



IMPROVING
**GUIDANCE &
COUNSELLING**
IN ADULT LEARNING

**HANDBOOK OF THE BEST PRACTICES TO
MAP BACKGROUND-LEARNING PARAMETERS**



Document information

This handbook is a pedagogical tool to map background learning parameters of adult learners, to expand and develop the skills of the counsellors, who support these learners and, therefore, break new ground of lifelong guidance and counselling. It was built based on the best guidance and counselling practices in adult learning, to map background-learning parameters, collected by the consortium, and developed further/reshaped after the testing of different practices with the adult learners.

Consortium

Työväen Akatemia, Finland (coordinator)

Caritas Coimbra, Portugal

AFEdemy, Academy on age-friendly environments in Europe B.V., The Netherlands

Ljudska Univerza Celje, Slovenia

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IMPROVING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN ADULT LEARNING

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Introduction

Improving Guidance and Counselling in Adult Learning was a two-year project of Erasmus+ KA204 - Strategic Partnerships for adult education, funded by European Union, which increased the quality of adult education by innovating effective ways of lifelong guidance and counselling. The aim was to develop a pedagogical tool to map background learning parameters of adult learners¹, to expand and develop the skills of counsellors² who support these adult learners and, therefore, break new ground of lifelong guidance and counselling. The good practices gathered by the consortium served as a basis for the first version of the pedagogical tool.

The project was a cooperation between four adult education institutions:

- ✦ AFEdeMy, Academy on age-friendly environments in Europe B.V. (The Netherlands)
- ✦ Caritas Coimbra (Portugal)
- ✦ Ljudska univerza Celje (Slovenia)
- ✦ Työväen Akatemia (Finland), which was the project's coordinator.

All partners work with different types of adult learners. The partnership covers a wide range of adult education age-wise, geographically, and from basic to tertiary level.

This handbook was built based on the best guidance and counselling practices in adult learning, to map background-learning parameters, collected by the consortium, and developed further/reshaped after the testing of different practices with the adult learners. Both counsellors and adult learners were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the tool in mapping background learning parameters as well as perceived ease of responding among adult learners. The potentially transferable elements of innovation were integrated in the version 2, that was translated.

- ✦ Each partner gathered information about their own organisation's existing guidance and counselling practices and tools separately, as well as information on each country's national education system (formal, non-formal and informal education):
 - Desk research, structured interviews, and/or questionnaires to gather existing examples of counselling and guidance practices, tools, successes, and challenges (in

¹ Some of the definitions of adult learners put emphasis upon the age, whereas other focus upon breaks in schooling or responsibilities and functions that adults are required to carry out in their lives. In this handbook the adult learners are the participants in adult learning opportunities. They form a heterogeneous group of individuals with different educational biographies and diversified educational needs.

² In this handbook, it will be used the word "counsellors" when referring to tutors/teachers/trainers/educators/social work technicians, psychologists, among others, because depending on the context, all these professionals may be involved in the guidance and counselling in adult learning.

the case of written documents, the most important and useful ones, as well as the analysis, were translated into English, the official project language.)

- The descriptions of the instruments and methodologies used by each partner organisation are described in each parameter to map background learning, divided into suitable practices for individual and group guidance and counselling. There is also the case of practices suitable that can be used in individual and group guidance and counselling processes.
- ✦ The online version of the developed pedagogical tool with national perspective is published on the web pages of each partner, as well as in their chosen social media. The online version contains the description of the applied methodology and the achievements of each practice. It represents the effectiveness of the tool in mapping background learning parameters and the perceived ease of responding among adult learners. The questions of the online tool aim to encourage adult learners to self-reflection and facilitate sharing their thoughts with the counsellors, and thus help them to overcome the barriers to learning and studying.

Guidance and counselling in adult learning

According to the Eurostat glossary (2019)³, adult learning means “the participation of adults in lifelong learning”, usually after the end of initial education. Lifelong learning refers to all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences, within personal, civic, social or employment-related perspectives.

Guidance plays a significant role in EU policies for education, training, and employment (Lifelong Learning Platform, 2020)⁴. The provision of lifelong guidance is recognised as a prerequisite to make lifelong learning a reality for European citizens. In 1992, the European Commission created Euroguidance - European network of national resources and information centres for guidance. Its main target group consists of guidance practitioners in education and employment, among them professionals who provide information and guidance on international learning mobility to end-users seeking studying and training opportunities abroad. It promotes mobility, helping guidance counsellors and individuals to better understand the opportunities available to European citizens throughout Europe (Euroguidance, 2020)⁵.

As adult education develops and educational experiences of student's changes, the need to provide adult students with guidance and counselling services is important. The process of guidance and counselling for adults only makes sense when viewed from a developmental life setting because adult life cycle is a process of continuing change and development. Therefore, it is also important to realize that each individual life is lived through different social contexts and influences and they have to take into account different expectations and aspirations, for example (WOOLFE *et al.*, 1987).⁶ This diversity derives from the various needs adults have in different periods of their lives and is based on their interests, linked to their everyday life and work, and derived from the need to solve problems and the way the individual functions within the community.

³ EUROSTAT STATISTICS EXPLAINED (2019). *Glossary: Lifelong learning*. [Online] Available from: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Lifelong_learning. [Accessed: 20th March 2020]

⁴ LIFELONG LEARNING PLATAFORM (2020). *Guidance*. [Online] Available from: <http://llplatform.eu/policy-areas/skills-and-qualifications/guidance/>. [Accessed: 20th March 2020]

⁵ EUROGUIDANCE (2020). *About us*. [Online] Available from: <https://www.euroguidance.eu/about-us>. [Accessed: 20th March 2020]

⁶ WOOLFE, R. *et al.* (1987). *Guidance and Counselling in Adult and Continuing Education: A Developmental Perspective*. [Online] Available from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED299378>. [Accessed: 20th March 2020]

It is possible to facilitate adult learners' studies through effective guidance and counselling, aimed at overcoming the barriers to learning and studying. In the case of low skilled adult learners, individual guidance and counselling becomes essential. Through effective outreach, guidance and motivation strategies, the professionals will be able to encourage low-skilled or low-qualified adults of all ages to progress towards higher qualifications.

According to the EU Resolution of the Council of 21st November 2008⁷, guidance "is an ongoing process that enables citizens of all ages and throughout their lives to identify their skills, competences and interests, to make education, training and employment decisions and manage their life course in education, training, work and other contexts." In fact, guidance and counselling in adult education has several functions (Krasovec, 2011)⁸:

- Learn about personal characteristics, interests, and capabilities
- Learn new habits and motivations
- Inform about education offers
- Help to achieve objectives linked to education as well as personal and professional path
- Orientation to overcome various obstacles that appear during the education process
- Support in learning and educational technologies and development of methods and techniques for efficient learning
- Recognition of prior learning

The British Association for Counselling, now British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (1986 in Sheppard, 2015)⁹ defines counselling as "the skilled and principled use of relationship to facilitate self- knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth and the optimal development of personal resources. The overall aim is to provide an opportunity to work towards living more satisfyingly and resourcefully. Counselling relationships will vary according to need but may be concerned with developmental issues, addressing, and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crisis, developing personal insights and knowledge, working through feelings of inner conflict, or improving relationships with others."

⁷ COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (2008). Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 21st November 2008, on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. *Official Journal of the European Union*. C319, 4-7. [Online] Available from: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X1213\(02\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X1213(02)&from=EN). [Accessed: 5th January 2020]

⁸ KRASOVEC, S. (2011). *Guidance and Counselling in Adult Education: Example of Slovenia, England and Ireland*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.as.edu.rs/pdf/articles/49>. [Accessed: 5th January 2020]

⁹ SHEPPARD, G. (2015). What is Counselling? A Search for a Definition. *Notebook on Ethics, Legal Issues, and Standards for Counsellors*. [Online] Available from: <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/NOE.What-is-Counselling-A-Search-for-a-Definition.pdf>. [Accessed: 3rd March 2020]

Future-orientation and hope-based guidance and counselling

Guidance and counselling may be considered as a map; though the aim is in the future, the starting point is the present of the person being advised; this, in turn, is affected by their past. Päivi-Katriina Juutilainen's depiction of hope-based student guidance (2019)¹⁰:

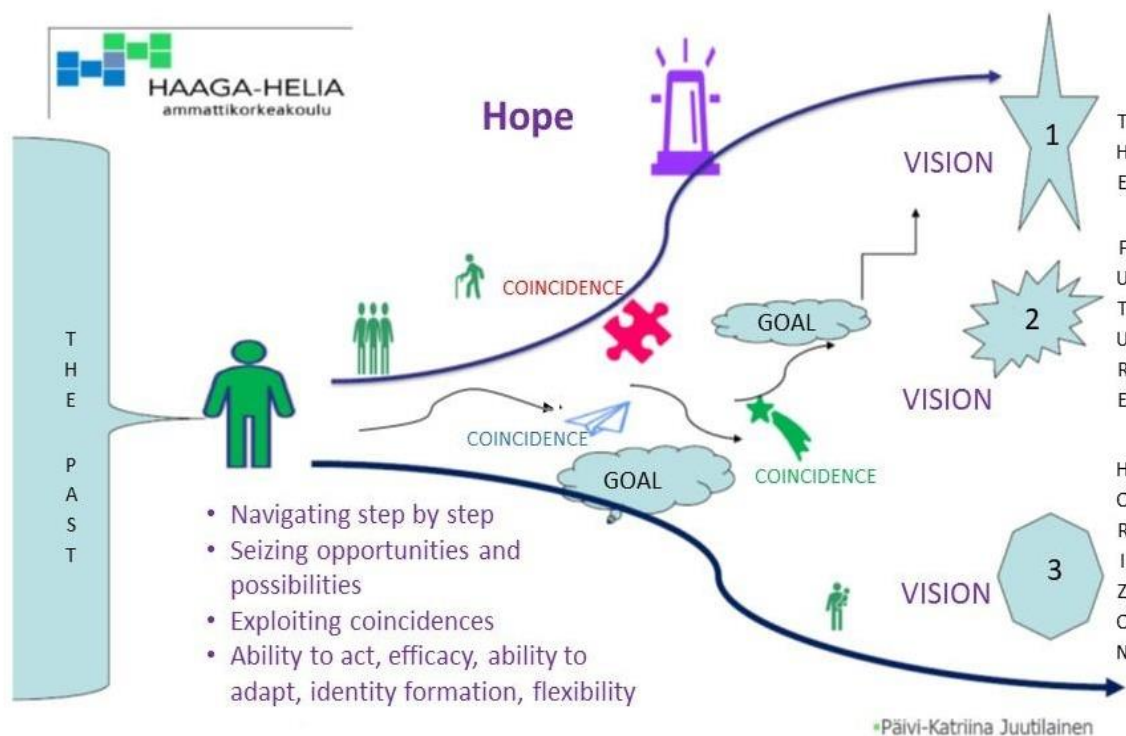


Figure 1: Hope-based student guidance

The past

- Experiences of success and failure may affect the concept of self-efficacy and hence also the concept of looking ahead to future possibility. The number of these experiences do also depend on the number of years already lived.
- Alongside motivation, the central question, which arises, is that of the main goals being strived for, and the means by which these goals can be reached. As far as motivation is

¹⁰ JUUTILAINEN, P.-K. & MÄKELÄ, N. (2019). "MÄ OON VAAN HALUNNU OLLA SIINÄ KAMPAAJAKUPLASSA" Opintopolku amiksesta korkeakouluun – opiskelijoiden kokemuksia ohjauksesta ja opinnoista. In Ed. P.-E. Ikonen & K. Voutilainen. *Jatkoväylällä. Yhteistyöllä ammatillisesta koulutuksesta ammattikorkeakouluun.* [Online] Available from: <https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/155042/URNISBN9789523441101.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>. [Accessed: 22nd September 2020]

concerned, it has been demonstrated that the crucial factor is that a person is capable of setting goals for themselves – goals that, furthermore, are achievable.

