Best Practices for Character Development

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Introduction

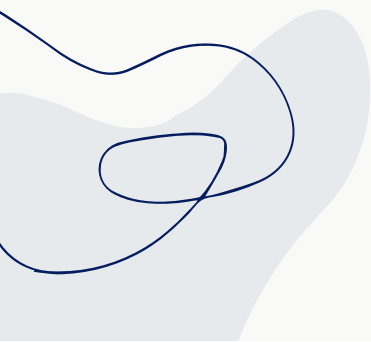**What is Character Development?**

By character development, we mean the process of shaping the character in order to transform it. It's an ongoing process often described in terms of "grit." Grit is the willingness to continue working towards a goal even in the face of difficulty. It is the ability to persevere in the face of setbacks. People with grit are resilient and have a clear sense of purpose. They know what they want to achieve and why it is essential to them.

Character development is vital for several reasons. It helps individuals understand and control their emotions and teaches them how to relate to others, resolve conflicts, and make responsible decisions. Character development also helps people set goals and develop a sense of self-efficacy and self-worth. Finally, it can foster pro-social behaviour and altruism, leading to a more caring and humane society. In sum, **character development plays a crucial role in the health and well-being of individuals and society**.

For the attention of all trainers and teachers who receive young people and adults who are far from employment and society, we propose a collection of good practices to help them teach effectively. We offer 32 examples of good practices that have been tried and tested by colleagues, and that develop motivation, help overcome difficulties and prolong efforts to succeed.
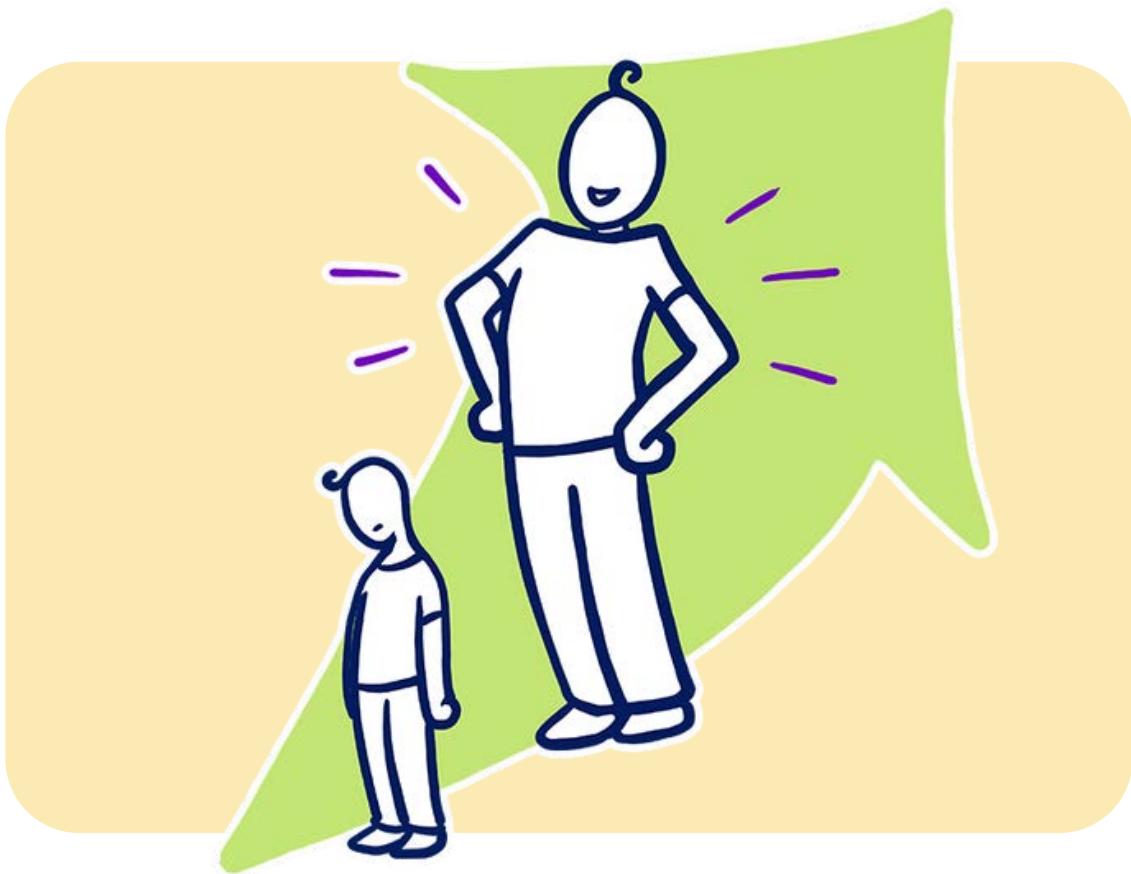
A Few Words About The Booklet

What is the situation on EU level by now and what are we going to change with the booklet?

The COVID-19 crisis and the measures applied to combat it have triggered a sharp increase in the number of claims for unemployment benefits across the EU. Eurostat estimates that 12.959 million men and women in the EU, of whom 10.983 million in the euro area (EA), were unemployed in July 2022. The EU unemployment rate was 6.0 % in July 2022.

Especially in the past two years, when COVID-19 occurred, individuals had few opportunities to socialise and gain experience. Amongst the people's insecurities, lack of self-awareness and self-esteem, as well as lack of social interactions, were the main problems presented. Many working people were let go, and there were no new opportunities in most fields of work. Now we will try to go from long-distance working to gaining more social interactions and skills to work in a group and show people how they can improve their life through self-awareness and setting long-term goals.

With this booklet, every teacher or trainer can define the weaknesses of their learners and work on their skills to build self-awareness and achieve their long-term goals. The newly gained accomplishments of the learners will help them gain experience and improve their future life.

Funded by the
European Union

How did we select the practices, where did we find them, and who did it?

Often, trainers can provide a good set of resources in order to motivate others and encourage them to improve their life through different training sessions. Our aim is to improve and expand the database of available training techniques for trainers to improve their knowledge and help even more people who lack general skills. Trainers can use these practices and benefit from its implementation in everyday work.

We searched for the best practices at the European level for using methods and tools for motivation through character development. We collected ten such good practices proposed by each partner. According to that analysis, we identified the gaps on this topic. Based on the identified gaps in existing approaches, partners analysed the possible improvements and reported on them. The information helped us build up the competence and skills matrix.

Furthermore, we sorted out the best practices in a Booklet with 32 good practices, so every adult trainer who wants to start with some exercises can do it instantly.

Why is this booklet for you?

We designed this booklet to train the character development of a person. Here you will find 32 good practices based on:
- self-awareness,
- motivation,
- perseverance,
- grit,
- and improving your life through setting long-term goals.
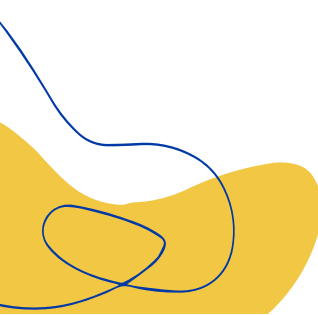
Funded by the
European Union

We have prepared this booklet for teachers, trainers, small groups, or whoever feels like they lack specific competencies in life and don't know how to proceed in their growth.

How to use it?

To use the booklet, you should answer some of the following questions.

- Define who the target audience is.
- What is the main problem that your audience faces?
- What are the main characteristics that your target group has? Which ones are problematic, and which are beneficial?
- What primary outcomes do you wish your target group would gain from these good practices?

From the results of the interviews and desired benefits, you should go over the good practices and decide which one would be eligible for your target group and also be easy to implement. The good practices can be used as described, but they can also be adapted or even transformed to better suit the audiences of the trainers who use them, and the cultural and social environment of the country in question.

Good Practices

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Contents:

Contents:

Description

An interview was made with a trainer which provided the following content.

Goal setting is invaluable in all aspects of our lives. It is particularly beneficial when areas of our life feel bad. This worksheet can help people capture aspects of their lives that currently feel bad. It can also assign goals to fix them or reduce their impact.

The practice for goal setting is a process that helps participants identify and attain their goals. The process includes discussing the difference between goal setting and goal achievement, sharing a desired goal, creating a map to help navigate the journey to reach the objective and setting up supports needed to achieve the goal.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of feeling competence and resilience.
- Lack of motivation and intention.
- Lack of plan for success and desires.
- Lack of grit and perseverance.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Lack of problem-solving skills.
- Inability to set and achieve long-term goals.
- Lack of skills to lead a more productive life.

Benefits for adult learners

- Develop grit and perseverance.
- Adults will learn how to set and achieve long-term goals.
- Achieve personal expectations.
- Greater sense of self-confidence.
- Ability to set and achieve long-term goals.
- Adult learners can lead more productive lives and contribute more to society.

This activity begins by asking participants to consider each of the following areas of their life and whether they have negative aspects (modified from McKay & Fanning, 2016):

● Family and friends: wanting more (or less) quality time with family and friends.

● Educational, professional: finishing examinations or projects on time.

● Health: improve fitness, spend more time outdoors.

● Emotional and psychological growth: wanting to be less stressed and manage anger.

Participants first consider each area of life.

Second, they make a table with 2 columns (or use the printable version attached)

1) Capture any negative aspects in the left-hand column (What feels bad).

2) In the righthand column (Corresponding goal), create a concrete goal describing something you could change.

Example:

What feels bad - My education is poor.

The corresponding goal - Enrol in an evening class.

The second method:

Materials used: Achievement Map

Lesson Plan

Journal (5 mins)

● What is an objective you aspire to attain in 5 years?

● What is a goal you have for the remainder of this year?

Action ideas

Small Group (10 mins)
  ● What is the difference between goal setting and goal achievement?
  ● How does a citizen who strives to achieve their goals support
  our society?

Whole Group Discussion (10 mins)
  ● Why is it important to have goals?
  ● What is challenging about achieving your goals?
  ● How do citizens who strive to achieve their goals support society?
  ● Today you are going to create a map to help you achieve the objective
    you stated in your journal you have for the remainder of the year.

Individual (15 mins)
  ● Suggestion: go through each step with the participants
  ● Start at Desired Goal
      Example: I want to run a 5K
  ● Then write where you are right now (Starting Point)
      Example: I can run a mile without stopping
  ● What are the steps in between the goal achievement (end goal) and
the goal setting (baseline)?
      Example: Increase to 1.5 miles a week (2 weeks)
      Example: Increase to 2 miles a week (2 weeks)
  ● Who will you have to hold you accountable?
      Example: My running partners
  ● Why is an accountability partner so important?
  ● What are the measurements or times when you will assess how you
are doing?

Example:
● Once a week we will test ourselves on how long it takes to run/walk 3.5 miles and chart it

Exit Ticket: (5 mins)
● Share this plan with your accountability partner
● Snap or scan a picture of the completed map and send it via text or email.

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Country of origin: USA, implemented in Slovakia
This method was modified from orignal of McKay & Fanning, 2016

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LInk to the resources:
Goal-Setting-for-Self-Esteem.pdf (positivepsychology.com)
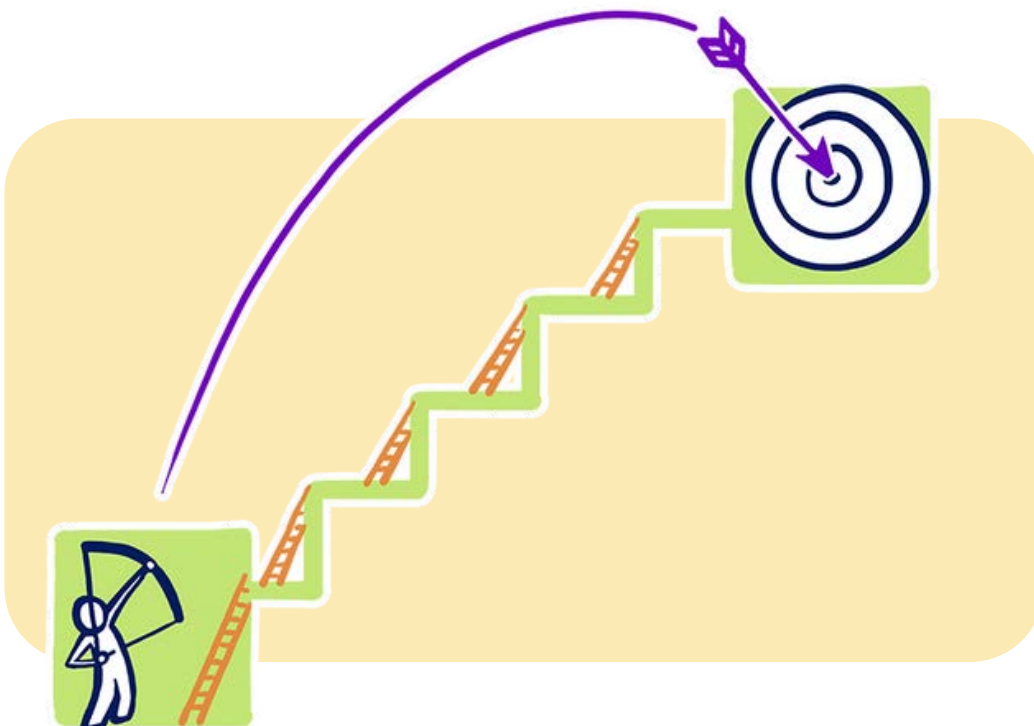
Description

Strengths can be knowledge, traits, skills, and talents that are considered positive. In theory, we should know our strengths - we are the ones who have them. But knowing our strengths means knowing ourselves, how we compare to others, and how others see us.

