

**SUP**porting Problem-solving  
mentalities in lifelOng  
leaRning for Trainers |  
**SUPPORT**

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**Intellectual Output 2**

**Learning Scenarios for  
Retention**

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## Project Partners

### Coordinator



### Partners



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## Introduction

Problem solving is the process of identifying a problem, developing possible solution paths, and taking the appropriate course of action. The European Commission has identified problem solving, and the ability to solve problems and work collaboratively as a main indicator of the transversal skills to be acquired as part of the key competences.

It is the view of the “SUPport of Problem-solving mentality in lifelOng leaRning for Trainers” SUPPORT consortium that adult learning consists of an everlasting process of problem-posing and problem-solving, especially in the case of dealing with persons with low level of skills or qualifications where the learning environment is not only challenged by the knowledge to be acquired but has to deal with a variety of existing preconceptions, social exclusion, stereotypes, language barriers, cultural limitations and others.

Retention as a concept is key for exploring and maintaining a learning environment that strives to overcome challenges and foster problem-solving mentalities. In the Learning Scenarios that you can briefly explore below we have tackled multiple challenges that either the educators or the learners face in terms of retaining interest and enhancing their optimal level of advancement.

The full Learning Scenarios are available in English and can be found in the **SUPPORTing Trainers Platform** of our website <https://supportae.eu>

## Identifying the needs of the Learners for Retaining Interest in Learning

In order to construct the Learning Scenarios for Retaining learners attention and interest the partnership carried out a series of focus groups with learners in order to identify the main indications in need of tackling therein.

The identified indicators can be seen categorized below.

### What Are the main challenges that learners face when it comes to retaining attention?

- ✓ Maintain a constant level of frequency
- ✓ What they learn must be relevant to their needs (e.g. work).
- ✓ Lack of planning and personal disorientation

### What is Missing?

- ✓ There are no reference persons/facilities that accompany the learner in a preliminary way towards a thorough knowledge of himself/herself.
- ✓ To bring out in learners the desire/need to learn as a value in its own right and not as a means of obtaining a job or residence permit
- ✓ A contextual analysis of their needs updated over time and according to their time.

### What could we do to support the educators in identifying and resolving these challenges?

- ✓ Creating tools/supports to orient learners towards their skills and consequently their training needs and desires.
- ✓ Praise the learners for each intermediate goal achieved. This will encourage them to continue to work at it, become better at it and feel rewarded and strengthen their self-esteem. The sense of self-efficacy has a great influence on the choices and commitment made by the learner. It affects people's beliefs about their ability to achieve a goal.
- ✓ Follow an agile approach i.e. an adaptive approach where the final learning objective is split into many small objectives (Milestones) to be achieved. For each of these objectives the educator and the learner plan the actions to be taken. The learner in an individual way and/or in comparison with the educator/teacher evaluates each process carried out (milestone achieved) from the point of view of skills acquired and personal satisfaction achieved.

## Identifying the needs of the Educators on Retaining Learners' Interest

In order to construct the Learning Scenarios for Retaining learners attention and interest the partnership carried out a series of focus groups with educators in order to identify the main indications in need of tackling therein.

The identified indicators can be seen categorized below.

### What Are the main challenges that educators face when it comes to retaining learners' interest?

- ✓ Psychological barrier (fear of saying you have problems; fear arises from the notion that inability to solve problems is a trait of a loser)
- ✓ Non-personalized programs (lack of individual contact on problematic issues)
- ✓ Intensity of training (it is impossible to gain trust in the teacher, find out the causes of problems, find and discuss ways to overcome them, the process is hasty and often not completed qualitatively)
- ✓ Often insufficient professionalism of teachers (trying to "dictate" how to do it)

### What is Missing?

- ✓ Consistent and individualized programs
- ✓ Properly trained teachers
- ✓ Resources for the implementation of the programs

### What could we do to support the educators in identifying and resolving these challenges?

- ✓ Appropriate teacher training programs (a lot of time and attention must be paid to quality practical tasks, trainings)
- ✓ Application of problem-solving methodology in the teaching of various subjects so that learners strengthen their ability to apply problem-solving methods and technologies independently
- ✓ Encouraging teachers to motivate the whole process from start to finish with equal quality
- ✓ A virtual database of methodologies and tools (with methodological recommendations for their application) for teachers and learners

## The Learning Scenarios

Based on the aforementioned findings the partnership created the two following sets of Learning Scenarios through the Learners' Perspective and the Educators' Perspective towards challenges.