- Opportunities to formal education for the generation now over 80 were open mainly for primary school only, extended learning on higher education institutes (gymnasium or university) was rather scarce and limited to people who could afford it. To learn a profession, apprenticeships were quite common. Generally speaking, boys went to vocational technical education and girls learned to do housekeeping or learned to become a secretary. Women were seldom permitted to go to higher education levels.
- The past should be regarded positively as part of the project of constructing the self.

The future horizon

- Is not predefined. In the post-modern world, the future is defined by uncertainty, which hinders choice.
- The future horizon has also a different duration in terms of timescale, as younger learners are mainly thinking on a medium-term or long-term base, while the learners over 80 are rather visioning on a short-term base only.
- Both the sociocultural context and the individual competences and characteristics influence learner's capability of forming the future visions. The role of guidance and counselling is enlarging a scale of these visions.
- In hope-based thinking, the setting of concrete intermediate goals is of particular importance; thus, exploiting the individual's proximal concept. Course selections are generally made at the start of studies, and intermediate goals such as basic language and other study programs are identified. The selection of courses provides a basis for self-reflection, during which learners have the opportunity to evaluate preconceptions about their own skills and motivation. If the study programme does not match the learner's preconceived notions, alternative options might be offered. However, learners are generally encouraged to complete the courses they have selected, on the grounds that the subject may prove useful later as a subsidiary subject. Completed courses serve to increase the learner's sense of self-efficacy.

Coincidences¹¹

- In the post-modern society, the future is defined as contingent and uncertain. Many future threats that are beyond the individual's control, such as climate change and COVID-19, cause anxiety, which overshadows expectations for the future. The uncertainty and unpredictability of the human life trajectory adds to this. Resilience could be defined as persistence or the ability to psychologically overcome adversity.
- Coincidences can have a strong influence here. People's perception of the future is central. Coincidence/luck can be viewed as both opportunity and/or threat.
- Hope and confidence in the future enables people to act in the present. It is important to be able to seize the opportunities that come along. The past may have some influence, but a person of hope dares to seize opportunities.

Identity

- An inalienable part of the postmodern identity is uncertainty and disruption. The sociological subject is constructed on the idea that the self is born in an interactive relationship with others. In this context the elements central to the formation of the identity are constructed: knowledge, skills, meanings, and symbols, which serve to answer the question: who am I? The self is also developed through social interactions.
- In addition to the environment, the actions of the individual are also influenced by psychological actors, which vary according to the stages of the life cycle. A person needs the capacity to adapt their targets and end goals according to external and internal changing circumstances, which are eventually happening more often as we grow older.
- Decisions about education are central to the socialisation of all ages and to the identity formation of the young person. The framework provided by the education system allows them to construct their horizon for action. The basic principle is that learners will have to adjust and adapt their goals according to the changing situation. The feedback that they receive helps to (further) construct their identity and sense of self.

¹¹ "Planned happenstance" theory was introduced in 1999, by Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz. They clarified it as "constructing unexpected career opportunities" and purport that students can "plan," be prepared for, and even "construct" or generate "chance" career events in their lives.

Juutilainen's depiction of hope-based study guidance can also be applied to previously observed research data concerning the significance of a year in folk high school¹², or more generally, of learning through other types of adult education. Of central significance, arise the following areas: learning to be independent, motivation, finding one's own direction, and reaching maturity in knowledge and skills. A period in adult education is a time when people are required to think about the future and the possibilities it offers, as well as their own motivation in relation to both the present and the past. Within the present are contained three levels of temporality in which the future defines the present.

Research has been carried out into young people's thinking about their own future through the concept of future-orientation. Future-orientation comprises an individual's plans, attitudes, and experience of life management, all of which are influenced by the individual's characteristics and the sociocultural context. A person lives ever more profoundly in the future, where they become increasingly aware of the risks to themselves and to others. Self-reflection operates on a present-future axis. It is always future directed. Life, however, does not proceed in a straight line; rather the stages of life are made up of periods of stability, change, continuity, lack of continuity, balance, and chaos.

Future-orientation has been seen to have a central connection with human development. Human beings consider their future in detail at stages of their life cycle. In the case of young people, the time after high school or vocational training represents the move into adulthood. For example, a year at folk high school is for many a time when they consider their own future and to questions about such things as education and work. Personal future-orientation is dependent on cognitive concepts of the past, the present and the future. Future-orientation is rarely a uniform, conscious attitude, since the factors that influence it come to the fore only in short and narrow phases of life.

Young adults (20-25 years) are, according to Loevinger's theory of development, at the so-called stage of self-awareness, which includes development as an individual and the acceptance of differences; this manifests itself as, amongst other things, the renunciation of traditional roles and protection mechanisms. Self-reliance is built through interaction with peers of the same age. In the development of the self can be distinguished three hierarchical levels: conscientiousness,

¹² NIEMI, A. (2008). *Vuosi elämästä. Työväen Akatemian opiskelijoiden kansanopistovuodenkokemukset ja merkitykset*. University of Jyväskylä. [Online] Available from: https://jyx.jyu.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/18466/URN_NBN_fi_jyu-200803131259.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. [Accessed: 16th September 2020]

individualism, plus autonomy and integration. At the level of conscientiousness, the individual feels responsibility towards other people and wishes to test their own personal limits, which, for its part, strengthens the growth of self-reliance. The individualism level concerns the autonomous ego and the discovery of the self as an individual. Self-reflection and a critical attitude to oneself is strengthened at this level. At the highest level in the hierarchy – that of autonomy and integration – the individual is capable of facing, tolerating, and solving internal conflicts. At this stage, the individual has self-control, behaves with authenticity and is capable of self-direction.

Adult learners are a heterogeneous group. We start from the fact that adults (over 25 years) retain all the diversity they bring from their childhood and adolescence into adulthood, but the diversity is still increasing or changing, just as the roles and tasks of adults in different periods of life. All this influences and determines the needs of adults for further education and learning, as well as their possibilities, abilities and concrete paths of education and learning.

It is necessary to know the characteristics of specific groups of adult learners, such as their cultural and socioeconomic situation and prior learning, along with other background learning parameters, to plan and implement appropriate educational opportunities for them.

The groups of adults who have more difficult access to education should get special attention; particularly the vulnerable groups such as migrants, the long-term unemployed, former prisoners, those in preparations of release, and people with special needs. The problems of these groups are reflected in unemployment, low education, homelessness and, consequently, further exclusion from society. Vulnerability can stem from physical characteristics, it can stem from social, economic, political, and cultural factors, from current conflicts, and so on.

The recommendations of the European Association for Adult Education (EAEA) highlight the benefits of educating the elderly (over 50 years), and are comparable to the proposals of the Pan-European Forum for the Elderly Education of the PEFETE network (Mercken, 2004 in EAEA, 2006)¹³:

- Independent and experiential learning: older people are usually more committed to their education, have lifelong experiences that they can share with others, and generally, they are intensively involved in the educational process;

¹³ EAEA - EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS (2006). *Adult education trends and issues in Europe*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.new-views.eu/resources/adult-education-trends-and-issues-in-europe.pdf>. [Accessed 20th February 2021]

- Lot of space for volunteering: many activities in the education of the elderly have the characteristics of cooperation; senior citizens can volunteer in senior education;
- Contribution to cultural heritage and human capital: senior citizens can play an important role in relation to cultural heritage;
- Diverse educational opportunities: Education of older population is provided by various organisations, from faculties and other organizations in the formal educational system to private organizations, self-help organizations, local groups of volunteers.

Older adults are a heterogeneous group when considering differences such as income, education, health, and background. In this handbook, we divide older adults in two groups: very old adults, born before the Second World War (80+) and younger older adults, including the baby boom generation (65-79).

People of 80 and over might well live independently, however many of them suffer from chronic diseases (3/4 has multiple chronic diseases, such as heart or lung diseases, diabetes, dementia) or incidentally face mobility issues (less gait, not able to climb stairs, need to use a wheeled walker or wheelchair). Opportunities to formal education for this generation were open for primary school only, extended learning on higher education institutes (gymnasium or university) was rather scarce and limited to people who could afford it. To learn a profession, apprenticeships were quite common. Generally speaking, boys went to vocational technical education and girls learned to do housekeeping or learned to become a secretary. Women were seldom permitted to go to higher education levels.

How different this situation turned out for those born after the war. In many countries education of the population became one of the priorities. Education became compulsory for everyone younger than 16 or 17 years. This and the fact that manual work was moved to lower income countries and other jobs with another kind of skills and competences, gave a boost to the educational levels of the entire population.

A large minority of older adults developed digital skills, because out of their own interest, the ongoing digitalization of society (internet banking, online shopping, public and business information) and to keep the same pace with the (grand)children.

Looking at the general sketch of older adults, lifelong learning at older age (65+) could contain the following elements:

- Digital skills development, to remain connected to others (especially in times of pandemic) and to remain autonomous and independent.
- Catch up or second chance education: learning a new language or other fields of interest, such as history, philosophy, political science. To compensate what has been missed in earlier life and can be caught up after retirement. In Eastern Europe, Third Age education is quite popular. In other countries university courses for older adults.
- Hobbies training and after retirement training: what to do with empty days and empty nests. Flower arranging, mindfulness, yoga, painting, and biography writing are some examples.
- Old-age learning: how to deal with losses (spouse or wife, friends, but also loss of mental or physical strength), how to deal with illnesses.

