

CHAPTER III

FACILITATION *of Learning*



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CHAPTER III

FACILITATION OF LEARNING

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LEARNING INTENTIONS



'Learning is a complex thing with many dimensions and a lot of potential to explore. That makes it so interesting and worth to dive into.'

PROVIDE

insight, background and methodology to support young people's learning in youth work.

GIVE

insight into the conditions that contribute to learning.

RAISE

awareness on how to build a supportive relationship with young people.

EXPLORE

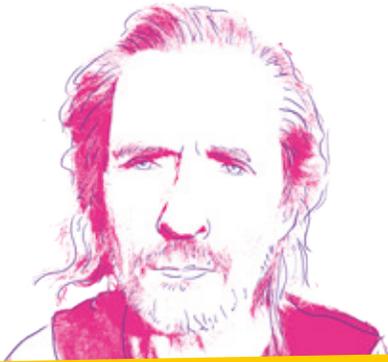
learning opportunities for young people in youth work projects.

EXPLORE

the importance of reflection as a crucial element for learning and provide methods to enable reflection.

EXPLORE

how to support young people to become responsible for their own learning processes.



INTRODUCTION

One could argue that young people will learn anyway when taking part in youth work. They gain new experiences, meet new people, take on new tasks, visit new places and will be challenged in all kinds of ways. They will learn by doing things; informal learning is taking place.

This chapter proposes to look at youth work as an enormous opportunity for non-formal learning. Learning that doesn't happen just like that, but learning that is conscious, intentional, reflected on and facilitated by youth workers, as has been explored in both Chapters 1 and 2.

Youth work has many forms and faces, but has one thing in common in that it offers young people a place to meet, connect, try out, explore, practice, experience and engage in a wide range of activities and topics. This means that there is great potential for learning. But merely doing doesn't immediately lead to learning. If, when someone is not aware of their learning and is not reflecting on what they have done, are they really learning?



VIDEO

*You can find a video about 'Facilitation for Learning' on the **FOCUS learning website.***
➔ www.focus-learning.eu



THIS CHAPTER WILL LOOK AT THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THIS FACILITATION OF LEARNING AND IS DIVIDED INTO THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS OR TOPICS:

- Preparing for Learning.
- What Makes Young People Learn?
- Identifying Learning Opportunities in Activities and Programmes.
- Putting and Keeping Learning on the Agenda.
- Reflection and Learning.
- Seeing the Potential of the Learners.
- Creating a Learning Environment.
- Dealing with Ambiguity and Change.
- Creating a Supportive Relationship.
- Asking Supportive Questions.
- Involving Young People.

If, for the first time in your life, you make a soup and it tastes reasonable, and then you make it again in the same way, you can say 'I learnt to make soup!' Your aim could also be to make a better soup that is not only reasonable, but is also delicious. In this case, you need to look back at the process that resulted in your first reasonable soup: the ingredients, the time of cooking, the order of what went in when, etc. You also have to think about what made it taste reasonable and what was missing to make it taste really good. You might need to try another three or four times or to do some reading or talking to people to finally make an excellent soup. You learnt to make the soup you wanted, you reflected on the process and, all the time, you were aware of your learning.

This chapter aims to provide the ingredients for making a great soup. It will look at how to support young people in learning from their experiences and help them develop an awareness about their own learning.

Learning is something that has to be learnt. When we want to give young people the opportunity to learn in youth work, youth workers have to support them in developing their own learning paths and strategies – a 'facilitation of learning'.

How can we create a 'climate for learning'?

When can we talk about learning?

How can we keep on talking about learning?

What are tools, methods and resources for learning and reflection we can use?

What are different competences which can be performed?

How to create a good balance between 'safety' and 'challenge'?

How can I get to know more about their wishes and needs?

What do I know about the needs and wishes of the young people in this activity?

How can I support young people to see learning opportunities?



When and how is there reflection time?

What can I myself learn from this?

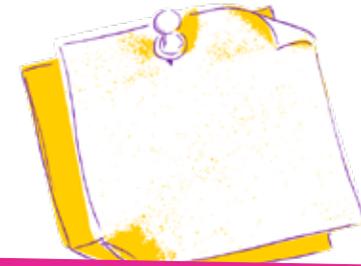
What can be learnt in this activity?

How can the environment contribute to learning?

PREPARING FOR LEARNING

Group reflection,
individual reflection,
peer learning?

When we talk about preparing for learning in youth work, it is not about preparing something with a fixed programme or that is ready to use, like an online language course where, by following the plan, everything will work out. Youth work is not structured like that and in many ways is very unpredictable. When you work with a group of 20 young people there will be 20 different learning processes with many different learning outcomes. In youth work, in general, we don't set learning goals that are reached through a step-by-step programme by all the young people taking part. In youth work a wide range of activities takes place in which young people have the opportunity to develop, grow and learn. Preparing activities with and/or for young people in which they can learn means creating conditions in which these opportunities are maximised, where young people feel invited to try out and feel motivated to take new steps.



LEARNING POSTER

*You can find a poster that explores the 'Preparing for Learning' on the **FOCUS learning website**, through the following link.*

➔ www.focus-learning.eu

Youth work offers many learning opportunities for young people and this learning is an essential part of youth work. In order to take advantage of these opportunities to support this learning, there needs to be significant preparation. This is in order to:

- Raise the potential of learning.
- Create a safe learning environment.
- Raise awareness of the learning opportunities.
- Raise awareness of learning taking place.
- Ensure the young people benefit as much as possible from the environment, resources and circumstances.

WHAT MAKES YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN?

To create the conditions for learning it is important to find out what helps and promotes people to learn, what triggers them, what motivates them, etc.

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (2010) describe four fundamental conditions for promoting intrinsic motivation for learning: **inclusion, attitude, meaning** and **competence**.

INCLUSION

Inclusion is about respect and connectedness. When you have the impression that you are respected by and connected to a group you feel included. Being respected means that you can express yourself in an authentic way without being judged, and that your perspectives matter. You feel safe and accepted.

Being connected is about belonging, feeling cared for and caring for others in the group. In this way learners experience trust and a sense of community which allows for a certain level of vulnerability and ambiguity.

When doing activities with young people, the youth workers' role is to always raise their awareness and attention to the process and the atmosphere in the group. Is everybody involved in the process, how does the group cooperate, does everyone feel safe in the group? These are all questions/topics that support young people in feeling connected, respected and included (see also 'Creating a Learning Environment' below).

ATTITUDE

An attitude is a combination of information, beliefs, values and emotions that results in a learned tendency to respond favourably or unfavourably towards particular people, groups, ideas, events or objects (Samovar et al. 2005). Attitudes help us understand and deal with the world. Relevance and volition (the ability to decide something by yourself) are the two criteria for developing a positive attitude towards learning.

Relevance is about the degree to which the learning is related to the learners: who they are, what they care about, their perspectives and what they already know. When something is relevant to us it motivates us to be curious, to find out more and to challenge ourselves.

This is connected to volition, meaning that it is the learners' will and choice to learn and that learning options are about their perspectives, values, strengths and needs.

One of the slogans one hears every now and then when defining youth work is **'Not working for young people but working with young people.'** Youth work should not be about offering a programme for which young people sign up to, it should be the youth worker trying to explore, together with the young people, what the activities that relate to their interests and needs could be, and the youth worker supporting them in making their own choices in this process.

MEANING

Giving meaning is vital to the intrinsic motivation of people to learn. When we receive new information, our brains search for a place for the information to 'fit'. If there is a connection, the new information makes sense. Prior knowledge, what we already know, allows us to understand the new information. However, in order to have meaning, the new information has to be connected to something that matters to us.

Engagement and challenges are important elements for meaning when it comes to learning. When engaged with learning, the learner is active and involved.

Youth work focuses on the topics, challenges and concerns of young people and tries to put young people in charge of their own development and learning.

COMPETENCE



LEARNING CARDS

*You can find a set of learning cards on the theme of 'Understanding Meaning' on the **FOCUS** learning website.*
➔ www.focus-learning.eu

It is in people's genes to strive to be competent. We explore, reflect and change things to deal with our environment. Competence has to do with effectiveness and authenticity. We become motivated when we see that we have accomplished something, when we have evidence that we really are learning, when we understand things and see that we can do something new. Then, we have been effective.

In this context, authenticity means the connection between the learning and the learners' actual life circumstances, frames of reference and values. Learners experience that what they learn can be applied in their families, jobs and communities.