Each of the scenarios were constructed using the template below.

### Title of Challenge Tackled

**Scenario** Title of the Specified Scenario

### The Learning Challenge – Narrative

Narrative of the Learning Challenge Text

### Solving the Problem: Activities for Learning Groups

Title of activity

Working on  
the activity –  
Suggestions

Title of activity

Working on  
the activity –  
Suggestions

### Solving the Problem: Self-reflection (educator's reflection)

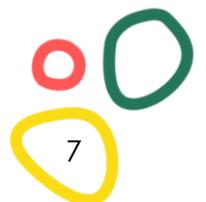
**Reflecting on the Problem**  
Solving measures taken  
to overcome the  
challenge

**Reflecting on the  
changes in the  
group dynamics**

**Reflecting on personal change**

### Points for Discussion with your Organisation

### Suggested Training Courses available online



## The Learning Scenarios on Retention | The Learners' Perspective

Below each scenario will be accompanied by a short introduction and a link to the English version on the project website.



### Maintain a constant level of frequency

One of the most common problems in adult education is to maintain a high and constant level of participation and interest in the learning process. To do this a starting point is to consider the needs of adults in training. The needs that are most commonly identified are (e.g.): to be considered as adults; to be made aware of knowledge needs; consider that the adult learns best from his or her own experience and from the analysis of the real, i.e. the real problems with respect to their profession and/or experience. In addition, adult education must be focused on the problems rather than the subjects and must use as much as possible non-formal education tools also in digital. From these needs derive a series of methodological suggestions for the trainer/trainer/teacher, which consist in preferring an inductive cognitive approach, making extensive use of active techniques and group work, and putting learned notions into practice immediately.



### Lack of planning and personal disorientation

It seems useful to recognize a strategic role and a decisive function in adult education, especially with the perspective of strengthening the orientative competences, i.e. those cognitive, emotional and relational tools able to face the disorientation of today's society. Living and acting in a constantly changing world means developing a meta-cognitive capacity, linked to an approach to knowledge that puts the person in a position to grasp its limits and possibilities. In particular, it may be useful to act at the level of transversal cognitive competences, i.e. those competences linked to the ability to analyse and select information received in a short period of time. These strategies are functional to avoid the passive attitude that sometimes occurs in learning processes and that, all the more so, one runs the risk of having when faced with an adult in training.



### What they learn must be relevant to their needs

Strengthen the desire/need for learning as a value in its own right and not as a means of obtaining a job or residence permit. The adult who decides to learn establishes in a certain sense to change his or her behaviour, to acquire methods and strategies that allow him or her to face new situations and to operate according to precise objectives. This is why motivation plays a central role in all theories of adult learning. The adult implements a change that implies personal research and awareness of his/her own knowledge and strategies, with the aim of social and professional improvement.

### Digital Learning



Due to the current pandemic – Covid 19- several educational activities were carried out digitally. This represents for many students a new learning environment where students find themselves without appropriate skills and technological means. Especially when it comes to adult learners, they are often lacking in basic and digital skills. Thus facing a learning path becomes a big obstacle for them and the risk of dropping out is really high. Educators/teachers and students find themselves having to find creative solutions based on the ability to manage themselves, to be able to question themselves, to be able to put themselves on the line despite difficulties and/or to overcome the lack of digital skills.

### Reconciling precarious life/work times with training times



The need to reconcile training with individuals' commitment to work and family life management should not be underestimated in the construction of adult education pathways. It is easier to make mistakes when working under pressure, which is perceived by the difficulty of reconciling work and private commitments. An adult who is satisfied with the distribution of his or her time and the balance that exists between his or her personal and professional life will perceive a satisfaction in family ties and a feeling of serenity with respect to the time he or she spends with people that are meaningful to him or her. The same satisfaction will be perceived on an interpersonal level, especially in the bond with friends, which will be of quality.

## The Learning Scenarios on Retention | The Educators' Perspective

Below each scenario will be accompanied by a short introduction and a link to the English version on the project website.