Parameters to map background learning

As mentioned earlier¹⁴, the persons being advised in guidance and counselling are affected by their past. This Handbook aims to develop a framework for the guidance and counselling in adult learning to map the following background learning parameters:

- Recognition of prior learning
- Self-awareness as a learner
- Factors of self-awareness
 - Ability to make independent choices and evaluations
 - Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect, and self-efficacy
- Metacognitive skills
- Motivation
- Social economic background

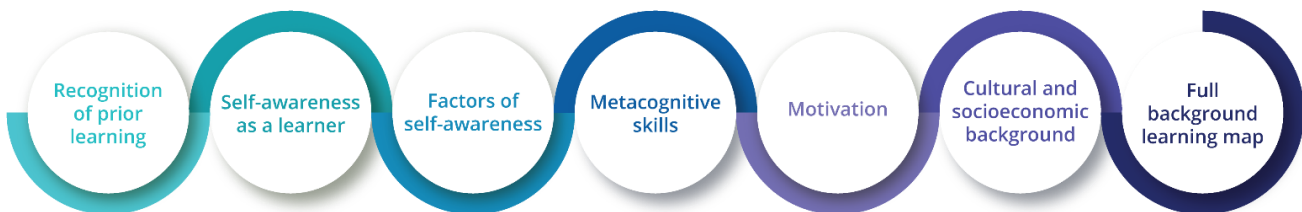


Figure 2: Parameters to map background learning

Recognition of prior learning is even more important to adult learners than to other learners because of prior education and life lived. The adult learner has gained both formal and non-formal education. Connecting new to prior knowledge makes learning more affective. Self-awareness as a learner has been formed through all other learning experiences. Through reflection, it is possible to acquire new perspectives to gain a more complete understanding of changing events. The counsellor has a very important role in undoing the negative circles developed from bad learning experiences. Recognition of the barriers to adult learning improves learning results. It is often expected that the adult learner has sufficient self-guidance skills to take responsibility for their own

¹⁴ JUUTILAINEN, P.-K. & MÄKELÄ, N. (2019). "MÄ OON VAAN HALUNNU OLLA SIINÄ KAMPAAJAKUPLASSA" Opintopolku amiksesta korkeakouluun – opiskelijoiden kokemuksia ohjauksesta ja opinnoista. In Ed. P.-E. Ikonen & K. Voutilainen. *Jatkoväylällä. Yhteistyöllä ammatillisesta koulutuksesta ammattikorkeakouluun*. [Online] Available from: <https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/155042/URNISBN9789523441101.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>. [Accessed: 22nd September 2020]

learning. This is not however always the case. In Finnish and Slovenian reality, it is possible to divide the responsibility, for example by the counsellor setting timelines for study tasks. Also, extending self-mirroring to the learning process permits motivation and planning of adult learners' studies.

Sufficient self-esteem can overcome the fears of learning, and there is no need for special strategies to face failures. Sufficient self-respect makes it possible for the adult learner to try out new things and to see challenges positively. Depending on the context, it is possible to ease adult learners' possible problems in cognitive skills by helping with study strategies and offering exam and essay clinics, for example. Effective learning demands that an adult learner can be active and finds both the activity and the subject under study of interest. Motivation for learning can be divided into internal and external. Balancing family, work and study might be hard.

More than supporting the choice of a specific qualification path and/or professional path, guidance and counselling activities are expected to prepare citizens of different ages and in different situations to be able to face the challenges of the labour market, anticipating and managing the various transitions they are going to make. For example, in the Portuguese reality of the Qualifica Centres's lifelong guidance and counselling¹⁵, the activities developed are expected to enable citizens to effectively manage their careers and to build life projects, facilitating various transitions: between school and the labour market, the return to the education or training system, the transition between employment and unemployment, between different jobs and between employment and retirement. It is a paradigm shift, shifting the focus from the orientation of an intervention merely to support decision-making on an area of study or professional training, contextualized in the time and in the organism in which it is made available (educational context, public employment service or other), for an intervention throughout the life cycle, focused on supporting these transitions.

¹⁵ ANQEP - AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O ENSINO PROFISSIONAL (2017). *Lifelong Guidance at the Qualifica Centres: Methodological Guide*. [Online] Available from: https://anqep.gov.pt/np4/file/339/Ori_Longo_Vida_GM.pdf. [Accessed: 15th January 2020]

The best practices

The guidance and counselling process can follow different methodologies and processes. The following figure illustrates different stages of intervention in the orientation process, based on the CEARTE's Qualifica Centre¹⁶ and the Methodological Guides of the Qualifica Centres¹⁷:

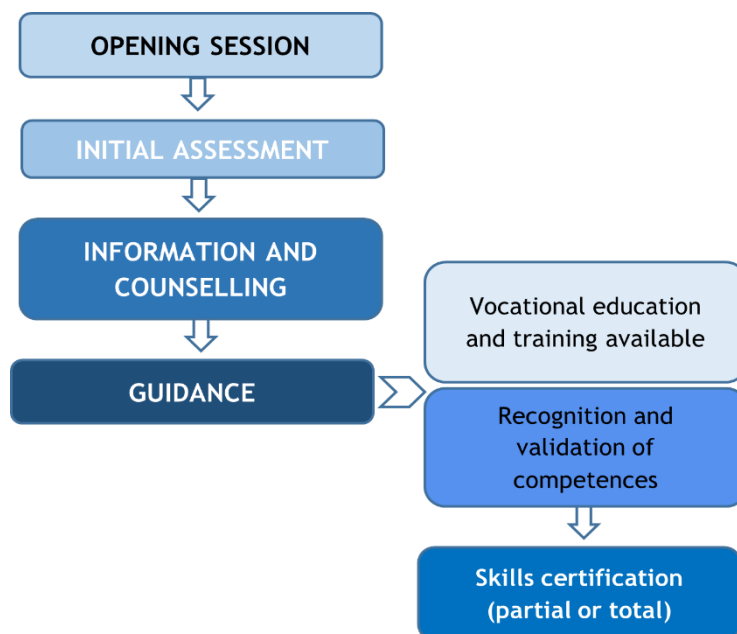


Figure 3: Guidance and Counselling Intervention Stages

These first two phases of the guidance and counselling intervention can be applied to different contexts and target groups and according to specific characteristics. These are the most important phases to map background learning parameters, even though the guidance and orientation process can be a continuous process, in several situations. One-on-one meetings with the candidate should be a priority. Nevertheless, the sessions can happen in a small group. These stages seek to explore the objectives of the lifelong guidance framework, namely, developing self-concept and interacting effectively.

1. Opening/welcome session (group or individual)

- Registration

¹⁶ CEARTE – CENTRO DE FORMAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL PARA O ARTESANATO E O PATRIMÓNIO. [Online] Available from: <https://www.cearte.pt/>. [Accessed: 15th January 2020]

¹⁷ ANQEP – AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O ENSINO PROFISSIONAL (2017). *Lifelong Guidance at the Qualifica Centres: Methodological Guide*. [Online] Available from: https://anqep.gov.pt/np4/file/339/Ori_Longo_Vida_GM.pdf. [Accessed: 15th January 2020]

- Information and clarification on the mission and scope of the services/training centre/school
 - General information on different qualifications
- 2. Initial assessment** (one to six sessions - group or individual)
- Analyse the candidate's profile (self-concept and ability of interaction)
 - Begin compiling official evidence and other relevant documentation
 - Preparation and development of a **portfolio**, if applicable (see chapter 1B. Suitable practices for working in small groups)

The **opening session** should culminate with the schedule of the following sessions/stages and with the indication of the documents and information that the candidate must gather. This schedule also aims to hold the candidate accountable for the registration process and make them aware of the importance of attending the next sessions.

The **initial assessment** gathers further information on the candidate's profile, their prior education and training as well as work or occupational experience. To this end, different instruments can be applied, namely diagnostic activities, curriculum analysis, interviews, and/or others, which allow the gathering of information considered relevant to the characterization/construction of the respective profile and the identification of their needs, motivations, and expectations.

This handbook represents guidance and counselling practices found suitable to map the following background learning parameters:

1. Recognition of prior learning
2. Self-awareness as a learner
3. Factors of self-awareness
 - a. Ability to make independent choices and evaluations
 - b. Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect, and self-efficacy
4. Metacognitive skills
5. Motivation
6. Social economic background

The practices are divided into two categories: suitable practices for individual guidance and counselling and suitable practices for working in small groups. In some cases, there are practices that are suitable for both individual and small group activities.

1. Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning is even more important to adult learners than to other students; the adult learner has gained both formal and non-formal education from prior education and other experiences. The recognition of prior learning (RPL) describes a process used to evaluate skills and knowledge gained through life outside of formal education and training, for the purpose of recognising life achievements against a given set of standards or learning outcomes¹⁸. All the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard should be considered in reviewing the prior learning of the learner and RPL should be a part of the learner eligibility assessment (GOV.UK, 2019)¹⁹. In recognising prior learning, the following should be considered:

- Work experience
- Prior education, training or associated qualification(s) in a related sector/subject/area
- Any previous apprenticeship undertaken.

In this way, RPL can increase self-esteem and self-confidence and help with career development and planning. RPL has real value in recognising and promoting lifelong learning and society's needs for an appropriately skilled and capable workforce (The Opening University, 2020)²⁰. Connecting new to prior knowledge makes learning more effective.

Currently, it is expected that each person will go through multiple occupations during their life, performing functions in which, in addition to professional skills, other transversal ones are also very important, such as communication, resilience, adaptability, and initiative. More than supporting the choice of a specific qualification path or professional path, guidance activities are now expected to prepare citizens of different ages and in different situations to be able to face the challenges of the labour market, anticipating and managing the various transitions they are going to make (ANQEP, 2017).²¹

¹⁸ QUALITY AND QUALIFICATIONS IRELAND (2020). *Recognition of Prior Learning*. [Online] Available from: <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-RPL.aspx>. [Accessed: 5th March 2020]

¹⁹ GOV.UK (2019). Apprenticeships: initial assessment to recognise prior learning. [Online] Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-recognition-of-prior-learning/apprenticeships-initial-assessment-to-recognise-prior-learning> [Accessed: 15th January 2020]

²⁰ THE OPEN UNIVERSITY (2020). *Recognition of Prior Learning*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.open.ac.uk/cicp/main/recognition-prior-learning>. [Accessed: 6th March 2020]

²¹ ANQEP - AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O ENSINO PROFISSIONAL (2017). *Lifelong Guidance at the Qualifica Centres: Methodological Guide*. [Online] Available from: https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/file/339/Ori_Longo_Vida_GM.pdf. [Accessed: 15th January 2020]

1A. Suitable practices for individual guidance & counselling

The application form often asks about the adult learners' prior education before they go back to school/training. This could later serve as a starting point for face-to-face discussions with a tutor at the beginning of their studies. However, the application form hardly ever asks about non-formal learning and the applicants often do not consider it an important answer. They may also think that mentioning unfinished education can be unimportant, unwise, or even harmful for a successful application.

New adult learners will rework their application forms when they go back to studying by turning them into personal education plans. It is a questionnaire inquiring about previous learning experiences, both formal and non-formal. In case of formal education (that includes those who did not finish it), there may be certain areas of the starting education already covered and certificated by the recognized exams, passed courses, or competence-based qualifications. Moreover, connecting new to prior knowledge makes learning more effective.

After the individual method of looking into each questionnaire, the adult learner can provide additional information in person as a part of the counselling process.

Ljudska univerza Celje

The following questions examples are part of institutional questionnaires used to evaluate past educational and work experience and acquired competencies. The questionnaire is used in introductory interviews conducted by the counsellor with the adult learner before enrolling in formal or non-formal education. Based on the answers, the personal education plan is built for the adult learners. The questionnaire is also used in individual or group counselling to evaluate the previous work and educational experience of the adult learners and according to the answers we advise on further educational opportunities.²²

²² KRAŠOVEC, S. *et al* (2007). *Svetovalni pripomočki v izobraževanju odraslih*. [Online] Available from https://arhiv.acs.si/publikacije/Svetovalni_pripomočki_v_izobraževanju_odraslih.pdf. [Accessed 11th October 2020]

Table 1: Recognition of prior learning - Ljudska univerza Celje

Recognition of prior learning through a personal education plan
Identify the highest level of education you obtained, as well as the establishment where you completed it
Other completed education
Incomplete education (education that was started, but left unfinished)
Working experience in a field of your current education
Based on your curriculum, mention the professional functions performed, as well as the learning acquired in the different experiences
Informally acquired knowledge - competencies (knowledge acquired outside of the formal education – through different hobbies, using your computer skills, household work etc.)