The word 'competence' in this context has a slightly different meaning than how we know it in, for example, the European context, where it is used to describe the ability to perform a certain task combining knowledge, skills and attitudes. Here, **it describes more generally the need for people to find confirmation when they have accomplished something in a successful, and for them, meaningful way.**



To summarise, people learn when they:

- Feel connected, respected and safe in the group.
- Can express themselves authentically and be vulnerable.
- Can learn something which is related to who they are and what they care about.
- Feel it is their choice to learn.
- Are engaged and actively involved in the learning.
- See the impact of their learning.
- Find out that what they learn can be transferred to their daily life.



IDENTIFYING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

IN ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES

When preparing activities or projects, the youth worker can already look for learning opportunities for the young people taking part in those activities.

The following is a list of things the youth worker can do to assist this process:

- Formulate the possible learning outcomes of the activity,
- Support the young people in becoming aware of these opportunities,
- Support the young people in setting their learning objectives,
- Focus on and plan different learning opportunities in the design of the activity,
- Formulate questions and challenges for young people,
- Develop an evaluation strategy.

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN

IN YOUTH WORK?

Research¹⁸ on the outcomes of youth work shows a wide range of attitudes and competences that young people acquire in youth work.

¹⁸ European Commission. (2014).



These include:

- Developing self-confidence and self-esteem,
- Interpersonal/communication skills,
- Empathy,
- Affective capacity (dealing with feelings/emotions),
- Dealing with new situations,
- Leadership skills,
- Working in teams,
- Planning/organising,
- Problem solving,
- Financial management,
- Performance skills,
- Digital skills.

Many more aspects could be added depending on the specific activity, e.g. learning a new language in an international youth exchange, technical skills when constructing a new sound system with a group in the youth centre, etc.



When trying to identify learning opportunities in the activity or programme you are preparing, three main areas play a role:

REASON:

What is your reason for developing this activity or programme? What are the objectives? Why do you think this is in the interest of the young people you want to work with?

OPPORTUNITIES:

What are the opportunities in the activity or programme: topic(s), activities and methods, etc.? What do you think they could learn from this activity?

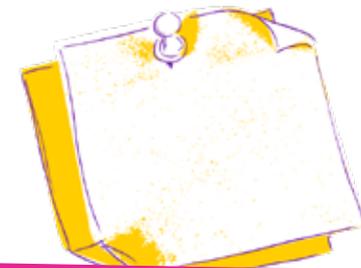
THE YOUNG PEOPLE:

What knowledge do you have about the group of young people? What are their needs, challenges, interests etc.? How do they relate to the activity or programme?



When taking a group of young people for four days into the mountains for a hiking trip, the youth worker could assume that an activity like this will have learning opportunities in areas like teamwork, self-confidence, problem solving, communication skills, dealing with unexpected situations, etc. The youth worker might also have their own objectives, e.g. creating an active group in the youth centre, motivating young people to be active in their community, raising awareness about nature, etc.

At the same time, in an activity like this, it might be that the young people learn things that the youth worker did not plan or even did not want the young people to learn. When the activity is excessively challenging, leading to frustrations, or when something is not properly reflected on, learning outcomes can be negative. These do not contribute at all to competences in teamwork or communication or self-confidence building, rather they can do the opposite. It is crucial to be prepared for elements that could have a positive as well as a negative effect on the learning process.



LEARNING POSTER

*You can find a poster that explores 'Identifying Learning Opportunities' on the **FOCUS learning website**.
➔ www.focus-learning.eu*



PUTTING AND KEEPING

LEARNING ON THE AGENDA

The link between youth work projects and learning is not always obvious. For many young people, learning is something that happens in school, not in your free time. As stated in Chapter 1, learning happens differently in youth work. Therefore, it is crucial to explain and discuss this perspective on learning with the young people. The key is to know when to start talking about learning with the young people in your group. Youth workers choose different strategies. The Time To Show Off! Research Report¹⁹ shows that some youth workers avoid using the word 'learning', especially in the beginning, arguing that hearing this word would cause their young people to run away. Youth workers explain that it reminds young people of school and the way they experience learning there, which in many cases is not a positive experience. Others consciously use the word learning from the beginning to make clear that the project involves learning.

¹⁹ Kloosterman, P. (2019).

The report makes clear that there might be tension involved when introducing the concept of learning to a group of young people. The idea that many young people tend to have about learning can be negative, that it is boring, difficult and not related to them. Many young people have the image of themselves as being 'bad learners' because they have been so told by others (teachers, parents, other young people), sometimes consistently, or they have a long experience of getting bad grades at school. It is therefore essential to broaden young peoples' perceptions of learning into something that can also be fun, about them in a constructive way, exciting and be something that has a positive impact on their lives.



'I speak about learning immediately in the first meeting I have with a group of young people. I also explain it's something else then learning in school and that I'm not a teacher but I make clear the project is about learning.'

Emil



'It's important as a youth worker to be aware of your own learning preferences because that will certainly influence how you guide young people through their learning process.'

Karmen

You can create exercises in which they look back at the things they have learnt outside school but that are essential to a young person's life. These things can help them to change their perspectives on learning. You can also engage them in conversations about their experiences in school or higher education. In a group setting this could help them to find recognition with their peers who are having similar problems and challenges. It can also help them to change their perspective of themselves as bad learners. Bad learners don't exist but, in many cases, formal education is not capable of being adjusted to people who have other/different learning preferences.



'We should definitely talk more about learning as youth workers to develop the concepts and ideas. It should be one of the main topics in the education of youth workers.'

Annamaria

It is crucial to help young people develop a perception of and an attitude towards learning in which enjoyment, curiosity, relevance and the opportunity to grow are the defining elements.

When talking about the facilitation of learning in youth work, one of the first points is to address the topic of learning with the young people. Below are some questions that can support this step:

- What is learning?
- What kinds of things have you learnt in your life?
- What and how did you learn out of school?
- In what way(s) do you learn best?
- How would you like to learn?



'I had very interesting conversations with young people by sharing their experiences, mostly quite negative, about their learning so far. Recognising that you are not the only one who struggled, felt stupid and realising that it's maybe not that you are a bad learner, helps young people.'

Paul



'There's a lot of learning going on which is only activated later and we as youth workers don't see that. We don't own the learning, the young people do. We believe in their potential.'

Dermot

For many young people it will probably be the first time that they reflect on the way they learn. In formal education you mostly follow the way the learning is planned for you. The question 'how would you like to learn?' is almost never asked. It is a difficult and complex question to answer, so don't expect the young people to have an instant answer. However, when we want 'learning' to be an important element in our youth work practice, it is crucial that young people start to think about learning and especially to become aware of their own learning. In youth work it is not about the young people following a learning plan set out by youth workers; youth work is not teaching. Young people decide for themselves what they want to learn, how they want to do it and when they want to do it. Youth workers are there to support young people in these decisions by asking questions, offering tools and showing interest and involvement. In this way, the young people are supported in developing the competences to be a self-directed learner.

Being clear about the objectives of the activity and the role of the youth worker helps the young people to understand the learning opportunities in the activity or project they are engaging in.

To get to this point, the youth worker should be asking themselves questions along the following lines:

- What is the reason for this activity or project?
- What does it offer?
- What learning opportunities could be involved in this?
- How do I, as a youth worker, understand my role in this learning process?
- What is my approach to learning?

By making the objectives and approach explicit, youth workers help the young people recognise learning opportunities.

Once the topic of 'learning' is on the agenda, it is important to keep it there. This gives the opportunity for young people to:

- Raise awareness of their learning.
- Find confirmation for their learning.
- Reflect and exchange on their learning.
- Plan further learning.



TABLE TALK

*You can find a Podcast exploring the concepts of 'Putting and Keeping Learning on the Agenda' on the **FOCUS learning website**.
➔ www.focus-learning.eu*

REFLECTION AND LEARNING

Reflection is a crucial element for learning:

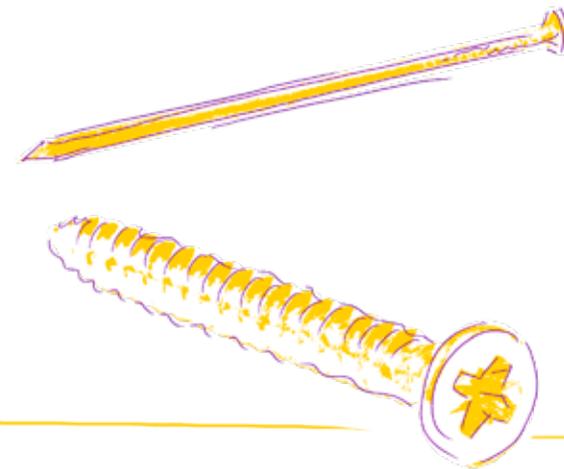
- Reflection helps you to become aware of your learning. By taking the time to step back and look back at your learning, the different steps you made and the insight you gained, you become conscious of your learning.
- Reflection helps you to be in charge of your own learning. Observing and understanding your own learning process allows you to direct your learning in the way you prefer.
- Reflection helps you to share aspects of your learning with others. Talking about your learning experiences with other people opens a great resource for receiving feedback and it can create new questions for you. Sharing the successes and challenges creates a means of support.
- Reflection helps to plan further learning. Having an insight into your own learning, as well into the process, allows you to make the next steps in a conscious way.