All this makes it a bit tricky to evaluate our strengths. That's why doing exercises to find our strengths can be helpful. We might ask ourselves questions, reflect on past experiences, or ask friends to see our strengths.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Lack of awareness of your skills.
● Not being aware of your 'soft' skills and your character strengths.
● Lack of happiness.
● Lack of positive aspects of ourselves.

Benefits for adult learners

● Get to know new things about yourself.
● Discover your specific strengths.
● Discover things about how you think or how other people think about you.
● Improve your life.
● Improve your happiness in life.

Action ideas

The Berkeley well-being Institute prepared a well-being quiz to get your free personalised report.

They also prepared strength-finding questions, activities, and SWOT analyses.

The following video presents how we should focus on our unique strengths rather than on our inability to do something and use them in daily life: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_30jf4Zmlc.

Wendelin Slusser, in her TEDx, shows us how we can turn our challenges and passions into a life mission that can also provide a better world for the future. By building on our strengths, we can also benefit the community and find our purpose in life, which can evolve into something more significant over time:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5w_j8J8kH64.

Strengths finding test to assess your strengths:
https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/strength-finding.html.

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Country of origin: USA, California applied in Netherlands at Better Minds at Work

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LInk to the resources:
https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/strength-finding.html

Description

Learners visualise the benefits of a goal, anticipate challenges, and create plans for overcoming their obstacles.

Even grand goals have smaller steps and countless obstacles. Training a cognitive skill to overcome the barriers can help you stay motivated and successful in being gritty. It's also essential to help learners see the shortcomings of just "wishful thinking."

Optimists often gloss over the obstacles. Pessimists often discredit their capabilities.

Instead, a balance between two cognitive strategies has a better effect on goal attainment.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Inaction.
- Feeling stuck.
- Wishful thinking.
- Overconfidence.
- Discouragement.

Benefits for adult learners

- Overcoming obstacles.
- Staying on track and achieving your goals.
- Fostering intrinsic motivation.
- Increased Self-awareness.
- Increased self-efficacy.
- Feel control of your life and destiny.
- Building grit.

Action ideas

This practice is beneficial for adult learners who are looking to stay motivated and achieve their goals. Learners can foster grit by helping trainers anticipate challenges and create plans for overcoming them. Secondary or VET schools, universities, and the youth sector for target groups 12+ can also use it.

WOOP has four steps:

1. Wish: What is your goal?

2. Outcome: What are the benefits of achieving your goal?

3. Obstacle: What challenges do you anticipate in achieving your goal?

4. Plan: How will you overcome these challenges?

How you can apply it:

1. Introduce WOOP

WOOP comes from W-wish, O-outcome, O-obstacle, and P-plan.

Lead learners through the following visualisations:

A. Wish – Think about something you would love to accomplish in your life or that has been concerning you. Make sure this is something you think you could overcome or achieve within a set amount of time – a day, a week, a month, a year.

B. Outcome – Visualise how it feels to achieve this goal – the sights, sounds, and feelings. What is the best thing you'd experience in achieving this goal?

C. Obstacle – Now, picture the things that may hold you back from getting this goal. Make sure you think of an internal obstacle that is the most significant in stopping you. The barrier may be an emotion, behaviour, thought, or a bad habit.

D. Plan – After choosing this internal obstacle, now think of how you can respond to it if and when it happens. What can you do to overcome it? Name one action you can take.

2. Now, help learners to form an if-then statement:

- "If (obstacle x) occurs, then I will (behaviour/action Y)."

3. Have learners share their WOOP in writing or conversation. Be sure to check in with them during and after the process to give feedback, support, and suggestions.

Country of origin: Germany, Bulgaria

LInk to the resources:
https://woopmylife.org/en/home

Description

This practice was taken from an interview with an adult trainer.
A personal story about how having a growth mindset helped learners accomplish something challenging is a powerful way to model what having a growth mindset means.

This reflective writing activity is designed to help learners identify and refine a story from their own life. Everyone has stories that happened because of their growth mindset thinking. When they are provoked to realise that their thinking is only fixed, it will be easier for them to perceive a complete change in their way of thinking towards a growth mindset.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of motivation.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Lack of focus.

Benefits for adult learners

- Build self-confidence.
- Stop making excuses and try to do something out of your comfort zone.
- Start taking on more challenging tasks.
- Be persistent and never give up. Persevere under difficulty.
- Be patient and keep trying. Build resilience.
- Keep learning and continue growing.
- Boosting your confidence.

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Action ideas

This practice can be done as a group activity or individually.

When doing it in a group, have everyone think about a story in their lives that has been a challenge for them. Despite the difficulties, they had overcome them. They can also think about when they decided to learn something new that was hard for them. It can be something from their childhood, adolescence, or even adulthood. Once everyone has thought of a story, have them share it with the group. After everyone has had a chance to share, discuss with all participants.

If doing it individually, have the learner think of a time when they faced a challenge and overcame it with the help of a growth mindset. Once they have thought of a story, have them write it down. After they have written it down, discuss it with the adult learner.

Learners have to respond to the prompts below:
  ● Describe their challenge or the new skill/knowledge they wanted to learn.
  ● Why did they want to take on this challenge? What motivated them?
  ● Did they have any moments of feeling discouraged? Did they have a negative voice telling them to give up at any point? If so, what helped them persevere?
  ● Did they make any mistakes along the way? What did they learn as a result?
  ● What strategies were most helpful? How did they figure out what strategies to use?

● Were there others who helped them or cheered on them? What did they do? How did it help?

● Did their success help others in any way? How?

Everyone has stories that happened because of their growth mindset thinking. When they are provoked to realise that their thinking is not only fixed, but it will also be easier for them to perceive a complete change in their way of thinking towards a growth mindset.

Doing the practice as a group activity can help everyone share and learn from each other's stories. Doing it individually, can help the learner reflect on their own story and how it has helped them in their life. Either way, this is a powerful way to help people realise the importance of having a growth mindset.

Country of origin: Bulgaria
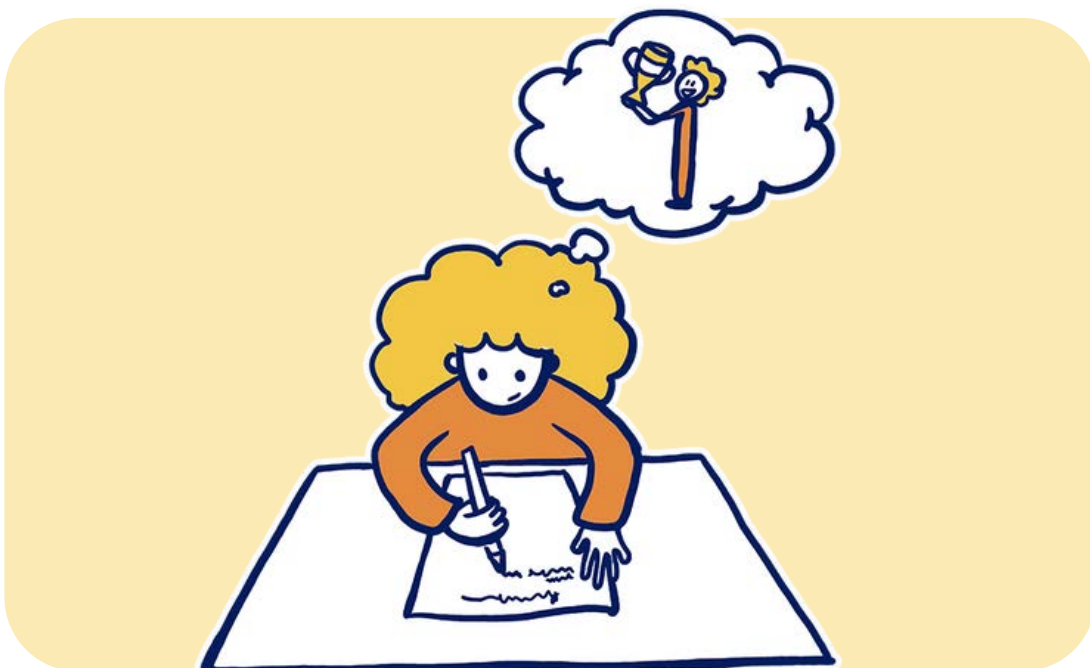
Let's Fight Laziness

Description

"Let's fight laziness" is a form of 12 simple exercises that help fight laziness. It is character development for unemployed adults.

The practice takes place with a trainer, and it is composed of three stages: The first stage is to identify laziness, the second stage is to find a way to overcome laziness, and the third stage is to maintain progress.

To fight laziness, it is crucial to design good habits and eliminate bad ones, which can be done in 4 steps: cue, craving, response & reward. We can transform these four steps into a practical framework to overcome laziness.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Bad, not productive habits that adult learners have.
● Self-doubt and self-destructive routines.
● Lack of motivation and intention.
● Lack of plan for success.
● Lack of grit and perseverance.
● Adults will learn how to set and achieve long and short-term goals.
● Adult learners can lead more productive lives.
● Adult learners will have the tools to change their habits.

Benefits for adult learners

● Build self-confidence and feel better about yourself.
● Stop feeling like you're wasting your life away.
● Find a way to get yourself motivated and focused.
● Stop making excuses and do something.
● Build stronger self-discipline.
● Give yourself a new goal in life and want to achieve it.
● Find new ways to motivate yourself when feeling useless or lazy.

Action ideas

Before doing anything, you must prepare your schedule and not miss a single line.

1. Break big tasks into smaller achievable ones
Try to break big tasks into more minor elements to achieve faster results.

2. Rest, sleep, exercise
If you feel tired and lack the desire to act, an excellent way to recharge is to alternate sleep with exercise, between which you take short breaks.

3. Motivation
Find something that motivates and inspires you. Everyone knows what motivates them and brings them back to "life."

4. Have a vision of what you want to be and who you want to be with.
We often give up specific tasks precisely because we have forgotten where we went and who we want to be. Never forget what your goal is.

5. Think about rewards
Reward yourself for every small victory achieved. The award goes hand in hand with motivation.

6. Think about the consequences
Think about what can happen if you continue to be lazy. Would this affect your life in the long run?

7. Complete one task at a time
Set aside time for each of the small tasks you put yourself. If you want to complete a job well, shorten the time and increase the complexity.

8. Visualise

Use your imagination to imagine yourself as a more productive and active person. You can do it!

9. Motivate yourself

Tell yourself that you can achieve anything. This way, the thought will become entrenched in your subconscious and become a reality.

10. Accept the task as a game

Accepting your work as a game will make you feel stronger and more determined. The game is not taken as an obligation and makes us more focused.

11. Postponement

A postponement is a form of laziness. Do not postpone the task.
Complete it now. Any procrastination leads to accumulation and makes us tenser.

12. Learn from successful people

Learn from successful people and watch them fight their laziness.

How to Create a Good Habit:

1º: Cue - Make it obvious.

2º: Craving - Make it attractive.

3º: Response - Make it easy.

4º: Reward - Make it satisfying.

Action ideas

We can invert these laws to learn how to break bad habits.

How to Break a Bad Habit (Inversion of previous laws)

1º: Cue - Make it invisible.

2º: Craving - Make it unattractive.

3º: Response - Make it challenging.

4º: Reward - Make it unsatisfying.

Whenever one wants to change their behaviour, they can ask themselves:

- How can I make it obvious?
- How can I make it attractive?
- How can I make it easy?
- How can I make it satisfying?

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Country of origin: USA, implemented in Bulgaria and Slovakia

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LInk to the resources:

https://setmodels.net/polezno/12-nachina-da-preborite-mrzela

The 3 R's of Habit Change: How To Start New Habits That Actually Stick (jamesclear.com)

Grit Ladders

Description

This practice was taken from an interview with an adult trainer.

Grit Ladders is a method where learners gradually break down long-term goals into smaller steps to progress on their gritty goals.