Caritas Coimbra

Through the Qualifica Programme²³, the CEARTE's team²⁴ build and mobilizes specific instruments, methodologies and activities that support the whole guidance process, to help create or develop specific ways of matching skills and life experiences with study and work activities. Below there are some examples used in the recognition of prior learning data collection, that can be used in an individual session (it can be adapted to group sessions):

Table 2: Recognition of prior learning - Caritas Coimbra

Recognition of prior learning
Academic path: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the last level of education you obtained, as well as the establishment where you obtained it.
Training courses path: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please indicate the training actions you have attended so far.
Professional path: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have worked, please indicate your professional experience. Based on your experience, refer the functions performed as well as the learning acquired in the different experiences.

²³ QUALIFICA PROGRAMME (2017). [Online] Available from: <https://www.qualifica.gov.pt/#/>. [Accessed: 20th January 2020]

²⁴ CEARTE – CENTRO DE FORMAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL PARA O ARTESANATO E O PATRIMÓNIO. [Online] Available from: <https://www.cearte.pt/>. [Accessed: 20th January 2020]

1B. Suitable practices for working in small groups

Caritas Coimbra

The construction of the **portfolio**²⁵ is an important resource and it should begin with the collection of official evidence, for recognition of prior learning, personal data, and/or other documentation that is considered relevant for the definition of the profile of the adult learner, considering the following topics:

Table 3: Recognition of prior learning - Caritas Coimbra

Recognition of prior learning
Sex and age
Education level
Current professional situation
Expectations/Interests
Education/Training courses
Work experience
Skills acquired through formal, non-formal, informal learning experiences
Life context
Assessment of accessibility
Availability for learning/pursuing studies
Availability to seek voluntary work, internships, student exchange programmes, professional mobility.

Thus, these topics can be used to build a questionnaire to be answered autonomously by the adult learner or in a semi-structured interview to collect information and foster dialogue, to build a personal education plan for the adult learners before enrolling in formal or non-formal education training courses.

²⁵ ANQEP - AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO E O ENSINO PROFISSIONAL (2017). *Lifelong Guidance at the Qualifica Centres: Methodological Guide*. [Online] Available from: https://anqep.gov.pt/np4/file/339/Ori_Longo_Vida_GM.pdf. [Accessed: 15th January 2020]

2. Self-awareness as a learner

The theories of self-awareness, according to APA Dictionary of Psychology (2020)²⁶, are “the theories of the consequences of focusing attention on the self”. Sometimes, distinctions are made between subjective self-awareness, arising directly from the observation and experience of oneself as the source of perception and behaviour and objective self-awareness, arising from comparison between the self and the behaviours, attitudes, and traits of others or some perceived standard for social correctness in any one of these areas.

Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund (Zhu, 2020)²⁷ developed the theory of self-awareness that says 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.” According to Daniel Goleman (2015)²⁸, there are four realms of **emotional intelligence**: self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skill. He proposed a definition of self-awareness, as “knowing one’s internal states, preference, resources, and intuitions.” This places more emphasis on the ability to monitor our inner world, our thoughts, and emotions as they arise.

In another article, Goleman (2019)²⁹ describes emotional self-awareness as the ability to understand your own emotions and their effects on your performance. You sense how others see you and so align your self-image with a larger reality. You have an accurate sense of your strengths and limitations, which gives you a realistic self-confidence. It also gives you clarity on your values and sense of purpose, so you can be more decisive when you set a course of action.

Recognition of the barriers to adult learning improves learning results. Extending self-mirroring to the learning process increases motivation and better planning of adult learners’ studies. Self-awareness as a learner has been formed through all other learning experiences. Through reflection, it is possible to acquire new perspectives to gain a more complete understanding of changing circumstances.

²⁶ APA DICTIONARY OF PSYCHOLOGY (2020). *Self-awareness theory*. [Online] Available from: <https://dictionary.apa.org/self-awareness-theory>. [Accessed: 6th March 2020]

²⁷ ZHU, J. (2020). *What is Self-Awareness and Why is it Important?*. [Online] Available from: <https://positivepsychology.com/self-awareness-matters-how-you-can-be-more-self-aware/>. [Accessed: 2nd March 2020]

²⁸ GOLEMAN, D. (2015). *Emotional Intelligence*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.danielgoleman.info/daniel-goleman-how-self-awareness-impacts-your-work/>. [Accessed: 2nd March 2020]

²⁹ GOLEMAN, D. (2019). *What is emotional self-awareness?*. [Online] Korn Ferry Institute. Available from: <https://www.kornferry.com/insights/articles/what-is-emotional-self-awareness-2019>. [Accessed: 2nd March 2020]

The counsellor has a very important role in undoing the negative circles developed from bad learning experiences. Recognition of the barriers to adult learning improves learning results. It is often expected that the adult learner has sufficient self-guidance skills to take responsibility for their own learning. This is not however always the case. It is possible to divide the responsibility: for example, by the teacher setting timelines for study tasks. Depending on the context, extending self-mirroring to the learning process increases motivation and better planning of adult learners' studies. Sufficient self-esteem can overcome the fears of learning, and there is no need for special strategies to face failures. Sufficient self-respect makes it possible for the adult learner to try out new things and to see challenges positively.

In adults, the connection between learning success and self-esteem is very strong, so it is important that the learners properly interpret learning experiences and achievements and experiences success as often as possible in learning process. Individuals who have negative experiences with prior learning are very insecure about their abilities and ability to successfully complete education. Incontinence can also be the result of poor knowledge of educational requirements and lack of learning planning.

2A. Practices suitable for individual guidance & counselling

Työväen Akatemia

The following questions have been used in Työväen Akatemia, adapted from the practice Opiskelun taitokartta, developed in the University of Turku³⁰:

Table 4: Self-awareness as a learner - Työväen Akatemia

Self-awareness as a learner	
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I am a slow reader. ▪ My eyes wander when I read, so that I have a hard time following the sentence. ▪ I rarely make mistakes while reading. ▪ I find it easy to discover the central ideas of a text. ▪ I find it easy to understand a text as a whole.
Understanding English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I find it easy to understand a text in English as a whole.

³⁰ KLEMOLA, U., IKÄHEIMO, H. & HÄMÄLÄINEN, T. (2019). *OHO-opas opiskelukykyä, hyvinvointia ja osallisuutta korkeakouluihin*. [Online] Available from: <https://ohohanke.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OHO-opas-1.pdf>. [Accessed: 20th February 2021]

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I find it easy to discover the central ideas of a text in English.
Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is easy for me to focus on writing. It is easy for me to write in a versatile way: to draft, to combine, to change as well as to edit a text. When I write using source material, I find it easy to understand the source in a profound way before writing. I do not possess a clear conception of my own way of writing.
Study strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I find it easy to stay within a planned schedule. It is difficult for me to find suitable study strategies for different texts. I find it difficult to keep myself focused while studying. I make a persistent effort to understand the more difficult texts related to my work.

The adult learner answers Likert scale questions, with the following range of options: never, sometimes, usually, always.

Ljudska univerza Celje

The following questions have been used in the first phases of the orientation process in an individual interview or in small group, in Ljudska univerza Celje³¹:

Table 5: Self-awareness as a learner - Ljudska univerza Celje

Self-awareness as a learner
I know how to schedule my learning time well.
If I do not understand something, I seek help.
When the material becomes too demanding, I stop learning it or I only learn the easy part parts.
When learning, I set goals that I consistently adhere to.
I find it hard to stick to my learning schedule.
When learning from learning materials, I help myself with underlining.
I repeat the material several times while learning.
I do my learning tasks well on a regular basis.

Answer a five-point Likert-type rating scale: 1 - fully invalid for me; 2 - mostly not valid for me; 3 - I cannot decide; 4 - mostly valid for me; 5 - completely valid for me.

³¹ KRAŠOVEC, S. et al. (2007). Svetovalni pripomočki v izobraževanju odraslih. [Online] Available from https://arhiv.acs.si/publikacije/Svetovalni_pripomocki_v_izobrazevanju_odraslih.pdf. [Accessed 11th October 2020]

It is very important that the counsellor leads the questionnaire resolution process, so that the adult learners can become aware of their own way of learning. The counsellor can also assess the individual's learning self-image. Based on the results, the individuals gain greater self-awareness regarding learning, which helps the adult learners to control and direct the learning process.

Työväen Akatemia

The following questions have been used in Työväen Akatemia, adapted from a practice developed in the University of Oulu³²:

Table 6: Self-awareness as a learner - Työväen Akatemia

Self-awareness as a learner
What kind of study assignments do you find it easiest to complete?
What sort of learner are you? How do you study and learn? What are your strong points as a learner?
Which aspects of yourself as a learner do you wish or need to improve the most?
From what sort of tasks have you received positive feedback?
What are you satisfied with regarding yourself as a learner?

The list of open questions serves as a base for the conversation in a private face-to-face meeting with a counsellor (½ h).

Ljudska univerza Celje

The Kolb Learning Style Model³³, from David Kolb, is divided into four different styles which derive from a four-stage learning cycle. This learning theory provides an understanding not just of individual learning styles based on the four quadrants but also explains a cycle of learning that can be applied to all learners. Some questionnaires are applied to ask adult learners what their learning and cognitive styles are:

³² KLEMOLA, U., IKÄHEIMO, H. & HÄMÄLÄINEN, T. (2019). *OHO-opas opiskelukykyä, hyvinvointia ja osallisuutta korkeakouluihin*. [Online] Available from: <https://ohohanke.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OHO-opas-1.pdf>. [Accessed: 20th February 2021]

³³ ATKINSON, T. (2018). *Kolb Learning Style*. [Online] Available from: <https://medium.com/proactive-learning/kolb-learning-style-e56162c48d43>. [Accessed 9th September 2020]

