Erasmus+

Activity Code O5

Train the Trainer Courseware Framework
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SYNERGY

Contents

Introduction

The aim of this deliverable is to present an outline of the principles and the relevant procedures for designing a training course for VET trainers with the objective to address their training needs with regards to delivering online training to MEOs.

Specifically, in the first part of this framework the principles underpinning the educational design of the training course will be presented. These principles are drawn from the field of adult education, highly relevant to the SYNERGY project.

The next section focuses on the process of eliciting the training needs of VETs. The third section presents the procedures through which the needs will be translated into concrete skills that will form the basis of the curriculum design. The fourth section covers the range and scope of modules and the fifth section presents the learning outcomes matrix. The deliverable concludes with a final section that presents the main training strategies and a suggested roadmap.

1   Principles of Adult Education training

Since the training course is addressed to VET trainers it has to combine established educational principles from the field of *adult learning*. Knowles, (1978) identified the following six principles of adult learning.

- Adults are internally motivated and self-directed
- Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences
- Adults are goal oriented
- Adults are relevancy oriented
- Adults are practical
- Adult learners like to be respected

1. Adults are internally motivated and self-directed
According to this principle adult learners resist learning when they feel others are imposing information, ideas or actions on them (Fidishun, 2000).
Therefore, the role of trainers should be to facilitate trainees' movement towards more self-directed and responsible learning as well as to foster their internal motivation to learn. The ultimate goal of such an approach is trainees to reach a state of autonomous problem solvers.
Therefore, in order to fulfil this characteristic of adult learning, the curriculum should:
- Move from more to less structure, from less to more responsibility and from more to less direct supervision, at an appropriate pace that is challenging yet not overloading for the student.
- Encourage asking of questions from the part of trainees as well as introducing new concepts and ideas in a contextualized and exploratory way (problem solving in authentic contexts).
- Build upon trainees' experiences and thoughts.

- Provide trainees with regular, constructive and specific feedback on tasks assessing their progress in the course including modes of self evaluation as well as modes of peer to peer evaluation.
- Frequently review goals and acknowledge goal completion.
- Allow for a diversified set of learning styles.

2. Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences

According to cognitive psychology all forms of knowledge are relational in nature (Novak, 1984). Therefore, adults must be given opportunity to use their existing foundation of knowledge and experiences gained from life, and apply it to their new learning experiences. In this way, training is nothing more than a reorganization of trainees' experiences into a coherent set of concepts and strategies.

Based on this principle it is imperative to:

- Find out about the trainees as much as possible- their interests and past experiences (personal, work and study related)
- Put them in front of challenges that resemble or even simulate real life circumstances.
- Orchestrate training in such a way so as to lead trainees into re-examining prior beliefs and understandings and thus offer them *reflective learning opportunities.*

3. Adults are goal oriented

Adult students become ready to learn when "*they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems*" (Knowles, 1980, p 44). Therefore the role of trainers is to facilitate trainees' readiness for problem-based learning and increase the latter's awareness about the need for the knowledge or skill presented. This could be accomplished by:
- Providing meaningful learning experiences that are clearly linked to problem based projects recognized as relevant and significant by trainees themselves.
- Asking questions that motivate reflection, inquiry and further research.

4. Adults are relevancy oriented

Adult learners want to know the relevance of what they are learning to what they want to achieve. One way to help trainees to see the value of their training is to:
- Ask trainees to do some reflection on for example, what they expect to learn prior to the experience, on what they learn after the experience, and how they might apply what they learnt in the future, or how it will help them to meet their learning goals.
- Provide some choice of fieldwork project by providing two or more options, so that learning is more likely to reflect the trainees' interests.

5. Adults are practical

Through practical fieldwork experiences, interacting with real stakeholders and their real life situations, trainees move from classroom and textbook mode to hands-on problem solving where they can recognise firsthand how what they are learning

applies to life and the work contexts. Therefore, so as to fulfil this principle trainers should:

- Clearly explain their reasoning when making choices about the content and the training procedures of the course.
- Be explicit about how what the trainees are learning is useful and applicable.
- Promote active participation by allowing students to experiment with various solutions and ideas.

6. Adult learners like to be respected

Through all aspects of the training course, the implicit and sometimes explicit message that must be conveyed is that trainees are respected as knowledgeable persons which have full awareness of their training needs, as well as invaluable collaborators with the full cooperation and involvement of which the course could have chances of success.

