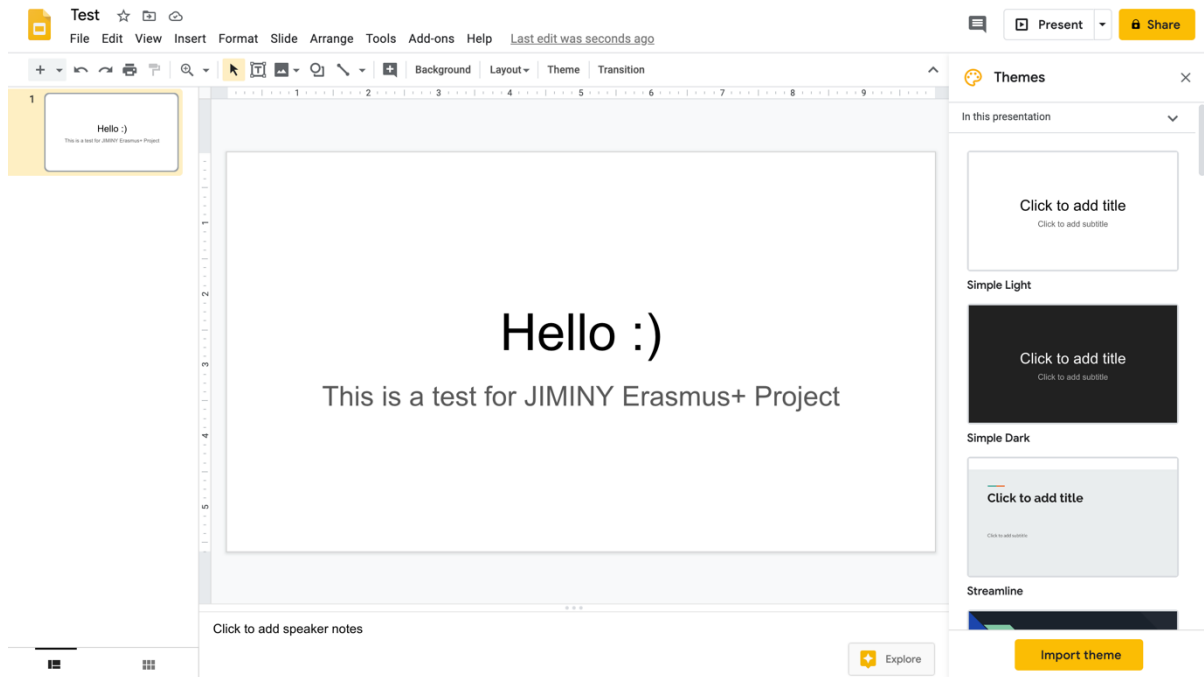
As we can already notice, it is really similar to the traditional Microsoft Suite interface. The documents are organized by sheets, in which we can write text with different formats and styles, as well as include graphics, images, links, indexes of content, references, footnotes...

The most peculiar characteristic of Docs is the capacity it has for several people to work at the same time. By pressing the "Share" button we can distribute the document among our colleagues and allow them to make edits or propose changes. For the latter function we can take advantage of the different modes offered by Docs to work on the document, such as "Editing", "Suggesting" and "Viewing". It should also be noted that Docs offers us different templates to create our documents, such as CVs, project proposals, reports...

All the changes we conduct are automatically saved in the cloud, and we can access this document from any device with an internet connection. This makes Docs a very useful tool, as it not only allows us to access all our documents from anywhere, but also to work from devices that are not powerful or do not have the capacity to support other heavier suites, such as Microsoft's.

For a deeper learning about Google Docs, please check the further reading section of this document.

The Google suite does not only provide us with Docs, but also with **Slides**, an alternative to the classic Microsoft Power Point, one of the most iconic software solutions to create presentations. It offers a very similar interface as Microsoft's, as we can see below:



Source: Valencia INNOHUB Database

Google Slides is Google's flagship presentation application, which resides within the browser as part of Google Suite. It is completely free - the only requirement to use it is to have a Google account.

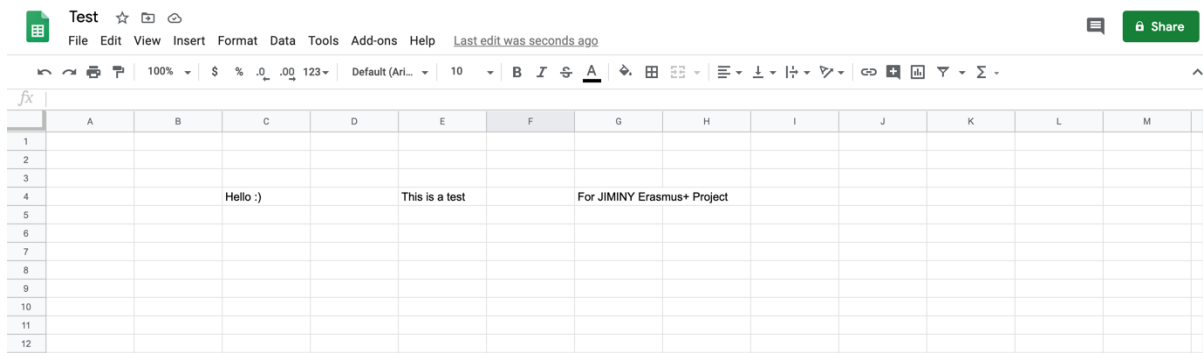
It works very similar to the well-known Power Point, the Microsoft alternative: the presentation is distributed in slides that we can design and configure to our liking. In them we can include everything from text to images, graphics and even videos and other multimedia resources. Not only can we edit each slide, but also the transitions between them, with the aim of making our presentation more interesting.

As with Docs, Google also offers us a series of Templates that we can use for free, as well as intelligent Themes that are suggested to us depending on whether they fit more or less with the style we are using for our presentation.

It shares with Docs and the rest of the Google suite the cloud storage and the ability to edit and consult from any device, as well as sharing the document with our colleagues (or, for example, with a given client) so that they can edit it in real time, and we can see the changes being made in real time.

And last but not least, we would like to talk a little bit about **Google Sheets**. This program works in a similar way as Microsoft Excel, creating spreadsheets that can have multiple purposes, as it can be used as a way to organize and monitor all kinds of issues related to a business, from the balance sheet of income and expenses, to the performance of employees, the customer portfolio or the growth forecast for the next year.

In the following screenshot we can check the interface of the program:



Source: Valencia INNOHUB Database

Its functionality, again, is similar to Microsoft's payment alternative. We can use several pages within a spreadsheet to organize and automate what we are doing. The main strength of spreadsheets is the ability to include formulas that relate values from different cells. These formulas not only have to be numerical but can be used to automate processes.

A good use of Sheets has the capacity to save us time and effort, since, using the correct formulas, we will be able to systematize our information to obtain the desired feedback, with the possibility, in addition, of automatically generating graphs and tables that summarize the results of our requests.

It is undoubtedly the most demanding of the programmes presented in this module, and its use by the general public is also somewhat reduced. However, without extensive knowledge of it, we can take advantage of its functions to organise the information we want. Even so, it is highly advisable to learn how to use its most basic functions, as it can be very useful and save us time and money thanks to its ability to synthesise information.

Conference Calls Platforms

Today, in the business world, video conferences and remote meetings are more than frequent. In the globalised world in which we live nowadays, with contacts, suppliers and members of our network thousands of kilometres away, it is common to take advantage of the capacity for interaction in real time offered by the internet to hold business meetings or conferences through online platforms.

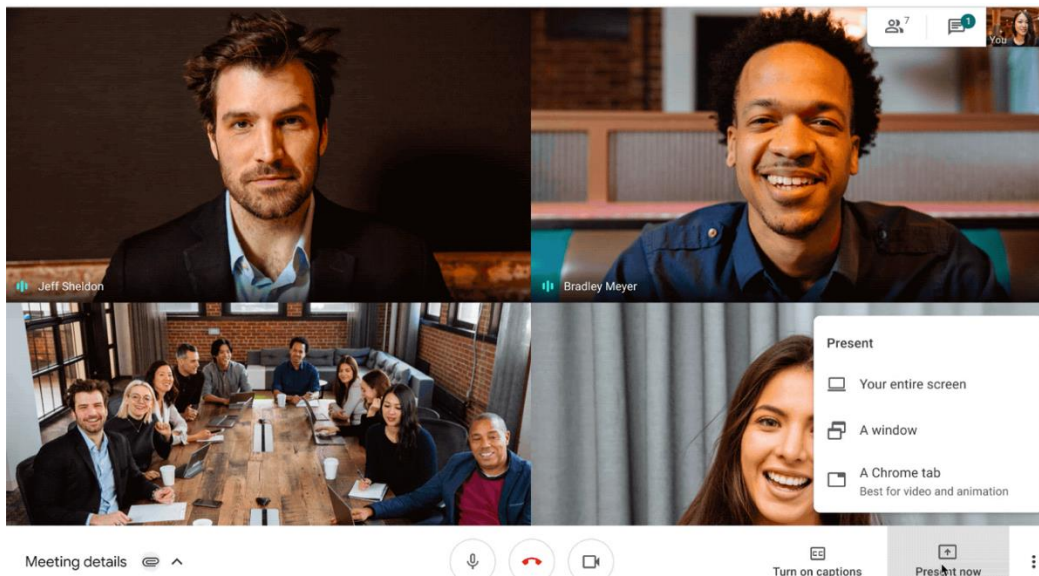
Holding meetings through electronic means also has other advantages, such as reducing the costs of business trips or visiting clients abroad, making much better use of working time, favouring the availability of all parties by being able to specify and modify the date according to the needs of the working group, as well as the possibility of holding much more working meetings than if they had to be held necessarily in person, since a video call to discuss a certain problem at work hardly involves any effort and can be arranged at any time.

Learning how to use these tools is therefore crucial for the professionals of the future. Now we are going to look at several different free alternatives and their characteristics, as well as the general functioning of this type of platforms.

We will start presenting the solution provided by Google: **Meet**. The way it works is very simple: simply with a Google account, we can organize a meeting and share an invitation through a link. During the meeting, as it can be seen in the screenshot below, we can activate or deactivate our webcam and microphone, as well as share our screen, part of it or attachments.



The main advantage of Meet is that no software needs to be installed and therefore we can use it from anywhere in the world with any device we have at hand with an internet connection. The quality of the calls is good and we also have a written chat to write down any information to our colleagues.



Source: <https://gsuiteupdates.googleblog.com/2020/04/high-quality-video-audio-meet.html>

Another alternative to Google Meet is **Zoom**. This software has become really popular recently, due to the quality of its calls and the professionalism that the whole interface inspires when using it. Its functionality is similar to the other alternatives: we can create a meeting (which, in this case, we can plan in advance) and invite our colleagues. During the video call we can activate or deactivate our microphone and our webcam, as well as share files quickly and easily.

The main difference with Google Meets is that Zoom, like most alternatives, does require the installation of a program to work. It is a lightweight program that will work on almost any computer and is usually updated regularly. It can also be used from other devices, but it needs to be installed on them. Zoom can be used free of charge without any limitations other than the duration of the meetings, which in its free version can only be up to 40 minutes.

As we can see in the following screenshot, its interface is quite similar to the rest of alternatives presented:



Source: <https://www.zdnet.com/article/zoom-101-a-starter-guide-for-beginners-plus-advanced-tips-and-tricks-for-pros/>

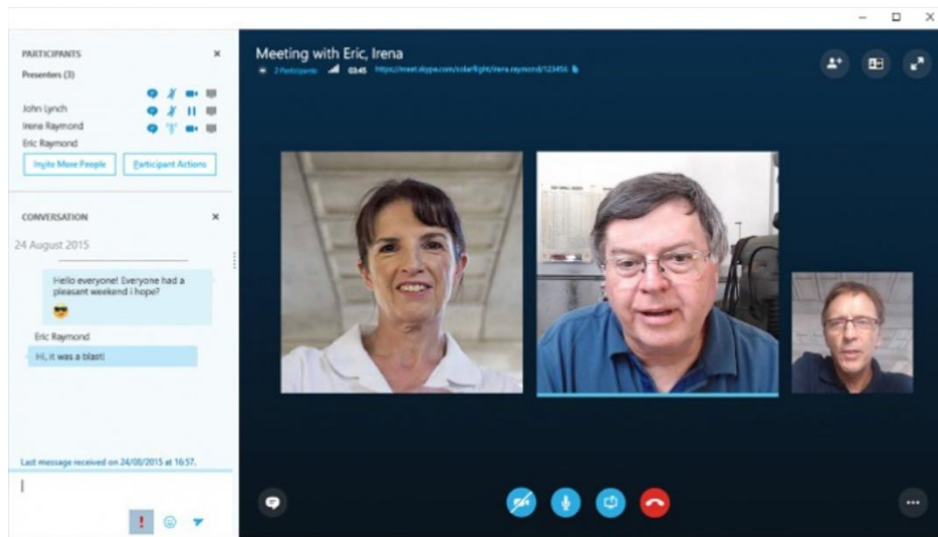
Finally, the last alternative that we are going to study in this section is **Skype**. This program is well known since many years ago as the main software for online videocalls. However, it is nowadays a little bit less used, and it is not considered a proper software for business matters.

Skype works in a similar way to the rest of the alternatives presented, although its approach is much more informal: it is a program created for calls between friends or family and not for professional use, which is noticeable.

However, its ease of use and handling, as well as its popularity and long history make it continue to be, today, a viable alternative for making video calls. To highlight we can say that it does not have any type of limitation in terms of the duration of the calls, which, as a general rule, have a somewhat less quality than its competitors. In addition, groups can be created in which to include the contacts we want, from which to organize a meeting or share content is much easier.

As negative points, it should be noted that it is not seen as a professional application and suitable for the business world, so its use can be seen by certain clients, suppliers or colleagues as something unprofessional. This program needs to be installed in a personal computer, and an android/iOS app is also available.

Its interface is similar to the rest of alternatives presented, as we can see below:



Source: <https://www.bit.es/knowledge-center/skype-meetings-la-nueva-herramienta-de-videoconferencias-online/>

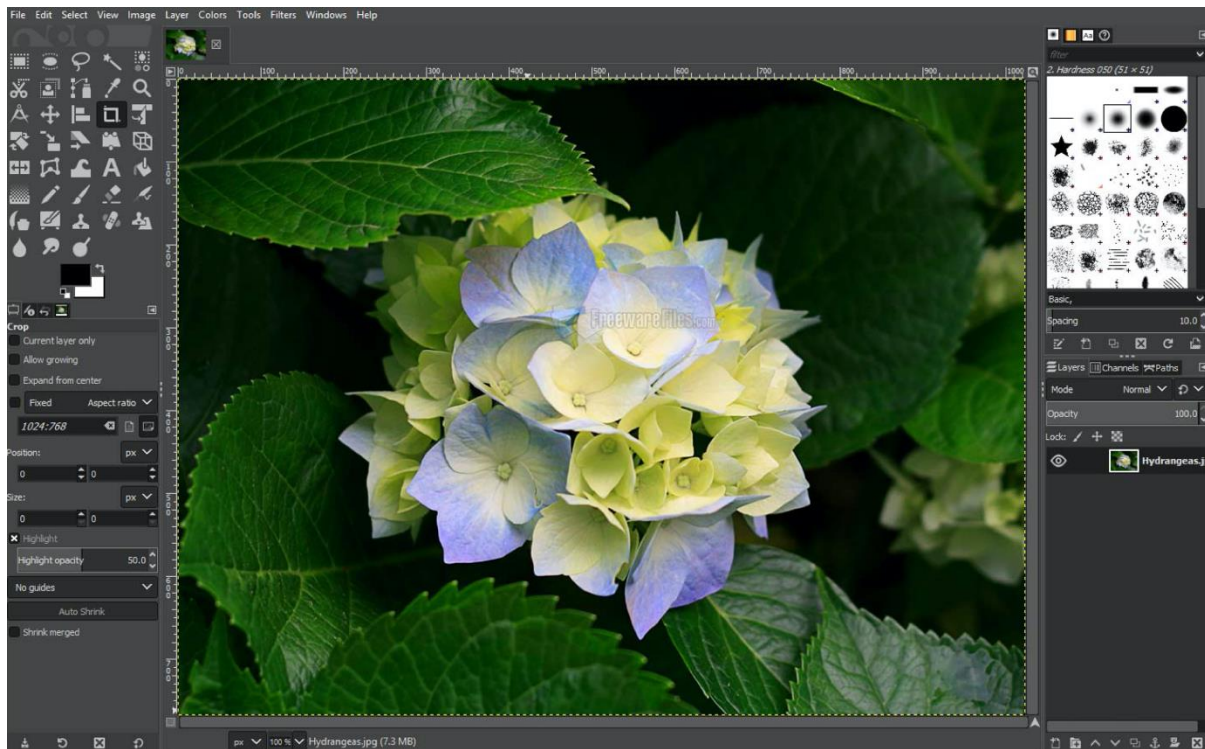
Multimedia Content

For any professional profile it is necessary to master some type of audio-visual content creation software, because these skills are going to be needed: be it an advertising spot, a radio advertisement, the logo of a new company, the corporate image, graphic designs to use on a website...

This is why we have decided to present two very useful tools (in addition to being completely free) that your students can use to develop this type of content. Obviously, this type of content and resources are beyond the knowledge of most professionals, since only graphic designers or audio-visual producers really know how to use these programs in depth, and therefore most companies outsource this type of services in order to focus in their activity.

However, and as we say, we consider that some basic notions about this type of tools, as well as access to further reading about the programs that we are going to present, may be useful to start an entrepreneurial path as, completely free of charge, they can be used as professional audio-visual creation tools. Below you will find resources for a deeper knowledge regarding this applications, in order to improve the quality of the training concerning this matters.

Firstly, we are going to talk about **GIMP**. It is a free program for editing digital images in bitmap form, both drawings and photographs. With GIMP we can create and edit bitmap images mainly. We can also work with vector images with the corresponding plug-in, but it is not the most suitable program to treat complex vector images.



Source: <https://www.freewarefiles.com/The-GIMP-screenshot-13556.html>

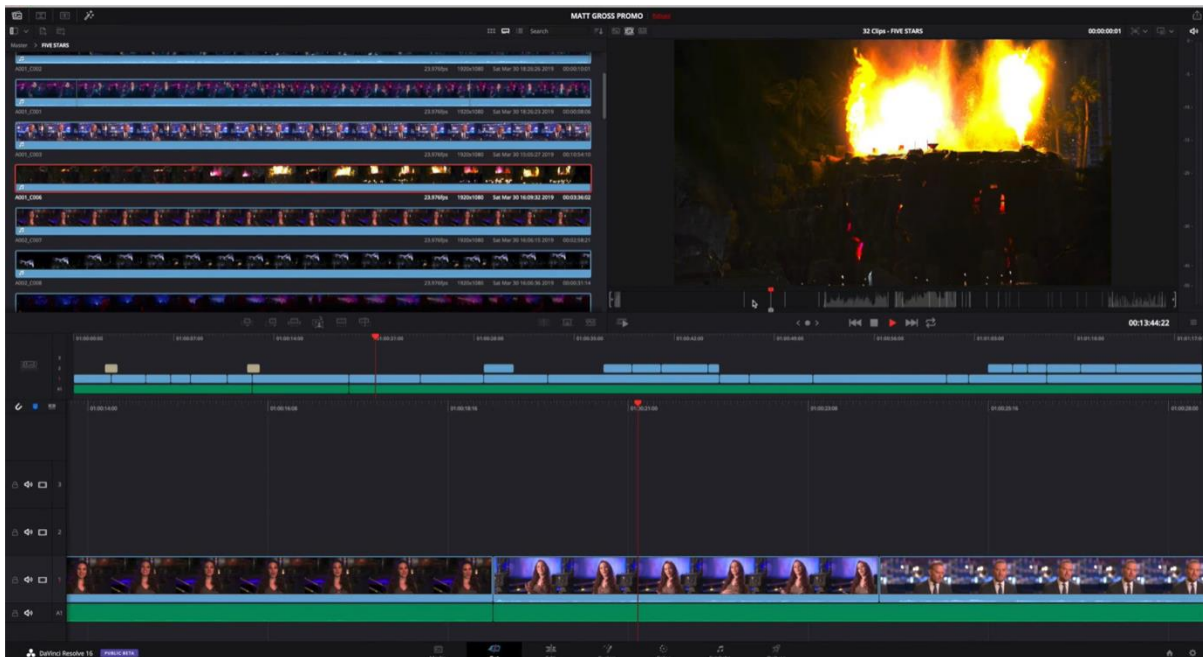
GIMP works similar to Adobe Photoshop, its paid alternative. We work in layers, in which we can add images, texts, shapes and other graphic resources to our liking. Later, and thanks to the use of the layers, we will design the final result according to our needs. This program can be extremely useful for designing logos, advertisements, posters ... the possibilities are endless.

When we start GIMP, we can see several windows, and inside each one we use the right button of the mouse to access its different functionalities. The GIMP interface has two main windows - the Toolbox and the Image Window - in addition to other windows, such as the Colour Palette, Layer Window, etc. Its functionalities are extensive and somewhat complex if you do not have knowledge in the matter, so we recommend that you take your time to explore all the possibilities it offers.

We have left in the section "Further reading" the link to the official tutorials of the program. We recommend that you take a look if you decide to try and go into the creation of graphic designs for your learners.