*'Youth work aims to develop in young people the critical skills of reflection, deliberation and rational judgement. It is a process that helps young people to develop the capacity to make sense of their experiences, themselves and their lives in the world.'*²⁰

²⁰ Young, K. (2006).

Some types of learning are easier to reflect on than others. Learning how to build a table will probably take some time and wood, but it can be achieved through concrete steps. During the process, one reflects on the different steps and might discover that it is better to use screws instead of nails, that equal lengths for the legs is essential, that it is important to find the most appropriate wood, etc. These are fairly simple reflections that happen in many things learned throughout life. It is quite human to reflect in order to do better next time. It is also not the kind of reflection that takes a lot of time; it happens almost automatically.



When looking at the kind of learning young people in youth work experience, this is often something different and more complex. It includes things like personal development, social skills, personal awareness, self-assurance, etc. Things that are not learned in a few simple steps in a limited time frame with a concrete tangible result. We cannot just tick these things off, like 'now I'm totally self-aware!' or 'self-assurance: done!'

When learning is about our own behaviour, attitudes, how we relate to others, developing our personal goals in life, etc., it is a learning process that goes on and on – lifelong! It is a process in which one takes steps forward, sometimes falling backwards, and, as a result, in which new questions and new goals develop. It is also more difficult to identify the exact learning moments when thinking about learning related to personal development. It happens in situations that are often not planned. It is not as if there is one hour about ‘being more assertive’ on the programme, and then young people know how to be more assertive. In reality the young people might find themselves in different situations – during the activity, while having a break, while chilling with others in the evening, etc. It is in these moments where they will experience being more assertive and relate that moment to a group activity they had had previously, or a talk with a youth worker from a few days ago.

Sometimes the learning is planned and sometimes it just happens, and sometimes the learning may be realised in that very moment and sometimes this happens later. This relates to both informal and non-formal learning (see Chapter 1, ‘Exploring Learning in Youth Work’). The youth worker can play a role in transferring the informal learning experience (a situation during an evening at the bar) into non-formal learning (reflecting on the experience with other young people).

All this makes the reflection more complex but, at the same time, it is essential for learning. It helps not only to be aware of what has been learnt, but also of how the learning took place. On the one hand, reflection helps the young person to record the learning – to give words to it – and on the other hand, it raises awareness of the learning process they are a part of and thus supports them in further planning the next direction(s) for their learning.



VIDEO

*You can find a short video about
'Reflection and Learning' on the
FOCUS learning website.
➔ www.focus-learning.eu*

DIFFERENT FORMS OF REFLECTION

Reflection can be done in many ways. When planning activities, projects or programmes it is important to plan time for reflection, but also to look for a variety of methods and tools that can help with reflection, for example from 'Youthpass Unfolded' 2012.²¹

²¹ Kloosterman, P., Markovic, D., and Ratto-Nielsen, J. (2012).

GROUP REFLECTION

Sharing experiences, insights, questions and doubts together with peers is mentioned by young people as being valuable for recognising learning moments. For many of them it is often the first time that they can express themselves with peers about their personal questions, doubts and successes. An important element here is also to find recognition with other people who have experienced similar challenges. A crucial role for the youth worker is to come up with relevant questions and methods that help the young people to reflect.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Some young people love individual reflection, while for others it is very challenging to be on your own and to reflect on the process you are in. During youth work projects some young people become addicted to writing in their diary, and for them this is a great way to take a moment for themselves to look back and think about the experiences they have had – and make notes of this. Apart from diary writing, there are also other creative methods that can guide reflection: mind maps, bullet points, doodles, notes, poems, key words, word associations, etc. Supportive questions offered by the youth worker will also help.

ONE-TO-ONE TALKS

WITH THE YOUTH WORKER

Although time-consuming, a personal talk with the youth worker is mostly highly appreciated by young people. The special relationship invites young people to be open about the process they are in. Again, the correct questions are important to help the young person express themselves.

NOT ONLY TALKING

Although for many young people the opportunity to speak about their feelings and experiences is of high value, it would also help to use a variety of methods which use other senses for reflection. Creating something with a reflective question in mind often gives new perspectives and helps those young people who don't feel comfortable with speaking. Creating a statue, a drawing, a sculpture, a song, a dance or a collage can support the process of reflection really well.

It is particularly important to allow sufficient time and space for reflection in the activities being conducted with the young people. Besides setting aside a specific time, it is essential to offer tools, methods and questions to help young people reflect. By providing time, space and resources, youth workers underline the importance of reflection as part of the learning process. Moreover, in addition to providing time for reflection, it would also make sense to ask young people to share their reflection experiences – to reflect on reflection, if you like. This may sound a bit over the top, but considering that, for many young people, reflecting regularly is likely to be something completely new, it helps to create a space for exchanging opinions about it, overcoming challenges and for receiving tips and ideas from others. In this way, learning will always be on the agenda.



SEEING THE POTENTIAL OF THE LEARNERS

For many young people, reflection and self-assessment is especially difficult because they require increased introspection. Reflecting on oneself and seeing one's strengths and weaknesses requires the ability to look at oneself from a distance, not to mention overcoming the difficulty to say about oneself, 'I'm good (or not so good) at that!'

As a **youth worker**, commenting on what you **observe in terms of behaviour and attitudes** can help young people **recognise skills, talents and/or attitudes** they are not aware of or not sure about. It requires good observation skills and the **feedback** provided **should be descriptive** rather than judgmental. For instance:

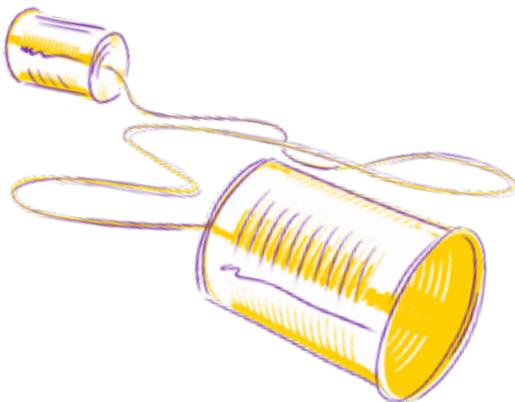


'I think the role you took here was quite important for the others in the group; you took quite a leading role there.'

'To me, it looked like you really enjoyed organising that activity.'

'I think you are really in your element when you do that.'

'I have the feeling you enjoy doing much more than talking.'



These are all ways to start a conversation about competences and attitudes which can help young people to reflect on themselves and gain more self-awareness.



Everybody has needs and passions. Many of these needs and passions are hidden and unspoken. Sadly, too often, this passion is not recognised or taken seriously in our education system. Passion is often seen as strange, silly or is put in a box of dreams. However, passion is probably one of the most important driving forces for learning. A youth worker who is able to recognise this passion can help the learner to (re)connect with them (see also Robinson 2013).



Recognising the potential of learners also involves **recognising the different ways in which people learn**, and realising that there is more than one way to learn successfully. Each path provides different opportunities. This is also true for reflection. For some people, sitting on their own and writing does not work at all; it is just not their thing. They may benefit much more from talking to others, maybe while out on a walk or even when listening to music together. So, as a facilitator of learning, the youth worker should allow different ways of doing things and not become annoyed if, when the time comes for individual writing, some of the young people start doing something completely different.



LEARNING CARDS

*You can find a set of learning cards on the theme of 'Seeing the Potential of the Learners' on the **FOCUS learning website**.*

➔ www.focus-learning.eu



CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

What makes a good social climate for learning? What is it that creates the conditions that encourage people to be open for change, to something 'new', to a 'challenge' and for taking initiative and becoming active? Certainly, there is no standard recipe for this. As people learn in different ways, they will have different circumstances and contexts that stimulate their learning. A social climate for learning should facilitate different styles and needs.

As part of a long-term project on learning to learn in international youth work, Chisholm et al. (2010) suggest some indicators that could constitute a constructive social climate for learning.



'To create a safe space takes time. It's about intimacy, humour, the feeling that you own the place. The kids need the feeling that this is their place, a space they created.'

Karmen

Learning is supported by:

- a diverse group of learners;
- transparency of learning objectives, planned methodology and learning process;
- confidentiality that learners can take trust in;
- safe learning spaces allowing for trial and error and learning without fear;
- trust, respect and appreciation between and among educators and learners;
- educators pro-actively accepting, while not abusing, their function as role models;
- a mutual rewarding reciprocal partnership between educators and learners;



'For me it's super important to have a space and culture where I can be myself, where I can be authentic.'