This method helps people outline goals and provide smaller, more manageable action steps. In achieving smaller goals, adult learners will experience more continual boosts of accomplishment and positive emotion, which increases motivation.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of motivation.
- Feeling overwhelmed by long-term goals.
- Lack of focus and direction.
- Lack of planning skills.
- Lack of self-efficacy.

Benefits for adult learners

- Boost motivation.
- Improve perseverance skills.
- Persistence in reaching goals.
- Set realistic tasks.
- Improve time management skills.
- Create a plan to achieve goals.
- Feel a sense of accomplishment.
- Manage tough situations and overcome challenges.

1. Learners draw a ladder with a long-term goal written at the top.
2. Under this "top goal," they write the step or goal they would need to accomplish just before the "top goal."
3. Working backward, learners will map out each successive step necessary. Eventually, they will find one small goal they can accomplish this week (or day) to get one step closer.

Tips:

● Coach learners on making their goals as SMART as possible (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-stamped). Ensure even the sub-goals are SMART.

● Some goals may have multiple "directions" of sub-steps.

● Continually check in with learners each week to reassess goals and support their moving onto the next step, etc. Outlining is a "process" and not just a "product."

● Learners can create graphics in their notebooks with "checklists" for each step. You may encourage them to celebrate when checking off a sub-goal.

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Country of origin: Bulgaria

How To Develop A Growth Mindset

Description

As you are gearing up for another year of working with youth and adults and striving to help them grow, consider the following. People can accomplish anything they want with effort, patience, and the right mindset.

According to Carol Dweck, our mindsets are malleable, and you can support the development of a growth mindset within your target audience. In her book, Mindset: The New Psychology of Success, Dweck defines two distinct mindsets and how they contribute to our success and failure.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Disruptive behaviour.
- Lack of resilience and perseverance.
- Lack of self-esteem.

Benefits for adult learners

- Get more determined.
- Build planning skills.
- Increased motivation.
- Boost self-awareness.
- Get resilient.
- Raise your self-esteem.

On one end of the spectrum is the fixed mindset, where individuals believe their essential qualities are inherent; you are either good at something or not.

The growth mindset lies on the other end of the spectrum. Individuals can develop individuals qualities and abilities through hard work and dedication. Practice, they believe, is the key to mastery. They look for opportunities to challenge themselves to learn and improve and utilise feedback as a tool for growth. Unsurprisingly, individuals with this mindset have better relationships and are more motivated, productive, and resilient.

Here are three ways you can impact the mindset of individuals in your program/organisation:

Create Challenging but Supportive Programming.

Don't be afraid to challenge people! Facilitate activities and create projects for them to work on that require effort, tackling obstacles, requesting feedback, or even learning a new skill. Most importantly, be there to support them throughout this process by providing encouragement and guidance.

Build Intentional Peer Connections

Consider the strengths and weaknesses of your groups and partner individuals with contrasting abilities during activities and projects. This enables them to learn from their peers, observe how others solve problems and persist through challenges. Create opportunities for reflection so that participants can consider what they learned from

their partner, and you can further guide the development of their growth mindset.

Use Effective Praise

How you celebrate and talk about a person's achievements impacts their mindset. It's essential to listen to what they accomplished to praise what was done to achieve success rather than just giving a simple "good job" or admiring their intelligence. It creates a genuine interaction and shows that you were paying attention to the steps they took to achieve success.

Practice Example: The Sneaky Sticky Note

While learners work, write a brief but specific note to one of them (if in a group) on a sticky note or index card. Subtly stick the note somewhere near them.

Tips:
- Set a simple goal to write one a day (or week).
- Acknowledge things beyond your training (especially since learners are sceptical of the "praise-as-manipulation" phenomenon). Ex: "You've shown a lot of commitment this week: five shows with the musical in just three days!? You should be proud of your work ethic."

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Country of origin: USA, implemented in Portugal
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LInk to the resources:
https://guideinc.org/2015/12/23/how-to-develop-a-growth-mindset-within-youth/

Description

Modelled by Robert B. Dilts in "Strategy of Genius", The Walt Disney Strategy is based on the creative processes used by the Walt Disney teams to bring out, collect and realise ideas for improvement from three points of view:

1. The Dreamer: enthusiastic, inventive, and without limitation, dreams and explores solutions with all senses, without judgement.

2. The Realist: pragmatic-practical, develops action plans, and examines the necessary working steps and conditions.

3. The Critic: identifies possible sources of error and necessary regulations.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Lack of confidence and feeling of incompetence.
● Lack of innovative or alternative ideas in relation to something that no longer works.
● Blockages Linked to a pyramidal structure.
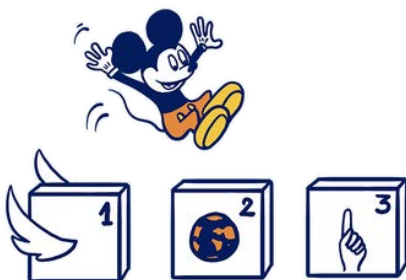
Benefits for adult learners

● Developing the ability to listen.
● Gaining self-motivation.
● Improved work in a team and cooperation.
● Reinforces the feeling of legitimacy and recognition.
● Help to combat feelings of incompetence.
● Co-construction promotes self-confidence, leadership, empathy, listening, creativity, etc.

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Action ideas

This method aims to build new courses of action with a given objective (creating an inclusive school, for example). The practice consists of 3 phases of 30 minutes each:

Equipment: 3 flip charts with paper and markers

Duration: 30 minutes per phase, or 1.5 hours in total.

Layout: 3 different spaces in one or three rooms adapted to the 3 phases. Physical movement allows the intellect to change its mode of thinking.

In phase 1, the participants sit in the dreamer's chair (in a spacious room with lots of natural light). The facilitator displays the rules: Divergence of ideas / Respect for other participants' views / Listening to all team members / Bouncing off other people's thoughts / As many ideas as possible / All ideas welcome. Participants are invited to close their eyes and to dream aloud in total freedom: the participants explore the project in question from all angles and give free rein to all the solutions or strategies that come to mind, including the most fanciful. The facilitator collects the ideas. When all ideas are voiced, participants are told to move to chair 2.

In phase 2, participants sit in the realist's chair (ideally in another room equipped with a flip chart and markers). The facilitator invites the participants to revisit the ideas from phase 1 and group together those that overlap. The participants should answer the questions: "What needs to be changed to make the proposal realistic?" and "Is it physically

and financially feasible? Participants should transform unrealistic ideas into viable proposals and prepare an action plan to be analysed in phase 3.

In phase 3, participants sit in the critic's chair (this time in a smaller and darker room if possible) to analyse the action plan. Whether negative or positive, all criticism must be constructive. They should build on the strengths of everything that can be retained from phase 1 and explore all avenues for improvement at all levels. Whenever a weakness is identified, participants must think of a way(s) to overcome this difficulty.
At the end of phase 3, the group selects a solution and decides to implement it. Alternatively, they may consider a new solution by repeating the three-phase process as often as necessary.

Country of origin: Used in France, Belgium, etc.

LInk to the resources:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPFhSWwp-ds
Books
- John Martin, Ros Bell, Eion Farmer : B822 - Technique Library, The Open University, Milton Keynes/USA 2000. (SUP 50139 5)
- Robert B. Dilts: Strategies of Genius. Volume I: Aristotle, Sherlock Holmes, Walt Disney, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Meta Publications, Capitalo (California/USA) 1994, (ISBN 0-916990-32-X).
- Robert B. Dilts, Todd Epstein, Robert W. Dilts: Know-how für Träumer: Strategien der Kreativität, NLP & modelling, Struktur der Innovation. Junfermann Verlag, Paderborn 1994, Reihe: Pragmatismus & Tradition - Bd. 31, (ISBN 3-87387-037-1).
  (Titre original en anglais : Tools for dreamers.)

CODEVELOPMENT

Description

The objective is to deal with a concrete situation brought by a trainee. The description, questioning, and analysis of the situation generate advice, solutions, and feedback from the group. From these insights, the trainee can develop an action plan.

At the end of each session, the trainee revisits what they had learned and what occurred in the group. That will make reflexivity and capitalisation beneficial to all with similar problems.

The people learn from each other in terms of content and methods used to listen, analyse and resolve the situations discussed.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Lack of group cohesion.
● Lack of interaction in a working group.
● Personal hang-ups (fears, anxieties, feelings of incompetence).
● Lack of motivation.
● Lack of openness.
● Lack of self-confidence.
● Discouragement.
● Lack of dialogue.
● Lack of distance from a given difficulty.

Benefits for adult learners

● Allows to draw on the experience of others for adapted solutions.
● Broadens the capacity for action and reflection of participants.
● Eases the tension in complex situations.
● Strengthens diversity of viewpoints.
● Develops collective intelligence based on experience rather than theory.
● Reduces the emotional load thanks to the group's friendliness.
● Develops a sense of leadership.
● Develops listening, collaboration, mutual aid, and respect within a group.

Action ideas

Pragmatic, based on the North American current of pedagogies of action, experimentation, and group dynamics, co-development is based on founding principles:

  - Start from experience rather than knowledge, and learn from action.
  - Use group dynamics to develop autonomy and cooperation.
  - Create a space for hindsight and a mirror effect.

Participants: a group of 5 to 10 people from various disciplinary backgrounds or not.

The facilitator is trained in the method, and his or her posture is essential to:

  - Stimulate the expression of all, the intelligence of each person, the collective intelligence of the group.
  - Allow everyone to find their place and feel protected within the group.
  - Encourage the divergence of ideas.
  - Encourage direct and indirect learning by the participants.
  - Be the guarantor of the method and the time.

A co-development session lasts between 1.30 hours and 3 hours.

There are seven stages:

  1. Choice of the situation
  2. Presentation by the person in charge of the chosen situation
  3. Questioning by the participants

4. A contract between the person in charge of the problem and the other participants
5. Consultation, the emergence of solutions
6. Action plan is defined by the person in charge of the chosen situation
7. Debriefing

Country of origin: Canada, implemented in France

This method was developed by Adrien Payette and Claude Champagne in Canada in the late 1980s.

LInk to the resources:

https://www.puq.ca/catalogue/livres/groupe-codeveloppement-professionnel-573.html

www.aqcp.org

Funded by the
European Union

Description

We took this practice from an interview with a coach from The Society of Psychologists in Bulgaria.

This piece is in a two-part series on learning from success and failure. Describing wins helps build resilience. This practice focuses on learning from success and failure. Participants will learn how to persevere through grit and positive psychology. When they remember their successes, it will give them a feeling of competence paired with resilience. This can be helpful for adult learners who want to set and achieve long-term goals.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● The ability to focus on grit and positive psychology can help adult learners set and achieve long-term goals.
● Remembering successes can help adult learners build resilience and a feeling of competence.
● This combination can help adult learners overcome any obstacle in their lives.

Benefits for adult learners

● Develop grit and perseverance.
● Learn from success and failure.
● Gain a feeling of competence and resilience.
● Focus on success.
● Improve self-awareness and focus on long-term goals.

Action ideas

For the implementation of this practice, we need two sessions.

In the first session, the coach prepares a questionnaire with ten questions and two answers per each question, one of them right. The participants receive success feedback regarding the questions they guessed right ("You are correct!") and failure feedback on the ones they thought wrong ("You are incorrect!"). However, since each question had just two options, they could have learned the correct answer from success or failure. To see if that happens, each following question must be related to the correct answer to one of the previous questions. The final result of this activity will show the participants that they don't learn from their mistakes.

It is because when we fail, we tune out. To avoid feeling bad about ourselves, we stop paying attention. As a result, we don't learn from the experience. At the same time, we do understand when failure is less personal. To prove this to the group, we do the test a second time but discuss each answer.

Participants who struggle to learn from their failures can learn from the failures of others. It can be hard to focus on our failings, but the mistakes, recoveries, and hard-won lessons of friends and colleagues?

Second session:

Divide the group of adult learners into two parts. Have a group write about their greatest success and how they did it. The other group writes about their biggest failure and how they learned or grew from it.
Then ask the groups to share their stories. Point out that the group

that writes about their success has described issues of struggle and resilience as often as the group that writes about their failure.

Discuss with participants: Why might this be the case? Aren't we supposed to learn from failure? How can they use this information to achieve long-term goals? How can they focus on success when they have to overcome failure in their lives? How to compare loss in one situation with victory in another similar case? What can they write to remind them of their toughness and positive psychology?

Finally, ask participants what type of activities help them focus on success. They can keep a diary, write down their accomplishments in a specific notebook, or set goals and track their progress.

This activity will give adult learners a better understanding of how to persevere through grit and positive psychology. They will also see that struggle + success is a powerful combination.

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Country of origin: Bulgaria

Self-Reflection

Description

We took the practice from an interview with an adult trainer.

Self-reflection is a growth mindset activity that looks at your external self rather than your internal. It'll focus on the skills that you've built and how you were able to develop them.