On the other hand, we would like to approach now multimedia content creation with the program **DaVinci Resolve 16**. This program is a professional software that aims at film and video creation, with integrated tools for colour correction, contrast, sound editing, effects... This tool is completely free of charge.

This program responds to the classic scheme of video editors like Sony Vegas or Adobe AfterEffects (both paid alternatives). At the bottom of the screen we have a timeline that we use to place our audio-visual content (be it videos, sounds, songs, images ...) and then we use all the tools that the program itself provides us to create and edit the final video.



Source: <https://www.diyphotography.net/blackmagic-davinci-resolve-16-now-comes-with-content-aware-fill-style-features-for-video/>

The program is completely free, with a paid version that includes some extra features that anyone will hardly miss. If when we talked about GIMP we said that it can be a complex program for beginners, DaVinci is much more so. We have to remember that this program is designed for professionals in the editing and creation of audio-visual content, as well as the production of films and shorts, so that it offers an extremely wide range of possibilities for the functions that our students are really going to use.

However, since we can learn to use the program for free thanks, among others, to the resources that we have selected and left in the "Further Reading" section, it is a tool that can be very useful to us to edit and produce that content that we need for a given activity, such as an advertisement, for example. Notwithstanding, the size and resource consumption of this program means that a fairly powerful computer is needed to be able to work with it.

To conclude, as we have previously mentioned, there are options to be able to develop audio-visual content completely free of charge, being able to learn how to use these resources if wished, also free of charge, although this subject may be a little far from our working capacity. Many companies choose to outsource these services, precisely because of the complexity that this type of software can have, but even so it is completely possible (and does not require an extraordinary effort) to learn to use these programs in a simple way and to start creating our first graphic elements in a simple and free way.

2.2. How to Use Social Media

Continuing with the previous section, digital resources and the online world are everything today. We live in a globalised and completely digital environment, where the traditional has given way to the modern, computing, the cloud and social and professional interaction through the Internet.

In this second section we will deal with the use of other types of digital resources: the internet, social networks and digital networks. We will start by studying what a network is and how our students can take advantage of it for their professional careers; later, we will see what networking 2.0 is and why it can be so effective for incomers into the job market; and, finally, we will try to answer to what extent it is advisable (or not) to use social networks to promote a professional activity, as well as different examples where it can be positive and/or negative, depending on the context and the market being faced.

Networking

Networking is a common practice in the **business and entrepreneurial world**. It is a word that is already used on a daily basis in the professional field and refers to events, both formal and informal, in which your students can build a network of contacts that may help them generate both business and employment opportunities.

At professional conferences and fairs, a space is usually reserved to facilitate this practice among the attendees. Such meetings, which are usually set up over coffee in the mid-morning or at the end of the day at an event that attracts relevant professionals from the sector, become valuable moments in which to make contact with people with common interests. They are one of several places where our students can network.

Networking meetings can satisfy **different work situations**. People who have a business idea and need investors or partners, recruiters who are looking to incorporate specialists in certain areas or business angels into their staff to find projects to invest in. But networking is not exclusive to entrepreneurs or business-related people. It can also be beneficial for those who are looking for a job or thinking about changing their workplace.

Getting a start-up off the ground is not an easy task and requires devoting the time and resources that not everyone has in the day-to-day running of the business. But it is worthwhile, attending events can be essential for budding businesses. It is a good opportunity to receive feedback on the product from people who know the sector in order to improve it. And an excellent opportunity to establish contacts that make it easier to attract users or prescribers of the product, or to get out of the bubble to have a global vision of the market being faced.



Source: Photo by [Evangeline Shaw](#) on [Unsplash](#)

One of the most important aspects when it comes to starting a business is to **surround yourself with people who will add to the project**. Networking can be a good formula for this.

Whatever the situation of your students is, for this type of meeting to be fruitful, a strategy must be drawn up that involves preparation and post-event work. They can help themselves with applications that are especially useful for networking. These are some of the key aspects that will help the network that is being woven to generate employment opportunities:

Orient their social network profiles in a professional way. They need to include the **keywords** of their specialty in their LinkedIn bio. Concepts, programmes, trends... everything in that type of sites helps them position themselves as experts in a given sector. They have to follow and participate in the conversations that are generated thanks to the hashtags related to their field of work, and share relevant content to add value to their professional profile.

Teach them how to create an **elevator pitch**. This technique consists of preparing a speech that describes the idea of a given business or product or their career and professional objectives in a brief way (as a person goes up in the lift). This content can be used as an introduction to tables in which your students participate, letters of introduction to accompany their CVs or used in a more informal conversation with specialists or potential investors.

Building and maintaining a network of professional relationships is essential to enrich the resume and work experience of your students. It will help them advance professionally and open the door to new job opportunities.

Networking 2.0: LinkedIn

Since we already know what networking is, what is networking 2.0 then? Well, it is nothing more than what we have been repeating during these materials: the move from the traditional to the modern, from the physical to the online, and from the national to the global.

We will now explain what new networking is, as well as LinkedIn, the best known professional social network at a global level, which has the potential to function as a digital and global network, a place where your students can have all their professional contacts located, find new partners for new projects, or even find jobs or employees for their own companies.

LinkedIn, as we say, is a professional social network, that is to say, it is oriented more to commercial and professional relations than to personal relations and therefore in this social network what you will find are companies and professionals who seek to promote themselves, network and do business.

The first step to start using LinkedIn is very similar to making a CV. You have to register, create an account (free) and start filling in your professional details which are basically what you would put on a CV: professional qualifications, education, current and past jobs, skills, publications, etc. When the process is completed, you will begin to see the first signs of the enormous potential that lies within LinkedIn because as you complete your information, the website begins to explore your relationships and discover things that are likely to surprise you. For example: if someone indicates that he/she has held a job in a certain company during a period of time, LinkedIn will examine among its members the employees of that company who have also been working there during the same period.

It is normal that even in small companies LinkedIn finds quite a few people and proposes them to their users as potential contacts, and they choose whether to accept them or not. Many people have recovered many lost contacts over time with this functionality and for that reason alone it has been worth their while to sign up for this tool.





Source: Photo by [Dylan Gillis](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The idea of being able to post your CV on the web and send it to almost anyone is perhaps the feature most associated with LinkedIn, although this does not mean that it is the most important, as we will see below.

Having a professional website is an important first step in creating and promoting a given personal brand on the Internet... In fact, the traditional CV is on the decline when faced with this type of new media, and more and more companies will consider the fact of not having a LinkedIn profile a defect. On the other hand, the fact that your students are present on LinkedIn is a guarantee that everyone will always have up-to-date information them, including potential employers and business partners.

And, finally, having a LinkedIn profile gives a lot of play to small but effective professional promotion tricks such as, for example, including in the signature footer of emails their LinkedIn profile. This will give your students visibility and boost the growth of their network of contacts.



Source: Photo by [Smartworks Coworking](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The fact that LinkedIn also functions as a network of contacts makes it a contact book unparalleled to any traditional address book: once you connect with someone, you will have all their professional information updated at all times without any effort on your part.

Moreover, LinkedIn incorporates the **recommendations**. A recommendation can be requested to your contacts and they, if they are willing to do so (it would be very rare not to), can write a brief summary of their professional opinion about you, which will appear in the recommendation section of your profile. Another simple, practical and very useful formula for adding points to your students' CV.

LinkedIn groups are a fantastic tool with endless possibilities: to keep up to date with the topics that interest the user, to consult professional doubts with experts, to promote your personal brand and a long list of other things. The dynamics of the groups is practically similar to that of a discussion forum: any member of the group can open a discussion thread (debate) on any topic and if it captures the interest of the group, a great conversation is generated between professionals.

Participating in the right groups will provide your students with a great way to demonstrate their knowledge to others and is therefore a very good way to network. There is a lot of potential lying in the fact that there are groups that reach tens of thousands of members, and whose members are subscribed to by email when they receive news from the group (where new discussions appear, among other things). The potential and scope of this and the possibilities for your student's personal brand is quite considerable.

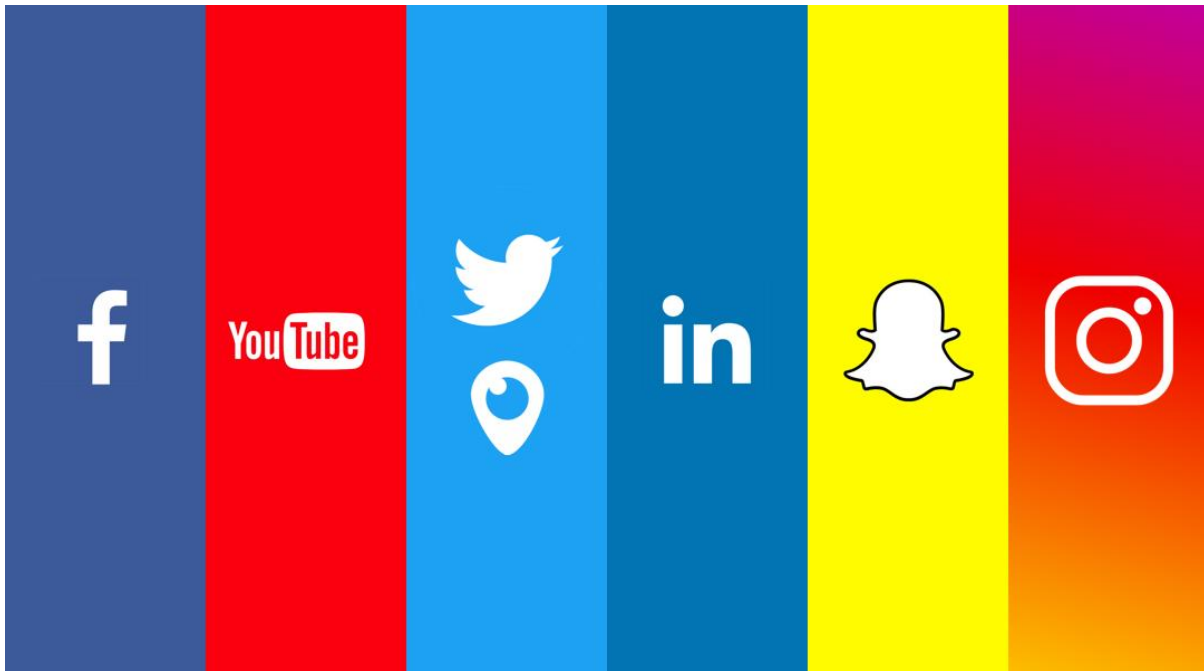
Use of Social Media professionally

Millions of people use social networks every day, and not just to find out what our friends are doing; your students probably also follow a few companies on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. Professionals and entrepreneurs nowadays need to be present on social networks, both to keep in touch with their clients and to attract potential ones.

If someone wants his/her company to go far thanks to the networks, they have to take into account the following concept: **branding**, the process by which a brand is built, providing it with values and personality.

In a branding process it has to be taken into account, on the one hand, the "tangible" image of the given brand: the logo, the name, the quality of a service or product... and, on the other hand, the values that the brand transmits, its personality, what we want others to think of it. This can be achieved by highlighting the best qualities of the company: innovative, big or small, traditional, family, craftsmanship...

Social networks currently have more than 3 billion active users around the world, and Facebook is the most popular of them all. Regardless of size, number of employees, or funding, all companies should take advantage of the most popular social networks to support the fulfilment of their business objectives. They can be seen as tools that change the way a company interacts with others, and the way it looks for new potential customers. They facilitate the business-client relationship, i.e. they make the employer more in tune with his customers. They are mainly used to share ideas, offers and get users to interact with our brand. It is possible for small businesses to survive without a social media presence, it all depends on the market they serve, how their customers and users do business, and their distribution approach.



Source: <https://www.laquagga.com/cual-red-social-me-conviene-un-detalle-que-no-debe-dejar-escapar/>

Within that context, it is not difficult for a business to succeed. However, it is difficult for a start-up whose intention is to succeed in a big way to do so without social media presence; they must take advantage of it as the best way to reach new audiences with a minimum expenditure. Business owners have a responsibility to provide good customer service and monitor their needs; with these social platforms they have the opportunity to stand out from other competitors by distinguishing themselves in services and customer service. As time goes by, companies are becoming more aware that social networks are the easiest way to connect directly with their customers.

The most complex issue is finding the right **balance**. Sometimes it is difficult to separate marketing from the mindset of being on social media all day. It is also important to know the procedures needed to use it correctly; from knowing how to advertise on Facebook, to getting involved with the audience on Instagram.

When managing the social networks of a business, the following advice can be followed:

1. Know your audience: It is crucial to understand the main profile of your clients and approach them accordingly. Your students need to learn how to study their needs, desires and behaviours, and their strategy will improve its results.
2. Show a consistent image: It is essential to show the same image in different social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram...). This way a perfectly defined business image will be created. This also includes talking with the same approach in social media and websites, even if (obviously) the tone is not going to be exactly the same.
3. Make every social network count: It is much better to focus on a couple of social networks, publishing constantly and with quality content, than to open a profile on each of the platforms and publish sporadically and with articles of little importance.

4. Change the perspective of storytelling: It is essential to not always treat issues from the same point of view. Your students need to offer different perspectives and combine the issues they control with different tools, procedures and strategies. Audiences tend to get bored if they are always told the same thing in the same way.
5. The key is in the quality content: Each social network has its own formats for images. If its decided to create a publication with an image and a link, your students need to bear in mind which format and size is best for each one, and the same goes for a video. On Facebook, YouTube videos do not look good if you put the URL directly. Also, this social network does not usually "like" it.
6. Plan your strategy: Having its profiles active and with good content is a "must" within the objectives of a brand. As good professionals, your students will need to know that keeping an eye on publications often takes longer than expected.
7. Large companies can serve as an example: Humans learn from imitation. It is natural to follow the steps taken by others before. What it has to be considered here is the huge difference between learning and copying. Your students need to learn from large companies or other successful social media managers and follow their steps with similar ones.

To conclude this subsection, both networking and social networks are a reality from which we cannot escape. Today's professional world is completely digitalised, and interactions with our competitors, colleagues, partners and customers are increasingly fast, global and physically distant. That is why we must enter fully into this reality, learn how to use the resources it offers us and get the most out of it. A good networking and social network strategy may be the key to professional success.

3. EXERCISES AND QUIZZES

3.1. Exercise 1

• **Practical Exercise:** *Develop your own social media strategy.*

The learner is given by the teacher a certain sector of activity and asked to develop his/her own social media strategy, answering the following questions:

- Which is your audience?
- Which are the characteristics of your audience? Are they young people, old, active, sportive...?
- Which social media platforms are appropriate for your activity?
- Can you write three well known enterprises related with your activity?
- Design a timeline stating your goals managing social media.

3.2. Exercise 2

• **Practical Exercise:** *Design your own CV using a given template by Google Docs*

The learner is asked to write his/her own CV using a template given by Google Docs and adapted by his/her teacher. This way, the learner will check out how this kind of templates work and will develop his/her own CV while learning how to use a word processor. He/she has to include an image and a link to his/her LinkedIn account.

3.3. Exercise 3

• **Practical Exercise:** *Design your own logo*

The learner is asked to use GIMP in order to create a draft logo for an imaginary company. It has to use the resources provided by the programme itself and present a result in line with the market to which the company is going to devote its activity. The teacher will provide the specific instructions and resources to be used during this exercise.

4. FURTHER READING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- [Google Suite learning Center](#)
- [The ultimate guide to Google Docs](#)
- [How to Use Google Slides in 2020 \(Quick Start Guide\).](#)
- [How to use Google Sheets to Make Your First Spreadsheet.](#)
- [The complete Zoom guide: From basic help to advanced tricks](#)
- [Official tutorials of GIMP](#)
- [DaVinci Resolve official training resources](#)

5. TESTS VERIFYING THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

5.1. Initial Assessment

Question 1

Do you know how to use a word processor?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Question 2

Would you be able to create a presentation using free software?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Question 3

Is social media fine for using it in business matters?

- a) Yes, always
- b) Yes, with a proper use
- c) No
- d) Yes, but only networking sites

Question 4

Would you be able to create your own CV?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Question 5

Would you be able to create and edit through software a short video for the presentation of a product?

- a) Yes, I could record it with a phone or camera, but not actually edit it
- b) Yes, both record it and edit it using a program
- c) No
- d) Yes, I could record it with a phone or camera and edit it with android free apps

Question 6



Would you be able to create a logo for your enterprise using a given software?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Question 7

Would you be able to use a given online meeting software and arrange a business meeting in it?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Question 8

Do you know what networking is?

- a) It is a new trend in the business world which consists of sharing information with your competitors and agree on prices and other matters, in order to improve the situation of the market
- b) It is similar to social media platforms, but for business matters
- c) It is the action or process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts
- d) No

Question 9

Would you be able to detect potential colleagues and other professionals related to your business idea?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Question 10

Are you aware of the free software alternatives to paid office suites?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Correct Answers



1-A
2-A
3-B
4-A
5-B
6-A
7-A
8-C
9-A
10-A

Level of the class matrix:

0-4	The student needs to deeply study these contents, as well as guidance and assistance by the trainer
5-6	The student will benefit from studying these contents, improving his/her knowledge regarding certain topics and learning new things
7-8	The student only needs to study several specific contents of this module
9-10	The student does not need to study these contents

5.2. Final Assessment

Question 1

A client has stated several issues regarding the last service provided by your company. You are not sure, of all your employees and colleagues, who was in charge of this service, and thus you do not have all the information about it and cannot solve the problem. What do you do?

- a) You wait until the person in charge solves the problem by himself/herself, forgetting about it
- b) You call a meeting for tomorrow and try to solve the issue
- c) You arrange a virtual meeting for the next hour using an online platform and try to solve the issue
- d) You call the client and try to solve the issue by yourself

Question 2

You gather with a few colleagues and decide to start your own entrepreneurial path. In order to begin your activity, you need some kind of software to generate documents and other written matters. What do you do?

- a) To buy a paid software
- b) To use a free option for now, and then, if desired, to jump into a paid version
- c) To freely obtain paid software in an illegal website
- d) We do not actually need to use any software, we will work by hand

Question 3

You are in charge of the social media of a given enterprise. Your boss asks you to provide a fresher look to the brand image, as the different platforms and social media websites are not actually being used now and the content showed in them is of poor quality. What do you do?

- a) I restart the social media apps and create a common image among all the platforms, with the same type of contents, images, logos and tone.
- b) I develop a separate social media plan for each platform, changing tone and contents between them.
- c) I try my best and start using the platforms as they currently are, keeping what it was done thus far.
- d) A serious enterprise should not have social media presence. They are not proper for business.

Question 4

You want to control the costs, gains and salaries of your new small enterprise. How would you organise this work?

- a) By hand, using a booklet
- b) I would create one or several sheets and do an intense follow up of all this data
- c) I do not need to use any device or system to control this information

d) Even if my enterprise is small, I need to hire an accountant

Question 5

A new product is going to be launched by your small enterprise. In order to improve sales and visibility, what would you do?

a) Nothing in particular

b) If the product is good enough, just basic marketing will be needed

c) We will promote our product on social media

d) We will promote our product on social media, creating logos and audio-visual contents to accompany its advertisement.

Correct Answers

1-C

2-B

3-A

4-B

5-D




Erasmus+



Module 3 – ENTREPRENEURSHIP LIFESTYLE



Erasmus+



3.1. What does it mean to have an entrepreneurship lifestyle/ thinking? How to take economically safe decisions?



1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Aim of the Module

For most of us, the word “entrepreneur” brings to our mind “solitary visionaries” who started out with next to nothing and thanks to a mysterious combination of talents, hard work, luck and a unique, innovative idea, ended up as “kings” or “queens” in their field. However, entrepreneurial thinking isn't so much about entrepreneurship as it is a perspective or a mindset. In other words, we don't have to start a business or build a company to think entrepreneurially and that is exactly what we are going to explore in this first part of the module “Entrepreneurship Lifestyle”. Our aim is to focus on the meaning and the value of having an entrepreneurial lifestyle and way of thinking and discuss how to take economically safe decisions, even if we are not entrepreneurs!

The sure is that all of us have much to learn from the entrepreneurs! Entrepreneurial thinking is the ability to see things differently than the rest of the world but, it is not necessarily an inherent trait. Entrepreneurship involves skills that can be acquired, but above all it is mindset that can be developed and nurtured. This module is about empowering, inspiring and supporting adult learners in their ambitions, both entrepreneurial and personal, in all aspects of their daily life. In more detail, this module will highlight the most important characteristics of an entrepreneurial mindset, will explain step-by-step the process for entrepreneurial decision-making and will assist learners to identify in which type of decision-maker and which type of entrepreneur they belong, aiming to lend insight into the things that they are good at, not good at and how to improve, so as to bring their ideas to life. In the final section, we will discuss shortly some examples of successful entrepreneurs.