Annamaria



'Your own presence as youth worker is also important. I use a lot of humour but I also show my own weaknesses and stupidities, my own vulnerability.'

Emil



'A safe place should also be a space where different opinions are allowed, where there can be conflicts. Conflicts that then should be transferred to learning.'

Annamaria



'I think there are different levels of safety. You can feel very safe in a group in which everybody is very nice and friendly to each other. But when there is also the possibility to disagree, to be different... that's maybe a higher level of safety.'

Paul

- clearly defined roles of educators and learners;
- a supportive and empowering role of educators/youth workers;
- group norms that are openly negotiable, but also binding once negotiated;
- structures and relations allowing educators and learners to intervene and engage without feeling restrained by time pressure, group size or programme setting;
- openness about and appreciation for questioning and changing roles, functions, hierarchies and power relations, allowing for and facilitating responsibility shifts.²²



'When there is a conflict or disagreement you as a youth worker have to be able to bring it to a good end. Not that you have to give the solution but there need to be a kind of emotional release.'

Karmen

²² Chisholm, L., Fennes, H., Karsten, A., and Reich, K. (2010).

Diversity, openness, safety and mutual support are crucial elements here. Learners should be able to show themselves and their differences, and this diversity needs to be appreciated. Human expression on all dimensions – intellectual, creative, emotional and spiritual – should be encouraged and appreciated as a contribution to the learning process. Openness is essential for creating a climate in which young people can ask the questions they have, express their doubts, ask for support and offer their support to others. Meanwhile, trying out new things, making mistakes and being vulnerable requires a high level of safety in a group. The awareness of the importance of mutual support in order to learn in the group is also essential.



'A youth work environment is so unique. There you can have tension, challenges but in the end you can transfer that into release, into fun and into learning.'

Dermot

CREATING TOGETHER

A youth worker cannot create a social climate on their own, but needs the cooperation of the group of young people for this. It should be a shared responsibility of young people and the youth worker to create and maintain a social climate that supports learning. The role of the youth worker is to initiate the conversation and to emphasise the importance of having a climate in the group that allows all members to learn. By introducing the different elements that contribute to a constructive social climate, the awareness and motivation of the young people to build on this together can be raised – finding out together what elements will help the group to work and learn together. This can result in a set of rules or principles decided on by the group.



'Especially when it comes to digital learning environments with young people we need to be very attentive when it comes to the topic of safety.'
Dermot: 'As social educators we have to find out what is our role in digital spaces, how do we equip young people to manage those spaces and how to have an impact in those spaces.'

Paul

The youth worker needs to see and use the opportunities that present themselves in order to build a constructive social climate. A simple activity like going to a concert with a group of young people could just be about planning the trip and buying the tickets, however, it is also an opportunity to start conversations with questions like 'What was the first concert you went to?', 'With whom did you go?', 'How was it, what made it special?', 'What is your favourite music?', 'How important is music in your life and in what way?', etc. Having these kinds of conversations can help to set the tone and a climate which opens up other conversations.

The essential point is that the social climate genuinely contributes to learning. Having an atmosphere in a group that does not create openness, safety and mutual support ruins every educational activity. Acknowledging the importance of this means giving appropriate time and space to building group relationships and identity, allowing the young people to get to know each other and show themselves in all their diversity, and using methods and exercises that involve different human dimensions and senses. This requires time, energy and attention, but is crucial in building and maintaining an environment that allows the young people to grow, flourish and learn. The role of the youth worker is to keep the conversation about how young people act and feel as part of the group going.

Many exercises exist to help groups develop a constructive social climate. The challenge is to find a combination of exercises and activities that tackle the different dimensions: safety, openness, supporting each other, diversity, etc.



TABLE TALK

*You can find a Podcast exploring the concepts of 'Creating a Learning Environment' on the **FOCUS learning website**.*

➔ www.focus-learning.eu

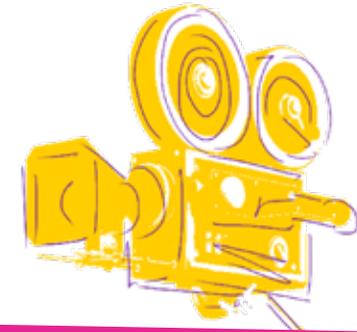


DEALING WITH AMBIGUITY AND CHANGE

Learning can lead to new insights, other perspectives, new questions, self-questioning, questioning the world around you, exploring new attitudes and behaviours and other changes in life. This doesn't always go smoothly and easily. These situations can lead to confusion and uncertainty. You might find that the questions you have don't only have one answer, but many. This in turn could lead to another question, maybe a better one, but still without an answer. You could come to the conclusion that a certain behaviour of yours doesn't help you. How should you act in another way that suits you better? How do you do that?

Learning sometimes leads to ambiguity, the awareness that something can have more than one meaning, that there are different answers to a question and that outcomes can be uncertain. Ambiguity is not only something you encounter when learning. With the enormous amount of information people are confronted with nowadays, finding the 'right' answer is more difficult than ever. The ability to deal with ambiguity becomes more and more important.

Learning can lead to change. You will find many people who will tell you that their youth work experiences changed their lives. Due to experiences they had and insights they received, they decided to take new steps or go in new directions. But there will also be people who went through the same experiences and didn't make those changes. Taking new steps and finding new directions do not come just like that. Courage, perseverance and the ability to deal with uncertainty are needed. Also, we can say that dealing with change is not something you only come across when learning. We live in an era where change is happening faster than ever. You had better be prepared!



VIDEO

*You can find a short video about 'Dealing with Ambiguity and Change' on the **FOCUS** learning website.*
➤ www.focus-learning.eu

FOUR ELEMENTS OF AMBIGUITY AND CHANGE

Dealing with ambiguity and change is a crucial competence in learning. Below, the **four main elements** for dealing with ambiguity and change are explained:

1.

HAVING AN OPEN ATTITUDE *towards change*

People often have an initial resistance towards change. It feels safer the way it is now. Change can result in fear. Curiosity for the new, a desire for innovation and an open mind are needed to be able to deal with change.

2.

TOLERATING SITUATIONS *where you are not able to implement your own ideas and expectations*

The ability to see that there are other solutions is really important. It is also necessary to be able to see that other people react from their own realities and have their own answers, and that sometimes you have to let go of ideas or things.

3.

THE ABILITY TO CRITICALLY REFLECTION AND DISTANCE YOURSELF

*from your own perceptions and stereotypical
constructions of reality*

Be aware that your perceptions of this world are formed by your education, your social environment and your culture, and at the same time accept that this is just one understanding of the world. Realise that other perceptions can question and broaden yours.

An open climate in a group can help to develop awareness around ambiguity and change amongst the young people and create the opportunity to speak about challenges and chances when change and ambiguity are experienced. For the youth worker it is important to be attentive when these situations arise and to discuss feelings and emotions with the group and/or individual young person.

4.

ABILITY TO TAKE ON NEW ROLES

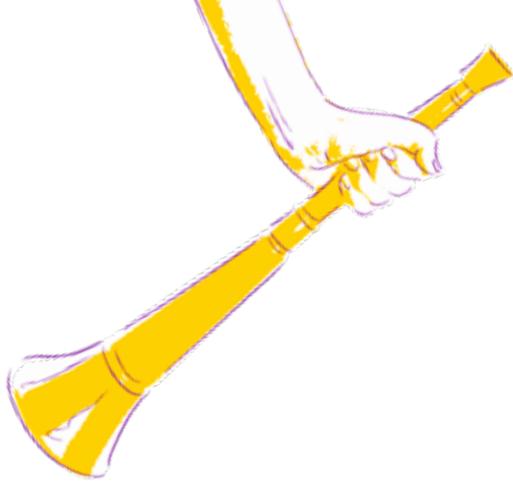
New situations require new attitudes and behaviour and the understanding and ability to taking on new roles.

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP

(See also Chapter 2, 'The Youth Worker as a Developer of Relationships with Young People')



Youth work is not only about groups of young people. The individual relationship between a youth worker and a young person is an essential part of youth work. A trusting relationship with the youth worker can be of great value for young peoples' development and growth. Some guidelines to building a supportive relationship are described below (Klomp et al., 2002).



SHOW INVOLVEMENT

The first steps on the road to taking care of their own learning can feel insecure and lonely for young people. Somebody who walks the journey with you, listens to you and supports you can be of great value, although in the end it is the responsibility of the learner to decide when and why they need the support of the youth worker. This role is especially useful in the beginning when the youth work could be much more pro-active. A regular initiative from the youth worker to show their involvement and interest would surely have a motivating effect on the young person's learning.

