Learning to Learn: a common path towards validation in non-formal learning

The White Paper is the end product of the Erasmus+ "L2L" Project and is aimed at disseminating the best practices for the validation of non-formal competences, with particular reference to the Learning to Learn competence to guide practitioners in assessing the competences possessed by low-skilled people and thus support them in choosing training offers consistent with their expectations and competences possessed.

This document, which will be hopefully of use for both teachers or trainers and staff of adult education centres, provides an overview of the project and its objectives, as well as the research results and some shared conclusions. It also contains the list of best practices found during the research phase in all the countries of the partnership: Italy, Finland, France, Spain, Ireland.
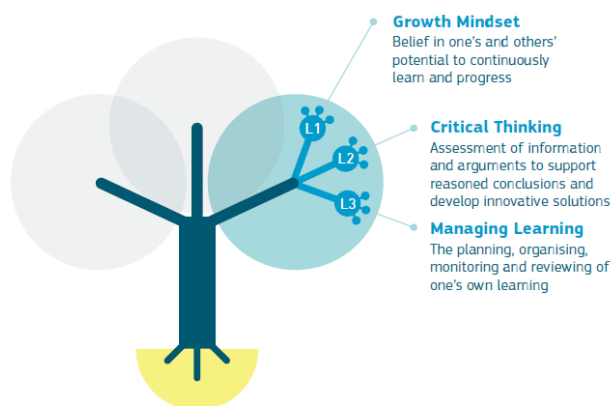
LEARNING TO LEARN COMPETENCE AT A GLANCE (picture taken from LifeComp)

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Aims of the White Paper

Introduction

The project "L2L - Learning to Learn: a common path towards validation in non-formal learning" is funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme and its partnership consists of **Università delle LiberEtà del FVG** from Italy (coordinating institution), **Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia** from Italy, **Solution: Solidarité & Inclusion** from France, **The Rural Hub CLG** from Ireland**, Universidad de Malaga** from Spain and **Sastamalan Opisto** from Finland.

The "L2L" White Paper summarises the work of the entire partnership in seeking and disseminate best practices at local and national level to validate the Learning to Learn competence, which is the ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity, to lead low-skilled people to become aware of their competences and thus have important social consequences for inclusion (or exclusion) in a world of work where requirements are increasingly high and competitive.

The White Paper directly addresses trainers and teachers of educational and training institutions and end users such as low-skilled adults.

The document provides a list of best practices implemented in Italy, Finland, France, Spain and Ireland, and has two annexes: a Table that can be used to identify the competences addresses by the Best Practices found, and the Self-assessment tool which is a questionnaire aimed at supporting teachers and trainers to identify and evaluate the competence level of the end users.

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Life skills are…

Context of the project

Organisations involved in adult education are well aware of the problem of low-skilled people in relation to their social and occupational integration. This takes on great importance at a time when the relevant international bodies and the scientific community are emphasising the importance of enhancing and developing human capital, identifying the skills of individuals as an important predictor of economic and social performance.

To face this problem, the aim of the OECD Skill Strategy[1] is to "mutually reinforce the skills system" through four pillars, including:

1. develop relevant skills

2. activating the supply of skills

3. using skills effectively

4. strengthening the skills system so that better jobs and better living conditions, both personal and social, can result from appropriate skills.

The validation of the competence Learning to Learn leads low-skilled people to become aware of their competences and thus has very important social consequences, due to the effects of inclusion (or exclusion) in a world of work where requirements are increasingly high and competitive.

The problem of low-skilled people is, in fact, dramatically present in all the countries that participated in the first PIAAC survey[2]. In relation to the countries of the partnership, in Italy and Spain the phenomenon exceeds 25% of the population 16-65 years old (reference population of the statistics) and precisely the Italian low skilled population is 27.9% of the total (highest percentage of the participating countries), the Spanish one is 27.7%, the French one is 21.7%, while Finland and Ireland have a percentage of low skilled below 20%.

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[1] https://www.oecd.org/skills/oecd-skills-strategy-2019-9789264313835-en.htm

[2] https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/

Objectives

The overall objective of the "L2L" project are to identify best practices for the validation of the competence Learning to Learn which is part of the more general key competence "Personal, Social and Learning to Learn" of low-skilled persons and to promote the adoption of best practices in the network of interested partners and stakeholders.