2   Trainers' Training Needs Assessment: Focus Groups

The SYNERGY project focuses on two main target groups of VETs and MEOs. The objective of the proposed training, as outlined in the proposal submitted for funding by Erasmus+, is to train VET trainers for QQI accreditation as well as develop and deliver mini-learning format online modules relevant to the needs of MEOs thereby achieving one of the project's aims which is to "improve the quality and relevance of VET provision to micro-enterprise owners'.

Therefore, following the line of reasoning emerging from the principles of adult education outlined above, it is essential to start from a rigorous needs assessment for VET trainers. Specifically, help a selected number of VETs (who later will act as trainers for their peers) connect closely with the business world and efficiently address current market needs.

The research method of focus groups is selected as the most appropriate. Mixed VETs and MEOs focus groups will not only facilitate interaction but also allow MEOs to put forward their training needs and thus highlight VETs past experience and skill sets. Our core strategy for designing the curriculum is to inform its content via identifying the needs of VET trainers with respect to addressing the training requirements of MEOs as outlined in the Summary Audit Report findings. Among others, issues identified were:

- Training themes

- Content relevance

- Preferred modes of delivery

- VET and MEOs interaction

Finally, the focus group discussions should be open enough to incorporate unanticipated issues emerging from the groups themselves but special provisions should be made so as to concentrate on exploring VETs' specific training needs. It is expected that the discussions occurring within focus groups will provide rich data to inform the TtT curriculum that will effectively allow trainers to relate with MEOs and their needs.

3   From Needs to Skills: Forming the basis of the training curriculum

On the basis of the discussions of the aforementioned focus groups, all the identified training needs will be translated into a coherent set of skills that will inform the training curriculum.

Special emphasis will be given to two criteria for the selection of these core skills:

a) The skills should be *generic* or *transversal* in nature so as to be easily transferable from one context of application to another and

b) The contexts of application of these generic skills have to be multiple and highly relevant for VETs (in practice these contexts will emerge from the focus groups discussions).

According to curriculum studies, the essential components of any curriculum design are as follows:

- Objectives (i.e. what is the purpose of training)
- Content (i.e. what is going to be taught)
- Sequencing (i.e. in what way the discrete parts of the content are going to be put in order)
- Pacing (i.e. how much time is going to be devoted to each content part) and
- Evaluation (i.e. how the acquisition of new knowledge is going to be verified)

In relation to these dimensions of curriculum design and taking into account the principles of adult education as well as the outcomes of the training needs assessment phase results, the following Table presents a preliminary outline of the proposed curriculum template.

Table: A generic template of the Train the Trainer Courseware

Heading	Description	Remarks
Title	A short, precise, non-technical (i.e. containing terminology) and if possible, eye-catching phrase. Use sub-title to improve deliverance of the message if and when needed.	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners.
Objective	It is a short statement (4-5 lines) informing the trainees about the topic(s)/main questions that are to be discussed during the delivery of each module session.	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners.
Abstract	A short passage no more than 300 words outlining the structure and the most important points of the main part of the material.	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners.
Expected outcomes	It is a list of bullet-points describing in precise ways what the trainees will be able to do after completing each module session. These outcomes could be classified as falling in: a) the knowledge domain, b) the attitudes domain and c) the domain of skills. These outcomes should form the basis for the trainees' evaluation or self-evaluation.	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners.
Key words or Key concepts	A list of terms (5-10) corresponding to the core concepts/ideas structuring the specific module session.	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners.
List of possible problems	It is a list of anticipated problems that might arise. This list can be devised on the basis of prior experience in training VET trainers, information gathered via the focus groups or review of the relevant literature. The problems anticipated could be related to lack of relevant knowledge and experiences.	The list should be developed by the SYNERGY partners prior to the mixed focus groups.
Identification of VET trainers' needs	This section contains a list of identified needs through exploration of their background knowledge (e.g. studies, similar courses attended), skills (e.g. past experiences) and attitudes (e.g. motives for attending the course, self-reported confidence) in relation to the specific module session.	The list will result from presenting the Summary Audit results within the context of the mixed focus groups and addressing the points highlighted in section 2 of this document.