CONFIRMING AND GIVING

(Words to Success and Steps Made (Making Change Explicit))

Being aware of new skills acquired, new insights gained and new behaviour expressed is crucial when it comes to recognising learning. In youth work projects, young people often do tasks for the first time, find themselves in new situations and have to find new solutions for the challenges they come across. Taking time to explicitly look at the steps taken contributes to the awareness of the learning that is there and contributes to self-esteem. Sometimes it can even help to emphasise the success of change. Many young people have the tendency to see their behaviour as 'not important' or even negative. If this is the case, it is important to re-label the negative observations that they make (see also Chapter 4, 'Transferring Learning').





ASSISTING IN STRUCTURING

(Wishes, Needs and Aims)

For many young people, expressing their needs and formulating their aims is a difficult thing to do. There might even be a risk in pushing young people too much into defining their learning objectives, as many learners don't function that way. However, it is important to support young people in taking at least some steps here to define a direction and to have some ideas about where to go.

For a lot of young people, it might not be useful to ask them directly for their learning objectives. That is likely to block them. Having a more general exchange about how they see their future and what their wishes and needs are can help to set a direction. The role of the youth worker in this case is to try and give some structure to this and to make connections where possible.

Setting realistic learning objectives is another challenge. Young people often have a tendency to set high aims for themselves, which are unrealistic or only reachable in the long-term. When this happens, the young person can find themselves in a position where they feel disappointed and could lose their motivation. The youth worker could encourage the young person to set short-term and easily achievable aims. If a young person realises that they have achieved an aim that they set for themselves, they will be more motivated to go on.



STIMULATING NETWORKING

(Linking to Others)

Learning is mostly not a solo task. The value of peers in learning is high. Cooperation between young people in their learning journeys should be encouraged as much as possible. The youth worker can play an important role in bringing together learners with similar objectives, topics, interests or styles of learning.

CONFRONTING

People can have very fixed ideas about themselves. Often, this self-perception limits them because they have a negative perception of themselves and this prevents different options being seen or tried. Offering feedback (as mentioned above), confirming successes and pointing out a young person's potential can help them develop a broader view of their possibilities. This does not only apply to the one-to-one contact between the youth worker and the individual young person, but also to creating an appropriate atmosphere in the group. A group that develops an attitude that allows members to give words to potential and strengths in others will certainly contribute a lot to broadening self-perception and increasing self-esteem. The next step in this situation is

to create enough safety within the group so that the young people can challenge each other, ask critical questions and agree to disagree.

Sometimes it also helps when the youth worker holds up a mirror to the young person, confronting them about a particular unhealthy behaviour and making it clear that certain attitudes or actions have negative consequences. This can only work when the relationship between the young person and the youth worker has developed sufficiently to allow for this. Confrontations can have a positive effect when the young person knows they are being supported.

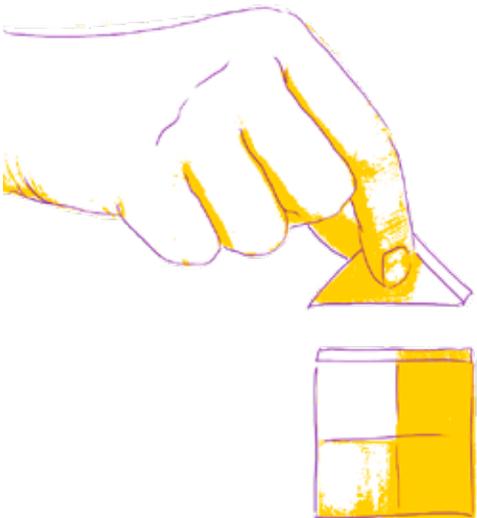


TO OFFER IDEAS AND TIPS

(for Resources, Tools and Methods)

The youth worker can give the young people tips, ideas and suggestions to support their learning. However, it is good to be aware of the risks involved in taking the steering wheel in the learning process. It is important to maintain a balance between giving tips and preserving the young persons' responsibility for their own learning. But, of course, sharing experiences with young people can be very valuable.

The youth worker can support young people in their learning by offering exercises, documents, people, websites, apps and places which might help them take further steps.



LEARNING CARDS

*You can find a set of learning cards on the theme of 'Creating a Supportive Relationship' on the **FOCUS** learning website.*

➔ www.focus-learning.eu



ASKING SUPPORTIVE QUESTIONS

(See also Chapter 2, 'The Youth Worker as a Developer of Relationships with Young People')

In an interview for research on the quality of youth work, a youth worker said:

*Asking good questions is according to me the most crucial competence of a youth worker ... and it's so damn difficult!*²³

²³ Kloosterman, P. (2019).



The existence of a 'top 10 questions to ask young people' list to make this all happen would be nice. Unfortunately, no such list exists. Asking questions is about much more than the questions as such. It involves the **situation** in which they are asked, the **attitude** of the youth worker, the **relationship** between the youth worker and the **young person** and the **way** the questions are **asked**.



LEARNING CARDS

*You can find a set of learning cards on the theme of 'Asking Supportive Questions' on the **FOCUS learning website**.*

➔ www.focus-learning.eu



Perhaps the most important part of 'good' questioning is the genuine and sincere interest that the youth worker has and shows to the young person. The most wonderfully formulated question will not work when the youth worker doesn't show **involvement** and **curiosity** in the person to whom the question is being asked. In many cases, being sincerely interested in the young person will help towards asking the correct questions since these will come naturally from the curiosity the youth worker has about the person.

There is another side to this. Being involved and interested in the young person might come with the risk that the youth worker, through their questions, ends up guiding the young person in a direction that that the youth worker sees as a good solution for a certain situation or challenge. This will not help the young person find their own insights and understanding. The intention of the questions has to be clear; they are **to support young people in finding their own responses**.

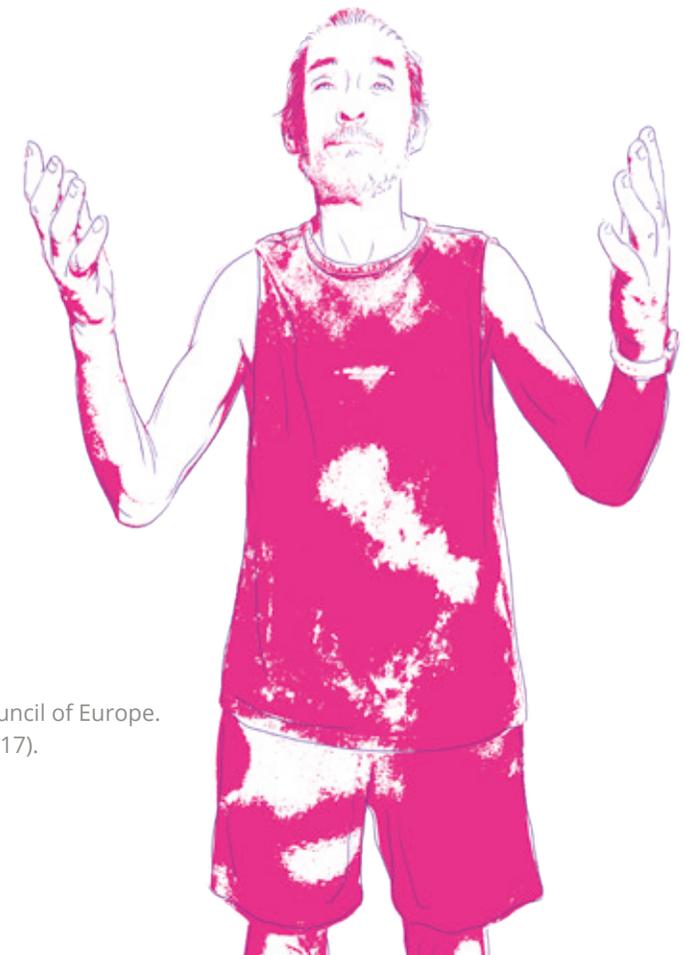
Listening is crucial when asking questions. This may sound obvious, but it may be quite challenging. Many young people, especially at the beginning of the process, are used to listening and expect the youth worker to talk. A crucial element for the youth worker, however, is to listen carefully and attentively to what the young person says. Listening is vital to discovering and recognising any specific needs, blocks and passions the young person might have. Too often we come up with immediate answers and solutions when instead we should be listening and asking the questions that support the young people – the learners – in coming up with their own solutions. Try to measure the amount of time that you speak and the time the young person speaks; do this during an individual talk. This will show you if you are on the right track.

INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

(See also Chapter 2, 'The Youth Worker as a Guide to and Facilitator of Young People's Learning')

'Youth work is ... facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision making.'²⁴

One of the objectives of the European Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme is promoting participation in democratic life. In many national youth policies, you will find the participation of young people as an important element in youth work. Youth work is, on the one hand, a place where young people practice competences like 'taking initiatives', 'working together', 'putting ideas into action' and all kinds of other dimensions of participation. This is achieved through their involvement in the activities and by shaping the youth work they are engaged in - 'youth work for, with and by young people'. On the other hand, youth work can be the place to start from, to reach out to the outside world and have the voice of young people



²⁴ Council of Europe. (2017).

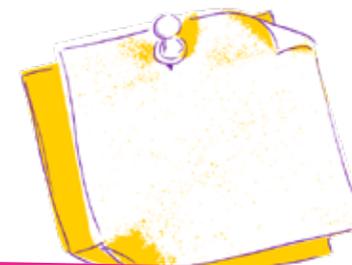
heard in society. Youth work often functions as the starting point for interest groups of young people fighting for specific rights, facilities or themes in their local community and, in this way, putting their civic engagement into practice.

Many youth workers find themselves in a position in which they are the organisers of activities for young people. Based on their own assumptions, knowledge and contacts, they have an impression of what young people would like to do and, from this, they organise the activity for the young people. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. In this way, young people are 'consumers of youth work'. The challenge is how to change this into a situation in which young people are involved, take the lead and feel responsible for the activities and their own learning.

Below are two models that can be of help in analysing the state of the art of participation and youth involvement in youth organisations and in developing strategies to increase participation and involvement.

The first is the '**Ladder of Participation**', a model developed by Roger Hart (1992), in which he identifies eight levels of (children's) participation. It has been developed in a way that pushes us to think more closely about the nature and purpose of children's (young peoples') participation in community activities.

The second is from John Huskins from 1995 and is officially titled the '**Youth Work Curriculum Development Model**'. It has seven stages and is about involving young people.²⁵ The risks associated with these kinds of step-by-step models is that they are linear-based and that human development generally doesn't work that way. In the Huskins model, for example, we might begin at stage 4 and at a later moment fall back from stage 6 to stage 3. Still, the different stages can help us define the different elements that play a role when developing a strategy to involve young people in youth work.

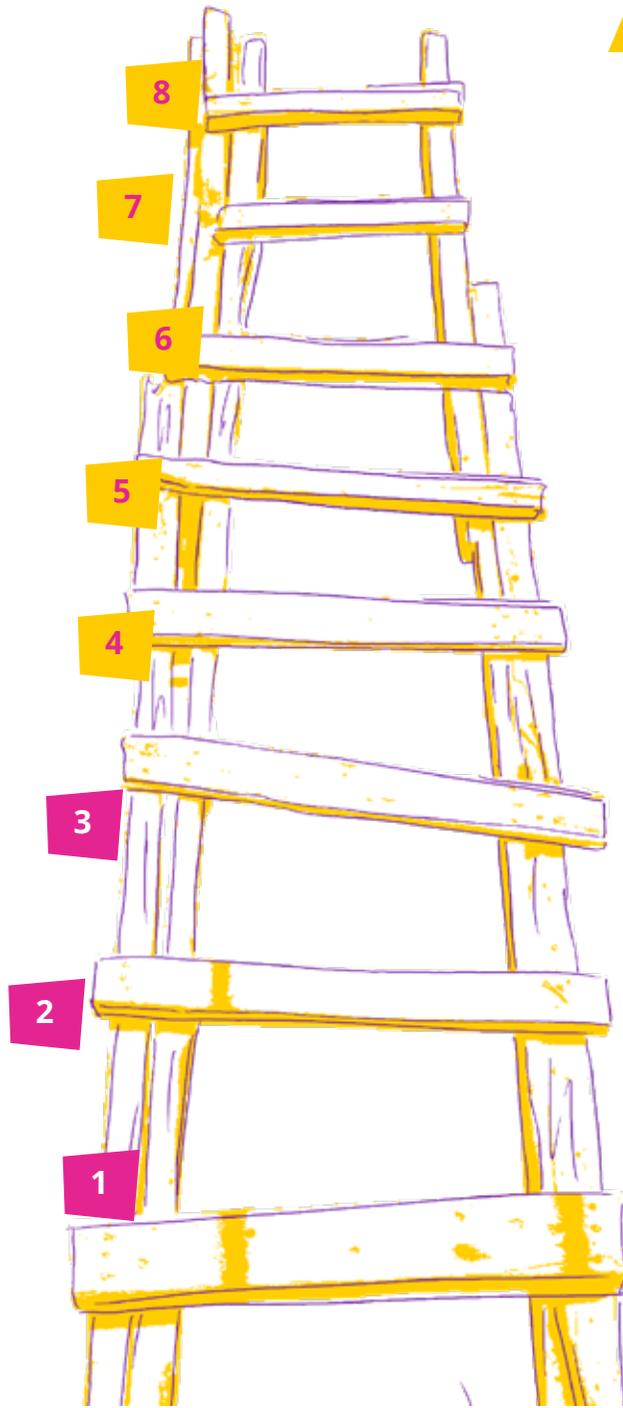


LEARNING POSTER

*You can find a poster that explores the 'Ladder of Participation' on the **FOCUS learning website**.
➔ www.focus-learning.eu*

²⁵ Huskins, J. (2014).

ROGER HART'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION



RUNG 8 - YOUTH INITIATED SHARED DECISIONS WITH ADULTS

Youth-led activities, in which decision making is shared between youth and adults working as equal partners.

RUNG 7 - YOUTH INITIATED AND DIRECTED

Youth-led activities, with little input from adults.

RUNG 6 - ADULT-INITIATED SHARED DECISIONS WITH YOUTH

Adult-led activities, in which decision making is shared with youth.

RUNG 5 - CONSULTED AND INFORMED

Adult-led activities, in which youth are consulted and informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of adult decisions.

RUNG 4 - ASSIGNED, BUT INFORMED

Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, decision-making process, and have a role.

RUNG 3 - TOKENISM

Adult-led activities, in which youth may be consulted with the minimal opportunities for feedback.

RUNG 2 - DECORATION

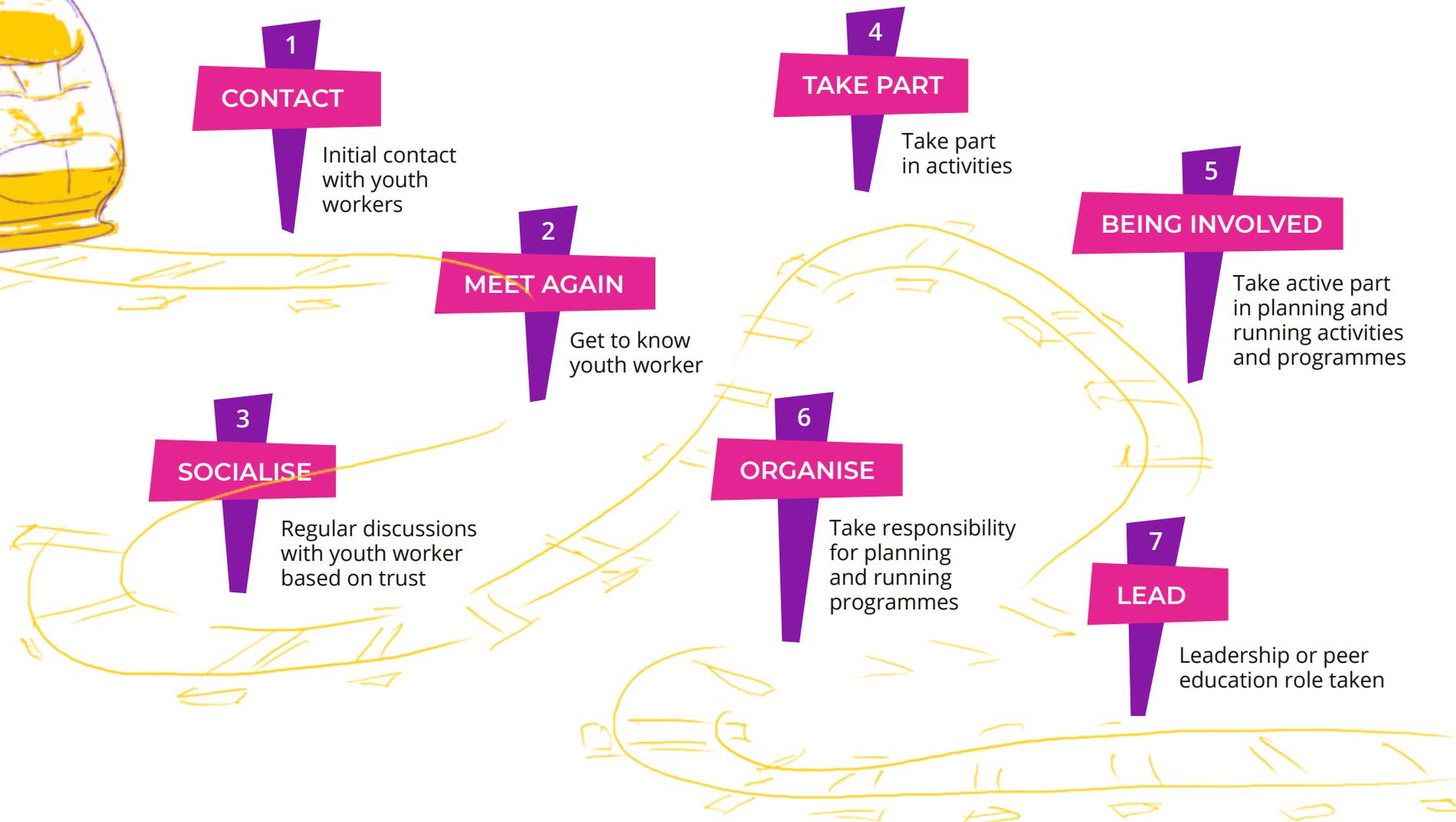
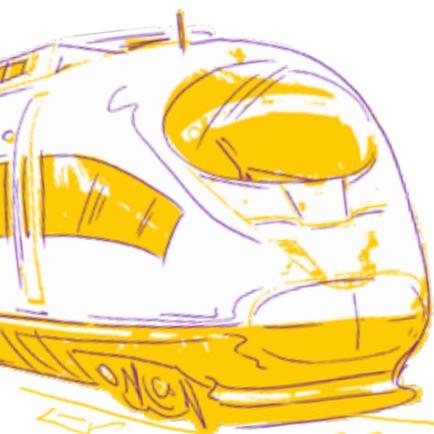
Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, but have no input in how they are planned.