The specific objectives are:

- Elaborate a White Paper on best practices for the validation of non-formal competences, with particular reference to the Learning to Learn skill that will be a guide for operators to assess the competences possessed by low-skilled people and thus support them in choosing training offers consistent with their expectations and competences possessed;

- Identify a shared pathway as a "first step" towards a certification of competence in the non-formal field;

- Disseminate the project results online;

- Disseminate the project results to adult education centres in the project partner countries.

Methodology and results of the research

The aim of the project was to produce a White Paper outlining methodology to identify best practices for the validation of key competences, especially the Learning to Learn competence. To achieve this, the project activities developed as follows: research phase - reflection on research - training activity - reflection on training activity - White Paper.

We expect that the results can support trainers in

1. improving their ability to assess the competences of the low-skilled, in order to be able to validate them, and
2. providing tools to validate the skills as "first step" towards the certification.

and low-skilled adults in

1. (re)discovering and developing life skills possessed but not known or used.

Regarding to BPs identified, the "LifeComp - The European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence"[3] document by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Commission's science and knowledge service, was taken as a reference document to link the examples found to the specific competences and descriptors of the Learning to Learn area.

The "L2L" project partners, on the basis of their experience in teaching and working with groups of low-skilled students, took into consideration best practices implemented both at a local level by the partner itself or at a national level by other institutions.

The methodology used for the creation of the Tables and the Self-assessment tool can also be the basis for an investigation on identification and validation of the other two areas (Personal and Social key competences).

Conclusions

Conclusions

The issue of low-skilled adults assumes great importance at a time when relevant international organisations and the scientific community are stressing the importance of enhancing and developing human capital, identifying in the skills of individuals significant predictors of economic and social outcomes.

The validation of the ability to learn, consists in recognising and then applying behaviours, habits and strategies useful for an effective learning process that can lead low-skilled people to acquire awareness of their own competences and thus to social and work inclusion in a world where the requirements are increasingly high and competitive.

"LifeComp - The European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence" offered a very specific and at the same time vast area of investigation that allowed partners to prepare tools that can be used to guide operators in assessing the competences possessed by low-skilled people and thus support them in choosing training offers consistent with their expectations and competences possessed. Moreover, these tools can also be used for the two further key areas, Personal and Social.

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[3] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC120911

Italy

Italy

Title: "HORTIS: Horticulture in Towns for Inclusion and Socialisation"
Why it is a best practice? The activities in the garden help to acquire the LEARNING TO LEARN competence, because in the garden learning begins with real problems and then takes the form of visible solutions.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "Project You-Up!"
Why it is a best practice? The You-up activities help to acquire the LEARNING TO LEARN and SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCES, because the volunteer activities begin with the comparison with real problems and then takes the research of effective and incisive solutions.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "SLO MB Project – local development employability of Monza e Brianza SVE"
Why it is a best practice? The activities in the "SLO MB project" help to acquire the LEARNING TO LEARN, SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCES as skills needed when searching for a job.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "Project YP + CV=E + E (Youthpass + Curriculum vitae = Erasmus+ Employability)"
Why it is a best practice? The YP + CV =E + E activities help to acquire the European Key competences during the reflection group or through self-reflection.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "From caterpillar to butterfly - techniques and tools to increase self-esteem and effectiveness"
Why it is a best practice? At the end of the training course participants are expected to be able to:
- evaluate the information contained in the concept of self in relation to the different dimensions: social, work, family, relating to one's body;
- realistically recognize one's own shortcomings and defects
- be aware of your strengths
- have a proactive attitude towards actions to improve one's areas of weakness
- recognize their needs
- find strategies to face obstacles and difficulties.
Link (to the PDF online)
Link to the Appendix

Title: "Personal Branding: Communicate your professional value"
Why it is a best practice? The course aims to help students achieve the following objectives:

- encourage the definition of a personal value proposition through the use of tools of visual design able to cooperatively draw on a Canvas (Personal Branding Canvas or Personal Business Model Canvas) elements of uniqueness (value proposition) and channels and means of communicating it.
Link (to the PDF online)
Link to the Appendix

Title: "ADOPT A CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ADDRESS CHANGE"
Why it is a best practice? The course aims to act on the ENHANCEMENT OF THE PERSONAL RESOURCES of the participants, understood as development of self-awareness, confidence in one's abilities and respect for one's own characteristics and peculiarities.
Link (to the PDF online)
Link to the Appendix