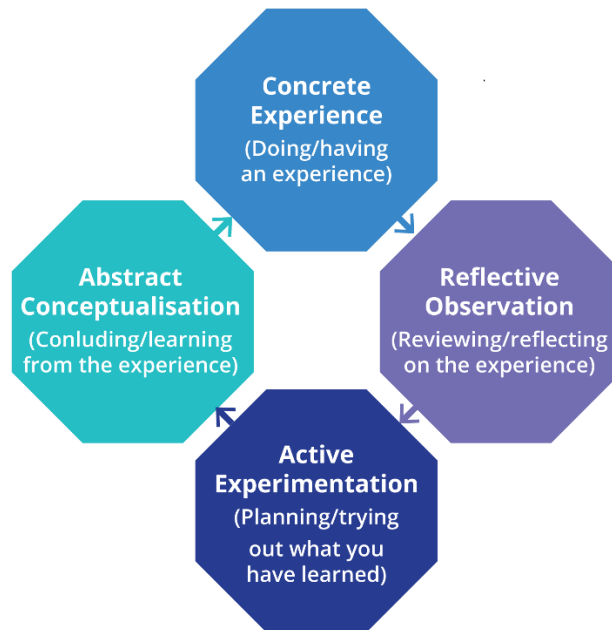


Figure 4: Kolb Learning styles

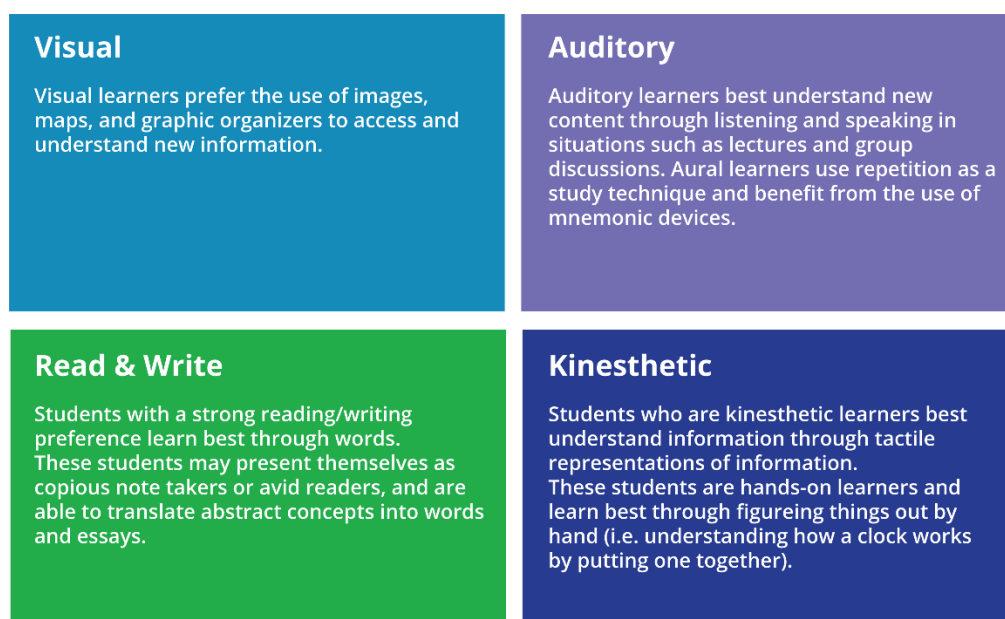


Figure 5: VARK cognitive styles³⁴

It is important to know what the predominant learning style and cognitive styles of the adult learners are. None of them is right or wrong. It just helps to know the advantages and disadvantages in the learning process. If each adult learner knows the strengths and weaknesses of their learning style, then they can guide themselves to improve it or even improve a learning style that is not

³⁴ TEACH.COM (2020). *Learning Styles: understanding VARK*. [Online] Available from: <https://teach.com/what/teachers-know/learning-styles/> [Accessed 9th September 2020]

predominant. Knowing the cognitive style makes learning much easier and effective. For those with learning problems and do not know how to approach learning, counsellors use learning aids on how to learn. The aim is to learn how to learn.

Caritas Coimbra

The following questions examples are part of institutional questionnaires for analysis/evaluation of the previous and current educational path, professional experience, motivation, skills and interest and the individual career project. Usually, these questionnaires are used in different services that make the referral to training courses or professional insertion offices, among others. For example, Social Integration Income (RSI), which is a social policy measure that helps individuals or families in financial difficulties who need support to integrate more successfully into society and who satisfy the eligibility conditions.

Table 7: Self-awareness as a learner - Caritas Coimbra

Self-awareness as a learner
Have you ever occurred in a situation of school failure/dropout or retention? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
If you answered affirmatively to the previous question, what reason(s) do you think contributed to your school failure? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of interest in the subjects taught ▪ School infrastructure conditions ▪ Lack of study ▪ Missing classes ▪ Lack of attention in class ▪ Widespread indiscipline at school ▪ Expulsion ▪ Difficulty of the subjects taught ▪ Inability of the teacher to explain the subject ▪ Classmate behaviour in the classroom ▪ Lack of parenting ▪ Relationship difficulties with staff and teachers
Regarding the previous question, why do you think the reasons you identified contributed to your school failure/dropout or retention?
I know my strengths and weaknesses regarding learning (SWOT analysis)

2B. Practices suitable for working in small group

SWOT analysis

According to Orr (2013)³⁵, SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A SWOT analysis is a simple tool to assist faculty to initiate meaningful change in a program and to use the data for program improvement. It provides helpful baseline information for a group that wants to vision the future or analyse a problem.

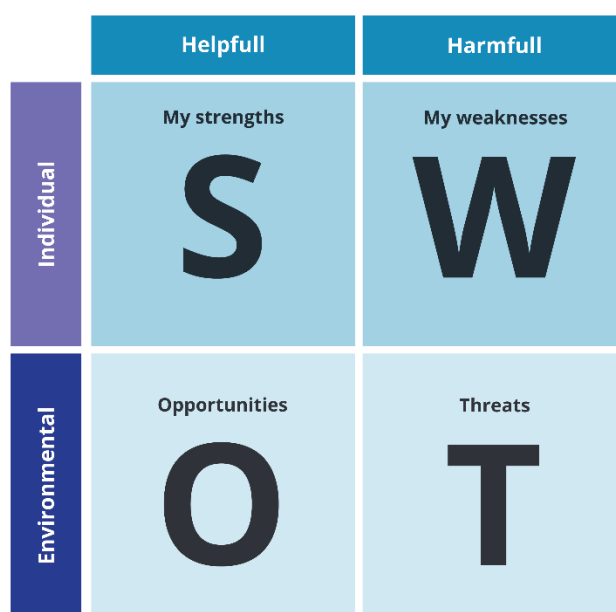


Figure 6: SWOT Analysis example

The attractions of SWOT analysis, according to Valkanos *et al.* (2009)³⁶, are that this technique is familiar and easily understandable by users, and it provides a good structuring device for sorting out ideas about the future and the ability to exploit that future.

Työväen Akatemia

An empty SWOT-form is shown on slide and for each adult learner on paper in front. The counsellor opens a conversation of possible strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of learning. Then each learner writes in a SWOT-form the statements that best describes their own situation.

³⁵ ORR, B. (2013). Conducting a SWOT Analysis for Program Improvement. *US-China Education Review*. [Online] June 2013, Vol. 3, No. 6, pp. 381-384. Available from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543801.pdf>. [Accessed: 23rd March 2020]

³⁶ VALKANOS, E. *et al* (2009). *The importance of SWOT Analysis for educational units that belong to the field of Vocational Education and Training: The case of the State Institute (IEK) of Epanomi in Thessaloniki, Greece*. [Online] Available from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/eb4b/636926470ba0f10bf8104a7ad209b4c7195c.pdf>. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

Afterwards, each group shares their thoughts, observations, and ideas of how to improve learning skills with the rest. Especially threats and opportunities easily open to a discussion in a group. A SWOT-form can easily serve later as a base for the conversation in a private face-to-face –meeting with a counsellor (½ h).

Caritas Coimbra

In the Inclusion Community Centre (CCI) – *Centro Comunitário de Inserção*³⁷, from Caritas Coimbra, the SWOT analysis tool is used for small groups activities to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the learning experiences, to easily reflect and measure about the internal and external influences. Usually, the SWOT analysis is used for different purposes but specially for referral to training courses or professional insertion offices. In some cases, this is a tool that requests some guidance and help to answer from the counsellor, so it is also used in individual sessions, where there is more time to reflect on the task. Below are some sample examples used in this exercise:

Table 8: Self-awareness as a learner - Caritas Coimbra

SWOT analysis tool to map self-awareness as a learner	
Strengths:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do well? What unique resources can you draw on? What do others see as your strengths? What strengths do you have that can be used differently?
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What could you improve? Where do you have fewer resources? What are others to see as a weakness?
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What opportunities are open to you? What circumstances may help you to expand your learning experiences? External conditions that are helpful to achieving your goals? How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What threats could harm you? Factors that could pose a risk to your success? What threats do your weaknesses expose to you?

³⁷ CCI - INCLUSION COMMUNITY CENTRE. [Online] Available from: <https://caritascoimbra.pt/2017/noticias/centro-comunitario-de-insercao/>. [Accessed: 15th January 2020]

3. Factors of self-awareness

By encouraging adult learners' self-reflection and facilitating the sharing of their thoughts with counsellors, following methods will help in overcoming the barriers to learning and studying. Through reflection, the adult learners acquire new perspectives to gain a more complete understanding of changing circumstances.

In this handbook, the factors of self-awareness are divided into two categories: 1) Ability to make independent choices and evaluations, and 2) Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect, and self-efficacy.

3.1 Ability to make independent choices and evaluations

Addressing the whole learner in developmentally appropriate ways includes establishing positive student relationships and listening to each learner's voice in creating productive learning climates. With this whole learner perspective, counsellor can help adult learners become responsible for their own learning in school and in life. According to McCombs (2020)³⁸, by addressing student learning needs and negative behaviours from a place of trust and positive relationships, adult learners are better able to make good choices during learning as well as outside the classroom.

To help adult learners to develop the ability to make choices for themselves, counsellors need to help them to understand their learning interests, dispositions to be active and autonomous learners and capacities or strengths in various content or skill areas. These learner-centred practices include counsellors showing students how to make learning choices and monitor the positive and negative consequences of their choices.

It is often expected that the adult learners have sufficient self-guidance skills to take responsibility for their own learning. This is, however, not always the case. It is possible to divide the responsibility: for example, by the counsellor setting timelines for study tasks.

³⁸ MCCOMBS, B. (2020). Developing Responsible and Autonomous Learners: A Key to Motivating Students. *American Psychological Association*. [Online] Available from: <https://www.apa.org/education/k12/learners>. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

3.1A. Practices suitable for individual guidance & counselling

Caritas Coimbra

The following questions are part of CEARTE's Qualifica Centre³⁹ profile survey (completed by the candidate) to collect information about the training/formation path, professional experience, motivation, skills and interest and the individual career project (understand how each adult learner perceives how the training/process will contribute to their career path).

Table 9: Ability to make independent choices and evaluations - Caritas Coimbra

Ability to make independent choices and evaluations
Indicate your projects after finishing the training course
Indicate your projects/expectations of work/training courses for the next year

Työväen Akatemia

The following questions have been used in Työväen Akatemia, adapted from the University of Oulu⁴⁰:

Table 10: Ability to make independent choices and evaluations - Työväen Akatemia

Ability to make independent choices and evaluations
What made you choose precisely this main subject?
What sort of aims do you have relating to your studies? What do you expect from your studies?
What sort of things generally interest you?
What kind of work would you like to do in the future?
What sort of things or tasks would you like your job to involve?
What would you need to accomplish in order to be qualified for the job?
How did you end up choosing this course/education? What made you choose exactly this one?
How do you take into account your studies in planning your schedule? How do you take care of your recovery and well-being?

The questions used in a private face-to-face meeting with a counsellor (½ h).