1.2. Learning Objectives

- A. Understanding the nature and the characteristics of entrepreneurial lifestyle and mindset
- B. Evaluating the importance of entrepreneurial attitude and thinking
- C. Identifying the difference between “entrepreneurship” and “intrapreneurship”
- D. Comprehending the process of entrepreneurial decision making and problem-solving procedures leading to safer choices
- E. Identifying personal attributes that enable the best use of entrepreneurial opportunities
- F. Exploring best practices in different entrepreneurship lifestyles
- G. Finding effective ways to upgrade the existing mindset

Competencies: Self-reflecting, opportunity-seeking, initiative, goal setting, persistence, commitment, taking calculated risks, effective decision-making, problem solving, information seeking, mindset's upgrading.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Overview of an Entrepreneurial Lifestyle and Mindset

Who is an “entrepreneur” and what does it really mean to have an “entrepreneurial” lifestyle and mindset? Literally, the word loan for the term “entrepreneur” goes back to the old French war vocabulary of the 18th century where “entreprende” means “to undertake” – an act that combines strategy, organization and risk. The term was then used to describe a “manager or promoter of a theatrical production” – another risky act that also demands collaboration and creativity. Nowadays, looking up the word in a dictionary, we can see that it refers mainly to “a person who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk”. In addition, entrepreneurs can sell anything: from products to services and from information to attention.

But is this definition enough? In fact, as we are about to discuss, having an entrepreneurial mindset is not just about starting companies, but it is a way of meeting life’s risks and challenges. Therefore, in this subsection we will focus on the definition and the importance of the entrepreneurial mentality and we will sum up the most essential characteristics of a successful entrepreneur’s way of thinking as a basis to identify effective ways to upgrade one’s mindset and improve his/her entrepreneurial attitude and approach towards everyday life.

What is Entrepreneurial Thinking and Why It Is Important

Although the “technical business side” is only one of many (and usually over-emphasized) aspects of being an entrepreneur, we will begin by this side because “the era of entrepreneurship” is already here and will evolve even more dynamically while, especially for the younger people, there are no more guarantees for a long career under one employer or even in one industry or sector.

First of all, we should realize that anyone can be an entrepreneur, but not everybody is going to have the same level of success. And the paradox is that entrepreneurs don’t necessarily make good business owners and managers¹. There are no prerequisites neither a “best way” to become an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship takes a lot of experience, determination, planning and sometimes education, while each entrepreneur has a different background and a unique set of motivations, assets and flaws. It is also crucial to understand that even the best business ideas might fail under different circumstances. However, entrepreneurial thinking can lessen the chances of failure and give a business a better chance of succeeding.

Even though anyone can be an entrepreneur, obviously not everyone is fond of entrepreneurship. In addition, a job is work we do mainly to earn money, while a career is a commitment to work in a field or industry. However, even those who fear risks, career and entrepreneurship and prefer working as

¹ Green, Mike (2017), “Developing the entrepreneurial mindset”, in Michelle Ferrier & Elizabeth Mays (eds) *Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, available online <https://press.rebus.community/media-innovation-and-entrepreneurship/chapter/developing-entrepreneurial-mindset>

employees, have a lot to gain by developing an entrepreneurial lifestyle and learn to think like entrepreneurs. An employee with an entrepreneurial mindset is also known as “internal entrepreneur” or “intrapreneur” and as it is said these people are among the most valued and desired kinds of employees¹. In more detail, an intrapreneur is an employee who innovates and thinks entrepreneurially within an existing organization or corporation, developing new lines of business, programs or products. Intrapreneurship is a safe or at least a safer way to practice entrepreneurship, from inside an organization². Intrapreneurs are expected to be self-motivated and take accountability, to carefully use company resources as if their own, to become great leaders in the company and have a sense of ownership coming into work³

But, as we have already highlight, having an entrepreneurial thinking means so much more than starting and running a successful business. The entrepreneurial mindset or attitude, approach, mood or “philosophy” is about a certain way of thinking and living: it is about the way we believe in ourselves, seek motivation, encourage our own creativity, improve our skills, face challenges, take risks, build relations, find solutions and accept responsibility for our actions. An person with entrepreneurial mindset has the ability to view needs, problems and challenges as opportunities. Entrepreneurial lifestyle is about being realist in an optimistic way and not being scared of new things and failure; it is about exploring different ways to succeed and be satisfied; it is about looking for more opportunities to feel happy and complete -in each person's own terms.

Characteristics of an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Most scientific studies and business articles focusing on the characteristics of an entrepreneurial lifestyle and mindset highlight how people need passion and a lot of self-confidence to pursue their goals and be effective despite the obstacles. To develop a successful entrepreneurial mindset, you also need to think differently, ideally in an innovative way, to take calculated risks and make the right decisions, for example knowing when and how to count on other people and ask for help. In case ones actually runs a business, it is crucial knowing how to develop your network, how to communicate effectively, how to find business mentors, how to choose and train your team and how to take advantage of technology and new media.

Based on various sources⁴, these are some basic entrepreneurial characteristics, that even if someone doesn't have them right now, he/she can always develop them so as to improve the chances of success in achieving his/her daily goals.

- **Passion:** people with a successful entrepreneurial mindset are passionate about their ideas, or products or their goals in general, meaning that they can work on something repeatedly to improve it without getting bored or giving up easily. Passion makes people able to view things from a positive angle and preserve their faith in success against all the odds. Most of the times, passion helps people find confidence and motivation when they are discouraged.
- **Self-Confidence:** Successful people also know that if they don't believe in themselves, nobody else will, therefore they rarely doubt about the success of their idea. However, we should not

¹¹ Green, Mike (2017), Ibid.

² Mays, Elizabeth (2016), “What’s an Intrapreneur, and How to Be One”, The medium, available online <https://medium.com/@theeditress/whats-an-intrapreneur-and-how-to-be-one-eba2af04269d>

³ Mitchell, Will, “The 6 Types of Entrepreneurs: Which One Are You?”, Start Up Bros, available online <https://startupbros.com/entrepreneur-glossary>

⁴ The Lonely Entrepreneur (2018, July 23rd), “8 Remarkable Entrepreneur Characteristics That Create Success”, <https://lonelyentrepreneur.com/entrepreneur-characteristics-success>; Daisyme, Peter (2015, Aug. 24th), “7 Characteristics of Successful Entrepreneurs”, DUE, available online <https://due.com/blog/7-characteristics-of-successful-entrepreneurs>; Ashford University (2019), “9 Characteristics of the Entrepreneurial Mindset”, <https://www.ashford.edu/online-degrees/business/9-characteristics-of-the-entrepreneurial-mindset>

confuse confidence with arrogance, which is in fact a recipe for isolation and failure. Being confident means finding the balance between ego and modesty and can be revealed by the way someone treats other people and talks about his/her plans and achievements. From decisiveness to confidence, humility can keep people focused and centered.

- **Self-Motivation:** one of the most important traits of entrepreneurial lifestyle is self-motivation and dedication to the plan, in other words the ability to “push themselves forward”.
- **Accountability:** The entrepreneurial mindset comes from taking responsibility for our actions and outcomes. Each one of us needs to internalize and accept that “everything that happens at home or at work, to my business or to my life, whether it is a success or a failure, it is MY responsibility”. Circumstances may not be our fault, but in the end, we make our choices about how to handle them and which people to trust to help us. Accountability means taking complete control, stop blaming others and take action to fix the problem.
- **Risk appetite:** This entrepreneurial characteristic is probably one of the “scariest” but also one of the most rewarding. People who succeed are not afraid of taking risks and in fact they feel comfortable in situations where most people would feel uncomfortable. However, not all the risk takers have a successful entrepreneurial mindset – knowing how to take calculated risks is the key. It is understanding which risks to take and how to evaluate them that matters the most. At this point it is crucial to define risk, since the term is used in many ways and is given different definitions depending on the field and context. Following the PRINCE2® methodology for managing various projects, risk is as “an uncertain event or set of events that, should it occur, will have an effect on the achievement of objectives. A risk is measured by a combination of the probability of a perceived threat or opportunity occurring, and the magnitude of its impact on objectives”¹.
- **Flexibility:** This trait allows entrepreneurs to know when and how to customize their products or services to satisfy their clients and how to adapt their business to new market demands (or even create new demands). With the rapid advancement of technology, evolving and adapting are the only options. Sometimes this is day to day adjustments, and sometimes it is complete pivots. But even for those who are not involved in business, flexibility is crucial. It is the intelligence to welcome new ideas and suggestions from other people and to know how to stick to an overall plan but be flexible enough to adapt this plan to achieve better results. Flexibility is an essential part of problem-solving in our daily life.

Effective ways that can help us upgrade our mindset, include the following: changing our language and the way we talk to our self about our self and about our goals; surrounding our self with people who match the desired mindset and creating habits to support the change we are seeking for; determining the entrepreneurial mindset we need, learn, apply and “act as if”, jumping out of our comfort zone but with calculated risks.

2.2. Entrepreneurial Decision-Making

The way of decision-making varies according to the situation and time and differs from person to person, from area to area and from project to project. However, it is important for people who wish to develop a successful entrepreneurial mindset to realise the process for their own decision making and at the same time be aware of how other people (friends, family, team or even competitors) make their own decisions.

¹ PRINCE2® Glossary of terms, available online

https://www.axelos.com/Corporate/media/Files/Glossaries/PRINCE2-2009-Glossary-of-terms_GB-v1-1.pdf

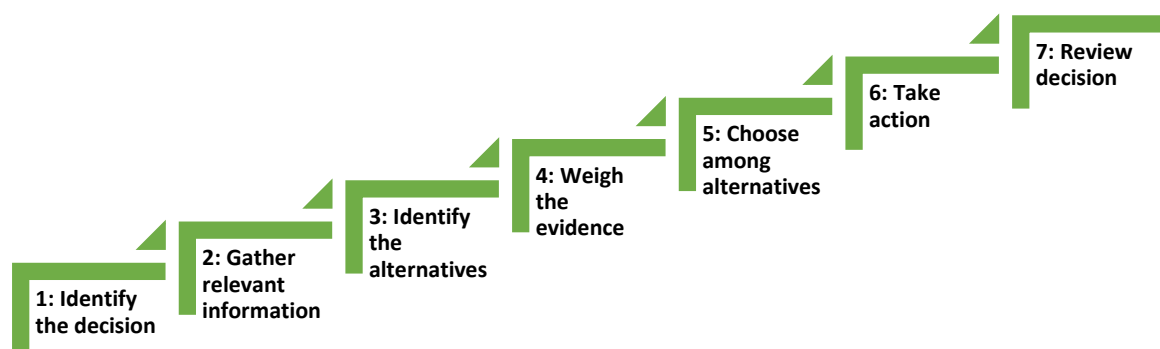


Understanding the type of decision that we are facing and responding appropriately can help us to increase our effectiveness, therefore in this section we will try to describe the entrepreneurial decision-making process and discuss different types of decision-makers.

The Process for Entrepreneurial Decision-Making

The decision-making process is one of the most critical processes not only in a company, but also in our personal life, that is why decisiveness (or the lack of it) can “make” or “break” many opportunities. Have you ever thought that even economic decision-making in private households is a topic relevant to entrepreneurial thinking? As analyzed by Kirchler, Winter & Penz (2016), “When speaking of private households, research typically revolves around couples, both with or without children, who live under one roof. Often, economic decisions need to be made that will demand in-depth analyses, lead to uncertainty and force the couple to weigh different alternatives, so that in the end specific actions can be taken. Decision-making processes are often characterized by differences of opinion between partners, which can cause disagreements and conflicts”¹. To be effective in various aspects of our daily life, one must gain the ability to look at a problem or situation, take into account all available data (at that point in time), and make a confident decision to move forward.

As it can be shortly described “decision making is the process of making choices by identifying a decision, gathering information, and assessing alternative resolutions”². The following step-by-step decision-making process by the University of Massachusetts, which is also the most common one, can help people make more deliberate, thoughtful decisions by organizing relevant information and defining alternatives, increasing the chances of choosing the most satisfying alternative possible.



Seven steps to effective decision making

Source: University of Massachusetts

<https://www.umassd.edu/fycm/decision-making/process>

Step 1: Identifying the decision. This first -and very important step- has to do with realizing that we need to make a decision and try to clearly define the nature of this decision. In other guides, this first

¹ Kirchler, E., L. Winter, E. Penz (2016), “Methods of Studying Economic Decisions in Private Households”, Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais [Online], 111 | 2016, <http://journals.openedition.org/rccs/6467>, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/rccs.6467>

² University of Massachusetts, “Decision-making process”, available online <https://www.umassd.edu/fycm/decision-making/process>

step is mentioned as “Recognizing the problem”¹, given that every decision-making process starts with a problem or some discrepancy that exist between the desired and current state. The difference between these two is the “gap” or problem that must be solved through the decision-making process.

Step 2: Gathering relevant information. The second step is about collecting some pertinent information before making the decision: what information is needed, the best sources of information, and how to get it. This step involves both internal and external “work.” Some information is internal: can be found through a process of self-assessment. Other information is external: can be found it online, in books, from other people, and from other sources.

Step 3: Identifying the alternatives. As we collect information, we will probably identify several possible paths of action, or alternatives. A good entrepreneur can also use his/her imagination and additional information, think “out of the box” and create new alternatives. In this step, listing all possible and desirable alternatives can be very useful.

Step 4: Weighing the evidence. This means drawing on our information and emotions to imagine what it would be like if we carried out each of the alternatives to the end. It is important to evaluate whether the need identified in Step 1 would be met or resolved through the use of each alternative. As we go through this difficult internal process, usually we begin to favor certain alternatives: those that seem to have a higher potential for reaching our goal. Finally, we can place the alternatives in a priority order, based upon our own value system.

Step 5: Choosing among alternatives. Once we have weighed all the evidence, we are ready to select the alternative that seems to be best one for our business. We may even choose a combination of alternatives. Our choice in Step 5 may very likely be the same or similar to the alternative we placed at the top of our list at the end of Step 4.

Step 6: Taking action. In this step we are ready to take some positive action by beginning to implement the alternative we chose in Step 5.

Step 7: Reviewing our decision and its consequences. In this final step, we should consider the results of our decision and evaluate whether or not it has resolved the need identified in Step 1. If the decision has not met the identified need, we may want to repeat certain steps of the process to make a new decision. For example, we might want to gather more detailed or somewhat different information or explore additional alternatives.

At this point, it is crucial to understand that not all decisions are equal and that we can differentiate them along two dimensions: importance and urgency. An important decision is one that has the potential to have a significant impact on our business or on a person’s life. An urgent decision is one that we must make immediately and there is no time for further consideration.

Going back to step 1, we have to consider these two dimensions together and act accordingly. Based on the advices given by two entrepreneurs and small business consultants², here are the four types of decisions (depending on their importance and urgency) and how to approach them:

a) Neither urgent, nor important: If a decision is neither urgent nor important, we may not need to make it at all or another option is to delegate to others (such decisions provide an opportunity for a manager to coach subordinates on how to think about decision-making). We should resist the

¹ Sutevski, Dragan, “An Introduction to Decision Making Process”, Entrepreneurship in a Box, available online <https://www.entrepreneurshipinabox.com/2062/an-introduction-to-decision-making-process>

² White, Doug and Polly (2015, Aug. 11th), “The 4 Types of Decisions, and How to Approach Each One”, Entrepreneur, available online <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/248988>

temptation to focus on items that we can check off our “to-do” list quickly when there are other more important and urgent decisions that need attention. However, we should not delay the decision until it becomes urgent.

b) Urgent, but not important: When a decision is not important, there is no need to overanalyze it. In some outrageous cases the cost of the time spent analyzing a decision can exceed the cost of making a wrong decision. These types of decisions can be easily made, either by following our “gut” as experienced businesspersons or by using standard guidelines and principles aligned with the values of the organization (or both).

c) Both urgent and important: Left unaddressed, many decisions may morph into this category and we should not let it happen. However, we should beware of false urgency. Many decisions that are portrayed as urgent aren’t. Therefore, we should not be pressed into making an important decision without careful consideration when we don’t have to. A good idea is to consider whether we can take steps to buy more time to make this important decision. Keeping options open that will allow us flexibility later and consulting experts can both lead us into the right direction to proceed.

d) Important but not urgent: Solving complex problems requires asking a series of questions that most of the times are relatively easy to answer. When facing a big decision, we should not overcome by emotions. What we need to figure out is “What do I want to happen next?” and “What do I have to do to maximize the probability that it occurs?”. For decisions that are important but not urgent, it is sometimes helpful to use decision-making tools (e.g. marginal analysis, SWOT analysis/Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats, Decision Matrix etc.¹) or seeking the counsel of experts. Last but not least, “live with your decision before executing” -make a decision and sleep on it before implementing.

What Kind of Decision-Maker Are You?

Like many other skills a person needs to succeed in his/her goals, being decisive is a skill that can (and should) be practiced and strengthened every day, starting even with the tiniest decisions. Many studies have shown that people are tending to regret mostly for things that they didn't do². Hence, it seems that somewhere in each of us lies the desire to make a decision and act, for fear that we will regret not doing so. The studies have also shown that if we are making a decision and acting according to it, but in the end failing, we accept it better than if we didn't try at all, maybe because we know that at least we tried.

Regarding various aspects in our daily life, in order not to find ourselves regretting, we must make informed decisions and act accordingly. Besides, indecision is one of the greatest causes of business failure. However not everyone makes decisions in the same way, nor should they. Being aware of our own decision-making process and type is the first step to see things from a different point of view and maybe start making decisions differently. Here are the most common types of decision makers:

- **Fast:** Makes decisions quickly, without too much thinking and factor analysis.
- **Procrastinator:** Avoids the decision making to the last possible moment.
- **Cautious:** Tries to collect as much information as possible and thinks all the possible aspects and consequences.

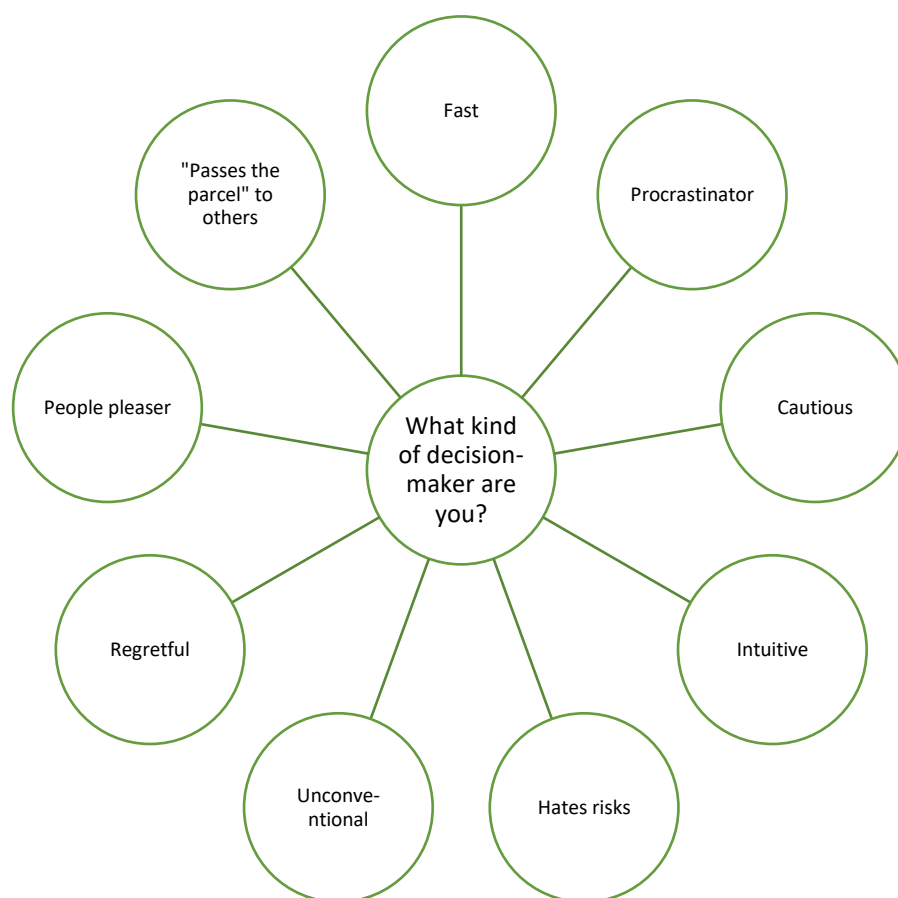
¹ iDashboards, “4 Tools & Strategies for Enhanced Decision-Making”, available online,

<https://www.idashboards.com/blog/2019/04/10/4-tools-strategies-for-enhanced-decision-making>

² Zamler, Galit. (2020), “The Ability to Take Calculated Risks”, Entrepreneurship for Kids™, available online <https://www.tomorrowsuccess.com/calculatedrisks.html>

- **Intuitive:** Makes decisions based on instinct.
- **Hates risks:** Prefers to make risk-free decisions.
- **Unconventional:** Thinks differently and out-of-the box and makes decisions that might cause surprise to other people.
- **Regretful:** Tends to regret the decisions made and sometimes -but not always- changes his/her mind.
- **People pleaser:** Makes decisions that put others needs before his/her own, trying to make other people happy, and not necessarily himself/herself.
- **“Passes the parcel” to others:** Lets other people make the decision, avoiding responsibility – something that a good entrepreneur would never do.

What we need to highlight about decision making and calculated risk is that people with entrepreneurial lifestyle always have to deal with their perceptions of reality, their emotions and beliefs, even with the previous experiences and future hopes, so as to be able to decide on something and take on a risk.