Title: "Work for Goals"
Why it is a best practice? At the end of the course the person will have defined a goal in realistic and coherent terms working. Through practical experimentation the student will have internalized some modalities procedural aimed at analysing and focusing on the salient elements.
Link (to the PDF online)
Link to the Appendix

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Finland

Finland
Title: "Labour market clinic and Professional skills workshop"
Why it is a best practice? According to the feedback from the participants the vast majority of them felt empowerment and strengthening of their self-confidence. They felt that they have been encountered as valuable human beings, not just as "invaluable outcast that has to be dealt with".
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "Skills Badges"
Why it is a best practice? The language Skills Badge acknowledges the language skills in a digital and visual way, it makes skills visible to the students and by sharing the badge – also to other people.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "Employment agency"
Why it is a best practice? More than 60% of the participants who have completed the employment workshop period have either entered study or work.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "Learning Workshop"
Why it is a best practice? Offering individual, free of change counselling for all learners regardless their background.
Link (to the PDF online)

France

France

Title: "Miroir en soi"
Why it is a best practice? The "Miroir de soi" workshop offers weekly group meetings with the objective of breaking out isolation, increasing soft personal skills, forging links with other participants and taking part in common projects.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "EDUFORM label"
Why it is a best practice? It allows people wishing to validate their professional competences acquired in non-academic contexts to choose among a high number of certified training providers, which also recognize their competences though the VAE (Validation of Acquired Experience) procedure.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "BEST TRANE: BEST practices for TRaining in Adults Non-formal Education"
Why it is a best practice? BEST TRANE is a whole training for adults' educators including study visits and a Manual about best practices and methodology to teach adults.
Link (to the PDF online)

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Ireland

Ireland

Title: "EU Youth Dialogue - Young Voices"
Why it is a best practice? This project helps to encourage participation, promote equal participation, include diverse voices, strengthen young people's citizenship competences, and sense of belonging, and ultimately bring about positive change.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "Citywise Education"
Why it is a best practice? This programme helps young people to learn to work hard, acquire study habits, learn to learn skills, and develop their academic ambition.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "DELSA - Digital Empowerment for Digitally Upskilling Adults"

Why it is a best practice? DELSA supports the development of basic and transversal skills (Digital Skills) in an innovative way: the innovative method of DELSA relies on its bottom-up and demand driven approach while consolidating on the expertise and experience of AE practitioners and technical experts.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "Promise Project"
Why it is a best practice? Education providers are gearing up their programmes and face the problem of determining what services to prioritise, how to ensure they are delivered in an effective but culturally sensitive way and how to quickly train the staff who will deliver them.
Link (to the PDF online)

Spain

Spain

Title: "Improvement of emotional well-being: psychology and happiness"
Why it is a best practice? This course can be considered a good practice because it promotes people's emotional well-being, it is addresses to the general population, the evaluation and monitoring of the course is double (students and teacher) and involves the students themselves in their learning process, and for the acquisition of the expected competences, both individual and group activities are carried out.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: The educational plan "Promotion of knowledge and conservation of the Andalusian cultural heritage and its natural environment"
Why it is a best practice? at the end of the training participants will be able to: Understand and value the heritage of the city of Antequera from a perspective of collective responsibility to contribute to its dissemination through the Internet and online media; - Know and respect the numerous cultural and natural values of the environment as a strategy for the involvement of people in the maintenance and conservation of these values; Learn to generate content on the Internet thanks to the work they produce.
Link (to the PDF online)

Title: "Emotional Intelligence Course"
Why it is a best practice? The course provides skills and competences for the management of emotions and feelings of oneself and others. It serves to promote and encourage a better climate in the workplace, fostering positive social relations in the work environment. At the end of the course, students are able to manage their own emotions, improve communication with co-workers and bosses, fostering social skills that increase the chances of promotion in the workplace.
Link (to the PDF online)

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https://associationsolution.org/

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Avda Cervantes, 2 - 29016 Málaga, Spain

https://www.uma.es/

The Rural Hub CLG

Centre for Educational Innovation, Virginia, Co. Cavan, Ireland

www.theruralhub.ie

Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia

Piazza Unità d'Italia, 1 - 34121 Trieste, Italy

https://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvg/cms/RAFVG/

List of annexes

Competences in the Learning to learn area according to LifeComp[1]:

L1 - Growth Mindset
- L 1.1: Awareness of and confidence in one's own and others' abilities to learn, improve and achieve with work and dedication
- L 1.2: Understanding that learning is a lifelong process that requires openness, curiosity and determination
- L 1.3: Reflecting on other people's feedback as well as on successful and unsuccessful experiences to continue developing one's potential

L2 - Critical Thinking
- L 2.1: Awareness of potential biases in the data and one's personal limitations, while collecting valid and reliable information and ideas from diverse and reputable sources
- L 2.2: Comparing, analysing, assessing, and synthesising data, information, ideas, and media messages in order to draw logical conclusions
- L 2.3: Developing creative ideas, synthesising and combining concepts and information from different sources in view of solving problems

L3 - Managing Learning
- L 3.1: Awareness of one's own learning interests, processes and preferred strategies, including learning needs and required support
- L 3.2: Planning and implementing learning goals, strategies, resources and processes
- L 3.3: Reflecting on and assessing purposes, processes and outcomes of learning and knowledge construction, establishing relationships across domains

BEST PRACTICE (COUNTRY)	INDIRECT WAY: OBJECTIVES	DURATION	METHODOLOGY	ADDRESSED COMPETENCES
				L1 Growth mindset ☐ **L 1.1** ☐ **L 1.2** ☐ **L 1.3** **L2 Critical thinking** ☐ **L 2.1** ☐ **L 2.2** ☐ **L 2.3** **L3 Managing learning** ☐ **L 3.1** ☐ **L 3.2** ☐ **L 3.3**

(Add lines if necessary)

Project nr. 2020-1-IT02-KA204-079301

BEST PRACTICE (COUNTRY)	DIRECT WAY: <u>ACTIVITIES</u>	DURATION	METHODOLOGY	ADDRESSED COMPETENCES
				L1 Growth mindset ☐ **L 1.1** ☐ **L 1.2** ☐ **L 1.3** **L2 Critical thinking** ☐ **L 2.1** ☐ **L 2.2** ☐ **L 2.3** **L3 Managing learning** ☐ **L 3.1** ☐ **L 3.2** ☐ **L 3.3**

(Add lines if necessary)

Project nr. 2020-1-IT02-KA204-079301

BEST PRACTICE (COUNTRY)	INDIRECT WAY: THEMES/UNITS	DURATION	METHODOLOGY	ADDRESSED COMPETENCES
				L1 Growth mindset ☐ **L 1.1** ☐ **L 1.2** ☐ **L 1.3** **L2 Critical thinking** ☐ **L 2.1** ☐ **L 2.2** ☐ **L 2.3** **L3 Managing learning** ☐ **L 3.1** ☐ **L 3.2** ☐ **L 3.3**

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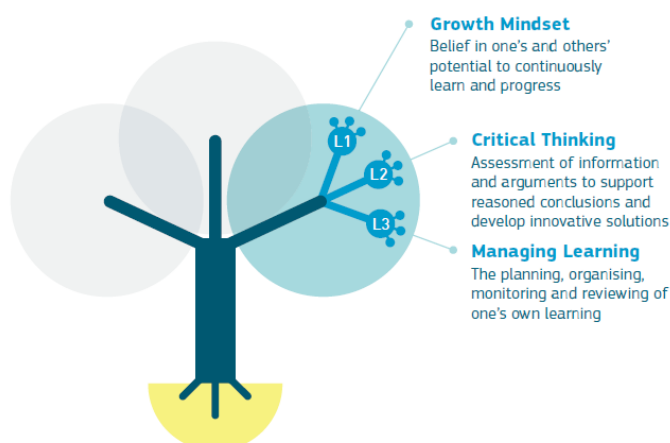
Project nr. 2020-1-IT02-KA204-079301

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR

ADULT LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

We learn all through our lives and everywhere! This self-assessment questionnaire is part of the White Paper produced by the Erasmus+ project *"Learning to learn: a common path to certification in the field of non-formal learning"*, and helps evaluate the level of the *Learning to Learn* competence, which is one of the main skills supporting our lifelong learning. The tool is aimed at all adult learners. As an adult educator, you can utilise the tool with your learners: they can assess their skills before AND after a certain course, workshop or activity, to get an overview of their learning process.