³⁹ CEARTE – CENTRO DE FORMAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL PARA O ARTESANATO E O PATRIMÓNIO. [Online] Available from: <https://www.cearte.pt/>. [Accessed: 20th January 2020]

⁴⁰ KLEMOLA, U., IKÄHEIMO, H. & HÄMÄLÄINEN, T. (2019). *OHO-opas opiskelukykyä, hyvinvointia ja osallisuutta korkeakouluihin*. [Online] Available from: <https://ohohanke.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OHO-opas-1.pdf>. [Accessed: 20th February 2021]

3.1B. Practices suitable for working in a small group

Caritas Coimbra

The aim of the MAPA project⁴¹ was to develop measures to help low-skill adults to feel motivated towards learning, through non-formal education activities, prior to or alongside with formal training structures. In a group that has low interests and low motivation for learning and offers great resistance to change, working the motivation is a constant. For example, to reflect and explore the ability to make independent choices and evaluations counsellors can create group activities where adult learners can choose news and/or topics to develop in a debate with the class or in short opinion texts.

Työväen Akatemia

The following questions have been used in Työväen Akatemia, adapted from the University of Oulu⁴²:

Table 11: Ability to make independent choices and evaluations - Työväen Akatemia

Ability to make independent choices and evaluations
What made you choose precisely this main subject?
What sort of aims do you have relating to your studies? What do you expect from your studies?
What sort of things generally interest you?
What kind of work would you like to do in the future?
What sort of things or tasks would you like your job to involve?
What would you need to accomplish in order to be qualified for the job?
How did you end up choosing this course/education? What made you choose exactly this one?
How do you take into account your studies in planning your schedule? How do you take care of your recovery and well-being?

A list of open questions is available for each adult learner either on slide or on paper. A group of 3 – 5 adult learners discuss of them 15 minutes. Afterwards, each group shares their thoughts, observations, and ideas.

⁴¹ GONÇALVES, M. & FERNANDES, M. (2007). *Motivar os Adultos para a Aprendizagem (MAPA) - Socrates-Grundtvig 2004 2007 - Olhares Cruzados Sobre a Educação Não Formal - Análise de Práticas e Recomendações*. Lisboa: DGFV

⁴² KLEMOLA, U., IKÄHEIMO, H. & HÄMÄLÄINEN, T. (2019). *OHO-opas opiskelukykyä, hyvinvointia ja osallisuutta korkeakouluihin*. [Online] Available from: <https://ohohanke.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OHO-opas-1.pdf>. [Accessed: 20th February 2021]

3.2 Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect and self-efficacy

Academic self-concept is the perception and evaluation that the students have or do about their academic abilities⁴³. This self-concept is one of the most important variables in the academic domain because it directly affects learning processes, such as academic achievement and expectations.

According to Bandura (1994)⁴⁴, “perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave.” They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. The level of self-efficacy refers to its dependence on the difficulty of a particular task.

For Zimmerman (2000)⁴⁵, self-efficacy beliefs have also shown convergent validity in influencing such key indices of academic motivation as choice of activities, level of effort, persistence, and emotional reactions. There is evidence (Bandura, 1997 in Zimmerman, 2000) that self-efficacious students participate more readily, work harder, persist longer, and have fewer adverse emotional reactions when they encounter difficulties than do those who doubt their capabilities.

Baumeister *et al.*, (2003)⁴⁶ define self-esteem by “how much value people place on themselves. It is the evaluative component of self-knowledge. High self-esteem refers to a highly favourable global evaluation of the self. Low self-esteem, by definition, refers to an unfavourable definition of the self.” Raised self-esteem and confidence are seen as outcomes of participating in learning. However, low self-esteem is also seen, in the context of adult learning and, according to researchers Lloyd and Sullivan (2003 in James & Nightingale⁴⁷), as “a factor that is associated with poor educational attainment and non-participation in education and training. Self-esteem and confidence therefore represent an important soft outcome of projects working with disadvantaged disengaged (...)”.

⁴³ ORDAZ-VILLEGAS, G.; ACLE-TOMASINI, G. et REYES-LAGUNES, L. (2014). Development of an academic self-concept for adolescents (ASCA) scale. *Journal of Behavior, Health & Social Issues*. [Online] Nov-2013/Apr-2014. vol.5 num.2. Pp.117-130. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.5460/jbhsi.v5.2.42304>. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

⁴⁴ BANDURA, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. *Encyclopedia of human behavior*. Vol. 4, pp. 71-81. New York: Academic Press. [Online] Available from: <https://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Bandura/Bandura1994EHB.pdf>. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

⁴⁵ ZIMMERMAN, B. (2000). Self-Efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. 25, pp 82–91. [Online] Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1016>. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

⁴⁶ BAUMEISTER, R. *et al.* (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles?. *Psychological Science in the public interest*. Vol. 4, No. 1, May 2003. [Online] Available from: <https://assets.csom.umn.edu/assets/71496.pdf>. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

⁴⁷ JAMES, K & NIGHTINGALE, C. Self-esteem, confidence and adult learning: Briefing Sheet. *Part of a series of NIACE briefing sheets on mental health. Leading learning and skills*. [Online] Available from: https://mhfe.org.uk/sites/default/files/self-esteem-confidence%202005_0.pdf. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

Development of confidence seems to be one of the keys to the successful development of literacy, language, and numeracy skills through the Skills for Life Strategy (Eldred *et al.*, 2004 in James & Nightingale).

Self-awareness as a learner has been formed through all other learning experiences. Through reflection, it is possible to acquire new perspectives to gain a more complete understanding of changing circumstances. The counselling teacher has a very important role in undoing the negative circles developed from bad learning experiences. Recognition of the barriers to adult learning improves learning results. Extending self-mirroring to the learning process increases motivation and better planning of adult learners' studies. Sufficient self-esteem can overcome the fears of learning, and there is no need for special strategies to face failures. Sufficient self-respect makes it possible for the adult learner to try out new things and to see challenges positively.

3.2A. Practices suitable for individual guidance & counselling

Caritas Coimbra

The following questions are part of CEARTE's Qualifica Centre⁴⁸ profile survey (completed by the adult learner) to collect information about the training/formation path, professional experience, motivation, skills and interest and the individual career project (understand how each person perceives how the training/process will contribute to their career path):

Table 12: Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect and self-efficacy - Caritas Coimbra

Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect and self-efficacy
Skills and interests
Identify how you see yourself and how others see you in different roles (student, colleague, friend, family member, friend) and the strengths in common
Analyse attitudes and behaviours that contribute positively or negatively to self-concept and its impact

⁴⁸ CEARTE – CENTRO DE FORMAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL PARA O ARTESANATO E O PATRIMÓNIO. [Online] Available from: <https://www.cearte.pt/>. [Accessed: 20th January 2020]

Ljudska univerza Celje

The counsellor has a very important role in recognizing the strengths and weaknesses that an adult learner has in the learning process. Based on the questions, the adult learners with the help of a counsellor, becomes aware of their strengths and areas where they need additional help and support. The following questions may be used in the first phases of the orientation process, in an individual interview or in small group.

Table 13: Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect and self-efficacy - Ljudska univerza Celje

Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect and self-efficacy	
What are your advantages and disadvantages in attitude towards learning process	
My advantages	My disadvantages

It is also asked to the adult learner statements that describe their self-esteem and attitude towards others ⁴⁹:

Table 14: Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect and self-efficacy - Ljudska univerza Celje

Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect and self-efficacy
When I do my exam, I think about how badly I am doing compared to other adult learners.
If I do not learn the material, it is completely my fault.
If it possible, I want to get better grades than others.
I am sure I can understand even the most difficult material we are dealing with in lectures.
Sometimes I think others are smarter than me.

Adult learners answer a five-point Likert-type rating scale: 1 - fully valid for me; 2 - mostly not valid for me; 3 - I cannot decide 4 - mostly valid for me; 5 - completely valid for me.

3.2B. Practices suitable for working in a small group

Työväen Akatemia

In Työväen Akatemia there is a practice to organize workshops about self-efficacy, learning strategies and study methods to the learners starting their academic studies. In the workshop, a

⁴⁹ KRAŠOVEC, S. et al (2007). Svetovalni pripomočki v izobraževanju odraslih [Online]. Available from https://arhiv.acs.si/publikacije/Svetovalni_pripomočki_v_izobraževanju_odraslih.pdf. [Accessed 11th October 2020]

counselling teacher gives first theoretical background to the academic self-concept, including idea of self-efficacy and a presentation of different study methods and learning styles. Then the learners discuss in pairs or small groups about these topics. Afterwards, each group might share their thoughts, observations, and ideas with the rest.

Adapted from a practice developed in the University of Oulu⁵⁰, a list of open questions is available for each adult learner either on slide or on paper. The following questions have been used in Työväen Akatemia:

Table 15: Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect and self-efficacy - Työväen Akatemia

Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect and self-efficacy
What have you learned during the past year?
If you were required to describe your capabilities to an employer, what would you say?
Specify one positive learning experience. What made it positive? Where do you think that you succeeded? How would you make use of the experience in other learning situations?
What have you discovered about yourself as a learner and as a student? How do you make use of your strengths and develop yourself?
What do you find challenging about your studies?
What do you expect from your studies in the future?

A group of 3 – 5 adult learners discuss of them 15 minutes. Afterwards, each group shares their thoughts, observations, and ideas with the rest.

Caritas Coimbra

The following exercise can be used in a questionnaire or as a part of a small group dynamic: “The following statements are related to self-esteem, self-respect, and personal effectiveness, regarding your educational path. To answer, you must choose the option that best applies, using a scale that varies between “never” and “always”. There are no right or wrong answers.”

⁵⁰ KLEMOLA, U., IKÄHEIMO, H. & HÄMÄLÄINEN, T. (2019). *OHO-opas opiskelukykyä, hyvinvointia ja osallisuutta korkeakouluihin*. [Online] Available from: <https://ohohanke.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OHO-opas-1.pdf>. [Accessed: 20th February 2021]

Table 16: Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect, and self-efficacy - Caritas Coimbra

Adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect, and self-efficacy
I can give a good impression to my colleagues of work or study
I am an important member inside my work or training groups
I have difficulty establishing contact with other people
I get nervous when I must answer questions or state my opinion in work or in a training context
I give up easily of my tasks/projects in my work or in a training context

The adult learner answers Likert scale questions, with the following range of options: never, sometimes, usually, always

In general, this type of exercise is very useful to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking about self-knowledge. In the specific case of the learning processes, it can be extremely useful for the counsellor to analyse and explore the adult learners' perceptions and guide/transform the self-knowledge concept.

4. Metacognitive skills

Metacognition is a concept that has been used to refer to a variety of epistemological processes. Essentially means cognition about cognition; that is, it refers to second order cognitions: thoughts about thoughts, knowledge about knowledge or reflections about actions.⁵¹ Metacognition pertains to the knowledge and skills for organizing, guiding, and controlling one's own thinking, actions, and learning processes. Students with good metacognitive skills are at the helm of their own learning process, through which they can execute a learning task more effectively. Metacognitive skills can be acquired and enhanced by instruction and training⁵². The development of metacognition allows an improvement in cognitive and motivational activity and, therefore, enhances the learning process. Although related, cognition and metacognition differ cognitive skills are those needed to perform a task whereas metacognitive skills are necessary to understand how it was performed (Rivers, 2001; Schraw, 1998 in Imel, 2002)⁵³. Metacognitive knowledge refers to what learners know about learning. This includes⁵⁴:

- the learner's knowledge of their own cognitive abilities (e.g., "I have trouble remembering dates in history")
- the learner's knowledge of tasks (e.g., "The ideas in this chapter that I'm going to read are complex")
- the learner's knowledge of different strategies that are available to them and when they are appropriate to the task (e.g., "If I scan the text first it will help me to understand the overall meaning").