Regardless of the mindset, you have right now, reflecting this way can piece together many things. For one, it helps us to realise that when we first started something, we weren't good at it. And over time, we got used to it.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of grit and perseverance.
- Lack of motivation.
- Lack of feeling competence and resilience.
- Lack of plan for success and desires.
- Lack of self-confidence.

Benefits for adult learners

- Develop grit and perseverance.
- Focus on success.
- Boost motivation.
- A feeling of being in control.
- Ability to monitor your progress.
- Self-awareness.
- Ability to take on new challenges.
- Adaptability and flexibility.
- Awareness of your own emotions and reactions.
- Perseverance and resilience.
- Analytical skills.
- Critical thinking skills.

This activity can be done either individually or in a group. The trainer will lead the reflection if you are doing it in a group. A great example is the job participants are doing today.

Preparation stage:
1) The trainer will start by asking everyone to find a comfortable place to sit or stand.
2) Then, he will guide the group in taking a few deep breaths in and out.
3) The trainer will ask everyone to begin noticing their thoughts.
4) Finally, the trainer will ask the group to notice the physical sensations in their bodies.

Implementation stage:
1) Once everyone is settled, the trainer will ask the participants to reflect on their first day at work. What was it like?
2) The next step is to ask if anyone showed up being able to move through a routine and have a solid workflow for the entire day. Or did they have to experiment and figure out what they were good at and what they needed some guidance with?
3) Next, the trainer will inquire about any challenges anyone faced along the way and what they did to overcome these challenges.
4) Finally, everyone must explain how they feel about their work. Do they feel comfortable with it? How has this work changed them in their life?

After everyone has had a chance to reflect, the trainer can lead a discussion about the activity. What did everyone notice during the reflection? What were some of the common themes that came up? How does reflecting on our work help us to grow and develop our skills?

Participants have to keep a record of their changes. This practice can be done once a day (individually) or as often as the groups like (if practised in a group).

You can do this activity for any new skill or experience we want to reflect on. It's a great way to check in with ourselves, notice our progress, and see how we've grown. When you take up a new skill, reflect on the progress too.

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Country of origin: Bulgaria

Make Sense

Description

Sensemaking is the meaningful construction of mental patterns based on information and behaviour from the natural, social and human environment.

In a complex and constantly changing environment, we must revisit our mental patterns, which create our ways of thinking and acting. They can sometimes become repetitive, rigid, and unadapted models if they are not re-evaluated.

Creating meaning encourages new choices in new or renewed situations. It means taking a step back from habits often associated with unconscious patterns.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Demotivation.
- Lack of confidence.
- Lack of self-esteem.
- Mental rigidity or even obsession.
- Maladjustment to people and/or contexts.
- Suicidal tendency.
- Violence.
- Absence of vision or black vision.
- Refusal of action.
- Disconnection from reality.
- Social isolation.

Benefits for adult learners

- Re-motivation.
- Personal involvement.
- Rediscovering one's place as a specific human being in the group.
- Horizon of life and positive vision of studies, work, forms of learning.
- Feeling listened to and recognised.
- Gain in calmness.
- Gain in authenticity and adaptability.
- Ability to analyse and evaluate.
- Gain in coherence between what I do, what I say, what I think and in the name of what I do it.

Action ideas

Meaning is at the same time meaning and orientation but also perceptions.

When it comes to human transformation, the personal commitment to move in a direction is to be sought. However, it should be provided that you understand the stakes, the why, the benefits, and the positive perceptions for oneself that will result from it.

Here are some practices that will take place through role-playing, theatre, graphic, plastic, manual and musical work, games... and the search for the *"Why?"* and then the *"How?"* through free speech and the use of all the senses.

1. Do a joint activity. Invite everyone to observe how they naturally act and how things could do done differently. Rethink their relationship with the training.
2. Doing things with others creates Links in a spirit of listening and caring. Question one's own choices and those of others.
3. We are working on a positive vision of ourselves and a positive relationship with others in welcoming differences.
4. Clarify personal values and observe the coherence between actions, choices, and values.
5. Look for what "I have more" if I do things differently than usual. The improvement becomes a sought value.
6. Work in "constellation": "to whom, for what is what I do valuable, who itself is helpful to whom, for what…
7. Develop the vision, show the future, and the results.
8. Develop creative approaches to encourage improvements and transformations of the existing or create something new.

Funded by the European Union

9. Create the conditions for confidence and pleasure to release creative energy.
10. Develop an open-minded attitude in the facilitator.

How to act with the learners:

- Hold a pragmatic and straightforward discourse.
- Remind them of the framework, the context, and the reason for being.
- Give the direction "where to go."
- Communicate regularly on the meaning (direction/significance/perception).
- Accompany in a personalised manner.
- Make everyone responsible. Show the complementarity of individual responsibilities to move towards the "direction."
- Propose values that can be observed in the reality of life.
- Define results criteria.
- Define meaningful indicators.
- Evaluate and regulate in a relatively dynamic way.

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Country of origin: France

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LInk to the resources:
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=donner+du+sens+aux+apprentissages

Books
- Donner un sens à sa vie – Jacques Lecomte - éditions Odile Jacob
- Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl
- Building a neuroscience of pleasure and well-being - Kent C. Morten & L. Kringelbach

Motivation

Description

Motivation stimulates, guides, and sustains learning. It is an essential building block of self-regulated learning - the set of attitudes and mental processes that allow a person to steer their knowledge. It is an internal process. The moment you tap into this energy source, motivation gives you the necessary direction and drive to engage with your environment in a problem-solving, open-ended, and adaptive way.

The main essence of motivation is persistent and energised behaviour directed to your goals. When you are motivated, you take action and make a move.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Lack of motivation with no effective motivation strategies and methods.
● Lack of goals and personality development.
● The lack of ambition.
● Presence of procrastination.

Benefits for adult learners

● Faster learning in a group.
● Persistent and energised behaviour, directed to your goals.
● Improve your motivation.
● Knowledge how to split your larger goals into subgoals which you can pursue one step at a time.
● Boost of incentive.
● Reaching your major goal with these methods of motivation.

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Learners are more likely to succeed when they see intelligence as something that can be developed through learning, especially in a positive learning climate.

Research has found that trainers are more influential than parents and relatives in motivating learners to learn. This situation is partly due to the number of tools and ways trainers can work to motivate learners. It also includes the ability of trainers to explain why a topic is essential to learners, to facilitate the perception of the importance of specific tasks and to provide high-quality feedback. Peers can also play a role in engagement and withdrawal as learners grow and experience developmental and social changes.

Relatives who help learners play a critical role in promoting learning and time management and problem solving strategies.
Relatives and caregivers who provide a home environment that supports autonomy enable learners to actively problem solve, think independently, and foster a sense of competence. This support of independence benefits learners' engagement and motivation in learning.

Praise can enhance motivation when it is sincere and specific and promotes autonomy and self-efficacy, but it also has the potential to undermine intrinsic motivation. Process praise focuses on the strategies and effort involved in effective learning. It helps learners understand that their learning successes and failures are shaped by their choices, not by who they are. This type of feedback often increases feelings of competence and confidence that the trainee can learn the skill. It is also

effective than personal praise that focuses on the individual, such as calling someone a "good learner." Praising the person makes learners see intelligence as fixed rather than something they can work on improving. It can undermine self-esteem, self-efficacy, and diligence in completing tasks. False praise can also harm motivation when a person is praised even when effort is insufficient. Learners know when recognition is incorrect because they are aware when they are not making progress on a task. Supporting learners' learning strategies and showing how these strategies lead to success are effective ways to promote motivation. When learners feel stuck in a particular job, they understand that it's not just a matter of putting in more effort, but also thinking of new strategies.

Country of origin: USA California, applied in Radboud University Nijmegen in the Netherlands

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LInk to the resources:

https://researchmap.digitalpromise.org/topics/student-motivation/

https://sintelly.com/articles/motivation-methods-and-meaning

Description

We took the practice from an interview with an adult trainer.

At the beginning of a learning session, learners identify on a sticky note one specific action step they can do to improve their growth or grit. By helping them identify a short, daily goal, we can create habits of forward-thinking. These daily check-ins can also allow learners to take ownership and enable us to identify who needs coaching.

Furthermore, by encouraging learners to set specific daily goals and track their progress over time, they can gain a greater perspective on their abilities and develop the mindset necessary for long-term success.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of focus.
- Short attention span.
- Unclear goals.
- Negative mindset.
- Not taking ownership of their development.
- Not checking in with themselves regularly.
- Not being able to identify areas of improvement.

Benefits for adult learners

- Improve social and communication skills.
- Improve self-awareness.
- Work on your metacognitive skills.
- Improve your self-management skills.
- Work on your emotional skills.
- Gain resilience.
- Learn how to focus on one specific goal that they can work on throughout the day, develop forward-thinking habits, and improve basic skills.

Action ideas

Place a sticky note in front of each learner. Coach them to identify one specific action step they can do to improve their social-emotional ability.

For example:
"I will avoid getting caught inside conversations that distract me."
"I will avoid saying, 'I am not good at my job'"

Periodically, pause learners to have them check in internally or externally about how they are doing with their goal.

At the end of the session, have them do any number of things:
- Place their note on either a "Successful" or "Not yet" chart. Keep track of these to follow up the next day and offer support to the "Not yet" crew;
- Discuss how they think they did on a scale of 1-10;
- Write a summary of whether they were successful, why, and what's their next goal.

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Country of origin: Bulgaria

Grit Award Ceremony

Description

Learners recognize individuals who have demonstrated grit, creating an award ceremony highlighting the importance of grit in that person's life and accomplishments. Encouraging learners to recognize grit as a factor of achievement in others helps provide modelling and encouragement.

Whereas typical award ceremonies acknowledge the products of success, this ceremony recognizes the process (such as grit and self-control) it took for others to succeed. Furthermore, preparing for the ceremony allows learners to practise academic skills such as research, speaking/writing, etc.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Lack of motivation in learners.
● Fear of failure and rejection.
● Lack of self-confidence and self-efficacy.
● Lack of resilience in the face of adversity.

Benefits for adult learners

● Greater self-awareness and critical thinking.
● Fostering a growth mindset and resilience in times of adversity.
● Improve teamwork and communication among learners, both essential skills for continued success in life.
● Improve your resilience and coping mechanism.
● Improve your social skills, critical thinking and decision-making skills.
● Higher sense of self awareness.

Action ideas

We took the practice from an interview with an adult trainer.

Steps of implementation:

1. Ask learners to search for clips of popular award ceremonies, such as The Academy Awards, Grammy Awards, etc. Lead them through a conversation about why/how the awarded individuals reached this level of achievement.

2. Before outlining the process and requirements, learners will be asked to present and guide a brainstorming session to list potential recipients they think would deserve a "Grit Award."

3. Tailor the process and requirements to your learners. Have them "nominate" for various awards, such as "Grittiest Historical Figure," "Grittiest Scientist," or "Grittiest Woman." If learners work in small groups, they could be part of selection committees to debate and decide on the actual award recipients.

Country of origin: Bulgaria

Description

If one wants to stick with a habit for good, one simple and compelling thing one can do is keep a habit tracker.

When it comes to building a habit, feedback is often delayed.

Habit formation is a long race. It often takes time for the desired results to appear. Furthermore, while a person is waiting for the long-term rewards of one's efforts to accumulate, it is necessary to stick with it in the short term. Immediate feedback that shows the right path is needed.

This is where a habit tracker can help.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Bad, not productive habits that adult learners have.
● Self-doubt and self-destructive routines.
● Lack of motivation and intention.
● Lack of plan for success.
● Lack of grit and perseverance.

Benefits for adult learners

● Motivates one to continue.
● Provides immediate satisfaction.
● Tracking feels rewarding.
● People are focused on the process rather than the result.
● Adults will learn how to set and achieve long and short-term goals.
● Adult learners can lead more productive lives.
● Adult learners will have the tools to change their habits.

A habit tracker is a simple way to measure whether a habit is made.

The most basic format is to get a calendar and cross off each day a person sticks with the routine. The calendar becomes a record of habit streaks as time rolls by.

To make this process as easy as possible, the learner can buy the Habit Journal or create one themselves.

The first step to this practice is deciding what habits one wants to implement. These could be all sorts of habits - running, meditating, working on an idea for an hour a day, etc. They have to add their routine in their journal, calendar, phone, or other tracking place and start crossing off the days when this habit has been fulfilled.

The critical point is that the habit tracker provides direct evidence of the completion of the habit. It is a signal that progress has been made.

Habit tracking can help kickstart a new habit or keep on track with behaviours people tend to forget or let slide when things get busy.

James Clear (Author) recommends using the Two-Minute Rule, which suggests people scale their habits down until they take two minutes or less to perform.