Types of decision-makers

Based on Zamler, G. (2020), "The Ability to Take Calculated Risks",
 Entrepreneurship for Kids™, <https://www.tomorrowsuccess.com/calculatedrisks.html>

No matter in which type of decision maker a person belongs (whether entrepreneur or not), having or/and developing management, financial and networking skills can help him/her making more effective decisions. Especially for people who run a business, it is very important knowing how to

delegate various functions and assign different roles to experts, as the business grows (having effective management skills is exactly what helps the business operate smoothly). It is impossible for an entrepreneur to handle all the tasks on his/her own. But even though these skills are not that developed, there are always “business mentors” who can help.

In addition, great entrepreneurs are able to connect with others and always have or make the right connections (customers, vendors, partners etc.) understanding that targeted (not general) networking is productive. Having good networking skills means to know how to add value to others, creating win-win situations. Effective networking needs time. If we take a closer look, not only great entrepreneurs but also happy people are the ones who know how to build strong relations with other people. When walking alone we may go faster, but when we go together, we definitely go further.

Last but not least, all people have to understand the importance of financial management being at the heart of a well-run business and a well-run household as well, leading to the right decisions for a prosperous future. Understanding the importance of financial management skills, however, does not mean that every one of us has to be an expert. But it does mean that we should find the right people and sources that can help.

2.3. Different Types of Entrepreneurs

Even for people who do not run or wish to start a business, learning about the different types of existing entrepreneurs can be very helpful. In fact, if we take a group of very successful entrepreneurs, we will see that their personalities, their backgrounds and even their education and skills are all radically different. However, they all have in common their ability to solve problems – an ability that we all need to develop to make our life easier. And different types of entrepreneurs can give us the motivation and the good example.

Before beginning a business or setting a goal, we need to have a (business) plan, that lays out any objectives we have as well as our strategy for achieving those objectives. This plan is important for getting investors on board, as well as measuring the success of the business. In addition, we need to define and make research about our target group/audience (age, gender, income, culture etc.), since not every business will appeal to everyone¹.

Understanding our type as an entrepreneur can be the key to creating a new business or growing an existing one and moving towards the milestones of success we are working to achieve. Classifications by social and behavioral scientists or people of the market vary despite the common ground, while the terminology used and the explanations given can be sometimes confusing.

In this subsection we will briefly discuss the five most common types of entrepreneurs (Innovators, Hustlers, Imitators, Researchers and Buyers) focusing on their characteristics and role, their advantages and disadvantages and seeing how each type affects the success of a business. In addition, we will present some examples of successful entrepreneurs.

Innovators, Hustlers, Imitators, Researchers, Buyers

Since there are so many types and sizes of businesses, there are also many kinds of entrepreneurship. There are people running a small business, a scalable startup or a large company or even social enterprises introducing solutions into the market that produce both profit and measurable social

¹ Learn how to become (2020), “How to Become an Entrepreneur”, available online <https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/entrepreneur>

impact. One way or another, all these engage entrepreneurship: small-scale, medium-scale or large-scale entrepreneurs, startups or social entrepreneurs.

However, leaving aside aspects related to the industry/sector or the business size, the country or the exact location, the era or the specific time period, there are also types of entrepreneurs that depend on factors such as personality traits, motivation, abilities, skills and attitude, as they are briefly discussed in the next paragraphs¹:

- **Innovators**

Innovators are the types of entrepreneurs who come up with completely new ideas and turn them into viable businesses. They are motivated by the idea of creating a legacy and changing the way people think about and the way they do things. Such entrepreneurs tend to be extremely passionate and obsessive, deriving their motivation from the unique nature of their business idea. Innovative entrepreneurs also find new ways to market their products by choosing product differentiation strategies that make their company stand out from the crowd or even actually creating a new audience.

The advantages of being an innovate entrepreneur include creating the rules, facing minimal competition during the beginning and also getting all the glory for the success of the business. On the other hand, except from the glory an innovative entrepreneur has to take all the arrows as well. Additional disadvantages include the need for significant capital to bring a new idea to life, resistance from shareholders and longer timeframe for bringing true innovation to life.

- **Hustlers**

Unlike innovators whose vision is “the gas in their engine”, hustlers are motivated by their dreams and will work extremely hard to achieve them. They create their own opportunities and know very well the importance of networking. They tend to be very focused and will get rid of all forms of distractions, favoring risks over short-term comfort. Hustlers often focus on starting small with the goal of becoming bigger in the future. Even though many hustlers rarely give up, a lot of them are willing to try anything to succeed which unfortunately means that they have a lot of hits and misses, while achieving their dreams takes a lot longer than most other types of entrepreneurs.

Being a hustler entrepreneur has advantages like strong will to outwork most, seeing disappointment and rejection as just another step in the process and tending to have “thick skin”, meaning that giving up is rarely an option. Hustlers know the importance of small things and make use of them effectively and efficiently. However, there are also disadvantages: hustlers usually tend to burn out, they often wear out their team members who don’t share the same work ethic, while most of the time they don’t see the value of raising capital as opposed to just working harder.

- **Imitators**

These entrepreneurs prefer to play safe by copying a successful business idea or model and improving upon them. For example, they iterate a certain feature or innovation to make a particular product better or change a business model to make it more appealing and have a competitive edge over the

¹ The Lonely Entrepreneur Blog (2018, August 13th), “5 Types of Entrepreneurs: Understanding The Unique Differences”, available online <https://lonelyentrepreneur.com/types-of-entrepreneurs> & Pahwa, Aashish (2020, July 2020), “The 10 Types Of Entrepreneurs [Infographic]”, Feedough.com – The entrepreneur’s guide, available online <https://www.feedough.com/types-of-entrepreneurs>

current market. In a way, “copycat entrepreneurs” are part innovators and part hustlers who don’t stick to the terms set by other people and have a lot of self-confidence.

The greatest advantages of imitators are that they know the opportunities and shortcomings of the business and they are risk takers but in a safer and usually less stressful way. In addition, they are great researchers, they learn from other peoples’ mistakes and they have an ability to build upon an existing idea choosing not to follow or do things on other people’s terms. The disadvantages of being an imitator includes that their ideas are always compared to the original ones and that they always have to “play catch-up”.

- **Researchers**

Researcher entrepreneurs usually believe in original viable ideas, that is why they prefer to start a business that has high chances of succeeding. In order to choose the right foolproof business to start, they spend a lot of time in gathering all the relevant information and they put in detailed work and effort to understand all aspects. They are visionaries and perfectionists, effective problem solvers and critical thinkers. Researchers usually take a lot of time to make decisions or to launch products because they need to analyze every subject from all angles minimizing the possibility of a failure. These entrepreneurs rely much more on data and facts than instincts and intuition.

The advantages of being a researcher entrepreneur include the following: plan for as many contingencies as possible, detailed and well-thought-out business/financial plans, good knowledge of the market and minimized chances of failing in the business. Of course, there are also disadvantages, since researchers typically move slow and their tense to avoid risks can hamper progress in a new venture. Another disadvantage is that they might fall into the habit of obsessing over the numbers and focusing less on the running of the business.

- **Buyers**

These entrepreneurs have financial wealth/resources and a great network and are ready to invest in any promising business. They might already have an experience in running a successful business and look for more opportunities, for original and different ideas. They have a thirst for knowledge and they act as a guide to new ventures. Buyer entrepreneurs will identify a business and assess its viability, proceed to acquire it and find the most suitable person to run and grow it.

Being a buyer has many advantages such as less risk, since you buy an already established venture and don’t have to worry so much about innovation. In addition, buyers can focus on building on something that has already gone through building a foundation and they already have a market for their products. On the other hand, buyer entrepreneurs usually pay a high price for good businesses and they face the risk of buying businesses that have problems that they think they can turn around.

Successful Entrepreneurs

There is no doubt that technology has enabled a new generation of entrepreneurs who use the latest digital technology so as to change the way things are done in various sectors. Examples of well-known “tech” entrepreneurs include the Microsoft founder **Bill Gates**, **Larry Page** of Google, the Apple co-founder **Steve Jobs** and the co-founder and CEO of the social-networking website Facebook **Mark Zuckerberg**.

The American **Jeff Bezos** (1964), founder of the multi-national technology company Amazon.com is usually mentioned as an example of a successful “researcher entrepreneur”¹. Back in 1994, Bezos read that the web was growing at a rate of 2,300% a year and he started looking for a way he could benefit from the phenomenal growth. He quitted his job on Wall Street and decided to sell books online since he noted that there were 3 million books in print in the world and there was a need to be able to organize them, search them and sell them electronically. In fact, he solved a problem for people who have used books but don’t know what to do with them by creating a website that allowed such people to meet online and sell used books to each other.

Amazon.com started creating value because it could be accessed 24/7 online by anyone with a computer and internet access. After the initial success with book swapping it began providing more services to members by selling new books, movies, electronics etc., improving continually its website to make it as customer friendly as possible.

Another inspiring example of a strong personality and successful entrepreneurial mindset is **Oprah Winfrey** (1954)², the famous TV host, global media leader and philanthropist. Oprah, despite her poor background and rough childhood and teen years (she has stated that she was molested during her childhood, became pregnant at 14 and her son was born prematurely and died in infancy), she never stopped pursuing her dreams and from working as an anchorwoman in Chicago managed to establish her own broadcasting network. Few know that before launching her career at the Oprah Winfrey Show in 1986, she was already a sky-rocketing broadcaster. But only after Oprah decided to take ownership and kick off her show on ABC, she unfolded a big entrepreneurial potential.



Jeff Bezos, Oprah Winfrey, Giorgio Armani

Source: Wikipedia.org

Her first job as a teenager was working at a local grocery store. Her speaking skills earned her a

¹ MIT-Africa Internet Technology Initiative (2005), “Entrepreneurship - Lecture 2: The Entrepreneurial Mindset”, available online https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/edgerton-center/ec-s01-internet-technology-in-local-and-global-communities-spring-2005-summer-2005/lecture-notes/MITEC_S01S05_e2_entre.pdf

² Hargrave, Marshal (2019, July 20), “Top 5 Most Successful American Entrepreneurs”, Investopedia, available online <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/092315/top-5-most-successful-american-entrepreneurs.asp> & Allen, Scott (2019, Feb.06), “Oprah Winfrey and Her Business Ventures. Broadcaster, Publisher and Philanthropist”, The Balance Small Business, available online <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/oprah-winfrey-entrepreneur-1200951>



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scholarship to Tennessee State University, where she majored in speech and drama. At the age of 17, she attracted the attention of a local black radio station, where Oprah impressed the managers with her passion and oration. Later, Oprah landed better gigs in leading radio stations and eventually on TV. Not pleased to work for someone else, Oprah Winfrey steadily grew her brand and her empire, founding Harpo Studios (that's "Oprah" spelled backwards), a multimedia company, in 1988. The company, through ad revenue and other revenue streams, has steadily grown to over 12,500 employees. She co-founded Oxygen Media, another media company that attracts millions of annual television viewers. Today (2020), Winfrey, a TV personality turned entrepreneur, has a net worth of \$2.6 billion.

The case of the Italian **Giorgio Armani** (1934), one of the most famous fashion designers in the world and successful entrepreneur is also worth to be mentioned. Armani was born in Piacenza, Italy to humble parents and he initially wanted to become a doctor. He enrolled in the Department of Medicine at the University of Milan, but after three years, in 1953, he left and joined the army. He eventually decided to look for a different career path and found a job as a window dresser at a department store in Milan in 1957. In the late 1960s, Armani met Sergio Galeotti, an architectural draftsman, which marked the beginning of a personal and professional relationship that lasted for many years. In fact, Galeotti inspired Armani to open his own design office. He succeeded as a freelance designer in the 1970s, and was motivated to create a label of his own. In 1975 Giorgio Armani founded his very own company named Giorgio Armani S.p.A, in Milan. He opened a United States branch located in New York in 1978 and his current net worth is \$8.1 Billion.

As Armani himself has stated in an interview¹ “I became a designer without knowing how to draw, and now I am becoming an entrepreneur, gaining experience as I go along. Remember, I grew up in a small, agricultural provincial town (Piacenza) and I brought with me the farmer's sixth sense about how much one can get done and when it is advisable to take a risk. I've now surrounded myself with specialists and I've been reading up on how the decision-making process should develop in a company. But the long and short of it for me is that the entrepreneur is the one who at the end decides yes or no and I like that even though it's a lot of responsibility (...)”.

3. EXERCISES AND QUIZZES

3.1. Exercise 1

Practical Exercise: The entrepreneurial mindset in action

The learner will have the chance to reflect and practice about essential entrepreneurial skills and traits in his/her day to day life, starting with the tiniest decisions. Being decisive, confident, responsible, resilient, flexible, passionate, self-motivated etc. takes practice to master and it can begin even with small decisions in the daily both personal and business life.

For example, “I want to become more decisive. The next time I will go out for lunch at a restaurant, I will scan the menu just once and decide what to order without spending too much time!”

Following this example, the learner is asked to think about his own personality traits, decide which characteristics and attitudes need improvement and find ways to build on his/her entrepreneurial mindset, starting from “simple” things and then begin to use it in bigger and bigger ways.

¹ Notizie Italiane (2001), “Giorgio Armani: A designer turns entrepreneur, available online https://ambtelaviv.esteri.it/resource/2007/03/13149_f_amb61NI14ottobre2001.pdf

3.2. Exercise 2

Practical Exercise: *Learning from successful entrepreneurs*

The learner is asked to identify a well-known successful entrepreneur and search on the web for articles, interviews, videos and other sources referring to his/her life and career. The point is to collect as much information as possible and answer/present or discuss the following questions:

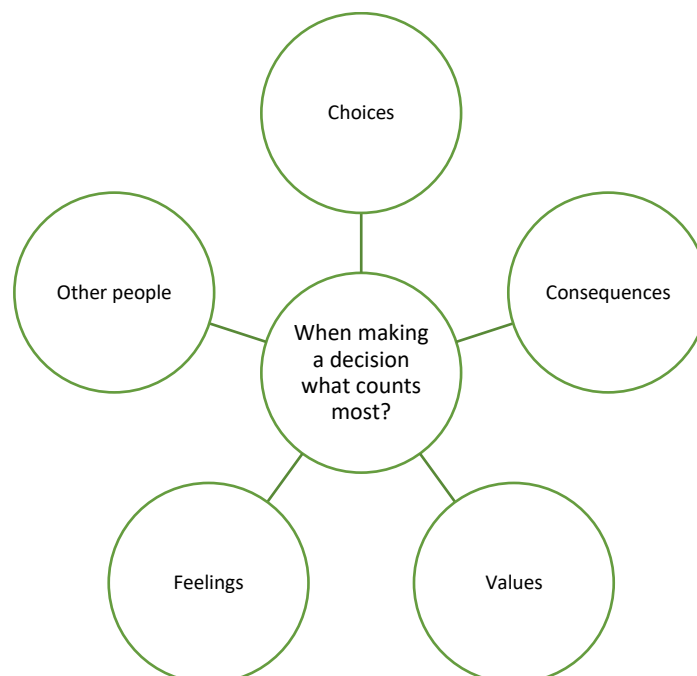
- Why is the entrepreneur considered as successful?
- What are his/her main characteristics as an entrepreneur?
- How did he/she create value? What has he/she done in a different way?
- How did he/she use the resources available to satisfy needs or solve problems?
- What were the obstacles and how did he/she managed to overcome them?
- What can we learn from this entrepreneur's example?

3.3. Exercise 3

Practical Exercise: *How do we make decisions?*

The learner is asked to use the following "Decision-Making Wheel" so as to reflect on his/her strengths and weaknesses while making decisions in different situations and in different environments (e.g. family, community, friends, work etc.). In addition, he/she is asked to think and discuss how other people around him/her (friends, relatives, colleagues) make decisions.

It is important for the learner to give examples and after completing the exercise, to answer these questions: "Did I learn something new about myself? If yes, what?", "How could I improve my way of thinking and decision making?"



4. FURTHER READING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- European Commission, “Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs” (a cross-border programme facilitating the exchange of entrepreneurial and management experience), more information https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/supporting-entrepreneurship/erasmus-young-entrepreneurs_en
- European Commission, “Supporting entrepreneurship”, more information https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/supporting-entrepreneurship_en
- Holgate, Mandie (2020, June 4th), “How to Take Calculated Risk to Achieve Success”, Lifehack, available online <https://www.lifehack.org/768345/how-to-take-calculated-risk>
- Nastor, Jonny (2020) “Entrepreneurial Mindset: How to Think Like an Entrepreneur”, Hack the entrepreneur, available online <https://hacktheentrepreneur.com/entrepreneurial-mindset>
- Risk Management, Investopedia, various sources available online <https://www.investopedia.com/risk-management-4689652>
- Robehmed, Natalie (2013), “100 best websites for entrepreneurs”, Forbes, available online <https://www.forbes.com/sites/natalierobehmed/2013/11/12/100-best-websites-for-entrepreneurs/#57ce767829f6>
- TREND (Training Refugees in Entrepreneurial Skills using Digital Devices) - a European Union funded initiative that aims at helping refugees set up their own business, <http://trend.credinfo.eu/>
- Sound of Business (S.O.B.), a European Union funded initiative that aims at boosting business skills through an innovative training approach based on the idea that music (in particular the history of Rock music) can be used as a cue to train adults about management, business and entrepreneurship, <https://soundofbusiness.eu>
- Self-Regenerate, a European Project that aims at increasing the opportunities for entrepreneurial careers of young people in peripheral regions, <https://www.selfregenerate.eu>

5. TESTS VERIFYING THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

5.1. Initial Assessment

Question 1

Do you know what entrepreneurship is?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I am not so sure

Question 2

Do you know what defines an entrepreneurial lifestyle and mindset?

- a) Yes
- b) No



c) I am not so sure

Question 3

Would you be able to mention at least 5 characteristics of a successful entrepreneurial mindset?

a) Yes, definitely

b) Yes, but I wouldn't be so confident about my answer

c) No

Question 4

Do you know the difference between an "entrepreneur" and an "internal entrepreneur or intrapreneur"?

a) Yes

b) No

c) I can guess

Question 5

Would you be able to describe the decision-making process for entrepreneurial decisions?

a) No, it seems quite difficult

b) Yes, but I am not sure if I could include all necessary steps

c) Yes, I could describe all necessary steps

Question 6

Would you be able to mention at least three different types of entrepreneurs?

a) I could guess, but I wouldn't be sure about my answer

b) Yes

c) No

Question 7

Do you know the difference between an "innovator", a "hustler" and a "buyer" entrepreneur?

a) Yes

b) No



c) I could guess, but I wouldn't be sure about my answer

Question 8

Do you know what does it mean to take risks as an entrepreneur but also in your daily life?

a) It is dealing with problems that could destroy your business or life.

b) It means to calculate the probability of a perceived threat for your business or life and the magnitude of its impact on your objectives.

c) It is dealing with uncertain events and calculate the probability of a perceived opportunity or threat and the extend of its impact on your objectives.

c) No/I am not sure

Question 9

Would you be able to mention at least 5 different types of decision-makers?

a) I could guess, but I wouldn't be sure about my answer

b) No

c) Yes

Question 10

Who do you think needs the most to learn more about the entrepreneurial lifestyle and mindset?

a) People who want to create a new business or grow an existing one

b) People who wish to be more effective in achieving both personal and business goals

c) All the above

Correct Answers

1-A

2-A

3-A

4-A

5-C

6-B

7-A

8-C

9-C

10-C

Level of the class matrix:

0-4	The student needs to deeply study these contents, as well as guidance and assistance by the trainer.
5-6	The student will benefit from studying these contents, improving his/her knowledge regarding certain topics and learning new things.
7-8	The student only needs to study several specific contents of this module.
9-10	The student does not need to study these contents.

5.2. Final Assessment

Question 1

You want to become an entrepreneur but you are not that sure about what business to choose/which field or sector would be better to start with. What do you do?

- You ask your friends and relatives and make a decision based on the majority's preference.
- You decide to pick something that you are passionate about, so that to focus on a business that you really love and care about.
- You chose something that involves new technologies simply because they will continue to impact our life.
- You follow the example of your best friend/former colleague/trusted relative who has become a successful entrepreneur, even if the job doesn't seem that exciting for you.

Question 2

You are running a new business for one year now and you want to know if your business is successful. What do you do?

- You ask your financial manager about his opinion
- You check if you have followed your business plan and if you're seeing growth
- You are conducting a survey among your clients to see if they are content with your business
- You do not actually need to check on anything as long as you have money in your pocket

Question 3

You want to become more self-confident but you don't know how to start with. What do you do?



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- a) Start visualizing yourself as you want to be, get out of your comfort zone and try to change the language you use when talking to yourself or about yourself
- b) Surround yourself with people who are over-confident or even arrogant so as to take useful lessons
- c) There are no effective ways that can help us upgrade our mindset, so in fact there is nothing you can do about it
- d) Do every day one thing that scares you, even if it is dangerous and try to take more risks even if they are not calculated

Question 4

You have a great entrepreneurial idea and you want to start a new business. You understand the importance of financial management but you are not good in dealing with numbers, statistics, expenses, salaries, investments etc. What do you do?

- a) You decide to give up on the idea of becoming an entrepreneur
- b) You don't have to be an expert, but you can always find the right associates e.g. an experienced financial manager to help you
- c) You can start your business anyway and start learning step-by-step by attending e-courses on financial management
- d) Good ideas always succeed, no matter what

Question 5

As a manager in your business, you have to make a decision on a matter that is neither urgent, nor important. What would you do?