4A. Practices suitable for individual guidance & counselling

Työväen Akatemia

Adapted from a practice developed in the University of Oulu⁵⁵, the following questions have been used in Työväen Akatemia:

⁵¹ LOUCA, E. (2008). *Metacognition and young children's Theory of Mind*. [Online] Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259848834_Metacognition_and_Young_Children's_Theory_of_Mind. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

⁵² TALENT EDUCATION ERASMUS+ PROJECT. *Metacognitive skills*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.talenteducation.eu/toolkitforteachers/metacognitiveskills/what-are-metacognitive-skills/>. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

⁵³ IMEL, S. (2002). Metacognitive Skills for Adult Learning. *Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education* no. 39. [Online] Available from: <https://calpro-online.org/eric/docs/tia00107.pdf>. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

⁵⁴ CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION - TEACHING AND LEARNING TEAM (2019). *Getting started with Metacognition*. [Online] Available from: <https://cambridge-community.org.uk/professional-development/gswmeta/index.html>. [Accessed: 16th March 2020]

⁵⁵ KLEMOLA, U., IKÄHEIMO, H. & HÄMÄLÄINEN, T. (2019). *OHO-opas opiskelukykyä, hyvinvointia ja osallisuutta korkeakouluihin*. [Online] Available from: <https://ohohanke.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OHO-opas-1.pdf>. [Accessed: 20th February 2021]

Table 17: Metacognitive skills - Työväen Akatemia

Metacognitive skills
Do you find it easy or difficult to keep yourself focused while studying?
Can you stay within a planned schedule?
How do you plan your schedule?
How do you take care of your own recovery?
What is your daily rhythm like?

This list of open questions serves as a base for the conversation in a private face-to-face meeting with a counsellor (½ h).

Caritas Coimbra

The following exercise can be used in a questionnaire or as a part of a small group dynamic: “The following statements relate to metacognitive skills, which are the ability to know and self-regulate cognitive processes in addition to knowing about them. To answer, you must choose the option that best applies, using a scale that varies between “never” and “always”. There are no right or wrong answers.

Table 18: Metacognitive skills - Caritas Coimbra

Metacognitive skills
I think of different ways to solve a problem and choose what I think is best
I have a perception of the effectiveness of each strategy I use
I try to use several strategies that have worked previously
When I am doing a task, I can recognize whether I understand what I am doing or not
I consider several alternatives to a problem before giving an answer

The adult learner answers Likert scale questions, with the following range of options: never, sometimes, usually, always.

In general, this type of exercise is very useful to encourage self-reflection and critical thinking about the skills and personal strategies used in different situations. In the specific case of the learning processes, it can be extremely useful for the counsellor to analyse and explore the adult learners'

perceptions and guide/transform different work strategies, to promote better results and a more adequate self-knowledge.

Työväen Akatemia

Adapted from the practice Opiskelun taitokartta developed in the University of Turku⁵⁶, the following questions have been used in Työväen Akatemia:

Table 19: Metacognitive skills - Työväen Akatemia

Metacognitive skills
Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am a slow reader. My eyes wander when I read, so that I have a hard time following the sentence. I rarely make mistakes while reading. I find it easy to discover the central ideas of a text. I find it easy to understand a text as a whole.
Understanding English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I find it easy to understand a text in English as a whole. I find it easy to discover the central ideas of a text in English.
Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is easy for me to focus on writing. It is easy for me to write in a versatile way: to draft, to combine, to change as well as to edit a text. When I write using source material, I find it easy to understand the source in a profound way before writing. I do not possess a clear conception of my own way of writing.
Study strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I find it easy to stay within a planned schedule. It is difficult for me to find suitable study strategies for different texts. I find it difficult to keep myself focused while studying. I make a persistent effort to understand the more difficult texts related to my work.

The adult learner answers Likert scale questions, with the following range of options: never, sometimes, usually, always.

4B. Practices suitable for working in small group

Työväen Akatemia

At the start of adult learning, learners read a same study text. Afterward they share their ideas of what was the main statement. If a chosen text is not too easy, the presented statements vary. That

⁵⁶ KLEMOLA, U., IKÄHEIMO, H. & HÄMÄLÄINEN, T. (2019). *OHO-opas opiskelukykyä, hyvinvointia ja osallisuutta korkeakouluihin*. [Online] Available from: <https://ohohanke.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OHO-opas-1.pdf>. [Accessed: 20th February 2021]

gives an opportunity to study the hierarchy of the text: what are the statements, and which are the arguments. Later the adult learners work in small groups, and each group must prepare a summary of certain part of the study material. The adult learners present their summaries and share them with the rest of the group, according to the timetable provided by the counsellor.

Caritas Coimbra

In the MAPA project⁵⁷, there were used a diverse set of methods: interrogative (permanently questioning), discovery (trying to get adult learners to reach conclusions) and simulations/modelling of realities. The activities were always well planned and provided for a set of alternative strategies, since often, there was a need for restructuring at the time (because some adult learner was not emotionally well or due to the small number of elements present). One of the instruments used was **portfolio** that has not only educational but also social potentialities. “What matters is what people can do with what they know” and the portfolio allows for skills improvement, which is essential in a professional context. People can change and rebuild their portfolio throughout their lives, as well as reflect on their personal development. This instrument allows monitoring, commenting, and reflecting on the work produced by the learners and their cognitive and affective development. The portfolios also allow to be enriched with personal documents, research material, grounded participation references (conferences, colloquia, symposiums, etc.) that demonstrate student autonomy and creativity. The portfolio is an assessment tool that provides an overview and at the same time detailed on the student's learning process.

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It is very important that the adult learners are aware of their own cognitive abilities and to recognize them, because only then the process of improvement begins. The counsellors encourage the adult learners to become aware of the level of their cognitive abilities based on results of the questionnaire.

Metacognitive abilities also include awareness of one's own learning process and needs, organizing one's own learning, including effective time and information management. Using questions from the questionnaire, the counsellors evaluate the metacognitive skills of the adult learners. The

⁵⁷ GONÇALVES, M. & FERNANDES, M. (2007). *Motivar os Adultos para a Aprendizagem (MAPA) - Socrates-Grundtvig 2004 2007 - Olhares Cruzados Sobre a Educação Não Formal - Análise de Práticas e Recomendações*. Lisboa: DGfV

following questions may be used in the first phases of the orientation process, in an individual interview or in small group.⁵⁸

Table 20: Metacognitive skills - Ljudska univerza Celje

Metacognitive skills
When I work in a group, I have trouble concentrating for work.
While working I forget about everything that is happening around me.
During class lectures, my thoughts often escape elsewhere.
I usually learn where I can gather more.
Before I start learning a new subject, I first take a quick look at it to get a better overview of it
I can focus my thoughts entirely on something that I am really interested in
If the lecture is longer than half an hour, I find it hard to follow

The adult learner answers Likert scale questions, with the following range of options: A-almost always; O-occasionally; N-never.

⁵⁸ KRAŠOVEC, S. *et al.* (2007). *Svetovalni pripomočki v izobraževanju odraslih*. [Online] Available from https://arhiv.acs.si/publikacije/Svetovalni_pripomočki_v_izobraževanju_odraslih.pdf. [Accessed 11th October 2020]

5. Motivation

In Psychology, there are two distinct types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. An action is intrinsically motivated when the goal of the action is the action itself. People can be intrinsically interested in gaining knowledge, in striving for (more) competence, in playing cards, doing sports, etc. An activity is extrinsically motivated when it is instrumental for reaching a goal that is not inherently related to the activity, e.g., studying to receive a reward or to succeed in the exam or learning how to play very good tennis to become a professional and make a lot of money. Very often, however, people are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated at the same time (Abreu, 2002; Deci, 1975; Lens, 2001; Lepper & Greene, 1978 in Lens, Paixão & Herrera, 2008)⁵⁹. Motivational problems in education are most frequently related to students' lack of intrinsic motivation. Studies showed that extrinsic rewards and other sources of extrinsic motivation may undermine intrinsic motivation and that extrinsic rewards and other external events (e.g., deadlines, surveillance, and threat of punishment) which are perceived by individuals as controlling their behaviour, are likely to undermine individuals' intrinsic motivation.

According to Crown (2006)⁶⁰, the daily grind of life finds everyone, lifelong learners included, engaged in activities that are required of them such as cooking, cleaning, working, and so forth, all activities that for most people are extrinsically motivated. Certainly, people have intrinsic motivation (caused by inherent satisfaction) when engaging in activities such as solving puzzles, doing art, or playing games for enjoyment. Lifelong learners read and learn about subjects that simply interest them. Effective learning demands that a learner can be active and finds both the activity and the subject under study of interest. Motivation for learning can be divided into internal and external. Balancing family, work and study might be hard. Connecting new to prior knowledge makes learning more effective.

⁵⁹ LENS, W.; PAIXÃO, M. & HERRERA, D. (2008). Instrumental Motivation is Extrinsic Motivation: So What???. *PSYCHOLOGICA*, 2009, 50. [Online] Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.14195/1647-8606_50_2. [Accessed: 18th March 2020]

⁶⁰ CROW, S. (2006). What Motivates a Lifelong Learner?. *School Libraries Worldwide*. Volume 12, Number 1, January 2006, pp. 22-34. [Online] Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251296152_What_Motivates_a_Lifelong_Learner. [Accessed: 18th March 2020]

5A. Practices suitable for individual guidance & counselling

Ljudska univerza Celje

Adult learners make independent choices to participate in different classes. Usually, the reason is a promotion at work or completing education they started long ago. Sometimes, however, it is hard for them to stay focused on education due to their families, jobs, other responsibilities, and low self-esteem as learners. In individual counselling, the counsellors try to help them stay focused by reminding them of their goals. With the following questions the goal is to encourage adult learners to think about their own motivation for persisting in education progress. The questions prove to be quite useful during education as they enable learners to find intrinsic motivation to complete the programme.⁶¹

Table 21: Motivation - Ljudska univerza Celje

Questions to stimulate motivation
Why am I here (in this programme, class)? /What is my goal?
Is it possible for me to reach my goals?
How far from reaching the goal am I?
How do I get there? /What must I do to get there?

Caritas Coimbra

The following questions may be explored in the first phases of the orientation process, in an individual interview or in small group dynamics, to discover oneself and record motivations, both personal and relational skills, paths and life contexts. This is an important parameter to the education process because a person is always “becoming different” and never remains static in these terms. In this way, adult learners come to find a meaning to life that is important to them (self-actualization). The following questions allow for multiple answers, so the adult learners can identify different motivations for the learning pathway, which can be explored and deepened in the lifelong guidance and counselling sessions.