RUNG 1 - MANIPULATION

Adult-led activities, in which youth do as directed without understanding of the purpose for the activities.

JOHN HUSKIN'S YOUTH WORK

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT MODEL



Below is an exploration of the seven stages of Huskins' model with a focus on the aspect of learning in youth work that we can define through the different steps/elements.

1.

CONTACT

Young people get a vague picture of what youth work represents: what they can do there, what the different activities are, who is who, a first meeting with the youth worker.

2.

MEET AGAIN

This includes the first steps in building a relationship, both between the individual and youth worker as well as between the young people. The creation of a social climate for learning begins.

3.

SOCIALISE

Stage 3 involves further group building. The youth worker can offer activities in which the different dimensions of a group climate are tackled. The first talks on potential topics of learning can take place. The young people are encouraged to share experiences while trying to broaden their perception of 'learning'. The first talks about young people's needs and wishes take place.

4.

TAKE PART

The youth worker takes the first initiative in organising activities based on the expressed needs/wishes of the young people. The youth worker tries to involve the young people by giving them specific tasks. After the activities, the youth worker focuses on the topic of learning: 'Did you do something new?', 'Did you learn from that?', 'How did you learn?', 'Did you learn from others?' Here, learning is on the agenda.

5

BEING INVOLVED

Young people are invited to take on responsibilities, to initiate their own activities and to work in groups to run the activities. The youth worker takes a step back but is available for support, both for the group as well as for the individuals. The youth worker keeps the topic of 'learning' and the topic of 'social climate' on the agenda and offers moments and tools for reflection.

6

ORGANISE

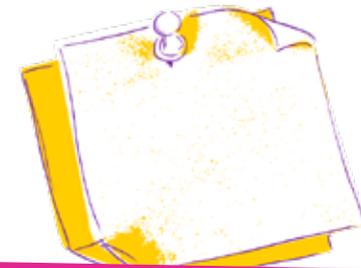
Young people take more and more responsibility for their own ideas and for developing activities. The youth worker is still there when support is needed but avoids giving solutions to the challenges the young people meet and instead asks questions to support them in finding their own answers. The responsibility to keep reflecting and to keep learning on the agenda is shared between the young people and youth workers.

7

LEAD

Young people take full responsibility for their activities and set their own (learning) objectives. The youth worker follows the process from a distance.

As noted above, there will probably be no group of young people that follows exactly these steps. A youth worker might be confronted with a highly motivated group that has already existed for a long time and sees youth work as an opportunity to realise a plan. They might enter at stage 6 but need the youth worker to introduce the topic of learning as part of their project. In some groups, personal problems might play a large role, which needs to first be dealt with before the young people are ready for learning. Nevertheless, the seven stages can help youth workers identify where young people are in their development and what the next steps to support them could be.



LEARNING POSTER

*You can find a poster that explores the 'Youth Work Curriculum Development Model' on the **FOCUS learning** website. ➔ www.focus-learning.eu*

SUMMARY

When youth workers want to give young people the opportunity to learn in youth work, they have to support them in developing their own learning paths and strategies, i.e. the facilitation of learning.

The assumption is that youth work offers many learning opportunities to young people and that learning is an essential part of youth work that needs proper preparation in order to increase the potential for learning, to create a proper learning environment, to be aware of learning opportunities, to raise an awareness of learning and to profit as much as possible from the environment, resources and circumstances.

In order to create the best conditions for learning, it is important to find out what makes people learn, what triggers them and what motivates them.

When preparing activities, the youth worker can already start looking for the learning opportunities that might be there for the young people involved. When identifying learning opportunities, three main elements play a role: the objective of the activity, the opportunities provided by the activity and the knowledge the youth worker has about the group of young people.



It is essential to broaden young peoples' perceptions of learning into something that can be fun, that is about them, that is exciting and has a positive impact on their lives. Therefore, the topic of learning should be on the agenda and remain there throughout the youth work.

Reflection is a crucial element for learning. When looking at the kind of learning young people in youth work experience, it is often learning about personal development, social skills, personal awareness, self-assurance, etc. These are things that are not learned in a few simple steps within a limited time frame. This learning is a process that goes on and on, it is lifelong. This makes reflection more complex, but at the same time is essential for learning. On the one hand, reflection helps to record the learning, to give words and identity to it, while on the other hand, it helps the young person to plan how to carry on learning.

What is it that creates the conditions that encourage people to be open to change, to something 'new', to 'challenges' and to taking the initiative and becoming active? Creating a supportive learning environment is an important element in making learning happen.

The individual relationship between a youth worker and a young person is an essential part of youth work. A trusting relationship with the youth worker can be of great value to the young person's development and growth.

One of the most important tasks of the youth worker is to involve, invite and empower young people to take responsibility for their lives and their communities.



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GLOSSARY

The following definitions and explanations are taken from the EU-CoE Youth Partnership's Glossary on youth. The text has been shortened in some instances.

FORMAL EDUCATION

UNESCO defines an education programme as a coherent set or sequence of educational activities or communication designed and organised to achieve pre-determined learning objectives or accomplish a specific set of educational tasks over a sustained period. Objectives encompass improving knowledge, skills and competencies within any personal, civic, social and/or employment-related context. Learning objectives are typically linked to the purpose of preparing for more advanced studies and/or for an occupation, trade, or class of occupations or trades but may be related to personal development or leisure. A common characteristic of an education programme is that, upon fulfilment of learning objectives or educational tasks, successful completion is certified.

REF: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2012): International Standard Classification of Education 2011, Montreal.

INFORMAL LEARNING

Informal learning, from the learner's standpoint at least, is non-purposive learning, which takes place in everyday life contexts in the family, at work, during leisure and in the community. It does have outcomes, but these are seldom recorded, virtually never certified and are typically neither immediately visible for the learner nor do they count in themselves for education, training or employment purposes.

REF: Chisholm, L. (2005): Bridges for Recognition Cheat Sheet: Proceedings of the SALTO Bridges for Recognition: Promoting Recognition of Youth Work across Europe, Leuven-Louvain.

LIFELONG LEARNING

The European Commission has defined lifelong learning in its communication 'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality' as 'all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.'

The key features of lifelong learning include the principles that learning:

- (1) Is an integral part of life from cradle to grave.
- (2) Should be accessible to all in the forms, at the times, at the stages and in the places people want and need to learn.
- (3) Takes place across the continuum of informal, non-formal and formal education and training in all spheres of life.

REF: European Commission: Communication from the Commission, COM(2001) 678: 21.11.2001 – Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Non-formal education is any educational action that takes place outside of the formal education system. Non-formal education is an integral part of a lifelong learning concept that ensures that young people and adults acquire and maintain the skills, abilities and dispositions needed to adapt to a continuously changing environment. It can be acquired on the personal initiative of each individual through different learning activities taking place outside the formal educational system. An important part of non-formal education is carried out by non-governmental organisations involved in community and youth work.