- a) Nothing in particular
- b) Delegate it to another member of your team
- c) Delay the decision until it becomes urgent
- d) Leave aside other more urgent and important decisions that scare you and focus on that which seems to be easier

Correct Answers

1-B

2-B

3-A

4-B

5-B

3.2. Why We Need to Take Responsibility for Our Own Experiences? How to Connect Our Dreams with Our Skills and a Market Opportunity? How to Maximise Our Resources and Effort to Achieve Our Goals?



1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Aim of the Module

Part of the topic section Entrepreneurship Lifestyle of the Self-Help Handbook, this module guides the reader through a lifelong learning journey to reflect on questions like: Why We Need to Take Responsibility for Our Own Experiences? How to Connect Our Dreams with Our Skills and a Market Opportunity? How to Maximise Our Resources and Effort to Achieve Our Goals?

Having an entrepreneurial mindset means to develop a way of thinking that helps us to take ownership and accept responsibility for our actions; to overcome challenges with resilience and openness to change; to perform self-analysis and apply creativity, pragmatism and planning techniques in daily life; to be proactive and maximise our strengths to achieve our goals.

Definitely an entrepreneurial lifestyle requires a constant need to improve our competences, learning from our mistake and taking continuous action on our dream, ideas and personal/professional projects.

*"All our dreams can come true,
if we have the courage to pursue them. "*

Walt Disney ©

1.2. Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, the learners will:

- A. Understand why responsibility matters and what means to take ownership of owns life
- B. Describe short-term change in the todays' life
- C. Identify ways to be more flexible, applying principles of resilience and adaptability
- D. Respond to change quickly and positively to deal with the uncertain
- E. Practice creative thinking techniques on daily routine
- F. Take a pragmatic approach to judge dreams and get things done
- G. Distinguish between skills, strengths and interests
- H. Strategic judge market opportunities based on own dreams and skills, strengths and interests
- I. Analyse and maximise resources to achieve owns goals



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- J. Recognise the characteristics of proactive people, exploring and cultivating a proactive behaviour

1.3. Soft Skills

At the same time, this module will also contribute to raise develop and strength a set of important soft skills, including:

- Self-leadership – the ability to lead ourselves to achieve our personal and professional goals and objectives, through the practice of intentionally influencing our thinking, feeling and actions
- Responsibility – the quality or state of being answerable as the primary source, cause, motive or agent for making choices and decisions, and of being creditable or chargeable with the result
- Flexibility – the capacity to adjust to short-term change quickly and calmly, so that we can deal with unexpected problems or tasks effectively
- Resilience - the ability to adapt to significant adversity, recover quickly and bounce back
- Common sense - the ability to think and behave in a reasonable way, making decision based on a simple perception of the situation or the facts
- Creative thinking - the ability to consider something in a new way
- Strategic thinking – the ability to plan for the future, considering changing environments and challenges
- Self-awareness – the ability to focus on ourselves and how our actions, thoughts or emotions do or do not align with our internal standards
- Analytical skills - the ability to collect and analyse information, problem-solve and make decisions
- Proactivity – the ability to act in anticipation of future problems, needs or changes



Source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/m0l9NBCivuk>



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2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Why We Need to Take Responsibility for Our Own Experiences?

Some entrepreneurs prefer to avoid their responsibility in different levels of their business and rather transfer it to others (e.g. employees, customer, business partners), due likely, the high pressure in managing a business. Can a shop's owner assume that the business is not doing well because soundly the clients do not want to buy anymore its products or services? Or a market research should be done before or even analysing the sales data in frequent periods of time to decide what needs to be changed?

Failure goes hand-in-hand with success. Michael Jordan, the famous NBA basketball player, in an interview for the newspaper Chicago Tribune, in 1997 said "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career, I've lost almost 300 games, 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." This life example shows well how success comes with taking responsibility for own experiences.

Recognising mistakes are lessons to learn and taking responsibility for actions and its consequences reflects the ability to improve personal growth, move forward and succeed. Acknowledging responsibility for own actions implies the awareness for choosing to react in certain ways or deciding for a particular solution. And, most importantly, to assume it.

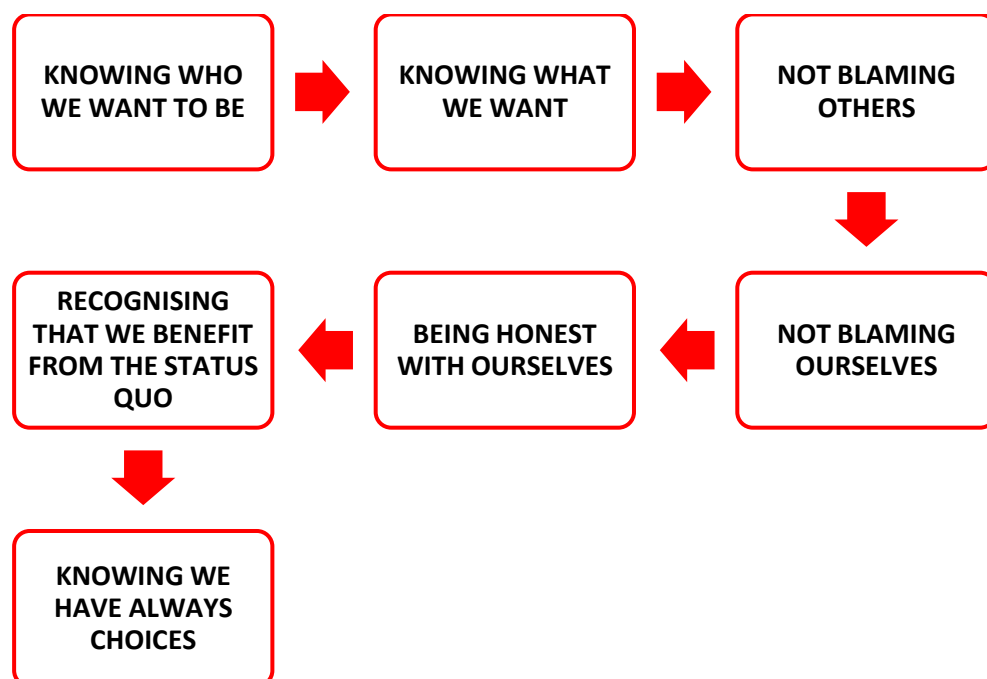
Life, at its simplest, is a continuous, simultaneous, parallel process of making decisions, either to initiate action or respond to the environment. Taking personal responsibility for our thoughts and actions is challenging and requires a willingness to learn from our mistakes, own our successes and failures, stop externally excuse our circumstances and take internal control of our life.



Source: https://unsplash.com/photos/S0hFspmvm_s

In order to know if we are taking responsibility for our life, it is important to analyse the following principles:

1. Knowing who we want to be – any individual needs a life plan to success and be happy, and for that we need to know the person that we want to be and what is important for us. A clear purpose of life and values will guide our choices and help us to priorities and focus on what really matters
2. Knowing what we want – if we are aware about what we really want from life, setting effective goals and purposes, then taking responsibility for our choices and actions is much more easier
3. Not blaming others – is an easy way out, but also a trap we all tend to fall into. In fact, when we are blaming others we are assuming that we are not capable to fix the situation, and therefore we lose the control of it. But if we decide to take responsibility our focus change and we will do whatever possible to understand what went wrong and solve the problem
4. Not blaming ourselves – blaming is not an option; just because we should not blame other it does not mean that we must blame ourselves. Responsibility means acceptance, is empowering. Blame, on the other hand, means rejection and is disempowering. The root of self-blame is a barrier to recognising relative responsibility
5. Being honest with ourselves – the first golden rule here is to give up all of the excuses (e.g. I am too busy, I am too tired, I am too young/old). And then, stop moaning and start acting to put in course the changes which we really want to make
6. Recognising that you benefit from the Status quo – i.e. from the current situation, when we know that something in our life needs to change but we are not doing it. Once again, will be easy to start with excuses. But once we take the responsibility and acknowledge the benefits of this situation, our chances of success in move on greatly increase
7. Knowing we have always choices – often we say to ourselves that we had no choice. And with this excuse, we self-absolve of all responsibility for the outcomes of our decisions. But, regardless of the situation, there is always a choice. It can be an unpleasant one, or felt like is not a realistic alternative, but we do have to make a choice



Taking Ownership and Accepting Responsibility

Before the will to embrace an entrepreneurship lifestyle, reach financial independence and imagining (just) days of glory, it is wisdom to take ownership of all the aspects of a future business. Ownership taking is the beginning of the so desired professional independence but with it comes full responsibility. The expression “Maximum freedom maximum responsibility” suits perfectly here.

Taking personal or professional ownership means standing up and announcing that we are responsible for something, but this can be a challenging process for most individuals. Over time, we have become used to blaming external factors for our circumstances, and it has turned into an automatic response. And to help us embedding this habit, we often listen from “higher authorities” that it's not our fault that our lives are not perfect — it's due to macro-level factors like the economy, government, globalisation, crises. Or, on a micro-level, it's the fault of our DNA, parents, education, kids, community, jobs.

But in reality, we have more control over our lives than we think we do. And like all bad habits, this unhelpful way of thinking can be broken, and we can take ownership and control over our life.



Source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/FGHJG17-tEU>

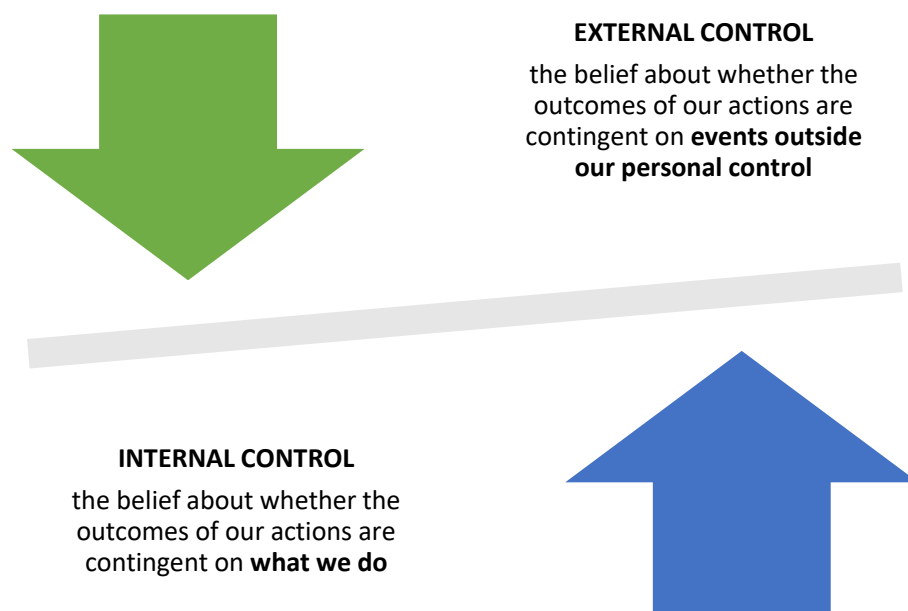
The “locus of control” plays an important role in taking ownership. There are many factors that influence the way how do we think and act, such as our belief system, personality, education, behavioural tendencies, culture or circumstances. In the realm of personal responsibility, how we view the world and our ability to influence our own circumstances is ruled by our locus of control. This locus of control is either internal or external.

It is important to note that locus of control is a continuum. Nobody has 100% external or internal locus of control. Instead, most individuals lie somewhere on the continuum between the two extremes, yet everybody has a dominant way.

A person with a more internal locus of control tend to have self-determination, personal agency and therefore higher levels of personal responsibility. S/he is more likely to have more confidence, work hard to achieve goals and take ownership of her/his decisions.

According to research, men appear to have a higher internal locus of control than women, and that ageing is also associated with a more dominant internal control. Studies also show that, in general, people with an internal locus of control tend to be in a better situation.

Not surprising that the internal locus of control is associated with intentions to become entrepreneur, as there is a strong believe that success is determined by owns efforts and abilities. Certainly, having the individual perception that we are our own master and can act to change own conditions helps us lead a more engaged, fulfilling and entrepreneurship lifestyle.



Individuals with higher external locus of control are more likely to be influenced by other people, feel caught up in the flow of life, and feel powerless to change. Often, others (or things) are seen as the reason for not achieving their goals. They tend to feel unsure about themselves and their abilities and are less likely to strive for the things they want to pursue in life.

To overcome this tendency, a good strategy is to pay attention to our self-talk. When we hear ourselves saying things like "I have no choice," or "There's nothing I can do," we must step back and remind ourselves that we can always make choices. Necessarily, this implies to move out our comfort zone, make a conscious choice to change, be willing to get uncomfortable, and take steps to cultivate an identity of self-responsibility and build ownership.



Resilience and Openness to Change

Sometimes changing is needed and some changes happen quickly. For example, by the moment this module was drafted, the world was, and still is, living a new pandemic context – the COVID-19 – which demands us all to adjust, adapt and change in a short-term notice some aspects of our lives, even the simplest and related with daily routines.

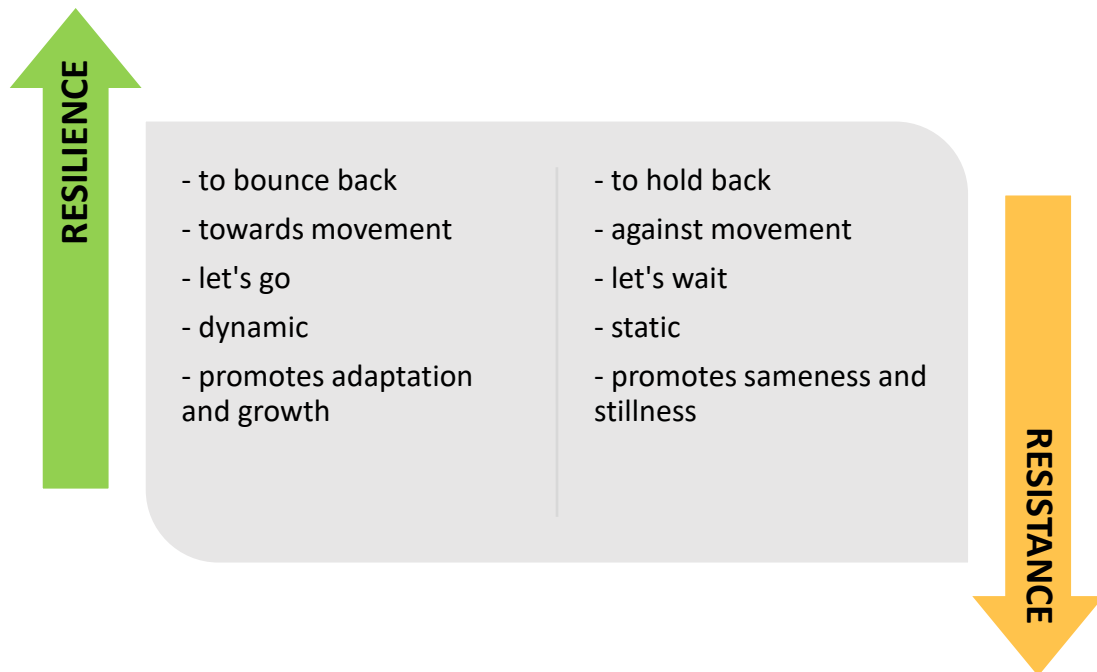
As consequence of this short-term change, at personal, professional, and social level each one of us had to adopt measures (as the use of facial masks) to protect ourselves and others from something we do not see. The scientific world is trying to discover more facts every day, hour, and minutes to help us to cope with this new today's life reality. But one thing we have already learnt, the unknown brings uncertainty, fear, discouragement, and the sensation of losing our freedom and life control.



Source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/Z9arfr0f248>

The world keeps moving and so have we, and the only constant in our life is change. Change can take so many forms: the subtle, almost imperceptible change, or the one happening at every single moment; the dramatic one that will turn something upside down in a split second; and the change that, while very impactful, is more gradual. Some change we can control, others we cannot; some we can initiate; others we cannot; some feel permanent, others seem reversible and malleable. And, certainly, living in a constant change, day after day, brings a certain level of uncertainty.

Uncertainty comes with the process of change. The process of change is not always easy, and this is one of the reasons why people are resistant to change. Resistance and resilience constructs can help to better understand the response to the process of change. Whereas resistance is related with the refusal to accept or to comply with something, resilience relates to the capacity to recover fast from difficulties and reshape things.



We can glimpse a potential conflict here, but the truth is that those that are more flexible and resilient, overcome obstacles and abrupt changes better than those who tend to refuse change staying in the old mindset and ways of behaving.

So, let us focus on the resilience concept since it is a useful and powerful tool to help in the process of change. Resilient people find new ways in adversity, have the ability to heal emotionally and the capacity to continue moving forward.

Everyone has resilience! It is a matter to know how much and how well people use it in their lives. Resilience does not mean that we are not feeling the intensity of life events or adversities; means is that we have found a positive way to deal with those issues quicker and adaptably than others do.

Many people use the terms adaptable and resilience interchangeably. However, they mean different things and we live and use them differently.

Adaptability helps us to create options. When we are adaptable, we accept that reality has changed. And because we admit that we have a new reality, we can find new approaches to manage our responses to our accelerating changing world.

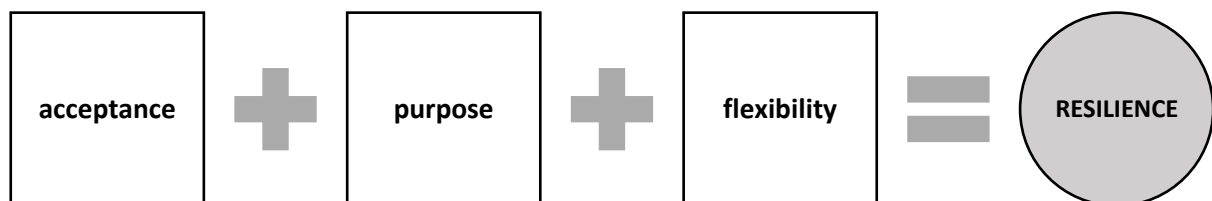
Resilience helps us to move forward. And we can all learn how to increase our resilience abilities. Building our resilience is possible just like develop any other skills. What matters here is to have the strength of will.



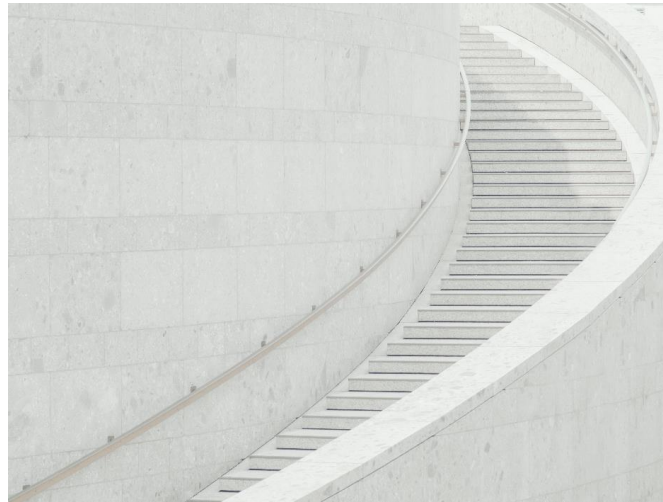
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For most of us, resilience is seen as a characteristic of those facing a drastic event, but most of the times resilience is not a heroic state and it is, in fact, ordinary in all of us. For example, taking criticism well from others instead of getting defensive, or processing grief in a healthy conscious way instead of denying it. Research recognises that there are three common traits in highly resilient people:

- Acceptance - of the way things really are, neither being too optimistic or too pessimist, allow us to be more effective in defining ways to cope with the changes and challenges
- Purpose – the more of intrinsic values we have, the stronger our sense of purpose is, and therefore the more motivation we have to thrive in adversities
- Flexibility - resilient people have an uncanny ability to be flexible and adapt to change instead of resist to it, and to do so they use as strategy taking control of what is really possible, of themselves



Building better resilience is a personal path to do and it that takes time, strong will, commitment and focus. In a realistic perspective, it will not happen overnight, or after reading a couple of specialised books about the subject or seeking for professional help with a psychologist. It might take more time to some of us to learn how to be more resilient, but with patience and training, this skill will be felt clearer and strongly.



Source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/tb4heMa-ZRo>

There are many ways to increase resilience and respond to change quickly and positively:

1. Make connections - building strong family, personal and professional relationships is fundamental to develop and increase resilience. Accepting help and support from those who care about us strengthens our resilience
2. Find solutions - every problem has a solution, otherwise would not be a problem. It is not easy to avoid a highly stressful event, but it is possible to change the way it is understood, accepted and responded. Trying and practicing looking beyond the present and how future circumstances may bring a positive perspective to solve a problem
3. Accept change – one thing is certain in life, change is part of it and living some sudden event may alter certain goals and affect projects and dreams. Looking for alternatives and not only into circumstances that cannot be changed can help
4. Achieve goals - after developing realistic goals, even what it might seem small accomplishments will help moving towards these goals
5. Act on adversity - the problems will not go away even if we wish it. Taking decisive actions as much as possible, is part of the process and it is an ownership statement
6. Learn from experience - every setback is an opportunity to learn. Often, we learn something and feel that we have grown in some way as a result of the struggle with loss or traumatic event. Who have experienced tragedies have reported better relationships, bigger sense of strength even while feeling vulnerability. These experiences are strongly connected with the sense of self-worth, developed spirituality and higher appreciation for life
7. Be positive – by nurturing this feeling and developing more confidence in the ability to solve problems. Trusting in instincts helps to build and increase resilience
8. Put into perspective - facing stressful situations as a big picture ahead in a broader context, can help. Seeing the bright side of each situation is a continuous learning path
9. Be optimist, but realist – keeping a hopeful perspective on what comes ahead when dealing with problems enables the capacity to hope for better times. In a realistic mindset, might not happen in the next day, but is the way to look into the future
10. Be your best friend – it is important to pay attention to ourselves and to our feelings and needs. Practice activities and hobbies can help to relax the mind and body, increase our resilience and prepare us for the upcoming changes



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These principles can be keys that will work not only at the present and in future events, but as well when we look back to former experiences. Past events can be a source of inner strength, and by analysing them we can understand what strategies were adopted and in this way better enhance our resilience.