### Time for individual and group follow-up

Educators are facing difficult times to have spare time to consistently follow-up with their students due to the volume of tasks they have to carry out. Students with special needs require time from the educator, sometimes as they are adults, do not report their situation so teachers find out in the first months in the school. Secondly, once we are aware of the situation, we need to interview the student to get more information about the specific needs. On top of that, the teachers involved will have to meet to discuss the situation and propose activities that are suitable for the student. We must involve the rest of the group with the situations, seeking inclusion and not segregation or integration. To sum up, educators require time to perform all the above to deal smoothly with the needs of their students



### Training for educators to recognise student's needs

Educators, trainers, and teachers can observe different behaviors and perceive those students that might need special attention or need, however they are not capable to identify all need types. This situation is common in education centers worldwide. Some organization might have an expert in the field as part of the team, but those with low resources put teachers in the situation to deal with situations they are not prepared for.



### Curriculum follow-up

Curricula are the basis of learning in any school around the world. However, these curricula have not been designed with inclusion goals, we can say that the curriculum objectives are not real if we want to respond to the needs of all students, including those with special needs. It is the educators themselves who are looking for different options for the student to acquire the basic knowledge to follow the rest of the courses. This fact requires the help of all teachers to be successful, it is necessary to review the curriculum constantly to adapt the learning path to the student.



### International students with communication barriers

International students often arrive in the classroom without any prior training in the language or the culture of the host country. This situation produces in the classroom a complicated situation for the teacher, classmates, and even for the new student. Within the group-class, we find a large number of national students with small groups of newcomers who are fluent in the language. Therefore it is necessary to find a situation that improves inclusiveness from different areas. This situation always involves an investment of time by the teacher who ends up bothering for many reasons (consumption of time, lack of information, lack of instructions)



### Large heterogeneous groups

Educators find a challenge when they have to follow students with special needs while the number of students in the classroom is very high, and even more when there is more than one case with several special needs. Small groups are not only helping the educator but also the students with special needs. Although the second option would be the most desirable, sometimes is not valid. Therefore, teachers have to find different resources, strategies, and formulas to adapt their methodological approach to all cases in the classroom.

## Example of Scenario | Filled in and Translated

Time for individual and group follow-up

**Scenario** Time for individual and group follow-up

### The Learning Challenge – Narrative

Educators are facing difficult times to have spare time to consistently follow-up with their students due to the volume of tasks they have to carry out. Students with special needs require time from the educator, sometimes as they are adults, do not report their situation so teachers find out in the first months in the school. Secondly, once we are aware of the situation, we need to interview the student to get more information about the specific needs. On top of that, the teachers involved will have to meet to discuss the situation and propose activities that are suitable for the student. We must involve the rest of the group with the situations, seeking inclusion and not segregation or integration. To sum up, educators require time to perform all the above to deal smoothly with the needs of their students.

### Solving the Problem: Activities for Learning Groups

#### //////////////////// Activity 1 //////////////////////

**Title of activity**

**Turn on the bulb**

**Working on the activity – Suggestions**

Based on a real situation, educators gathered together to propose different alternatives to the problem. To start with, one of the educators explains the situation to the rest of the participants in this activity, it is important to be concise in the problem as participants will have to come up with a valid solution individually. Once we collect all proposals the group will have different possible solutions.

#### //////////////////// Activity 2 //////////////////////

**Title of activity**

**Brainstorming**

**Working on the activity – Suggestions**

A group of educators gathers together and one of them share the problem with the rest and they all have to brainstorm to find a possible solution. This activity can be performed informally but the results can be really powerful and useful as the ideas produced come straight from the educators.

### **Solving the Problem: Self-reflection (educator's reflection)**

#### **Reflecting on the Problem Solving measures taken to overcome the challenge**

Involving educators in the process of finding solutions helps them to enhance their commitment to improve education and feel valued.

#### **Reflecting on the changes in the group dynamics**

When educators are asked to participate in problem-solving and collaborate for a common goal, the result is a group of educators reinforced and better communicated. Empathy plays an important role in this activity, as they share their concerns and each other can relate.

#### **Reflecting on personal change**

When educators face problems sometimes they do not talk about it and they keep it for themselves, the activities proposed above are aimed to reinforce the role of educators being part of a community and to find solutions together, as they experience similar situations. It is important to have the opportunity, time, and place to have your say.

### **Points for Discussion with your Organisation**

The activities proposed seeks to resolve problems with the participation of all members of the organization, not excluding them. The management of the organization is the one responsible of providing to their staff (educators) a place and time to share their thoughts and problems.

### **Suggested Training Courses available online**



<https://learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage/course/increase-productivity/lesson/158>



<https://www.advancementcourses.com/courses/how-to-stop-playing-catch-up-time-management-for-teachers/>



<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/mindfulness-wellbeing-performance/>



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