Some examples of breaking habits out into daily, weekly, and monthly routines:

Common daily habits to track:
- journal: 1 sentence,
- meditate: 1 minute,
- stretch for 1 minute,
- make your bed,
- wake up by [TIME],
- floss teeth …

Habits should be so easy that one can stick to them even on the hard days.

For something to become genuinely customary, it needs to repeat frequently. As a result, most habits are daily. However, using a habit tracker for various weekly or monthly routines can also be helpful. These behaviours will not become "automatic," like tying your shoes or brushing your teeth. Still, a habit tracker can remind you to complete them.

Common weekly habits to track:
- publish a blog post,
- take out trash/recycling,
- water the plants,
- tidy up bedroom …

A habit tracker can be used to count how often one does something.

Examples:
- days spent travelling,
- conduct weekly review …

Action ideas

Finally, a habit tracker can be used to measure what one does not do.

Habits of avoidance:
- Alcohol,
- Netflix,
- Online purchases …

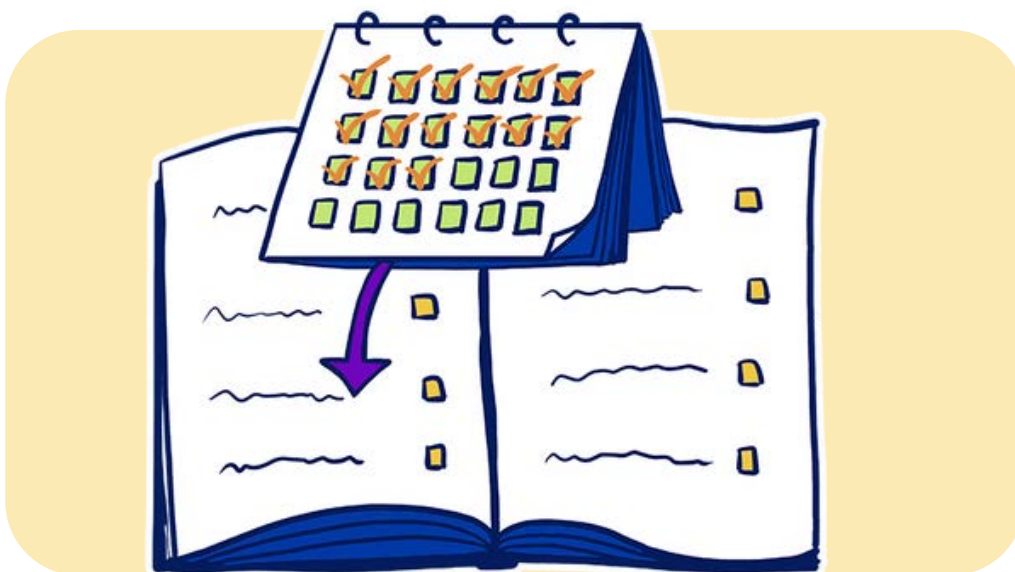We should make this process a part of their routine.

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Country of origin: USA practised in Slovakia
Practice described by JAMES CLEAR

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LInk to the resources:
[The Ultimate Habit Tracker Guide: Why and How to Track Your Habits - James Clear](#)

Description

We took this practice from an interview with a coach from the MultiAct Association.

The activity aims to allow the trainees to understand and analyse a person's daily/weekly life cycle. Based on responsibilities and interests, the individual's daily plan, workload, actions, future, and life are formed.

The purpose of this activity is for the trainees:

- To work in groups.
- Get to know each other.
- To learn details about each other - everyday life; family; friends.
- To discuss the factors that affect their mood and energy.
- Based on these discussions, each trainee can make an individual plan.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of motivation, self-esteem, self-confidence.
- Unable to work in a team.
- Procrastination.
- Poor time management skills.

Benefits for adult learners

- Developing a sense of agency. Increased self-efficacy.
- A feeling of being in control.
- The ability to identify problems and brainstorm solutions.
- Develop creativity and teamwork skills.
- Developing communication and interpersonal skills.

Action ideas

Required materials: chairs; space for group work; flipchart paper; markers.

It would be best if you located the chairs around the workroom.

We recommend that you equip some tables for group work.

In the work process, trainees must talk about a hypothetical person in the third person. Still, at all times, they must consider their personal experience and point of view.

1. Trainees enter the room and randomly choose a chair to sit on.

2. The trainer creates groups (again at random).

3. Each group receives a sheet of paper from a flipchart and markers. Their first task is to draw a person on a piece of paper.

4. Each group must determine the gender, age, name, interests, and other characteristics of the person in the drawing.

5. The trainer should hand out a list of questions to each group. Learners should think about each of them and write the answers on paper.

6. Suggestions for questions:
   - What are the daily responsibilities of the person?
   - What factors negatively or positively affect his/hers mood?
   - What are their responsibilities in the family or work environment?
   - What do they like to do in his/hers free time? How much time do they spend on recreation and entertainment? When?
   - What are his/hers friends? What do they do together? Etc.

7. After answering all the questions, each group makes a weekly program for the person, taking into account his duties, responsibilities, interests, and hobbies.

8. Presentation - each group presents its weekly plan to the others.
During each presentation, the trainer can ask questions such as:
- What is the character of the fictional character?
- What would they be like in 10 or 20 years?
- Which aspect of the activity characters' daily rhythm can they change to live more calmly and happily and feel more motivated?
- What is the secret of a happy life?
- Which issues were the most straightforward/challenging to make a shared decision on?
- Could the activity have been organised differently?

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Country of origin: Bulgaria

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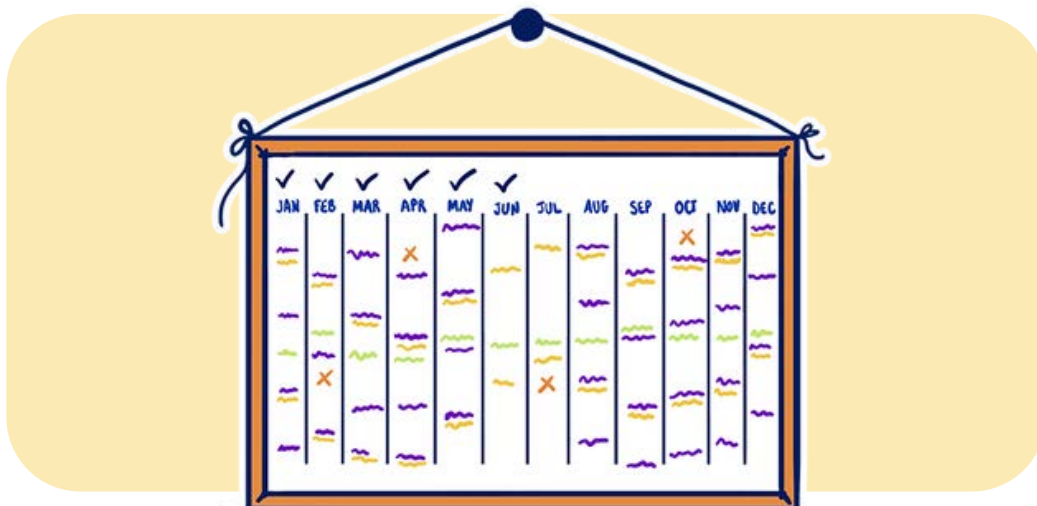
Find Out Your Character Strengths

Description

Your character strengths are the positive parts of your personality that impact how you think, feel, and behave.

Take this simple, 96-question, 15-minute character test and discover your greatest strengths. After taking the survey, you will get the ranking of your 24 strengths. Print it out and keep track of your top 5 strengths. Your top 5 strengths are typically your signature strengths, the characteristics that make you feel energized and engaged.

Discuss your strengths and how they contribute to your life and relationships.

This activity goes well together with **Character strengths for well-being**.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Self-doubt.
● Lack of introspection and self-awareness.
● Lack of ability to use talents and strengths to achieve goals.

Benefits for adult learners

● Boost motivation.
● Increase happiness.
● Find meaning and purpose.
● Boost relationships.
● Manage stress and health.
● Accomplish goals.
● Improve self-awareness.

1. Ask Each person to fill in the survey.

2. Debrief on the results in the group:
   ● Did you know about your core strengths?
   ● How do you use them in your daily life?
   ● Can you recall one time you used your strengths and it made you happy?
   ● What do you do when you feel down? Are you using one of your strengths to make you feel better? Etc.

Country of origin: United Kingdom

LInk to the resources:

Personality Test, Personality Assessment: VIA Survey | VIA Institute (viacharacter.org)

Bucket Lists

Description

This practice is applied at the University of Ruse to students 18+ but can be easily adapted for other adult learners.

Students go through the process of creating "bucket lists" that they want to accomplish before they die.

One major obstacle to helping students develop grit is not spending enough time thinking about what they want to accomplish (i.e., forming goals). Through this practice, students are supported in taking their first steps in developing visions of what they want to do in life.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of motivation.
- Lack of focus.
- Feeling down about not having accomplished anything.
- Lack of trust in their own abilities.
- Lack of a community to support.

Benefits for adult learners

- Feel supported in their endeavours.
- Recognition for their accomplishments.
- A sense of community.
- Gain perseverance.
- Focus on goals.
- Gain self-awareness.

1. Introduce the following quotation:

"People often don't get what they want out of life because they don't know what they want out of life."
– John Goddard.

Lead a discussion about the personal meaning students make out of this quotation. Prompting students to share stories of when people have doubted them or told them "you can't do it" can also help students relate to the life list of John Goddard that you'll share next.

2. Describe the life of John Goddard (https://www.johngoddard.info) and share the original life list that he started at the age of 15.

3. Introduce a new quotation:
"What would you do in life if you knew you could not fail?"

4. Have students list things they'd like to accomplish before they die. Give them permission to copy from each others' lists – and John Goddard's. If you have your bucket list, share it with them. Challenge students to generate many ideas, knowing they may remove, add, or modify items at any point.

5. Invite students to post their bucket lists in the classroom or online via a blog or community post.

6. Try to provide supplies or opportunities for students to accomplish items off their list (e.g., Leave chopsticks on the desk of a student who wants to learn how to use them, etc.).

7. Celebrate whenever a student checks something off their list. Celebrations can be a whole group, like a round of applause, or individual ones, like pre-made *"Congratulations: You are kicking life's big ol' butt" cards.*

Country of origin: Bulgaria
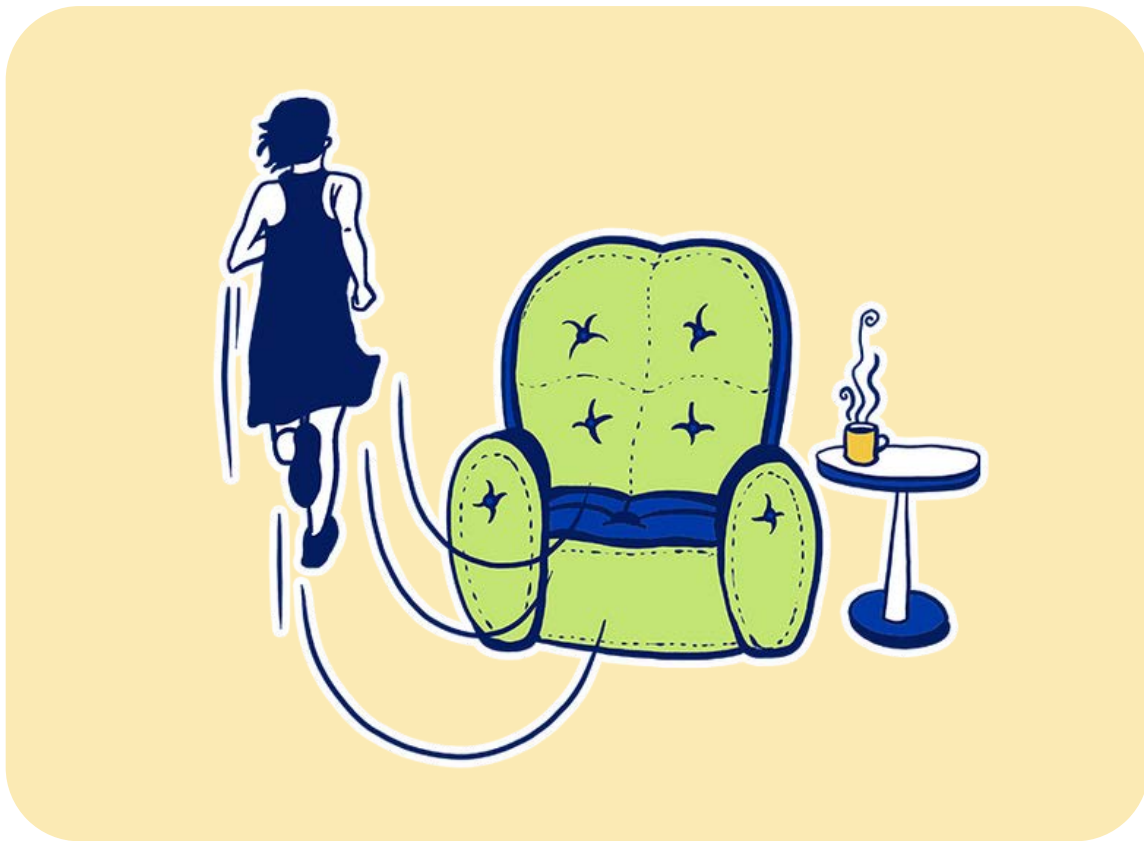
Description

We took the practice from an interview with a trainer from Ruse University.