⁶¹ KRAŠOVEC, S. et al (2007). *Svetovalni pripomočki v izobraževanju odraslih*. [Online] Available from https://arhiv.acs.si/publikacije/Svetovalni_pripomocki_v_izobrazevanju_odraslih.pdf. [Accessed 11th October 2020]

Table 22: Motivation - Caritas Coimbra

Motivation
What must I do to achieve my goals?
What do you think about investing in your training? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Training is a waste of time and does not reflect real issues and challenges b) Training should be done only when specific knowledge is needed c) The education process, when correct and consistent, facilitates the performance of functions and contributes to personal development
I intend to continue learning, attend education and training courses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Learn more e) Adjust my qualifications f) Have better salary g) Change professional activity h) Increase my qualifications i) Improve my chances of getting a job j) Get promoted k) Being able to help my students in their school progression l) Finish the course with good grades m) Get the most out of the experiment

Työväen Akatemia

Adapted from the practice ProMot⁶² developed in the University of Turku, the following questions have been used in Työväen Akatemia:

Table 23: Motivation - Työväen Akatemia

Motivation
Task orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I try to connect new information to what I have learnt previously. ▪ I am not content with a good grade and wish to truly grasp things.
Self-efficacy

⁶² KLEMOLA, U., IKÄHEIMO, H. & HÄMÄLÄINEN, T. (2019). *OHO-opas opiskelukykyä, hyvinvointia ja osallisuutta korkeakouluihin*. [Online] Available from: <https://ohohanke.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OHO-opas-1.pdf>. [Accessed: 20th February 2021]

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I consider myself capable of achieving my aims while studying. ▪ I trust myself to successfully get through my studies.
Social inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I feel like I belong to a community of learners. ▪ I study with people significant to myself.
Activation of challenging feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I am worried about failing my exams. ▪ The pressure caused by tasks, deadlines and competition gives me stress.
Procrastination and compensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If I predict problems, I move on to something else. ▪ If I encounter a difficult task, I find that I do not make a serious effort.
Being let off easy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I try to get through my studies with the least amount of work possible. ▪ I am particularly satisfied when I am not required to do a lot of work.

The adult learner answers Likert scale questions, with the following range of options: never, sometimes, usually, always

5B. Practices suitable for working in small group

Caritas Coimbra

In the MAPA project⁶³, there were used a diverse set of methods: interrogative (permanently questioning), discovery (trying to get adult learners to reach conclusions) and simulations/modelling of realities. The activities were always well planned and provided for a set of alternative strategies, since often, there was a need for restructuring at the time (because some learners were not emotionally well or due to the small number of elements present). In a group that with low interests and low motivation for learning and offers great resistance to change, working the motivation is a constant. Therefore, it is justified to use behaviour modification and modelling techniques that provide learning for life, facilitating social and professional integration. The activities developed from a constructivist perspective, where adult learners took on various roles: protagonists of the case or observers. One of the techniques used was **autoscropy**, which is used to simulate realities and microteaching to discuss and visualize social attitudes, behaviours, and representations. The use of dramatization of practices, which are close to the experiences of the adult learners, was extremely motivating for learning, as well as social reinforcement (praise). Educational play can help

⁶³ GONÇALVES, M. & FERNANDES, M. (2007). *Motivar os Adultos para a Aprendizagem (MAPA) - Socrates-Grundtvig 2004 2007 - Olhares Cruzados Sobre a Educação Não Formal - Análise de Práticas e Recomendações*. Lisboa: DGFV

to change behaviours and attitudes if the roles of representation and observation are played alternately, and spaces are created to develop critical thinking.

Työväen Akatemia

Adapted from the practice ProMot⁶⁴ developed in the University of Turku, the following questions have been used in Työväen Akatemia:

Table 24: Motivation - Työväen Akatemia

Motivation
Task orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I try to connect new information to what I have learnt previously. I am not content with a good grade and wish to truly grasp things.
Self-efficacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I consider myself capable of achieving my aims while studying. I trust myself to successfully get through my studies.
Social inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I feel like I belong to a community of learners. I study with people significant to myself.
Activation of challenging feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am worried about failing my exams. The pressure caused by tasks, deadlines and competition gives me stress.
Procrastination and compensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If I predict problems, I move on to something else. If I encounter a difficult task, I find that I do not make a serious effort.
Being let off easy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I try to get through my studies with the least amount of work possible. I am particularly satisfied when I am not required to do a lot of work.

A list of statements is available for each adult learner either on slide or on paper. Adult learners choose the statements that best describes them. Afterwards the whole group thinks how to improve learning skills.

⁶⁴ KLEMOLA, U., IKÄHEIMO, H. & HÄMÄLÄINEN, T. (2019). *OHO-opas opiskelukykyä, hyvinvointia ja osallisuutta korkeakouluihin* [Online]. Available from: <https://ohohanke.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OHO-opas-1.pdf>. [Accessed: 20th February 2021]

6. Cultural and socioeconomic background

Balancing family, work and study might be hard, especially for parents of young children. On the other hand, belonging to a study group, meeting, and influencing other adult learners gives better learning results.

6A. Practices suitable for individual guidance & counselling

Caritas Coimbra

The Qualifying Passport⁶⁵, from Qualifica Centres, is a technological instrument for recording qualifications and competences acquired or developed throughout the adult's life and providing guidance for learning paths. Based on the capitalization of the learning results already achieved and the skills acquired by the adult learner, the Qualifying Passport simulates several possible qualification paths for obtaining new qualifications and/or school and professional progression. Although this is a specific tool used in the Qualifica Centres, it can be adapted to different contexts of lifelong guidance and counselling. Below there are some examples of the question to map socioeconomic background:

Table 25: Cultural and socioeconomic background - Caritas Coimbra

Cultural and socioeconomic background
Age
Sex
Education level
Professional/Educational situation

Ljudska univerza Celje

The definition of socioeconomic background used varies widely, even across educational research. In the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) socioeconomic background is represented by the index of Economic, Social and Cultural Status, the highest level of education of the student's parents, converted into years of schooling⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ QUALIFYING PASSPORT. [Online] Available from: <https://www.passaportequalifica.gov.pt/cicLogin.xhtml>. [Accessed: 15th January 2020]

⁶⁶ OECD - ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (2017). *Scaling Procedures and Construct Validation of Context Questionnaire Data*. [Online] Available from: <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/sitedocument/PISA-2015-Technical-Report-Chapter-16-Procedures-and-Construct-Validation-of-Context-Questionnaire-Data.pdf>. [Accessed: 11th October 2020]

Adults from low socioeconomic level homes are at a disadvantage in education because they lack an academic home environment, which influences their academic success in education. Educational practices are affected by one's social background and, more precisely, by the cultural resources handed down in the family context. To obtain this background it is applied a questionnaire, in individual counselling.⁶⁷

Table 26: Cultural and socioeconomic background - Ljudska univerza Celje

Cultural and Socioeconomic background
What have I been doing in my life?
Current work
Employments so far
The responsibilities I have in life
My most important life experiences
Domestic chores, household
My role in the family
Entertainment, my hobbies, what I like to do
What I'm thinking, I'm interested in
Achievements of which I am proud of

6B. Practices suitable for working in small group

Caritas Coimbra

Sometimes, in sessions for small groups it may be used different icebreakers techniques. This can be an effective way of starting a training session, team building event, or an orientation/guidance session and allows, to collect cultural and social information. By getting to know each other and learning about the objectives of the session/event, people can become more engaged in the proceedings and so contribute more effectively towards a successful outcome.

While the primary purpose of an icebreaker is to do exactly what their title indicates, break the ice between people, icebreakers techniques can be used in many different situations. On the purpose,

⁶⁷ KRAŠOVEC, S. et al. (2007). *Svetovalni pripomočki v izobraževanju odraslih*. [Online] Available from https://arhiv.acs.si/publikacije/Svetovalni_pripomocki_v_izobrazevanju_odrslih.pdf. [Accessed 11th October 2020]

icebreakers can be as short as one minute, or developed into a longer activity of an hour or more. There are several dynamics: for example, the groupings by specific characteristics allow to increase the mutual knowledge of the adult learners, while helping to constitute a context and collect information that can be used to collect cultural and social information. The counsellor asks the members of the group to walk around the room and at a certain moment asks the adult learners to group themselves by preferred colours, birthplace, people that speak two different languages, who is the furthest from home, etc.:

- Find someone who can speak a second language. Ask if they have learned anything about cultural difference/s from this experience?
- Find someone who has spent more than 6 months in another country to the one they were born in. Ask them where and talk to them about it.
- Find someone who has read a book/novel about cross cultural working/experiences and ask if they would recommend that text.

Conclusion

This handbook represents the collective work of the IGCAL's consortium, that collect, tested and adapted different guidance and counselling practices, with methodologies and processes to map background learning parameters such as recognition of prior learning, self-awareness as a learner, factors of self-awareness – ability to make independent choices and evaluations and adult learners' self-esteem, self-respect, and self-efficacy, metacognitive skills, motivation and social–economic background. The gathered best practices enable to improve the lifelong guidance and counselling in adult learning and increase the quality of adult education. The aim of the handbook is to facilitate expansion and the development the skills of counsellors and to empower them to work with adult learners.

Based on the performed testing at the Ljudska univerza Celje, the adult learners that participated in the survey agreed that questionnaire was simple and well accepted. The main part of the counselling process was done by the counsellor, who completes the pedagogical tool (questionnaire), analyses the results, and provides feedback, otherwise, the questionnaire does not fulfil its purpose. The support of a counsellor is crucial in the learning process. The questionnaire represents a great contribution to counsellors in the counselling process, as it offers an insight into the adult learner's current educational path and lays the foundation for further education. Based on the collected data analysis in the testing phase with the target group, recognition of prior learning and self-awareness as a learner were considered essential parameters in the counselling process, as a crucial part for planning a further learning process.

The Caritas Coimbra's counsellors involved in the testing phase of the IGCAL's pedagogical tool reported that the receptivity of the adult learners to the questionnaire was very positive. Both counsellors and adult learners agreed that the questionnaire is useful to map adult learners' background learning parameters, and they also highlighted the usefulness of the questionnaire, not only in the guidance and counselling processes but also at the career guidance process. These are some of the comments of the counsellors about the pedagogical tool: "I think it is important for adult learners to be aware of their reality and to be able to make decisions for the future", "It allows obtaining information about the path and hopes at a professional and educational level" and "It can provide more adequate orientation to training courses, depending on their skills and expectations".

Partner AFEdeemy trains stakeholders, mainly older adults, to implement smart healthy age-friendly environments in their community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was unsafe especially for this group of learners to meet. Therefore, AFEdeemy was not able to perform the practices of the Handbook. Despite that, AFEdeemy, as young company, learned a lot from the project to focus on prior learning and hope based education and development.

In Työväen Akatemia testing phase, it was discovered that the questionnaire, whether it is online or a form, is not sufficient. It will need a private (individual) or semi-private (a small group) discussion with the adult learner and a counsellor. Counselling needs trust between the partners and it should be given at the right moment. The students seem very capable of self-reflection their learning in writing. It is still important to determine exactly which matters should be asked about in a questionnaire and which should be left to be discussed in teacher-student meetings. It was realized that the order of the questions is important because the adult learner should not get confused regarding the purpose of guidance and counselling. That is why it might also be a good idea to start by focusing more on the adult learner as a learner rather than as a person. For the counsellors, by far, the most helpful questions on the questionnaire appear to be the one dealing with the effects of the adult learners' own attitudes and ways of acting on their learning, and the ones about the adult learners' future aims.