Content	In this part the content to be delivered is presented in short bullet points (about 3-5 lines each). If considered as more appropriate, this part can also be divided into sub-sections (designated by sub-headings). For coherence purposes the subsections should not be more than four or five.	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners.
Training Strategies	This section includes the description of the strategies and instructional techniques to be used for each phase of the content delivery process. Phase I – Pre TtT meeting The first step of this phase is the **introduction** to the content material to the local sub-groups of VET trainers. The second step will be to elicit issues of concern that VET trainers may have with regards to the content of the TtT courseware. Phase II – TtT meeting The first step of this phase is the **initiation**. In this step, techniques for introducing the topic(s) and capturing the trainees' interest are devised. Such techniques could be a) a practical activity, b) a scenario inspired by trainees' professional lives, c) an authentic story, d) the discussion of the ways the specific workshop will be proved useful in their future professional lives and e) the discussion of a controversial position. All techniques should be complemented by guided discussion building on trainees' experiences. For **delivery** of the content the usual techniques can be distinguished as uni-directional (lecture and demonstration) and participatory (practical activity, case study, role-play, snowballing, brainstorming and group work). Phase III – Post TtT meeting *Added work to finalise the QQI L6 certification*	The stimuli (i.e practical activities, scenarios, stories, topics of discussion, controverisal positions) on which techniques chosen for initiation and content delivery should be explicitly described.
Additional training materials	This part contains the description of the materials required for each phase of the content delivery process so that training can proceed smoothly. Examples of such materials could be printed texts (e.g. articles), audio-visual material (e.g. a short	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners.

	documentary), demonstration devices (e.g. overhead projectors) or ICT materials (e.g. P.C., modem, printer, etc).	
Sequencing and pacing	Phase I – Pre TtT meeting Self-paced study of the material. Following the introduction of the TtT courseware, VET trainers will be expected to study the material in their own time. They are expected to have completed this prior to the TtT meeting in Ireland. Phase II – TtT meeting The sequencing and the pacing (provisional time allocation) for each phase of the content delivery process are identified in this section. It must be taken into consideration that usually 15-20% of the training time is covered by unanticipated occurrences not being able to be scheduled beforehand like lasting queries and controversial discussions, or longer presentation of a concept the trainees had difficulty to grasp.	This section will be dictated by UoP and proofread by Meath.
Evaluation	A set of evaluation tasks must be developed for each module of the TtT courseware. It is preferable these tasks to require the application of the principles presented during the relevant content delivery phase in conditions simulating real-life settings. A proposed duration for engaging with each one of the evaluation tasks should also be included.	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners.
Summing up	The major points tackled during each module will be summarized in this section. In this section the trainer proceeds to: • Recap objectives and major points tackled during each module session. • The statement of conclusions and synopsis. • The identification of the practical implications from the effective use of the principles and techniques presented (this could also take the form of a discussion leading the trainees to reflect on the usefulness of the course). • The link of the content delivered with the follow-up activities (see next relevant section).	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners.
Further reading	A list of easily accessible (e.g. on the web) and non-technical (articles in academic journals should be preferably avoided) references, relevant to each module, is provided to the trainees as a resource for	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners, and

	further reading.	uploaded on the SYNERGY platform.
Follow up activities	The follow-up activities should be of the same nature but slightly deeper and more extensive (the extent of the expected answers should be defined in number of words) than the ones used for evaluation purposes during the delivery of the TtT courseware.	Available in the training material and/ or informed by partners. Mini-learning format modules to be delivered upon completion of the TtT meeting.

4 Range and scope of modules

The 1st Module titled 'Training, Needs Identification and Design' comprises of 4 sessions and its scope is to: equip VET trainers with all the necessary tools to identify the needs of their trainees, analyze those needs and devise a training plan and content, as well as assess the range of instructional models to be used.

- Training, Needs Identification and Design Session 1
- Training, Needs Identification and Design Session 2
- Training, Needs Identification and Design Session 3
- Training, Needs Identification and Design Session 4

The 2nd Module titled 'Training, Delivery and Evaluation' comprises of 4 sessions and its scope is to: teach VETs to deliver appropriate training content, catering for the specific needs of their audience as well as employ appropriate evaluation tools, formulate techniques and approaches.

- Training, Delivery and Evaluation Session 1
- Training, Delivery and Evaluation Session 2
- Training, Delivery and Evaluation Session 3
- Training, Delivery and Evaluation Session 4

The 3rd Module titled 'Synergy Platform Orientation' comprises of 2 sessions and its scope is to: familiarize VET trainers with the workings and tools of the SYNERGY platform as well as the micro-social networks therein so as to better leverage direct rapport with the MEOs.