Using a visual anchor within the room, trainees chart something beyond their comfort zone in which they want to develop skills or abilities.

Providing a visual record of growth helps remind trainees about their goals. It helps demonstrate the consistent effort needed to become comfortable / competent in something. In doing so, they see the Link between effort and ability, which enhances a growth mindset.

By doing this in a group, trainees can help support and hold each other accountable.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lacking in confidence.
- Skills gaps.
- Poor self-image.

Benefits for adult learners

- Developing a sense of accomplishment.
- Increasing self-efficacy.
- Fostering a sense of belonging/connectedness.
- Develop grit, perseverance, and self-discipline skills.
- Positive self-perception.
- Increasing social awareness skills.
- Enhancing creativity.
- Develop teamwork skills.
- Engage in critical thinking.

1. Create a graphic on a board/chart (such as a circle or square). Inside this graphic, elicit examples of things that are easy, comfortable, and take little effort for humans to do. I love to start by discussing what abilities we are born with as babies: eat, poop, make noises, breathe, cry, bLink.

2. Describe how humans come "equipped" to live, but it takes effort and risk to develop new skills. A good example is walking: humans take the physical dangers of falling over and over before mastering walking. Label this graphic a "Comfort Zone " or "Established Habits."

3. Outside the graphic, ask trainees for things that are uncomfortable for them that they would like to make comfortable. Label outside the illustration a "Grit Zone":

- Public speaking.
- Singing in public.
- Asking for help.
- Playing guitar.
- Talking to new people.
- Reading out loud.
- Asking questions to the boss at work.

4. Ask trainees to write one major thing on an index card they would like to work on this year to make it comfortable for themselves. Encourage them to choose something they can work on in your training course.

5. On a board or wall within the room, have a pre-made "Comfort Zone" graphic. Ask trainees to tape/pin their notecard with the comfort zone graphic (closer to the graphic = more comfortable; farther from the graphic = more uncomfortable).

6. Throughout the course, check in with trainees about how they are progressing. Have them move the cards periodically (or autonomously) when they feel they are getting more comfortable. Provide challenges or opportunities for trainees to improve their comfort with their noted goal.

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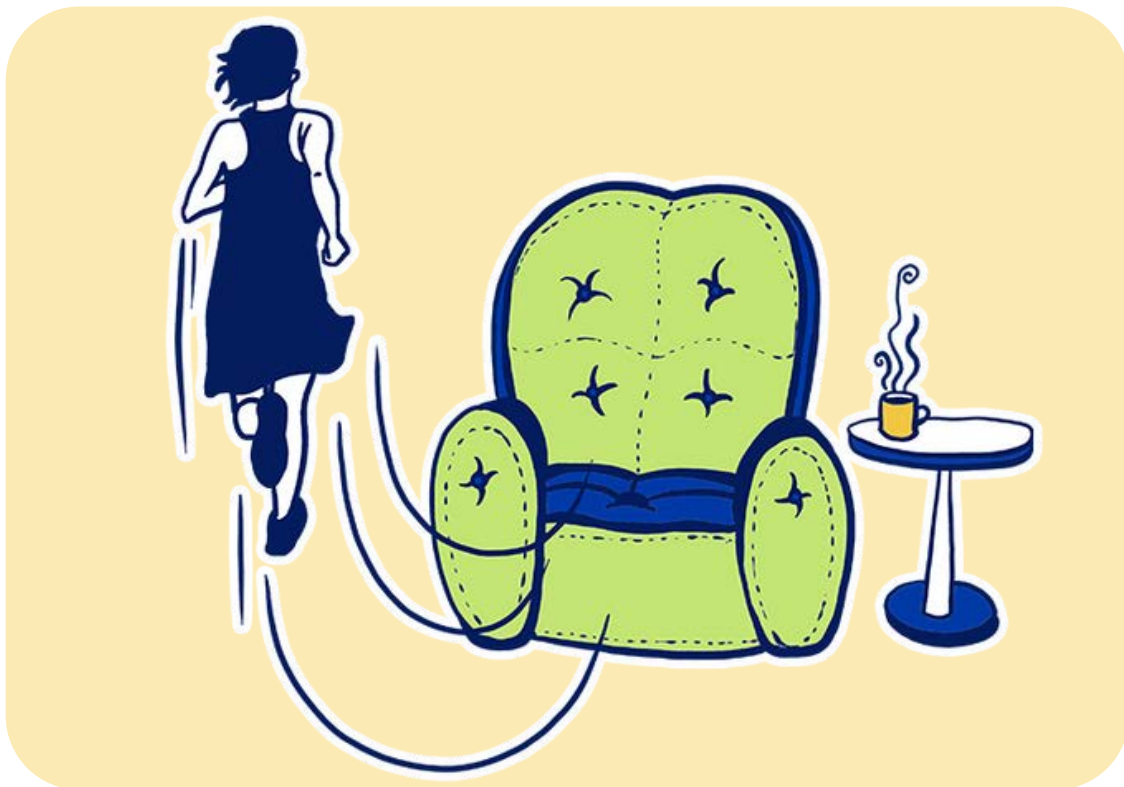
Country of origin: Bulgaria

Description

Kapla wooden boards improve imagination, reflection, creativity, skill, coordination, concentration, and logic.

This game allows people to get together, exchange and collaborate. Used in training, Kapla boards are a source of motivation, socialisation, and pleasure. Learners can exercise language, thinking, and action skills. They all collaborate, including those who are shy or anxious. The game improves awareness of rules and mutual respect while reducing the fear of error and failure.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Lack of feeling competence and resilience.
● Lack of motivation and intention.
● Lack of grit and perseverance.
● Lack of self-confidence.
● Lack of problem-solving skills.

Benefits for adult learners

● Learning to set and achieve long-term goals and plan for a more successful future.
● Sustain their motivation.
● Improve perseverance.
● Gain better logical competence.
● Improve concentration skills.
● Achieve success and therefore a better self-esteem.

Action ideas

Before the workshop

The trainer prepares written instructions, boxes of wooden boards, and posters for debriefing after the session.

He also prepares the pedagogical scenario, i.e., the activities' planning specifying each part's duration.

During the workshop

Introduction:

Introduce the activity by stating the learning objective to be achieved in front of the whole group. For example, by the end of this training session, you will be able to describe the different steps of an action plan. Write the pedagogical objective on the board.

Describe the objects that you will use, and the duration of the workshop (for example, intro = 10 minutes, game = 50 minutes, and debrief + evaluation = 30 minutes)

Divide learners into groups of 3 or 4 people, and provide each with a box of 200 wooden boards.

Display the instruction: "You must make a construction together that represents the different stages of an action plan" "You have 30 minutes."

Each person has to manipulate the boards. First, each person makes a small construction in silence. After a few minutes, each person explains their structure to the other members of the group. Then you decide to build a typical building from your shared ideas.

Debriefing

In turn, one person from each group presents the group's construction to everyone, pointing to the elements of the structure with their fingers (pointing and explaining orally).

The trainer, during this time, notes the main elements on a large poster (they can also give this task to another member of the group).

At the end of the presentations, the trainer asks about the initial pedagogical objective: "What are the different stages of an action plan ?" and notes the answers on a post-it.

The post-its are then rearranged in the order chosen by all the participants.

Last step: ask, *"What did you learn from this experience?"*

After the workshop
- Check what has been learned by offering the learning questionnaire
- Collect the photos and videos made during the workshop and make them available to the learners to relive the workshop and reactivate the knowledge acquired.

Country of origin: KAPLA: Netherlands

LInk to the resources:
https://www.kapla.com/fr/notre-histoire_i30.html

Celebrate Mistake

Description

Many students shy away from challenging school work and get discouraged when they make mistakes. These students are at a significant disadvantage in school - and life more generally - because they avoid the most challenging work.

Successful entrepreneurs make more mistakes and learn from their mistakes.

Making mistakes is one of the most valuable ways to learn maths. Our brains develop when we make a mistake and think about the error. This brain activity doesn't happen when people get work correctly.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Doing and accepting mistakes.
● Changing the way of thinking.
● Being afraid of doing wrong.

Benefits for adult learners

● Develop a growth mindset.
● Learn from mistakes.
● Get comfortable with mistakes and start talking about them.
● Develop a problem-solving mindset.
● Increase the ability to succeed.

Help students understand that mistakes are opportunities to grow. Celebrate it when students make a mistake that might help advance their conceptual understanding of a topic. And help students reflect on the value of making mistakes.

Three Ways to Celebrate Mistakes - Three strategies that incorporate the idea that mistakes are essential for growth and learning:

1) Start the school year/class with the norm that you love and want mistakes.

2) Don't just praise mistakes. Explain why they are essential - Mistakes help your brain grow.

3) Give work that encourages mistakes.

Activity:

(2 min) Ask participants/students to write about a mistake they made this week and how it made them feel.

(2 min) Give each student a fresh piece of paper. Ask them to crumple it up and throw it at the board with the feelings they have when they make a mistake.

(3 min) Ask them to retrieve the paper, un-crumple it, and color each line with different colours.

(3 min) Ask students what they think those lines represent. Explain that the lines represent all the synaptic activity that happens when they make a mistake.

(1 min) Ask participants/students to keep the paper and stick it into a notebook or folder to look at when they make a mistake. This physical reminder prompts students to use mistakes to strengthen their brains when they open their notebooks.

(5-10 min) OPTIONAL - Lead a discussion using prompts from this resource: Classroom Discussion about Mistakes

- How do you feel when you make a mistake? Why?
- How do you think other people see you when you make a mistake?
- Have you ever discovered something new from making a mistake?
- Have you ever felt proud of making a mistake?
- Has a mistake ever made you think more deeply about a problem? (You can start by discussing a non-academic setting and then consult how the lessons apply to academics.)

https://www.mindsetkit.org/practices/sOMwSRdLzTictvnb

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Country of origin: USA, Stanford University applied in United Kingdom
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LInk to the resources:
https://www.mindsetkit.org/topics/celebrate-mistakes

Meaning Missions

Description

This practice is applied at the University of Ruse to students 18+ but can be easily adapted for other adult learners.

Students are given random, personalised missions that support their passions or "grand goals."

Students have a variety of passions and grand goals that may not typically fit within standardised curricula or graduation requirements. These passions, however, should still be acknowledged, cultivated, and supported no matter what class we teach. Meaning Missions allow us to fuel students' desires and goals.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Lack of purpose.
● Lack of meaning.
● Lack of mission.
● Lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Benefits for adult learners

● Network with other people.
● Feel supported and motivated in their endeavours.
● Improve time management/prioritisation.
● Have opportunities to try new things.
● Encouragement to pursue their passions.
● Fostering intrinsic motivation.
● Improve problem-solving.
● Increase creativity.

1. Early in the year, provide surveys in which students list their passions and hobbies.

Sample Questions:
- "If money were not an issue, what would you love to do as a career/calling?"
- "What are your top three hobbies from which you could make a career someday?"
- "What do you love doing when you don't have school work or other obligations?"

2. Keep track of students' hobbies/passions in a private document.

3. Create personalised "missions" that students can choose to take on without fear of the requirement of grading/evaluation.

Examples:
Art/doodling – "Your mission is to create a logo/design for our [name of club/organisation] to be used on this year's t-shirts. Make sure your logo includes their symbols (a book and a sun)."

Fishing – "Your mission is to create a youtube video on how to bait a hook and clean a fish for beginners (particularly young children)."

Music – "Your mission is to create background music for our university's announcements. Feel free to make it upbeat and use instrumentation that your peers would like."

Helping others – "Your mission is to take the contents contained in this envelope [5euro] and make the biggest, most positive impact possible on someone in our university."

Video Games – "Your mission is to create a new video game concept for teenagers aged 14-18. Once completed, I'll help you pitch your concept to the owners of Haemimont Games."

Extra Credit:
- Whenever possible, help students extend their meaning missions. Email ideas to students about opportunities and help them network with adults within their career interests.
- Ask your social media network for volunteers from any career field. Have these volunteers suggest "missions" for students to try.