Resilience involves keeping balance and flexibility in all dimensions of life, to better:

- Experience strong feelings and realise when to avoid them to continue healthy
- Know and understand when to step up or step back when needed to reenergise
- Nurture the inner self and spend time with the loved ones
- Build self-confidence and rely on others

Resilience is also a key ingredient for a successful entrepreneurship lifestyle. Entrepreneurs are more likely to face daily changes and adversities than any other person. They feel bold and challenged in that way, and to be both happy and successful they need to be highly resilient.

2.2. How to Connect Our Dreams with Our Skills and a Market Opportunity?

Having dreams is important once it moves us ahead and makes us believe in something, taking dynamic actions guided by our thoughts. In a very simple way, we know that this moving forward drives us to development, achievements and allow us to growth as individuals, at personal and professional level.

Knowing this, as a common sense way of thinking, we should and could take dreams to the maximum level, the highest peak in our lives, giving the best of us and, who knows, influence others to do the

same. This can be the difference between excitement and apathy, between doing something with our lives or just live the life as is, with no goals.

What if dreams are not there to guide us? This is, again, a matter of choice. A strong believe that we have something to give out there, in a positive and contributory way, solving existing problems and overcoming challenges is not only exciting, but reveals a sense of mission and fulfilment. Where there are no dreams there is no hope, there is no active and creative thinking. Proactivity is replaced by resignation.

Pursuing our dreams is important:



Connecting our dreams to our skills is the key to empower ourselves and raise our personal awareness. All of us can develop a set of skills to be better equipped to pursuit dreams and embrace opportunities.

These life opportunities can be seen as an open market, and sometimes we lose them because the fear of the consequences of doing a change or due to the lack of attitude and passion to follow our dreams.

Passion and a positive attitude combined with creative thinking, pragmatism, self-analysis and strategic planning can be seen as essential skills to pursuit dreams and make them real.



Source: <https://petit-prince-collection.com/>

Creative Thinking and Pragmatism

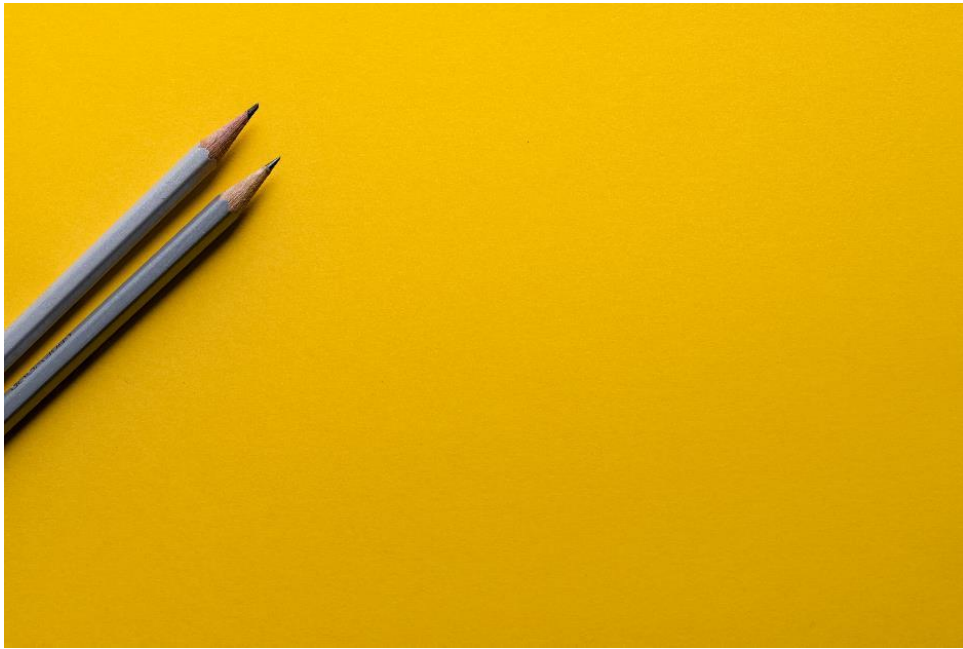
“A dream without a plan is just a wish.” Even though there are some doubts about the author of this sentence, if the French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry or the children’s book writer Katherine Paterson, it highlights the importance of ones be creative and pragmatic to make a dream come true.

Indeed, to realise our personal and professional dreams, we need a mixture of creativity, the so often called “out of the box” thinking, with pragmatism, keeping the “feet on the ground”. So, to succeed in this path, on the one hand, plans must include pragmatic judgments based on what is possible, and at the same time reflect creative thinking.

Creative thinking is the ability to make new connections between things or to consider something in a new way, in an open and receptive mind to do things with a new approach. To practice creative thinking, inputs from different sources are stimulating, either from books, online platforms, past experiences, role models, business models or just observational capacity to perceive patterns that are not obvious.



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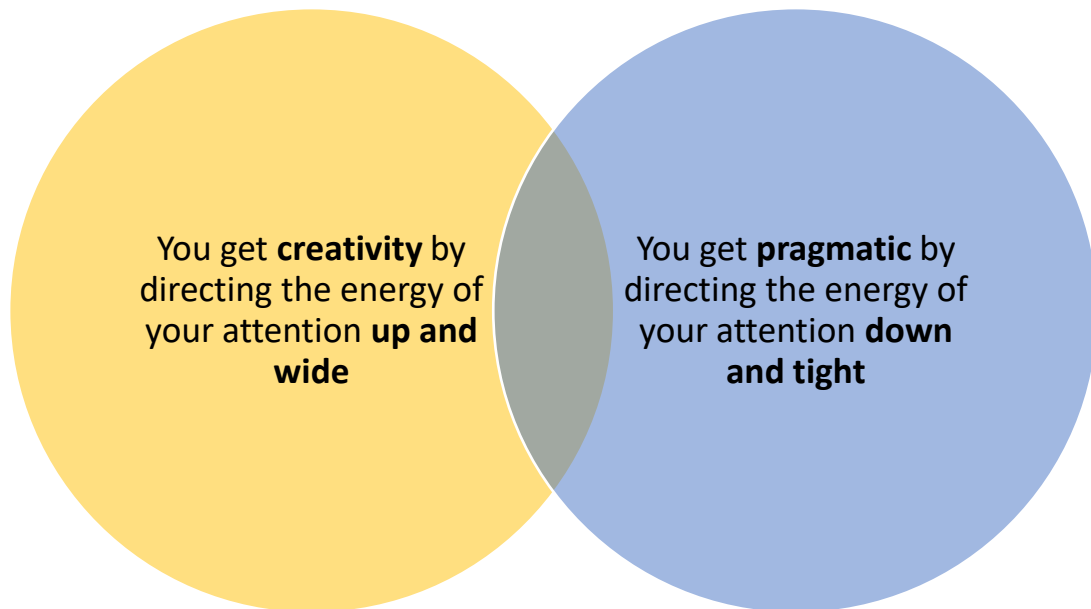


Source: https://unsplash.com/photos/1_CMoFsPfs0

Creative thinking is not something that some people are inherently born with. But anyone can develop and nurture creative thinking, and there are ways that can help to boost it, specially trying to be more:

- Analytic - before thinking or doing something, the creativity process starts with understanding it. By examining things and its context carefully, we gain the necessary background to explore different options in a creative way
- Open-minded - the attempt to look at things as it was the first time. This is one of photography principles, and helps us to have a fresh look even into things that we have seen before. By putting assumptions aside, the creative process flows easier
- Organised - even though creative people are known for not being so organised, organisation is required in the creative thinking process. Like in every process, steps are taken to the next level and others to understand an idea, and organisation helps it
- Good communicator - people will understand and appreciate a creative idea if communicated effectively. Strong written and oral communication skills are the key to do so. Good listener skills are, also, very important in this process
- Flexible – flexibility helps to look at something from a different angle or point of view, and therefore is one of the cornerstones of creative thinking

Creative thinking can become a way of life, an important one for any dreamer. However, this “blue-sky thinking” way must be balanced with a “down to earth” pragmatic thinking. Know how and when to direct the right energy in the right moment is fundamental to reach balance and follow a solid path.



Pragmatism emphasises logic and rationality, encourages specific thinking and turning ideas into reality. For this to happen we will need to narrow down the frames of reference, leaving no space for things that are not relevant. The key is to focus the attention on concrete details of what has to be done.

A pragmatic person is often associated to someone that has a strong personality, and which is characterised by having a logical and analytical mindset, be strategic and a good time planner, take action and achieve goals for own benefit.

Like creative thinking, pragmatism can also be developed, by tracking and using a number of methods in our life:

- Logic conclusion – applied to all tasks and goals, starting with those that are smaller
- Time management - keeping a diary/agenda of to dos to be more efficient
- Goals set – planning short and long-term goals, defining deadlines, tools for implementation, a list of contacts of people who may be useful
- Step-by-step - crushing large tasks into small steps
- Self-discipline – following the daily plan, identifying distracting factors and eliminating them
- Self-reinvention - conformity is the silent enemy of pragmatism
- Emotions - developing calmness and positivity

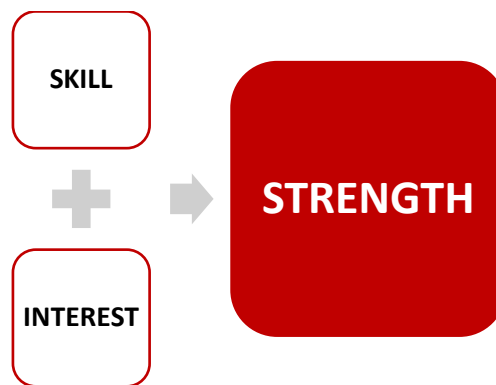
The common mantra of the pragmatic thinker is that “truth is whatever works.” And this can be a very helpful way, because avoids us to over-thinking, keeping us grounded in real market opportunities and guiding our action to desirable results.

Self-Analysis and Strategic Planning

As we realised, creative thinking and pragmatism are fundamental skills to put our plans and ideas into motion. As we realised, creative thinking and pragmatism are fundamental skills to put our plans and ideas into motion. Simultaneously, it is also important to evaluate and understand our skills, interests, and strengths to outline a personal strategy to give us the right direction to pursue our dreams.

We tend to “live” in our own minds; sometimes in the future, with hopes and dreams; others stuck in the past, only with a small perception of the present and the current opportunities. Skills, interests, and strengths play an important role when we are looking at future.

A skill is the ability to do something well. An interest is something that we are motivated by. Not every interest is supported by a skill. Skills can be developed over a period of time, with particular success if motivated by an interest. In some cases, the skills match the areas of interest. These are our strengths.

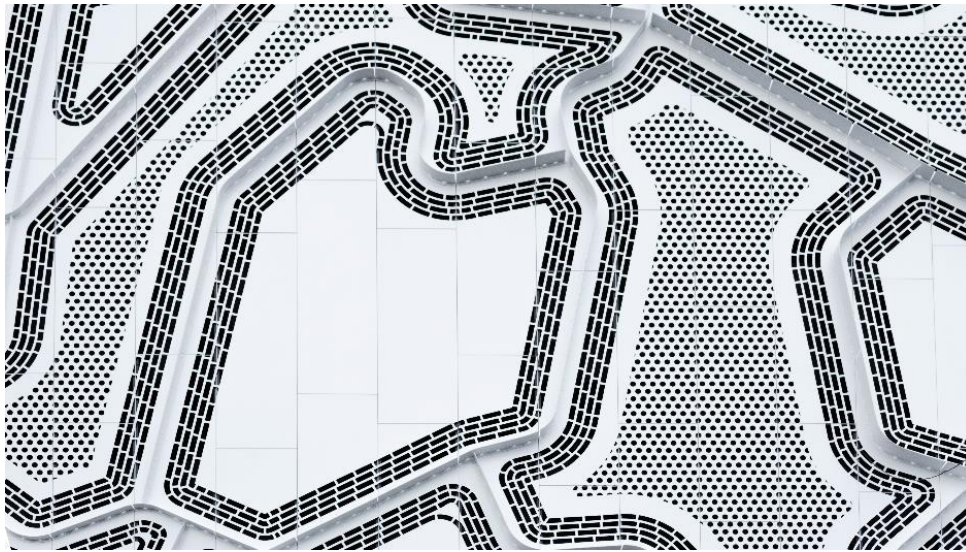


Self-analysis helps us to be aware of ourselves, of what we think and what we are, allowing us to focus on what really matters to us – on our strengths. Self-analysis can be practiced. There are some simple steps that can be done to increase this awareness and capacity:

- Knowing ourselves – our attitudes and behaviour, emotions and thoughts, strengths and weaknesses, fears and dreams, accepting how we are in understanding not in judgement, being aware of self-limitations to overcome it
- Thinking pattern - a strategic thinker has the capacity to perceive and understand things quicker. Usually, noting down ideas and thoughts helps to identify a pattern and the trigger behind it, giving us a better organised thinking structure
- Checking our roadmap - sometimes we just must stop to know where we are in our own road, like when we are driving and having doubts about the way. Tracking the self in emotional states, personal milestones and actions done is fundamental to have a better perception of the next step to take, even if it is a step back, which can be needed
- Gaining perspective – what really matters is to build a strong self-esteem and not really care about what others might think. Comparing today’s self with the self of yesterday, instead with the self of others. Reminding that life is not a competition even if some think so - life is a personal journey

A self-analysis exercise helps us to gain clarity and focus by exploring where we have been and creating a pathway to where we are going. To succeed in this journey, besides the gaining awareness of our

minds, it is essential to well align our actions toward what is most important to us, creating a personal strategic plan.



Source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/j6Y4lyBFVdc>

A personal strategic plan has the following elements:

1. Personal mission statement - defines who we are and steers how we want our dreams to go: “My purpose is...”
2. Personal vision statement - gives a sense of direction and represents what we wish to become or wish our life to be like. It is aspirational and embodies what our future self and future life will look like. A vision statement deals with tomorrow, while mission deals with today
3. Top core values - personal values are the things that are important to us, motivating and guiding our decisions. Defining our core values will ensure that our strategic plan is the right plan for achieving what is most important to us
4. Strategic focus areas – family, work, health, leisure, etc., that are the most important of our life and that we want to focus on and prioritise
5. Objectives – it is important to identify one or more objectives for each focus area. An objective is a target or intention, must be attainable, and can also be something that we want to maintain or sustain. Objectives define strategies or implementation steps to attain the goals that we want to achieve

Without a goal, a direction we are just lost. Strategic planning is the process of establishing a direction knowing where we are and where we are going. It is a process where values, vision and mission can be perceived clearly, as well as intentions and goals. And to achieve our goals, and cope with the setbacks that happen in all areas of life, sometimes we need to change tactic and have backup plans.

A backup plan is not a precursor for failure. The reason why there is a “plan B” is because, strategically when designing “plan A” some anticipation had place predicting what could go wrong. Having other plans means that the “show can go on”. It is not a preparation to fail, but instead a recipe to succeed.

With solid backup plans, we gain peace of mind. Nothing in life goes smoothly, but planning for the most common breaking points can help navigate difficult times without straying from the overarching



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goals. Strategic planning helps us to be more adaptive and overcoming obstacles, keeping plans on track by revising plan As into even better plans Bs or Cs.



For an effective strategic planning is needed to be a strategic thinker. A strategic thinker has the ability to see ahead, identify the consequence of own decisions and point the way to move on. Paloma Cantero-Gomez wrote an article in Forbes magazine in 2019, identifying seven critical skills of successful strategic thinkers:

1. Vision - strategic thinkers often are able to create a very clear visioning process
2. Framework - strategic thinkers recognise that vision should be embedded within a framework. They set the objectives and develop an action plan with separate goals into measurable tasks
3. Perceptiveness - good strategic thinkers understand things from multiple perspectives. They have the ability to listen, hear, and perceive the world beyond the obvious
4. Assertiveness - strategic thinkers defend their points of view without disparaging others, persuading without forcing, and are easily followed
5. Flexibility - strategic thinkers have the habit to seek advice from others, are humble enough to be open to other's ideas, and flexible enough to shape their ideas and framework to achieve the desired vision
6. Emotional balance - strategic thinkers can balance their emotions in such a way that always favours the achievement of ultimate goals
7. Patience - strategic thinkers know that achievement is often a long-term process

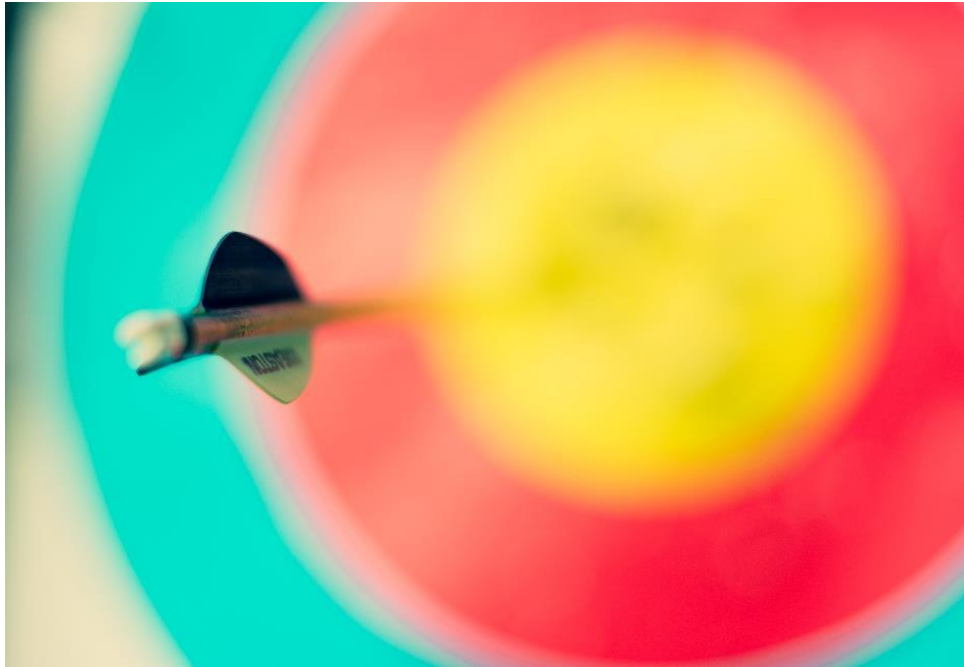
These skills, if combined with personal or professional interests, can be also considered strengths, inner forces that drive us ahead. At the heart of strategic thinking is the ability to anticipate major shifts in the marketplace and identify emerging opportunities.

Connecting our skills, interests and strengths to our dreams might seem easier on the personal level than in the professional plan. But as in personal life, also market opportunities are volatile and the key is to judge them carefully and then apply strategic planning principles to address each one. And in this process, maximising our strengths and putting them on the service of our entrepreneurial mindset is a way to turn or dreams a reality.

2.3. How to Maximise Our Resources and Efforts to Achieve Our Goals?

Challenging ourselves to reach "other level" or to think "out of the box" are ways to get the best of us. Everything that makes us move forward, that boosts our aspirations and turns it into achievements is like fuel for our engine.

The way to maximise resources and efforts to achieve the defined goals requires a lot of what we have learnt in this module. Everything makes sense in coherency when designing a plan, setting specific goals, pointing multiple ways to achieve the goals, evaluating each one, and having the big picture in a time frame makes the difference, if not all.