REF: Parliamentary Assembly (1999): Report of the Committee on Culture and Education, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, document 8595: Non-formal education; Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution 1930 and Recommendation 2014 (2013): Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge.

NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Non-formal learning is a purposive, but voluntary, learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be intermittent or transitory, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects.

REF: Chisholm, L. (2005): Bridges for Recognition Cheat Sheet: Proceedings of the SALTO Bridges for Recognition: Promoting Recognition of Youth Work across Europe, Leuven-Louvain and Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Field of Youth (2011): Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe, Strasbourg.

NON-FORMAL LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Non-formal learning and education, understood as learning outside institutional contexts (out-of-school) is the key activity, but also the key competence, of youth work. Non-formal learning/education in youth work is often structured, based on learning objectives, learning time and specific learning support and it is intentional. It typically does not lead to certification, but in an increasing number of cases, certificates are delivered, leading to a better recognition of the individual learning outcome.

REF: Chisholm, L. (2005): Bridges for Recognition Cheat Sheet: Proceedings of the SALTO Bridges for Recognition: Promoting Recognition of Youth Work across Europe, Leuven-Louvain and Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Field of Youth (2011): Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe, Strasbourg.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are persons 13–30 years old. For the purposes of European youth policies this age is used both by the European Commission and Council of Europe.

REF: Council of Europe and European Commission Research Partnership: Report of the Research Seminar 'The Youth Sector and Non-formal Education/ Learning: working to make lifelong learning a reality and contributing to the Third Sector', Strasbourg 28-30, April 2004.

YOUTH WORK

Youth work is a summary expression for activities with and for young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. The main objective of youth work is to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own futures.

The general aims of youth work are the integration and inclusion of young people in society. It may also aim towards the personal and social emancipation of young people from dependency and exploitation. Youth work belongs both to the social welfare and to the educational systems. In some countries it is regulated by law and administered by state civil servants, in particular at local level. However, there is an important relation between these professional and voluntary workers, which is at times antagonistic, and at others, cooperative. The definitions of youth work are diverse.

REF: Lauritzen P. (2006): Defining youth work. Internal working paper, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

YOUTH WORKER

Youth workers are people who work with young people in a wide variety of non-formal and informal contexts, typically focusing on personal and social development through one-to-one relationships and in group-based activities. Being learning facilitators may be their main task, but it is at least as likely that youth workers take a social pedagogic or directly social work-based approach. In many cases, these roles and functions are combined with each other.

REF: Chisholm, L. (2005): Bridges for Recognition Cheat Sheet: Proceedings of the SALTO Bridges for Recognition: Promoting Recognition of Youth Work across Europe, Leuven-Louvain.

AN EXAMINATION OF LEARNING IN YOUTH WORK

FOCUS learning is resource for youth worker trainers and educators. It is the culmination of over 6 years work exploring the subject of learning in youth work. It has involved numerous members of the youth work community of practice. The **FOCUS learning** website is a resource with a large quantity of materials contained within it that can be easily accessed and used in lectures, training courses, workshop, and conferences on the subject of youth work. The resources are designed and written in such a way that they can be used for basic youth worker training and they can be used for advanced youth worker training / education. The emphasis here is that they are intended for both the nonformal education and formal education of youth workers.

THE FOLLOWING LEARNING MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE:



TABLE TALKS

You can find various dynamic podcasts with 5 experienced youth workers in lively debates about practice on the **FOCUS learning** website.

➔ www.focus-learning.eu



POSTERS

You can find numerous posters and diagrams visually exploring an overview of each topic on the **FOCUS learning** website.

➔ www.focus-learning.eu



CARD SETS

You can find several easy to use and to understand sets of learning cards exploring theories, posing questions and could be projected, downloaded and printed on:

➔ www.focus-learning.eu



VIDEOS

You can find 8 engaging videos:

- 4 with input from experts
- 4 by local youth work organisations on the

FOCUS learning website.

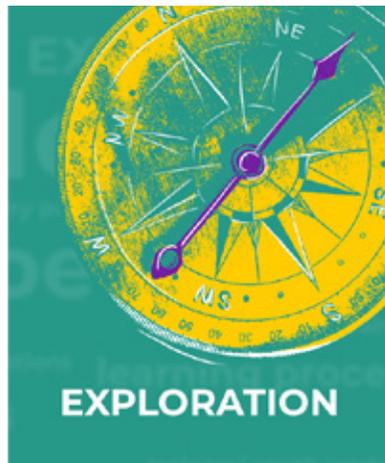
➔ www.focus-learning.eu

THE PUBLICATION

The development of youth worker competences in facilitating learning in youth work is at the heart of this publication. It is envisaged that the content of the publication and the various materials connected to it, can be used by educators and trainers who are involved in the education and training of youth workers. **FOCUS learning** and all its content should be seen as being complementary to Youthpass and the European Training Strategy Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally. The **FOCUS learning** publication is the culmination of many years of work and stands as a unique resource dedicated to learning in youth work.

THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE:

CHAPTER I



EXPLORING
Learning in Youth Work

➤ www.focus-learning.eu

CHAPTER II



*The Youth Worker
and the Learning*
ENVIRONMENT

➤ www.focus-learning.eu

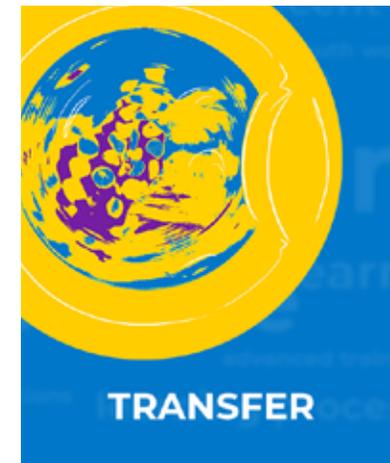
CHAPTER III



FACILITATION
of Learning

➤ www.focus-learning.eu

CHAPTER IV



TRANSFERRING
Learning

➤ www.focus-learning.eu

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THE WRITERS

The team of writers was selected for their broad spectrum of knowledge and understanding of youth work and learning – in both the formal and non-formal learning contexts.



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Natalja has a background in training, youth work and psychology. She is based in Latvia. Her story in youth work started in 2000 when she joined a youth organisation as a volunteer. Since 2003, she has been developing and running training courses in the youth field on a regular basis. She has been a trainer in the Trainers Pool of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe and the Latvian National Agency of Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme since 2006. She has training experience across Europe and beyond, and cooperates with the Salto Resource Centres, the National Agencies and different international and local organisations. She is an author of different publications, educational manuals and pedagogical resources in the youth field. On an everyday basis she leads the international 'Participation for All' (Līdzdalības platforma) organisation. Her professional interests include learning, learning motivation, self-directed and game-based learning, training of trainers, intercultural learning, social inclusion, human rights education and leadership. She believes that learning and youth work are strongly connected and that non-formal education has an incredible power to support people in building their lives and shaping communities.



NORA FURLONG

Nora is a freelance youth worker, trainer and educator based in the South East region of Ireland. She is passionate about the role of youth work and non-formal learning in making a positive change in the lives of young people, communities and society at large. She has a particular interest in areas of wellbeing, resilience, environmental sustainability and lots, lots more. Creative approaches lie at the core of her practice provoking curiosity, critical thinking, learning and action for healthier, kinder and more inclusive communities. Nora is a lecturer with the School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork. She is part of the Léargas (Irish National Agency) Trainers Pool. Nora maintains her practice with young people on a voluntary basis. She strongly believes that her work with young people informs her teaching and training, and vice versa.



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With a background as a youth worker from the UK, Nik is a trainer of trainers, youth workers, leaders, volunteers and activists in the European youth field. He is a full-time freelance trainer, writer and editor. He develops educational games, activities, theories and approaches related to the youth field in the context of non-formal learning. He is regularly employed with the youth sectors of both the European Union and the Council of Europe, although he primarily works with locally based youth NGOs across Europe. His work focuses on a broad spectrum of subject areas including human rights, peace building, combatting hate speech, exploring issues of right-wing populism, extremism and radicalisation, work with Roma young people, gender issues, refugees, digital training and youth work development at the European level.



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Paul is a freelance trainer, writer and researcher based in the south of Italy. He has been and still is involved in training courses for trainers, youth workers, teachers and policy makers. He is a member of the Youthpass Advisory Group, responsible for the implementation of the Youthpass in the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme. He has been involved in different research projects focusing on learning to learn and self-directed learning in youth work and training. In the last 15 years he has predominantly focused on his passion: the topic of learning to learn and self-directed learning.

THE PARTNERS



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