Country of origin: Bulgaria

Seek Out Challenge

Description

In his book Think Again, Adam Grant (2021) encourages readers to escape 'echo chambers' where everyone agrees with them. Instead, challenge your mindset by seeking out people who think differently.

If you hold a particular view about something, encourage a reasoned discussion with non-like-minded people where you challenge one another. Don't just try to beat them; learn from them. What didn't you know before? Should you alter your view, perhaps becoming more moderate, or replace it?

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Challenging own mindset.
- Pushing own limits.
- Learning from others.
- Accepting other ideas.

Benefits for adult learners

- Think differently.
- Improve the ability to be open-minded.
- Learn from others.
- Improve the ability to meet challenges.
- Develop a challenging mindset.

1. Originals know they are a terrible judge of their ideas.

Everyone thinks their baby is beautiful: we assume it must be evident to everyone how fantastic our baby's idea is. Wrong. We need to seek out honest and credible feedback. But where? We can't trust our managers: they tend to be too negative*. Nor the wisdom of crowds: they tend to be too uninformed. So, where can you turn for helpful feedback? To your peers. They know what good looks like and if your idea has promise. Ask them.

2. Originals make the unfamiliar familiar.

3. Originals fight groupthink.

They keep themselves open to all ideas and feedback even when they don't like what they hear. Adam suggested another exercise: get with your team and brainstorm what could kill your company (or your department or project). Think like a competitor. The training gives you some distance, puts you on offence rather than defence, and is less likely to be blindsided by the opposition.

4. Originals find allies in unlikely places.

5. Weed out takers.

Don't be fooled by someone who seems agreeable but takes your time and ideas and never gives in return. They can suck your energy.

Disagreeable givers are far better allies than pleasant takers. That doesn't mean to stop being a giver or be clever. Help others after doing what you need to fulfil your commitments. As they say on the airline, "Secure your mask before assisting others."
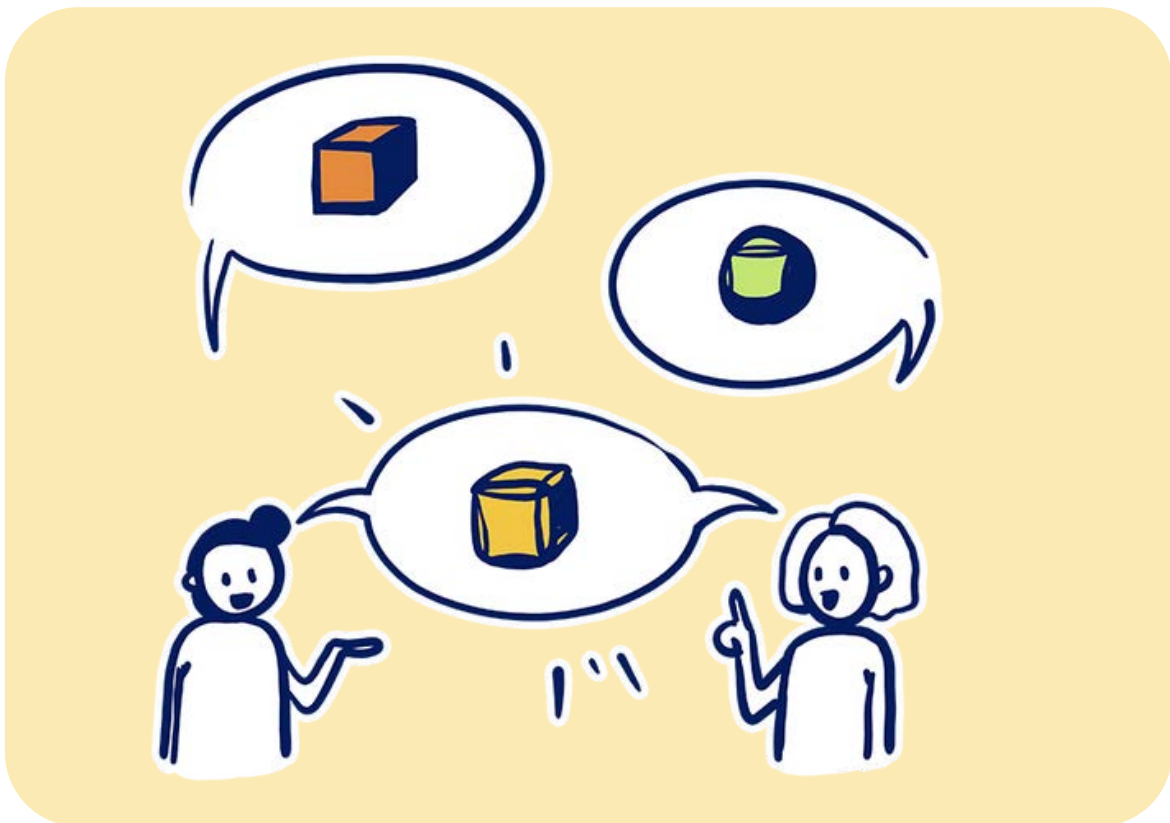

Country of origin: The Netherlands

LInk to the resources:
https://www.apqc.org/blog/5-tips-adam-grant-how-speak-without-getting-shot-down

https://positivepsychology.com/growth-mindset/

Funded by the European Union

Peacemakers vs. Peacebreakers

Description

Peacemakers vs. Peacebreakers - This activity helps learners reflect on behaviours that cause conflict versus behaviours that promote a peaceful environment.

When it comes to skills for active living, there are peacemakers, and there are peacebreakers. Peacemakers' skills involve solving problems, setting goals, and working towards them. Peacebreakers' skills involve causing conflict, breaking agreements, and not taking responsibility for their actions.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Not following through on your commitments.
● Purposely creating arguments and disagreements.
● Refusing to take ownership of your actions and their consequences.

Benefits for adult learners

● To practise brainstorming skills.
● Being able to express yourself clearly and listen to others.
● To encourage learners to apply ideas to other contexts.
● To develop discussion and evaluation skills.
● To apply ideas to practical scenarios and practise speaking skills.
● Being able to reach agreements that benefit everyone involved.
● Being able to work together towards a common goal.

Divide learners into two groups.

One group will brainstorm a list of skills needed to be a peacemaker.
The second group will brainstorm a list of skills needed to be a peacebreaker.
After they have the time to brainstorm, have the groups share their lists.
As a group, discuss which skills are more crucial for peace-making and why. (What is necessary for peacekeeping?)

Skills needed for peace-making:
- Good communication skills.
- Conflict resolution skills.
- Empathy.
- Teamwork skills.

Skills needed for peace-breaking:
- Causing conflict.
- Breaking agreements.
- Not taking responsibility.
- Not caring.

Both skills are essential for peace-making and peace-breaking. However, the skills needed for peace-making are more critical because they help to prevent conflict and promote a peaceful environment.

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Country of origin: Bosnia and Herzegovina

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LInk to the resources:
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/peacemakers-and-peace-breakers

Le Fil à Bascule ®

Description

Based on neuroscience and behavioural science, "The Trigger Wire®" is a tool for addressing the complexity of human behavioural skills, both individual and collective. It is intended for all professionals involved in coaching: trainers, HR consultants, vocational and guidance counsellors, and coaches. This card game has its place in companies and schools. It allows each participant to conduct a detailed and deep analysis of their qualities/actions/values/motivations/dislikes/evolution.

The training of trainers aims to show how to:

- Use the cards in individual and group settings.
- Facilitate the expression of complex human behaviours and their setting in motion.
- Deploy ethical, playful, and engaging guidance.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of self-esteem.
- Self-denial.
- Lack of motivation.
- Burnout at work/ in life.
- Unhappiness at work.
- Difficulty talking about oneself, one's project, one's choices.
- Difficulty in communicating and conflict management.

Benefits for adult learners

- Cognitive: awakening curiosity, accepting complexity.
- Emotional: reconnecting with deep motivations.
- Behavioural: working well together, communicating.
- Identifying one's strengths.
- Identify comfort zones, "resource" zones in which we are talented.

The Trigger Wire **(Le Fil à Bascule ®)** consists of 6 decks of cards that you can use separately or in combination, either in one-to-one or in groups. As these decks (Qualities/Actions/Values/Motivations/Dislikes/Evolution) have different degrees of emotional involvement. We recommend starting with the Qualities and Actions decks, which do not require special coaching skills to run.

The facilitator explains the instructions and encourages the participants to question themselves about choosing the cards that best correspond to them.
In the second stage, the participants discuss and agree on the cards they keep.

The **Qualities game** allows everyone to value the positive in themselves.

Step 1: The cards are placed face down on the table.

Step 2: Each person chooses five cards and keeps the ones that suit them best. The others can be given to another participant if judged justified or put back into the deck. When everyone has five cards that match their character, they move on to the next step.

Step 3: Each person, in turn, tells the following person (or the rest of the group) how the five cards relate to themselves and the qualities they see and that others see in them. They illustrate each time with an actual situation.

Action ideas

The **Actions game** helps identify the skills acquired or acquired to give each person the power to act.

It takes place in 5 stages:

1) The group agrees on the starting question concerning the given project.

2) Each person, in turn, reflects on the question asked.

3) Each person presents the result of their reflection to the group

4) The group agrees on six actions to be carried out.

5) The group defines a SMART action plan with quantifiable and measurable objectives and clear deadlines.

The trainer can use the Motivations deck to identify the motivations to help develop the action plan.

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Country of origin: France

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LInk to the resources:

https://neurocognitivism.be/le-fil-a-bascule/

https://hoform.catalogueformpro.com/

Find Something Funny

Description

We took the practice from an interview with an adult trainer.

Laughter is found to boost resilience. Daily humour activities to induce laughter have proven to reduce depression and increase joy for participants, even months later. Laughter has also been Linked to increased self-esteem and teamwork.

Even under challenging situations, people who use humour and laughter as a coping mechanism have better mental health and perceive their quality of life to be higher than those who do not use them. When people can laugh at themselves and their mistakes, they are more likely to have a positive outlook on life and move easier from negative experiences.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of resilience.
- Negative outlook on life.
- Poor collaborative skills.
- Unhappiness.
- Feeling down.

Benefits for adult learners

- Develop grit and perseverance.
- Greater self-confidence.
- Improved collaborative skills.
- Strengthened relationships.
- Increased sense of joy and happiness.
- Develop mental toughness.
- Focus on long-term goals.

Action ideas

Spend 10 minutes each day for seven days on the following exercise:

Write down three funniest things you have experienced, seen, or heard that day. Provide detail and note how they made you feel. If you can't think of anything, search online for funny stories or anecdotes. Social media can be a good source of humorous material.

Write down why you found it funny. The more specific you are, the more effective the exercise will be.

Write these three funny things at the end of your day. Doing so will foster a new habit and may help you absorb the emotion more as you sleep.

Examples:
- I saw a dog walking on its hind legs. It was so comical!
- I heard a hilarious joke about two guys in a bar.
- My friend told me a funny story about the time she got lost in the city.
- I saw a dog chasing its tail in circles.
- I heard a joke about a chicken crossing the road.
- I watched a stand-up comedy show on YouTube. It was so funny!
- I read a funny comic strip in the newspaper.

*Note: There are certain things that people shouldn't laugh at. For example, it is inappropriate to laugh if someone is in pain or suffering or make fun of someone's appearance, race, or culture. If you're unsure about whether something is funny or not, err on the side of caution.

Country of origin: Bulgaria

Oxford Debate

Description

The Oxford debate is a unique, formalised type of discussion between two teams - a proposal and an opposition - on the thesis put forward, which should be in the form of a declarative sentence. The proposal defends the theory of the debate while the opposition is trying to overthrow it.

The original version gives the teams the thesis a few days or weeks before the debate. So that each group could substantively prepare for the discussion. Discuss topics can vary, including life situations related to personal development.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of communication.
- Lack of respect for other people's opinions.
- Inability to cooperate.

Benefits for adult learners

- Learning how to debate respectfully.
- Ability to listen and consider different points of view.
- Development of teamwork skills.
- Receive suggestions on how to react in a real-life situation.
- Improve communication skills.
- Courage to speak up in the forum.
- Ability to respect different people and their opinions.
- Self-organisation.
- Teamwork.

The coach reads a life case and allows the debate teams to draw by lot whether they will defend or refute the actions of the person in the story. The teams have a few minutes to discuss their success strategy and share with the team who will be responsible for which step of the debate. The coach leads the debate. There is also an audience that will ultimately decide which team did better.

The coach gives the floor to the other members of the proposal team and the opposition. The first speaker spoke on the proposal's side, followed by the first opposition spokesman. Then there is the time of the second speaker, then the second speaker of the opposition, and so on. Each member of the team has a specific role:

The main task of the first speaker is to define the thesis of the debate - that is, to explain how his team understands it. This speaker, if they have time, can give the first arguments.