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Despite, achieve goals is not always easy, and some reasons for we don't succeed to do so can be related with:

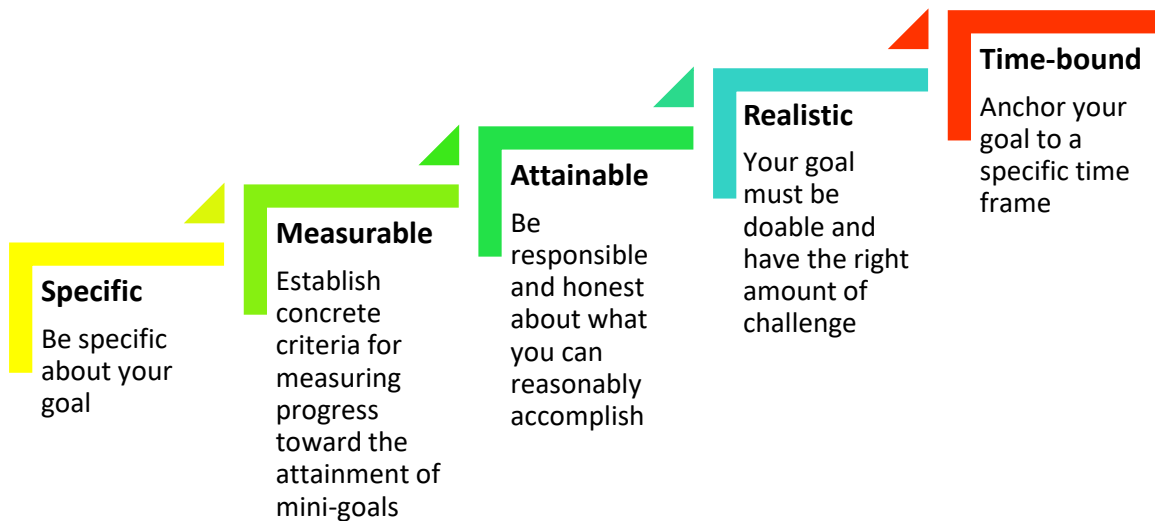
- Lack of clarity – when we don't set enough goals, as well as a proper action plan and an effective strategy to achieve them
- Lack of commitment – when we don't fully commit to doing whatever it takes to achieve our goals and failed to hold themselves accountable
- Lack of focus – when we don't direct enough time, energy and mental focus to our goals and got distracted by other things
- Lack of confidence – when we failed to identify and overcome our beliefs, fears and doubt that are holding our goals back mentally

Personal Goal Setting and Proactivity

Personal goals are the expressions of the things we want to achieve in life. We set goals for our career, our health, and our life in general. Undeniably, goal setting is everywhere and make us feel more self-motivates and positive-minded. We are often encouraged to think about the next milestone. However, what we do not think about enough is about the process and steps of setting personal goals.

We can find easily different models for goal setting in the self-help literature. For example, in business world, SMART (acronym stands for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) is a

helpful mnemonic way to create goals. Setting SMART goals can help to clarify our ideas and focus our efforts, which allows us to allocate resources in a way that promises the most return and the highest chance of achieving these goals.



Also, the positive psychology offers a useful three steps framework for setting life goals:

1. Goal design – in this first step, we should define goals that are concrete endpoints (i.e. clear and detailed), approached-based (i.e. workable towards) and breakable into sub-goals
2. Pathway generation – after having designed our personally meaningful goals, we can start thinking about different potential pathways (A, B, C) for achieving them, and on what resources will be needed to pursue each one of those same pathways
3. Overcoming obstacles - when setting life goals, it helps to consider the possible barriers that might arise and self-reflect about potential strategies we might use to deal with them

Despite the way chosen to set our goals, prioritise them is crucial. Prioritising is about identifying the most personally important life goals we have defined, write them down and then do a ranking. To do so, we can use a scale of 1-5 or 1-10, or whatever works for us, as long as we systematically apply the same ranking system to all of our goals. The most important ones should stand out – Is it feasible or realistic to focus on the top five goals? Or is three a more viable figure?

For most of the persons, goal setting finishes with the process of simply writing down what we want to achieve, and then take the necessary steps to towards it. And this seems the way to do it. So why don't most of us achieve our goals?

Self-coaching questions can help us to better succeed this goal-achievement journey. A modified version of the coaching GROW (acronym stands for goal, reality, options and way) model, can helps us be more effective in this process.

What is the **GOAL**

What are I trying to achieve?
 Why are I trying to achieve this?
 What will success look like?
 How will I measure success?

What is the **REALITY?**

What happens currently?
 What resources exist?
 What problems exist now?
 What are the facts and evidence of this reality?

What are the **OPTIONS?**

What are my options?
 Who can I ask about options?
 What other options (even crazy ones) are there?
 What are the pros and cons of each option?

What is my preferred **WAY FORWARD?**

Which is my preferred option?
 Why is this my preferred option?
 What actions do I need to implement now?

What is my **TIMESCALE?**

What actions need to be implemented?
 When do they need to be implemented?
 How will I monitor progress and performance?

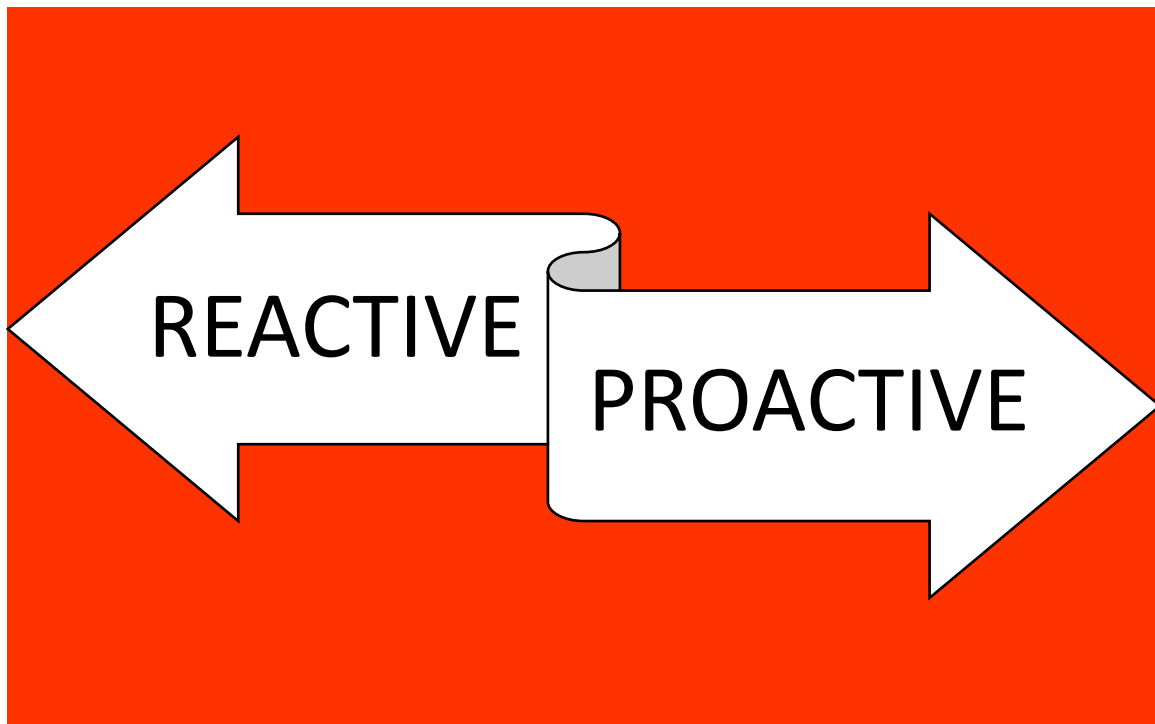
What is my **HEADLINE result?**

What will achieving this mean to me?
 What will it mean to others?
 How will I celebrate when I achieve the result?

Being responsible for our goals can be more present when someone knows them. When the goals are known, people can help remind us of them, and this way our focus increases. It can be challenging, but at the end, when achieving each one of our goals the reward is ours.

Proactivity can also help us to continue our goal-achievement journey, and only depends of ourselves. Having a proactive behaviour involves acting in advance of a future situation, rather than just reacting.





In life, the price of lacking initiative can jeopardize our dreams. Those who achieve great results in life are proactive regardless of the situations they find themselves in. They always get back on track even if get lost, find obstacles or face tough challenges.

How often we ask to ourselves if we are a proactive person? There is a simple way to understand proactive behaviour in its five levels:

1. Inactive - at this level, something is needed from us and nothing is done. For whatever reason, we decide to take no action. Maybe we may think the request or problem will go away by itself, or not
2. Reactive - at this level, something is needed, and we respond. The only problem is if we are constantly in fire-fighting mode, we are, at least, a step behind. After sometime, according to the needs speed and expectations increases, we might be unable to catch up, since you are behind. People that are constantly waiting for us, frustrated and impatient might decide to look in other directions for what they need
3. Active - being in this level, we are giving to people what they want and need, in real-time, meeting expectations. One problem is that when we are just keeping pace, we are not getting ahead. At this level, there is no time or space for growth. And in an ever-changing world, if we are standing still, we are falling behind
4. Proactive - at this level, we are setting the pace and staying a step ahead. We are not just meeting expectations, we are exceeding them. Anticipating own and other's needs and expectations doing our work, putting ourselves in the shoes of others, fostering an environment of growth and development for ourselves and others, and taking control of our destiny
5. Super-proactive - now we are leading, not just setting the pace! We are having vision of the future. This is where innovation happens, this is where paradigms shift, this is how we drive change and

amaze people. We are being a visionary. And as management guru Peter Drucker famously said, “The best way to predict the future is to create it.”



Source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/m0l9NBCivuk>

Proactive characteristics predict an entrepreneurship lifestyle. Proactive people take initiative to increase the likelihood of success, by:

- Looking more at the future than the past
- Taking personal responsibility
- Having a big-picture thinking
- Focusing on what can control
- Prioritising
- Thinking through scenarios
- Making things happen

3. EXERCISES AND QUIZZES

These set of quizzes are provided to help you be more aware, in a quick and informal way, on what you have learnt, so far, across the five topics of this module. Please, for each one of the 10 short questions structured in a format of multiple choice, select one or more answers that you believe are the correct ones.

Quiz 1

To take ownership is important to have...

- a) internal locus of control
- b) good communication skills
- c) external locus of control
- d) entrepreneurship skills

Quiz 2

Remembering the principles of responsibility taking, which of the following are part of it?

- a) Knowing what we want
- b) Being honest with ourselves
- c) Doing what it pleases us
- d) Believing that others or things are the reason for not achieving our goals

Quiz 3

Resilience is...

- a) the capacity to recover fast from difficulties in a flexible way
- b) the ability to learn with the mistakes
- c) to be resistant to change
- d) a skill that can be learned and applied overnight

Quiz 4

Connecting our dreams, our skills and market opportunities...

- a) is impossible, since dreams are part of our imagination and skills and market are real things
- b) is possible, as long as we keep the faith and trust on luck
- c) is empowering ourselves in awareness and conscience of our abilities and capacities
- d) is the only way to achieve success if we prioritise each one

Quiz 5

Creative thinking is...

- a) the ability to think and find the easiest way out from a problem or dilemma
- b) a pragmatic and objective way to accomplish the defined objective
- c) the ability to make new connections between things or to consider something in a new way
- d) not limited to arts

Quiz 6

Which of the following are pragmatism methods?

- a) Self-discipline
- b) Time management
- c) Meditation
- d) Goals setting

Quiz 7

Self-analysis is:

- a) the ability of every individual to achieve self-conscience in the creative process
- b) a systematic approach taken by every individual to evaluate their strength and weakness
- c) the skill of self-diagnose to identify the capacity of being an entrepreneur
- d) a solid approach done individuals to test their knowledge about market opportunities

Quiz 8

Which are strategic thinker's critical skills?

- a) Patience
 - b) Kindness
 - c) Assertiveness
 - d) Vision
- a) is attainable but almost impossible due to the need to get the most resources we can

Quiz 9

Which of the following are true?

- a) Setting goals require a long and detailed description that illustrates the whole vision
- b) A specific goal as to be specific and says what do you really want to achieve
- c) Time-bound is mandatory, when setting a goal, to tell you if you accomplishing it
- d) A goal does not have to be reachable as long as you are close to achieve it

Quiz 10

Which of the following are part of the five levels of proactivity?

- a) Hyperactive
- b) Inactive
- c) Proactive
- d) Reactive

Correct answers

1-a

2-a, b

3-a

4-c

5-c, d

6-a, b, d

7-b

8-a, d

9-b, c

10-b, c, d

4. FURTHER READING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The following online resources are available in English to go further with your learning:

Take Responsibility and Ownership

<https://www.wholelifechallenge.com/how-to-take-ownership-of-your-life-and-get-everything-you-want/>

Resilience and Openness to Change

<https://coachcampus.com/coach-portfolios/power-tools/ines-paler-resistance-vs-resilience/>

Creative Thinking and Pragmatism

<https://www.alchemyformanagers.co.uk/topics/mMdW6G2jzBJUGQUp.html>

Self-Analysis and Strategic Planning

<https://agileleanlife.com/ways-getting-know/>

Personal Goal Setting and Proactivity

<http://www.bigbluegumball.com/the-gumblog/2016/11/16/the-5-levels-of-proactivity-how-proactive-are-you.html>

5. TESTS VERIFYING THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

5.1. Initial Assessment

Please identify if the following statements are true or false:

STATEMENT	TRUE	FALSE
1. Recognising mistakes and taking responsibility for actions and its consequences reflects the ability to improve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Recognising and assuming that there are no options is natural and part of process of accepting responsibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Resilient people have an uncanny ability to be flexible and adapt to change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Resilience involves keeping balance and flexibility in all perspectives of life, and this means to assume the maximum tasks possible and avoid trusting in others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Creative thinking is the ability to make new connections between things or to consider something in a new way, with an open and receptive mind.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Pragmatism encourages philosophic thinking and turning ideas into theories based on observation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Self-analysis helps us to be aware of ourselves, of what we think and what we are, allowing us to focus on what really matters to us and in our strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Assertiveness, vision and happiness are three of the seven critical skills of successful strategic thinkers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Personal goals are the expressions of the things we want to achieve in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Anticipating needs and expectations, fostering an environment of growth and development, and taking control of our destiny is part of being proactive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Correct answers

- 1-true
- 2-false
- 3-true
- 4-false
- 5-true
- 6-false
- 7-true
- 8-false
- 9-true
- 10-true

5.2. Final Assessment

Please fill in the empty spaces choosing from the following list of term the one you believe is correct: strategic planning; change; pragmatic; self- analysis; goals; creative; proactive; acceptance; ownership; resilience.

1. _____ does not mean that we are not feeling the intensity of life events or problems. It just means that we respond to them quickly and positively.
2. To do an effective _____ we need to be a strategic thinker.
3. Preparation and anticipation, both are ways to be _____, instead of waiting for things happen to react.
4. _____ is one of the three common traits of highly resilient people.
5. Taking personal or professional _____ means standing up and announcing that we are responsible for something, despite it can be a challenging process for most of the persons.
6. _____ can take different forms: the subtle, almost imperceptible; the one happening at every single moment; the dramatic one that will turn something upside down in a split second; or the one that, while very impactful, is more gradual.
7. “Blue-sky thinking” is associated to _____ thinking.
8. The common mantra of the _____ thinker is that “truth is whatever works.”
9. A _____ exercise helps us to gain clarity and focus by exploring where we have been and creating a pathway to where we want to go.
10. Self-coaching questions can help us to better succeed our _____-achievement journey.

Correct answers

1-Resilience does not mean that we are not feeling the intensity of life events or problems. It just means that we respond to them quickly and positively.

2-To do an effective strategic planning we need to be a strategic thinker.

3-Preparation and anticipation, both are ways to be proactive, instead of waiting for things happen to react.

4-Acceptance is one of the three common traits of highly resilient people.

5-Taking personal or professional ownership means standing up and announcing that we are responsible for something, despite it can be a challenging process for most of the persons.

6-Change can take different forms: the subtle, almost imperceptible; the one happening at every single moment; the dramatic one that will turn something upside down in a split second; or the one that, while very impactful, is more gradual.

7-“Blue-sky thinking” is associated to creative thinking.

8-The common mantra of the pragmatic thinker is that “truth is whatever works.”

9-A self- analysis exercise helps us to gain clarity and focus by exploring where we have been and creating a pathway to where we want to go.

10-Self-coaching questions can help us to better succeed our goal-achievement journey.



3.3. Validation of the Competence “Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship” of Adults with Fewer Opportunities



1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Aim of the Module

The aim of this module is to develop the competences of adult educators in order to assess and validate the skills and competences 'Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship' of adults with fewer opportunities and the acquisition of knowledge by adults with fewer opportunities on how to approach the validation process of competences acquired through other means than formal education.

The module briefly discusses the definition and meaning of the competence 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship' and the context and importance of the validation process in Europe. Examples of tools and methods used in the validation process are given and the factors influencing the validation process and the stages of the validation process are identified. In addition to the theory, exercises and literature for knowledge and a validation test were given.

1.2. Learning Objectives

By the end of this subchapter, the learners will:

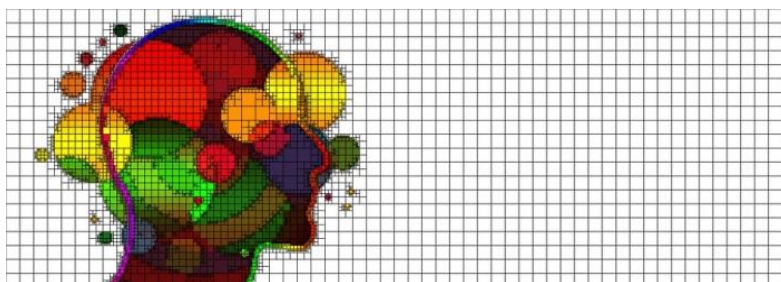
- A. Understand what “validation of competence” refers to by discovering the basic concepts to the notion as they vary in term of application in different EU member states.
- B. Learn about the main factors to take into account when building a process of “validation of competence”.
- C. Learn at what level “validation of competence” works.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Definition of the Concept of “Validation of the Competence”

Competences are context-specific dispositions

Competence can be defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/pl/illustrations/g%C5%82owy-zdaniem-innowacji-nowy-4488311/>

There are many different types of competences. We will focus our attention on **key competences**, i.e. those that are needed for personal development, finding a job, social integration and functioning in society, a balanced lifestyle, making health choices consciously, or active participation in civic matters. These competences are developed throughout life in different forms: formal, non-formal and

informal education, and in different environments: family, school, workplace, neighborhood and other groups.

8 key competences can be mentioned, all of which are equally important and necessary to function properly in life and society:

- Literacy skills;
- Multilingual competence;
- Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering;
- Digital competence;
- Personal and social competence;
- Civic competence;
- Entrepreneurship competence;
- Cultural awareness and expression.

The competence 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship' is one of the key competences in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (2006). According to the European Union, the competence of initiative and entrepreneurship can be defined as the ability of an individual to put ideas into practice. These competences can be further defined by: creativity, innovation and the ability to take risks, as well as the ability to plan and implement various projects in pursuit of their objectives.

It is worth noting that the European Union attaches great importance to the development of entrepreneurial competence, as evidenced by the fact that many EU documents and programmes have been created, where this competence has been reflected. Under the Education and Training 2020 programme, the framework for European cooperation in education and training is set to 4 strategic objectives. One of these is precisely the enhancement of creativity and innovation (including entrepreneurship) and this is intended to apply to all levels of education and training. This is because the positive impact of education in this area on society is noted. More and more companies are being established, innovative undertakings are being undertaken, and as a result new jobs are being created.

The necessary **knowledge of this competence** is the recognition of different opportunities to undertake private, professional or commercial activities, as well as knowledge of economic mechanisms, opportunities and problems that an entrepreneur may face.

Skills within this competence are related to active project management (where the following skills are required: planning, organising, directing, guiding, delegating, analysing, communicating, conducting discussions, evaluating and reporting), and the ability to work independently as well as in a team. Another important skill is the ability to assess the risk and profitability of taking it, to identify strengths and weaknesses.

As far as **attitudes** are concerned, the feeling of entrepreneurship is characterised by e.g. initiative, activity, motivation, following goals, independence and innovation.

Validation and Its Importance

The European Parliament and the Council adopted in 2008 a Recommendation on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. A very important addition to this document was the 2009 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training. These documents recommend the introduction of a process of validation of learning outcomes. **It is defined as “the**

process of attesting that certain assessed learning outcomes achieved by a learner correspond to specific outcomes required for a given set of learning outcomes or qualifications.”

Subsequently, also in 2009, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) published European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. The document presents the conclusions of more than two years of exchange of experience in this field between representatives of more than 20 European countries. The guidelines focus on validation, taking into account different perspectives (i.e. European, national, organisational and individual). They provide practical guidance for use on a voluntary basis.

In summary, validation should be a process that is independent of the learning process. Validation is designed to check whether the required learning outcomes have been achieved, in whatever way (through formal, non-formal or informal education), but whether they are compatible with the requirements for the qualification. It is very important to use criteria, tools and validation methods appropriate to the nature and specificity of the learning outcomes concerned. Reliable and reliable validation enables the whole qualifications system to be truly based on learning outcomes. For more information on validation, see section: (2.3.) „Validation process”.

Why should the competence of "Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship" be approved?

The following benefits can be gained: increased self-confidence, increased self-esteem, increased motivation and commitment, increased self-reflection, visualisation of learning progress and better career opportunities.

2.2. Validation tools and methods

European validation tools and principles

Most EU countries have their own qualifications frameworks. This makes it easier for employees to prove their level of competence to a foreign employer and for companies to show European contractors that their employees have the right level of skills and are well prepared to take on the job.

In the countries belonging to the European Union, there are several common instruments that help in the transfer, recognition and accumulation of assessed learning outcomes, in the achievement of qualifications or in lifelong learning. Some of these tools are also used in non-EU countries. Below is a description of these tools.

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was established by the European Union to facilitate the comparison of qualifications obtained in education systems in different countries. It can therefore be concluded that their task is to support the cross-border mobility of learners and workers and to promote lifelong learning and professional development be limited - throughout Europe.

The EQF consists of an eight-level scoreboard which contains all types of qualifications and is designed to compare qualification levels in different education systems. This increases transparency and makes it easy to compare the level of qualifications obtained in different countries or educational institutions, which makes it much easier to certify qualifications obtained abroad.