- Synergy Platform Orientation Session 1
- Synergy Platform Orientation Session 2

5   Learning Outcomes Matrix

Expected outcomes	Training Strategies	Evaluation
It is a list of bullet-points describing in precise ways what the trainees will be able to do after completing each module session. These outcomes could be classified as falling in: a) the <u>knowledge domain</u>, b) the <u>attitudes domain</u> and c) the <u>domain of skills</u>. These outcomes should form the basis for the trainees' evaluation or self-evaluation.	This section includes the description of the strategies and instructional techniques to be used for each phase of the content delivery process. Phase I – Pre TtT meeting The first step of this phase is the **introduction** to the content material to the local sub-groups of VET trainers. The second step will be to elicit issues of concern that VET trainers may have with regards to the content of the TtT courseware. Phase II – TtT meeting The first step of this phase is the **initiation**. In this step, techniques for introducing the topic(s) and capturing the trainees' interest are devised. Such techniques could be a) a practical activity, b) a scenario inspired by trainees' professional lives, c) an authentic story, d) the discussion of the ways the specific workshop will be proved useful in their	A set of evaluation tasks must be developed for each module of the TtT courseware. It is preferable these tasks to require the application of the principles presented during the relevant content delivery phase in conditions simulating real-life settings. A proposed duration for engaging with each one of the evaluation tasks should also be included.

	future professional lives and e) the discussion of a controversial position. All techniques should be complemented by guided discussion building on trainees' experiences.	
	For **delivery** of the content the usual techniques can be distinguished as uni-directional (lecture and demonstration) and participatory (practical activity, case study, role-play, snowballing, brainstorming and group work).	

6   Training strategies and Roadmap

The rules of transmission in a training course constitute a central issue that in essence determines what Bernstein, (2000) calls instructional discourse. In other words, these rules define the pedagogical approach of the TtT courseware and in this sense, are decisive in delivering the relevant curriculum. Bernstein defines pedagogy as the form or mode of transmission of education. More simply, he sees pedagogy as *how* the selection of knowledge is taught (what some people would call "teaching methods").

The adoption of the principles of adult education and online training as the basis for designing the TtT framework implies certain choices as far as the training methods are concerned.

These choices could be summarized in the following strategies proposed to be adopted in the context of the SYNERGY project:

Community building

This will be accomplished by developing an atmosphere promoting participation whereby each trainee will be given a chance to share personal experiences and ideas. In the case of SYNERGY local sub-groups, the platform's discussion forum and the TtT event in Ireland will facilitate interaction, and help build knowledge and understanding of the business world within the VET sector.

Energetic involvement with MEOs

It is proposed that all tasks and activities should involve all trainees by being highly relevant to market needs and promoting interaction with MEOs. This can be achieved by the conduct of mixed local focus groups with VET trainers.

High levels of trainees' autonomy

As the training course proceeds, trainees should enjoy increasingly higher levels of autonomy in fulfilling the training tasks and activities. This will be encouraged by the provision of the TtT courseware material and self-paced study, as well as, the preparation of the mini-learning format modules in the TtT meeting in Ireland.

6.1   Roadmap

The training strategies will be employed throughtout the process of engaging trainers to the TtT courseware up to the point of accreditation. This process is outlined in the following roadmap which designates the steps to be taken and suggested timeframe within which they should be completed.

1. Preparation and dessimination of module assignment requirements (**Meath / UoP**) – *by mid of September*

   - Development of assignments (**All partners**) – *by end of October*

2. Module content development (**Meath**) – *by end of October*

   - Make modules available to partners for dessimination to VETs

3. Preparation and engagement of VETs (**All partners**) – *by end of November*

   - Conduct of focus group with VETs in order to:

     - ➢ identify skillsets such as computer literacy level, former involvement with MEOs etc.

     - ➢ introduce TtT courseware and respective assignments

     - ➢ provide TtT courseware material and timeframe of completion

   - Establish feedback loop so as to inform the TtT Tutor/Learner Handbook

4. Preparation of Tutor/Learner Handbok (**Meath**) – *by mid January*

5. TtT meeting in Ireland (**Meath**) – *February*

   - Recap of courseware, assignments, projects

   - Preparation of mini-learning format modules (assignments/other)

6. Completion of accreditation process (**Meath**)

The goal is that by its completion, a satisfactory number of mini-learning format modules should be available to populate the platform and VETs should be eligible for QQI accreditation.

References

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