Learning to Learn competence is one of the key competences for lifelong learning. In an ideal situation everybody would have the essential set of competences needed for personal development, social inclusion, active citizenship, and employment. According to the 2018 European Commission's **LifeComp** report, the *Learning to Learn* area can be divided in 3 competences: *Growth Mindset*, *Critical Thinking* and *Managing Learning*:

- **Growth Mindset:** Believing in your and others' potential to continuously learn and progress.
- **Critical Thinking:** Being able to assess information and arguments (telling apart for example fact, fiction, rumours, fake news and opinions) to support reasoned conclusions and develop innovative solutions.
- **Managing Learning:** Having skills at planning, organising, monitoring and reviewing your own learning process.

Growth Mindset
Belief in one's and others' potential to continuously learn and progress

Critical Thinking
Assessment of information and arguments to support reasoned conclusions and develop innovative solutions

Managing Learning
The planning, organising, monitoring and reviewing of one's own learning

Rate with an **X** according to this scale

1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly agree

your level of agreement with each statement:

L.1 Growth mindset

1. I trust in my ability to learn and improve my skills with work and dedication.

1	2	3	4	5

2. I trust in my work and dedication skills to achieve my goals.

1	2	3	4	5

3. I think that human beings are capable of developing their skills regardless of their biological and social background.

1	2	3	4	5

4. I think that I am able to keep on learning no matter what my age is.

1	2	3	4	5

5. I seize opportunities to learn no matter the difficulties that may occur.

1	2	3	4	5

6. I do my best to achieve the learning goals I set in the beginning of the learning process.

1	2	3	4	5

7. Even if I get negative feedback or I fail, I have motivation to continue learning.

1	2	3	4	5

8. Even if I reach my goal, I have motivation to go on improving myself.

1	2	3	4	5

9. I learn from the learning process no matter if I succeed or fail.

1	2	3	4	5

10. I learn from my and other people's mistakes.

1	2	3	4	5

11. I learn from my and other people's successes.

1	2	3	4	5

12. I am not afraid to ask for help to achieve a goal.

1	2	3	4	5

Rate with an **X** according to this scale

1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly agree

your level of agreement with each statement:

L2 – Critical Thinking

1. I am aware that all the information is bound to cultural, social and individual circumstances, and does not necessarily present the whole truth on the topic.

1	2	3	4	5

2. I am aware that my personal values, beliefs and opinions influence the process of collecting information and weighting different arguments.

1	2	3	4	5

3. I am willing and open to hear different arguments to be able to understand opposite views, as well as revise my views when I hear good reasoned arguments.

1	2	3	4	5

4. I am using diverse sources while collecting information.

1	2	3	4	5

5. I am aware that there is misinformation, propaganda, opinions, and rumours amongst the real facts on the internet.

1	2	3	4	5

6. I am paying attention to fact-checking and verifying different sources of information by assessing their accuracy, reliability and authority.

1	2	3	4	5

7. I am able to draw logical conclusions by comparing, analysing and synthesising data, information, ideas and media messages.

1	2	3	4	5

8. I am able to test the robustness of arguments to identify possible cultural, social and individual influences while drawing logical conclusions.

1	2	3	4	5

9. I am able to develop creative ideas and solve problems by using different information sources.

1	2	3	4	5

10. I am able to accept some level of risk while developing creative ideas.

1	2	3	4	5

11. I am able to collaborate with others when solving problems.

1	2	3	4	5

Rate with an **X** according to this scale

1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly agree

your level of agreement with each statement:

L3 - Managing Learning

1. I recognize the best learning strategies for me.

1	2	3	4	5

2. I recognize what support I need for learning.

1	2	3	4	5

3. I am aware of my learning needs.

1	2	3	4	5

4. I am aware of my learning interests.

1	2	3	4	5

5. I recognize that planning is useful to reach my learning goals.

1	2	3	4	5

6. I am able to recognize that I need resources (time, money, support, etc.) and commitment to implement my learning process.

1	2	3	4	5

7. I am able to plan my learning strategy.

1	2	3	4	5

8. I am aware of the learning strategy that made me achieve my goals.

1	2	3	4	5

9. I am aware that my learning strategy can be applied to different contexts and areas of interest.

1	2	3	4	5

10. I am aware that in order to reach my goals the learning process needs constant reflection and evaluation.

1	2	3	4	5