Many countries use this system. In addition to EU countries, there are 11 other countries. These are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Switzerland.

- **The European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET)**



ECVET is a system that addresses VET qualifications at all levels (8) of the EQF. The functioning of this system is based on units of learning outcomes as part of specific qualifications that can be assessed and validated. By being able to accumulate, transfer and use the acquired knowledge in units, it enables learners to build qualifications at their own pace based on the acquired learning outcomes in formal, non-formal and informal ways (in the country and abroad).

The aim of ECVET is to enhance employability, promote geographical and occupational mobility, and increase compatibility between different VET systems.

- **The Europass**

The European Commission has developed a set of online tools and information (Europass) to help manage every stage of learning and career. This tool is widely used throughout Europe. This service is free and available in 29 different languages.

Europass offers 6 free online tools:

- *Europass profile*
You will find support in describing skills, looking for interesting jobs and learning opportunities, managing applications and creating application documents such as: CV or cover letter.
- *Europass CV editor*
In this section you can, among other things, create and edit your CV and you can use various available templates.
- *Cover Letter Editor*
This tool allows you to create professional motivation letters, which are also visually interesting. It contains various templates that are available for editing.
- *Diploma Supplement*
This document contains the necessary information to facilitate understanding of the knowledge and skills acquired by the student during his or her studies.
- *Certificate Supplement*
This document, as well as the Diploma Supplement, contains information that facilitates the understanding of the knowledge and skills acquired during the vocational education.
- *Europass Mobility*
This document addresses the skills acquired during mobility and helps to show them in a simple, coherent and understandable way.

- **The European quality assurance reference framework for VET (EQAVET)**

This is an instrument to improve the quality of VET systems. It provides a pan-European system to help with a range of activities such as documenting, developing, monitoring, evaluating and improving the effectiveness of VET learning practices as well as quality management.

In addition, it has 10 indicators that can also be used by countries to adapt and develop their VET systems.

- **The National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)**

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is country-specific. Their task is to classify the qualification of a given level based on the given learning outcomes. The strength of this system is that

it enables easier movement of pupils between different institutions and sectors of education and training.

Current Methods of Validation

A very important aspect in the validation process is the validation methods used, which must be adapted to the nature of the learning outcomes being tested. There are a lot of them.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/pl/illustrations/biznesmen-tabletki-koncepcja-4608282/>

Below are a few examples of validation methods with a brief explanation.

Type of method	Description
Analysis of evidence and statements	To examine the extent to which an individual's documents and other creations can attest to the achievement of their expected learning outcomes.
Skills audit	This method aims to develop a plan for the professional development or further education of an individual and consists in identifying and analysing his or her knowledge, skills and broadly understood social competences (including motivation and aptitudes).
Unstructured interview	A method where questions are asked by the interviewer and answers are given by the person undertaking the validation. It can be more or less targeted. The objectives of the interview are clearly defined, but the course of the conversation is completely spontaneous, unstructured and is based only on the general plan of the issues raised and depends on the interlocutor's response.
Structured interview	This method is based on asking a series of standardised (closed) questions and analysing the answers given. The structure of the interview is dependent on the objectives of validation. The topics covered during the interview are imposed in advance and serve

	to gain specific information and knowledge. Usually all candidates are asked the same questions, even their order is kept.
Observation in real-life conditions	Analysis of the candidate's activities in the actual conditions of the tasks that are described in the description of qualifications. Most often the observation covers the candidate's activities at his workplace or only part of his work.
Observation in simulated conditions	Analysis of the candidate's activities under conditions created for the validation process that is close to reality. The use of simulation results from the fact that sometimes the application of this method in real conditions can be dangerous, raising an ethical dilemma, or simply too time-consuming.
Presentation	The presentation consists in the preparation, presentation and discussion of a specific topic by the student in the presence of an audience and experts. During or immediately after the presentation, the public and experts may ask additional questions to give the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the subject or to clarify any doubts.
Unstructured debate	This type of debate involves the exchange of arguments on a specific topic in a group, where participants have great freedom of expression. There is no division of roles here, nor is there any imposition on them to present their positions. The topic of the discussion is predefined by the moderator, but there is no script. However, in some techniques (e.g. brainstorming) there are certain patterns of behaviour that must be followed. The course of the debate depends on the ideas and creativity of the participants.
Structured debate	This method consists of a structured and guided group discussion based on the exchange of arguments on the selected topic. It can go according to the script. There's a division into roles. The topic is fixed in advance (it shouldn't be too easy, but it should provoke the participants to discuss it). Sometimes there is a need to prepare the participants of the discussion in advance in order to gain necessary information and arguments.
Theoretical test (written or oral)	This method involves testing the candidate's knowledge and ability to apply it. It consists in the analysis of the answers to the questions asked or the tasks performed by him. This is a very common, simple and convenient method. It allows the validation of multiple



	people at once. The tests can take different forms.
Peer assessment	It consists in the fact that students evaluate the work of their peers on the basis of a set of criteria created by the trainer. This tool helps students to develop judgmental skills, critical skills and self-awareness.
Self-assessment	It is a process in which students reflect on their own work and assess how well they have done with the task. This method allows students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement. However, it is worth remembering that self-assessment can be very subjective. So, self-evaluation is more often used as part of the formative rather than summary evaluation process.

It is possible to combine this validation method with others. Some of the above methods can be used for each of the 3 stages of validation (an example is unstructured interview). The others are intended for specific stages only. An example of such a method is the competence skills audit, which can be used in 2 stages of the validation process: identifying and documenting. It is also worth noting that although some methods can be used by definition at all stages, they will still work best on only one of them. An example is the theoretical test - which can be used at any stage, but will be most effective at the verification stage.

Two major approaches to validation of competences “Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship” (bilan de compétences, NVQ)

In this part of the chapter, the 2 selected validation methods will be discussed in more detail. Some of them are briefly described above in the table.

The first one is **BILAN DE COMPÉTENCES (Skills audit)**, which was previously defined as: „This method aims to develop a plan for the professional development or further education of an individual and consists in identifying and analysing his or her knowledge, skills and broadly understood social competences (including motivation and aptitudes).”

The skills audit is a set of methods, it includes, among others different kinds of structured interviews.

The French model often serves as a model for this method. It does not have 1 scenario to carry out, but it can be divided into the following 3 stages:

- A conversation or several interviews (depending on the need) with the counsellor - sometimes it can also be supplemented by observation, additional tests or questionnaires. The aim of this stage is to identify the candidate's achieved learning outcomes.
- Collect evidence of the candidate's learning outcomes.
- Establish a plan for further development.

The performance of a skills audit allows to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a person and indicates possible paths for further development. It also helps to identify and document the achievement of learning outcomes. This method can be useful for those who are not sure of their skills

and knowledge or feel they need guidance for further development. It can also be useful for those who want to return to the labour market after a break or retrain.

Strengths and weaknesses of the skills audit:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows to comprehensively define the knowledge, skills and competences of a given person • enables the identification and documentation of competences acquired outside formal education • the candidate can get feedback on his learning outcomes and how to develop them • the candidate has support in the preparation of documents (evidence) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes a lot of time and can generate additional costs for the candidate - requires at least a few meetings with the advisor • is costly for the certified/advisory body - in addition to meetings with the candidate, the advisor may also prepare recommendations • it doesn't allow the verification of learning outcomes

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) are job-related and skills-based qualifications. NVQs are based on UK professional standards, which define a person's competence in a particular field, the specification of the profession, the principles of good professional practice, the ability to adapt to future requirements and the range of knowledge needed for good work. These standards can be obtained by pupils, students and workers. There are no specific restrictions on this issue.

The possibility of obtaining NVQ includes the completion of training and exercises, which take place under the supervision of the examiner. Candidates are then required to prove that they have the competence appropriate to the NVQ standards. Then, at the end of the training, the examiner certifies that the candidate has acquired the competence to perform the job properly.

The candidate can count on the help of an assessor to prepare well for the exam. The assessor helps to determine the skills he already has, to establish the required level and standards to complete the training successfully, but also to establish an action plan. NVQs are divided into 5 levels depending on the required skills.

The NVQ system is suitable for people who have certain skills, but need to improve them. It is also suitable for those who are beginners.

2.3. Validation Process

It is worth pointing out that the validation process cannot be limited to testing a person's knowledge and skills to obtain a particular certificate. It is also a recognition of potential - what a person already knows, what he or she can do, but also what he or she has a problem with and what he or she still has to improve in his or her knowledge and skills.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/pl/illustrations/proces-przep%C5%82ywu-logistyka-kontroli-3829727/>

Main Factors

In order to choose the right method for the validation process, the following factors should be taken into account:

- the nature of the learning outcomes,
- the stage of validation,
- the needs of the person entering validation.

The nature of the learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are, in other words: knowledge, skills and all social competences that have been acquired through learning. It should be remembered that each method works for a specific category of learning outcomes. Therefore, the selection of appropriate methods as well as techniques and tools to match the learning outcomes of the qualification and the verification criteria specified for them is an essential condition for carrying out validation in a correct and accurate way.

The stage of validation

This point is discussed in detail in the next section (2.3.2.) called: "Stages of validation".

The needs of the person entering validation

The needs of the learner are very important. It can cover many issues such as easy access to the validation process, or comprehensive information about the process. However, let us focus on other issues that are directly relevant for the selection of validation methods. A distinction can be made here between the candidate's learning (or achievement of learning outcomes) and their purpose in entering the validation process. This information can already be collected during the preparation of the qualification description.

If we develop the topic of **learning path**, we can list here three basic ways of achieving learning outcomes within the framework of:

- **formal education** (school, university),
- **non-formal education** (training),
- **informal learning** (e.g. self-study, acquiring knowledge and skills at work or as a hobby).

Each way may require a completely different approach in the validation process. It is therefore important to take this into account when developing validation requirements in the qualifications description. It is worth considering the possibility of using a variety of methods and taking this into account when creating a scenario for the validation process and making several versions (to adapt techniques for experienced and beginner students).

The way it is learned can also have a huge impact on the need to include the identification and documentation stages in the validation process. This is important especially for those who have already acquired a significant part of the necessary knowledge, skills and social competences through practical (work) experience.

Another very important issue concerning the choice of an appropriate method with regard to the way of education, which is worth remembering, is the fact that there is a risk that people who, e.g. have been gaining knowledge for a long time other than formal education, writing a theoretical test can be very stressful and can have a negative impact on the outcome of the verification. In this situation, for example, it would work better the method of observation in real-life conditions, unstructured interview, or analysis of evidence and statements. The opposite is true for those who have recently completed formal education. For this group of people the test should not be a difficulty, but the use of observation or analysis of evidence and statements in this case could negatively affect the outcome of the validation, due to little professional experience.

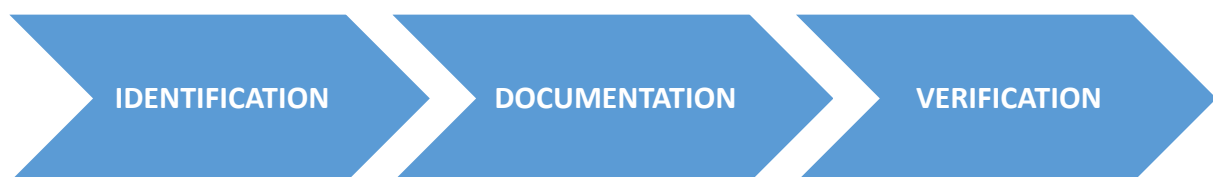
As regards aspect 2 - **the purpose of validation**, it is usually to obtain a qualification. However, as each stage of the validation process produces results, further learning or retraining may be an additional objective.

If a person wants to determine his or her chances of obtaining a given qualification or his or her deficiencies, he or she can only approach the first two stages of the process (i.e. identifying and possibly documenting to have a fuller picture). In this case, the methods used at these stages should make it possible to provide complete and detailed feedback to the candidate.

In the opposite situation, if a candidate only wants to go to the last stage - verification and omit the two previous stages - it is worthwhile to consider at the verification stage methods that are not dependent on others that were used at the previous stages.

Stages of validation

The validation process can take place in 3 stages:



STAGE 1 – IDENTIFICATION



Source: <https://www.pexels.com/pl-pl/zdjecie/kobieta-dziewczyna-sciana-mur-3772511/>

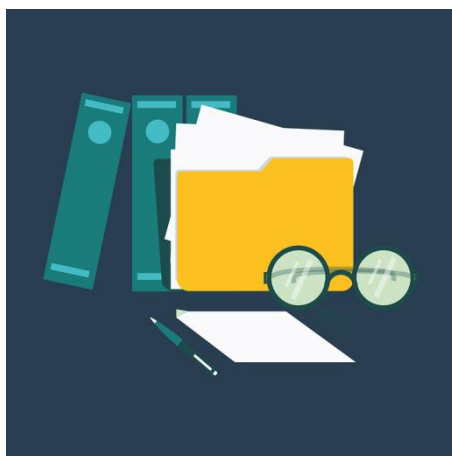
At this stage the validation process begins and focuses on identifying what an individual already knows and what are the skills and gaps in relation to the requirements for a qualification or for planning further development.

At this stage the certifying authority has the possibility to provide support to the validation advisor, but this is not obligatory.

This stage aims to:

- better prepare for the verification stage,
- allow for easy planning of further learning in order to fill the gaps in the competences that are necessary to obtain a given qualification.

STAGE 2 – DOCUMENTATION



Source: <https://pixabay.com/pl/vectors/dokumenty-biznesu-dokument-papieru-4625654/>

As can be deduced from the name, this stage is based on the collection of documents that provide evidence of the knowledge and skills required to achieve a certificate.

The documentation stage does not always occur. It is only included in the validation process if the validation involves the use of evidence and declarations. This depends on the type of qualification and the certifying authority.

STAGE 3 – VERIFICATION



Source: <https://pixabay.com/pl/illustrations/audytu-raport-weryfikacja-lupa-4576720/>

This is a very important stage on which it depends whether the certifying authority will issue a certificate confirming the applicant's qualification. However, before this happens, the specialists in the area in question carefully check whether an individual has achieved all the required learning outcomes.

The course of verification depends on the institution that carries out the validation. Each institution can do it in a different way. The verification may take place within one day or may be phased in. Different validation methods can also be used (this can be checked in the qualification description).

3. EXERCISES AND QUIZZES

Here are some exercises and quizzes that can be used for improving the specific issue addressed by the Module. They are meant as a warm up exercise to build up the confidence of participants and raise awareness about their own point of view as well as the point of view of other classmates.

The exercises can be done by the trainer as a test and then proposed to the class as a group or to be done in couples.

3.1. Exercise 1

Free brainstorming exercise with beneficiaries, using big white paper sheets and colored markers:

Describe yourself: which are your strengths and weaknesses?

3.2. Exercise 2

Free brainstorming exercise with beneficiaries, using big white paper sheets and colored markers:

What did you want to be when you were a child/adolescent?

3.3. Exercise 3

Free brainstorming exercise with beneficiaries:

What would make you happy and what are, according to you, the main constraints that prevent you from achieving them?

3.4. Exercise 4

In this last exercise each participant will describe another member of the group (or the other partner in the couple) and speak about their strengths, weaknesses, dreams and problems.

4. FURTHER READING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2019/european_inventory_validation_2018_synthesis.pdf
- <https://walidacja.ibe.edu.pl/metody/en/>
- <http://self-e.lpf.lt/youth-workers-module3.html?lang=en>
- <https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-eqf>
- <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/ro/events-and-projects/projects/european-credit-system-vocational-education-and-training-ecvet>
- <https://europa.eu/europass/en/about-europass>
- <https://www.eqavet.eu/What-We-Do/European-Quality-Assurance-Reference-Framework/Overview>
- https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/9139_en.pdf
- <https://kwalifikacje.edu.pl/baza-wiedzy/use-the-integrated-qualifications-system-iqs/validation/?lang=en>
- <https://www.polnews.uk/index.php/czytelnia/454-kursy-nvq.html>
- <https://www.vocationaltraining.org.uk/nvq-overview>
- Shih-Yeh Chen and Shiang-Yao Liu, *Developing Students' Action Competence for a Sustainable Future: A Review of Educational Research*, 13 February 2020
- [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01)&from=EN)



5. TESTS VERIFYING THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

This is a test that trainers can use for finding out the level of the class. This exercise does not have correct answers, but is meant to help the trainer to evaluate the starting and final point of view of the participants regarding their sense of initiative, motivation, self of confidence, before and after the course.

The test can be done by the trainer as a test and then proposed to the class as a group or to be done in couples.

5.1. Initial Assessment

1. How do you consider yourself in terms of **sense of initiative**? It means: do you take decisions about your life on your own or do you prefer to have a guide: a friend or a relative who can advise you on the best choice to make?
 - a. I am independent in my decisions and take most decisions on my own
 - b. I like to take decisions on my own but I prefer to listen to suggestions by others first
 - c. It depends: sometimes I decide on my own but sometimes I follow other people's advice
 - d. Mostly I follow other people's advice and I don't think usually I am independent in my decisions
 - e. Other (please describe) _____

2. Please describe a moment in your life when you had to make **an important decision** about a relevant choice:

3. Do you prefer a paid job as an employee, which gives you a certain level of security, or do you prefer an independent job that gives you the freedom to work on your own?
 - a. Employee
 - b. Independent job

4. Do you have a dream job or a project that you have always thought you wished to realise?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes. Please describe _____

5. How do you feel if you think about your dreams or projects?
 - a. I think it's impossible to realise them, I don't know how to start and what to do. Basically I don't think I am able to realize them.
 - b. I think it's very hard and it's very difficult to make them real, but if I had the possibility to get some help maybe I might try
 - c. There are several opportunities today to learn how to realise a project, but I never tried
 - d. I have a dream/ a project and I already have some ideas about how to realise it but I never started
 - e. I have a dream/a project, I already have some ideas about how to realise it and I already took some steps in order to realise them



6. Can you describe a situation in your life when you took **a risk** regarding an important decision? For instance to make a change in your life about a job or a relationship.
- No
 - Yes. Please describe it _____

7. How do you feel when you have to take **a decision about important changes** in your life, for instance about a new job opportunity or a new relationship?
- It's very difficult for me, I realise I hate to change
 - I accept changes just if I really need to
 - I take my time but eventually I make choices that include changes
 - I like news and to take a risk if I think it's worth it
 - Other (please describe) _____
8. As far as the level of **motivation** is concerned, with which of the following statements do you agree most?
- Usually I am very motivated and this helps me to get organized and achieve my goals
 - It's not easy to achieve my goals and follow my plans, because there are many problems and obstacles, but I eventually I go through them and partly achieve my objectives
 - I'd like to achieve my goals but usually I don't manage to do it because of the many problems I meet
 - It's always too difficult for me to achieve my goals, so I often don't even try to do it
 - Other (please describe) _____

5.2. Final Assessment

1. How do you consider yourself in terms of **sense of initiative**, after taking part to this course? It means: how do you consider now your way to take important decisions about your life?
- I am more aware than before that I like to take decisions on my own
 - I still like to take decisions on my own, accepting also suggestions by others first
 - I still feel I am not always sure about my decisions so I think I still depend on other people's advice
 - I still feel I depend on my friends and relatives' advice because I don't trust that much my independent decisions
 - If you changed your mind, please describe how _____

2. If you think again about the important decision you described at the beginning of the course, how do you see it now, after taking part to this training?

3. Do you prefer a paid job as an employee that gives you a certain degree of stability or do you prefer an independent job that gives you the freedom to work on your own?
- Employee
 - Independent job
4. Do you have a dream job or a project that you would like to realise?



- a. No
- b. Yes. Please describe _____

5. How do you feel if you think about your dreams or projects?
- a. I think it's impossible to realise them, I don't know how to start and what to do. Basically I don't think I am able to realize them.
- b. I think it's very hard and it's very difficult to make them real, but if I had the possibility to get some help maybe I might try
- c. There are several opportunities today to learn how to realise a project, but I never tried
- d. I have a dream/ a project and I already have some ideas about how to realise it but I never started
- e. I have a dream/a project, I already have some ideas about how to realise it and I already took some steps in order to realise them
6. If you think again about a situation in your life when you took a risk regarding an important decision (making a change in your life about a job or a relationship), do you see it differently than at the beginning of the course? If yes, how? (please describe)
- a. No
- b. Yes _____
7. How do you feel when you have to take a decision about important changes in your life, for instance about a new opportunity in your job or a relationship?
- a. It's very difficult for me, I realize I hate to change
- b. I accept changes just if really need to
- c. I take my time but eventually I make choices that include changes
- d. I like news and to take a risk if I think it's worth it
8. As far as the level of motivation is concerned, with which of the following statements do you agree most?
- a. Usually I am very motivated and this helps me to get organized and achieve my goals
- b. It's not easy to achieve my goals and follow my plans, because there are many problems and obstacles, but I eventually I go through them and partly achieve my objectives
- c. I'd like to achieve my goals but usually I don't manage to do it because of the many problems I meet
- d. It's always too difficult for me to achieve my goals, so I often don't even try to do it
- e. Other _____
9. Please tell us if you think this course had an impact on you and, if it did, how.
- _____
- _____

10. Will you change something in your life now? Which are your plans for the future?
- _____
- _____