The second speaker - gives arguments for the thesis (Proposal) or against the idea (Opposition). At this step, the statements are justified, not just listed.

The third speaker - refutes the arguments of the opposing side.

The fourth speaker - summarises all the arguments of the team.
Each speaker has a few minutes to speak. The parties may ask questions or provide information. The number of questions and lead the team must accept is determined by the time allotted for the debate. The audience also has the right to ask questions to both teams.

The audience chooses which team has proved its point better. At the end of the session, the coach summarises the most important of the theses of both teams.

Example of the case to be discussed:

The Robin Hood Problem

Your character is an eyewitness to a crime.

A man has robbed a bank, but instead of keeping the money for himself, he donates it to an orphanage that can now afford to feed, clothe, and care for its children. You know who committed the crime. If you go to the authorities with the information, there's a good chance the money will be returned to the bank, leaving many kids in need. What does your character do?

- Turn the robber in. Stealing is wrong, end of the story.
- Keep the information to yourself because the money is going to a good cause.

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Country of origin: Bulgaria, UK, other countries from the EU.

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LInk to the resources:
Book: The Oxford Handbook of Reciprocal Adult Development and Learning

Description

The practice of an "Average Perfect day" is a simple but powerful exercise that can change how people spend their time. It can help with goal setting, clearing thoughts, motivation, and prioritisation.

A "perfect life" is simply a collection of perfect days. The more days people have that bring their enjoyment and practice their passions, the more "perfect" and enjoyable their life will be.

Therefore, we aim to map out what an average day would look like in participants' perfect lives.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of motivation.
- Lack of intention.
- Lack of plan and desires.
- Lack of grit and perseverance.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Adults will learn how to set and achieve long-term goals.
- Adult learners can lead more productive lives.
- Stop feeling like you are wasting their lives.

Benefits for adult learners

- Build self-confidence in achieving a successful life
- Feel better about themselves.
- They will see every day getting closer to their goal and enjoying the journey.
- Improve goal setting.
- Clear your thoughts.
- Improve self-awareness.
- Increase motivation.
- Gain analytical skills.
- Learn how to manage stress.

Action ideas

You can do this exercise in a journal, blank notebook, or computer. It is straightforward – write about what an average perfect day looks like.

It is essential to focus on each person's perfect day without any added extras or surprises (no winning lottery tickets or surprise romantic getaways). The idea here is to create a detailed list of what an average day looks like, step by step. This could include:

- The perfect time for waking up and what that looks like – reading for 20 minutes before getting up? Do a sun salutation or mindfulness to start the day?
- What is done once out of bed? Are coffee and breakfast made first, or do you shower first? Are the curtains or window blinds open fully or closed while getting ready?
- What happens next? Going to work/ school or staying home – what does that look like? Whom do you engage with? What does the desk look like?
- What does a nutritious lunch look like and include?
- And so on. Create a day that cannot get boring, and you could happily repeat five or seven days a week.

You can create an 'Average Perfect Day' for different days and scenarios - workdays and downtime days. Think about the individual behaviours that go into that day.

Country of origin: USA, implemented in Slovakia

LInk to the resources:
https://positivepsychology.com/goal-setting-exercises/

Positive Attitude Program

Description

Positive Attitude is a Program for the promotion of healthy behaviors and the prevention of risky behaviors, focused on the development of students' socio-emotional skills and the promotion of school adjustment during the cycle transition. The project includes activities aimed at all school agents, making it easier for them to be elements of promotion and maintenance of these skills.

The Positive Attitude Project started in the 2004/05 academic year in the 2nd and 3rd cycle schools of Campelos, Maxial and São Gonçalo (Torres Vedras municipality).

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of self-control.
- Lack of socio-emotional skills.

Benefits for adult learners

- Increase self-awareness
- Improve social consciousness
- Improve self-control
- Improve relational skills
- Develop a responsible decision making
- Develop social-emotional skills.

More than a good practice, this is a holistic program to be implemented in Schools or other educational facilities. However, it can be adapted to different contexts with the exact needs.

Moreover, it takes experienced professionals/technicians, time, and effort to implement such a project.

The project includes intervention with students through socio-cognitive development sessions covering about 2000 people. Most of them are students, teachers, parents, educators, and youth workers, who participate in the various activities developed by the Psychologists who collaborate on the project.

Currently, the project integrates four actions that aim to develop socio-emotional competencies, creating more favourable conditions for adopting healthy behaviours and reducing risky behaviours. In this way, the project supports the creation of conditions for school and life success, either directly through intervention in school cycle transitions or indirectly through skills development programs, information and awareness actions, and the training of agents in using specific tools.

Action 1 - Dissemination and awareness
- Identify the main problems and the characteristics of the target population and agents.
- Disclosing the Project to future partners.
- Share experiences at national and international levels to continuously improve results.

Action ideas

Action 2 - Assessment, referral
- Assess the risk and balance factors to identify groups with which it is necessary to intervene.
- Identify or create instruments for the evaluation of programs.
- Assess the impact of the socio-emotional skills programs developed by the Positive Attitude Project and the level of satisfaction of the students.

Action 3 - Develop skills
- Develop skills to protect young people.
- Involve peers in changing the behaviour of young people at risk.
- Promote students' socialization skills.
- Develop students' Self-Concept in its various dimensions.
- Promote the learning of working tools with young people by teachers and operational assistants to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors.

Action 4 - Positive Transition
- Increase knowledge about cycle transition processes.
- Develop a specific intervention program.
- Promote school adjustment.
- Detect situations of future intervention in terms of socio-emotional skills.

Country of origin: Portugal

LInk to the resources:

https://www.atv.pt/atividade/25

https://bit.ly/3RC8DiR

Visualising A Dilemma

Description

We took this practice from an interview with an adult trainer, which can be done in a group or individually.

We are confronted with daily dilemmas. Some are small (What should we have for lunch?), while others significantly impact our lives (Should we work for a start-up?).

While we must always balance potential risks and gains, opening yourself up to growth does not mean you become careless. Instead, you will become more yourself, not less.

When you're met with a dilemma, it's essential to think about what you want to achieve. A fixed mindset will hold you back, while a growth mindset will help you move forward.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

- Lack of motivation.
- Self-doubt.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Negative outlook.
- Lack of satisfaction.
- Lack of self-efficacy.

Benefits for adult learners

- Focus on success.
- Learn from success and failure.
- Persistence in the face of setbacks.
- Positive outlook.
- Improve creativity.
- Improve problem-solving skills
- Improve self-reflection.
- Foster intrinsic motivation.

Try visualising some real and artificial dilemmas. How would you react to the situation from a fixed versus a growth mindset? Consider the following two examples:

You didn't get the offer you had hoped for from graduate school.
A fixed mindset might tell you that you are fooling yourself. You were never going to get in, and that's that.

Using a growth mindset, you go further. You think about your goal. What are you trying to achieve? Could you get back in contact with the school to see what options you have or apply for a different one? Perhaps you could commit to additional studies and then try applying again.

The project didn't go well; you made mistakes.
A fixed mindset might ask: Well, what did they expect? After all, I didn't have the skills needed. You accept the failure and, most likely, repeat the mistakes in the future.

Using your newfound growth mindset, you think about how you could learn from what went wrong. You get the team together to consider what you can salvage, how you can fix what's wrong, and how you can prevent it from happening again.

A growth mindset is ultimately more favorable because it puts you back in control.

Action ideas

Example of how to implement the practice:
1. Choose a dilemma you're facing
2. Write down what a fixed mindset would say about the situation
3. Write down what a growth mindset would say about the situation
4. Evaluate which mindset is more helpful in the current situation
5. Decide how you want to react to the dilemma based on your evaluation

The trainer can discuss the practice with the adult learners if the training is done in groups.

Examples of guiding questions:
- How did it feel to have a fixed mindset in the situation?
- What would have happened if you had chosen a growth mindset instead?
- What are some other ways you could have reacted to the dilemma?
- How would others from the group react in the same situation?

Country of origin: Bulgaria

Neuroplasticity

Description

We took the practice from an interview with an adult trainer.

Give learners a brief and introductory crash course on how neuroplasticity happens in the human brain. Many people are fascinated with how their brain works. Explaining the concept of neuroplasticity helps them to see the physiological Link between their efforts and their abilities. It can also provide the "why" behind many things we ask them to do to learn better.

Problems we are solving with this good practice

● Lack of self-motivation and perseverance.
● Poor study habits.
● Lack of self-understanding and confidence in one's own abilities.
● Difficulty dealing with setbacks or challenges.
● Lack of understanding how brain works and how it influences learning, development, and change over time.
● Lack of awareness of the impact of different learning strategies.

Benefits for adult learners

● Develop strategies for learning.
● Better equipped to deal with setbacks and challenges.
● Become more motivated.
● Find greater confidence in themselves.
● Improve self-awareness.
● Improve communication skills.
● Improve analytical ability.

1. Ask learners to brainstorm everything they know about the human brain and why it works.

2. Provide them with "true or false" questions, such as:
   - *We have more brain cells as babies than we do now.*
   - *IQ is fixed at birth.*
   - *More intelligent people have bigger brains.*

3. Have learners predict whether each statement is "true" or "false." Feel free to let them discuss and debate their answers. Put them in teams and have them justify a response before revealing the answers if the learning process allows.

4. Reveal the answers

We have more brain cells as babies than we do now.
True: Through adolescence, our brain loses brain cells to allow existing cells more room to develop strong and ample connections. Think about the concept of "pruning" a rose bush. Although we can gain and lose cells as we age, 30 our abilities depend more on the amount and strength of connections between neurons than the sum of cells.

IQ is fixed at birth.
False: IQ can remain relatively stable; however, many studies show that influences such as effort, motivation, and practice can influence IQ scores.

More intelligent people have bigger brains.
False: The volume of a brain does not dictate intelligence or skill. For example, by volume, the average male has a bigger brain than the average female, solely due to average cranial capacity (larger skulls). Don't fret, though, because there is no correlation between volume and ability or intelligence.

5. Have learners imagine that they are each a brain cell within a brain. Have them extend an arm with their fingers spread out. Label this arm their "dendrite." Label the fist an "axon." Brain cells communicate by sending electrical and chemical signals from dendrites to axons across a "synaptic gap" (the space between the fist and the finger).

Sample explanation: Every time we learn, specific cells send a signal. If we do this same thing again, it sends another signal. Over time, if the signals happen often enough, our brain changes its structure so that this "firing" becomes more effortless. Furthermore, if we fire them often, the cells wrap these connections with a fatty substance called "myelin" to make firing more efficient. In other words, our brain is constantly changing shape as we learn.

6. Teach learners sayings to help them remember this idea like, "Use it or lose it," or "Neurons that fire together, wire together."

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Country of origin: Bulgaria

Conclusion

Grit

Grit is a trait that allows people to maintain their focus and pursue their goals despite challenges and setbacks. People with grit are said to be resilient and tenacious. They possess a strong work ethic and are not afraid of failure. Instead, they view failure as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Character development

Character development is a process based on a positive psychology program to help people build their foundation of core ethical values of life — respect, justice, responsibility, etc.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a set of abilities that pertain to emotions and emotional information. (S Côté - Annu. Rev. Organ. Psychol. Organ. Behav., 2014).

Growth mindset

A growth mindset is the belief that individuals have the power to change and grow through their own efforts. This mindset is based on the idea that intelligence and ability are not fixed traits, but rather can be developed through hard work and dedication.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness allows people to understand their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours and how they affect other people. The ability to be self-aware is essential for good mental health and personal relationships. Peo-

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ple who are self-aware are able to regulate their emotions, set boundaries, and achieve their goals. They are also better able to cope with stress and make positive changes in their lives.

NEETs

NEET is an acronym that stands for "Not in Education, Employment, or Training." NEET is a classification used to describe young people who are not enrolled in school and are not working. NEETs often struggle with mental health issues, unemployment, and underemployment. However, there are programs and initiatives in place to help NEETs re-enter the workforce and become productive members of society. With the right support, NEETs can overcome the challenges they face and lead successful lives.

Soft skills

Abilities related to personality, attitude, and behaviour. Examples of soft skills include teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

What are our next steps and where can you find information about them?

You can follow us on our webpage to see our activities, what we have already done, which things we are working on, and plans for the future.

Contact us

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Formethic
formethic.europe@gmail.com

PROJECT PARTNERS

Smart Idea, Igor Razbornik s.p.
igor.razbornik@gmail.com

Edukopro
edukopro21@gmail.com

Coaching Bulgaria Association
denitsa.diyanova.dimova@gmail.com

Jumpin hub
jumpinhub@gmail.com

Youthfully Yours SK
info@youthfullyyours.sk

Rousse industrial association
galena.robeva@ragina.net

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Character development for active life
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