

InCounselling

REPORT

Intellectual Outcome 2
Learning Concept

For the face-to-face training &
the self-directed online course

July 2017



Erasmus+

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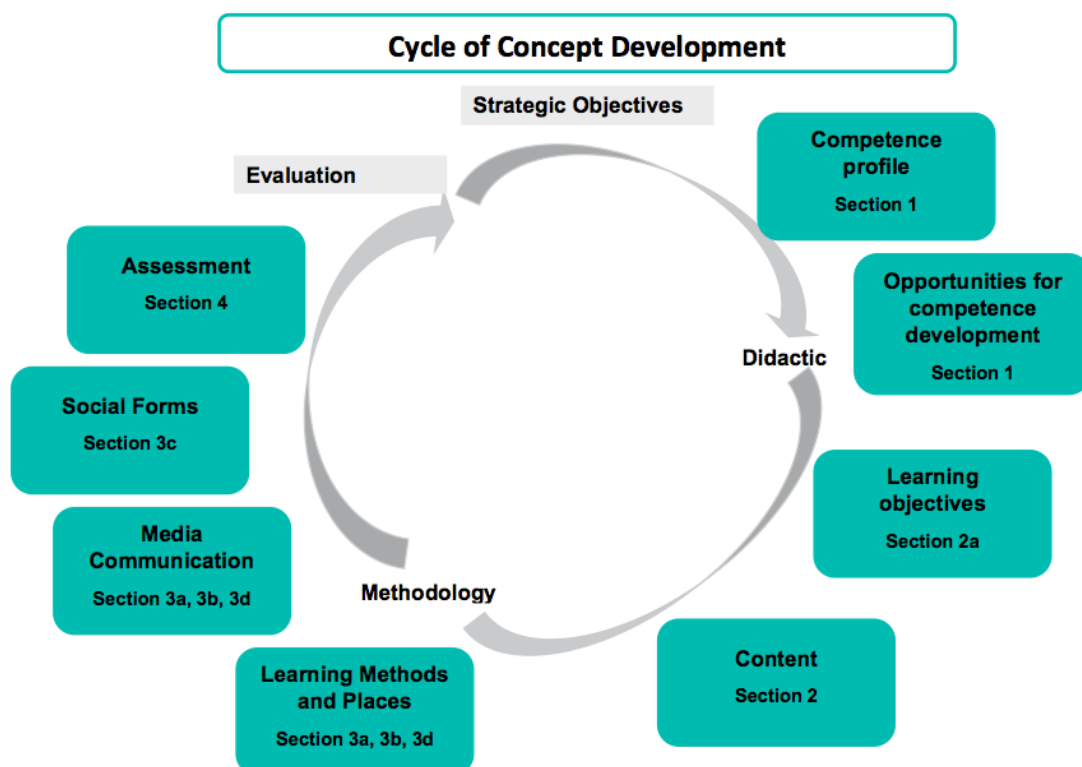


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A Learning Concept for HR and Counselling Practitioners

The present report concludes the needs analysis report and draws implications for the learning content and concept for the face-to-face training and the self-directed online course of the project InCounselling50+. To provide a systematic and useful learning environment, it is crucial to include all learning parts and take into account various preconditions. The following graphic (*Graphic 1*) helps to understand the reports structure and training's general development procedure.



Graphic 1. Adaption of the Cycle of Concept Development (Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008, p. 17)

1. Definition of Competences and Development Potential
 - a. Human Resource Practitioners

Competences that can be extracted from the needs analysis, at the same time, demonstrate future requirements and are presented in the following section. Besides recent information of the labour market situation about employees 50+, those in transition to retirement and jobseekers 50+, HR practitioners need information about labour legislation. Other prospect requirements mostly refer to soft skills that include personal as well as interpersonal and methodological skills.

In the need analysis becomes clear that older people experience a shift from prestige to emotional driven needs. In addition to that, older employees inherit many experiences and, due to that or due to the amount of changes, many are unable to change or are change-

fatigue. For this, HR practitioners require sociological and/or psychological know-how for the design of an appropriate leadership style in order to react to these requirements in a proper and proactive way. Furthermore, and to meet the challenges of the demographic change in the working world, it is crucial for enterprises to establish a sustainable knowledge and information management in order to secure knowledge and competences of skilled personnel.

Most HR practitioners are familiar with common methods on how to support employees in reference to adjust working conditions or work places. Some of them miss counselling knowledge though, which often refers to knowledge of legal aspects. Legislation itself does not require soft skills and psychological knowledge, while counselling does. That is why HR practitioners should get to know the application of socio-psychological knowledge in entrepreneurial consultations, for which legal aspects set the framework. It is important that they are able to integrate needs of both the enterprise and the individual into such processes. As counselling is a cross-discipline and requires profound know-how of how to communicate and act in an empathic way towards the guidance-seekers, HR practitioners should get up-skilled in these topics.

b. Counselling Practitioners

This is why counselling practitioners are going to be integrated in the training. We understand a counselling practitioner as someone who gives information and advice to a client under consideration of his/her individual needs, supports the client in the transition process through workplace changes, to another job, to joblessness or to retirement and guides the client to new activities or jobs including job matching and mediation. This definition is based on the description of the interviewees' activity fields. On the one hand, they should enrich the training when it comes to counselling. HR practitioners in this way can benefit from their experience and connect theoretical with informal knowledge. Counselling inherits a great potential, especially for several enterprises as the European Commission also has stated (Cedefop, 2010). On the other hand, the training is useful and enriching for counsellors. As stated in the interviews counsellors can learn further aspects from HR practitioners that enhance the guidance or counselling process for older people in transition to other jobs or the retirement. This means to improve the application processes for jobseekers 50+, to facilitate the transition to retirement towards the retiree's needs, to find an optimal solution for retiree's activities, or to help and assist employees that change jobs or even professions. Although the needs analysis showed that promotion opportunities and self-development on the job are quite unpopular among older employees, it can be assumed that both are going to gain popularity in future. This is due to the coming generation's needs and the extending professional life. Individual aspirations have to be acknowledged in the

counselling process and the goals and procedure for the transition have to be adapted to that.

Furthermore, counselling interviewees reported that they lack knowledge and information from enterprises and HR departments or other responsible persons. As mentioned above, counsellors would like to get insights into transition planning and human resource planning as well as on how the labour market influences HR planning. Therefore, also counsellors require more insights into organizations, business and learning cultures, human resource selection and development, and information on the current labour market situation, for instance, when and why enterprises do not take on employees any more due to a recession.

Counsellors usually show a high empathic attitude when it comes to consultations. This type of communication includes and applies many psychological facts and theories. Counsellors usually have acquired and experienced many various consultations. To guarantee a common knowledge base for HR and counselling practitioners, it is useful to introduce them both to the same relevant theories as well as to promote their understanding of how to provide help and support to employees/clients.

To sum up, for both sides it is important to get an in-depth understanding of HR and counselling processes in order to provide a sufficient and sustainable support for their clients or employees. It is, therefore, necessary to include communication opportunities from which both groups can benefit.

c. Preconditions for the Training under Consideration of Both

Under consideration of both subgroups' future requirements, common competences can be concluded, which are a precondition to the work tasks of both professions. Besides the theoretical input of economics, legislation and psychology, the training has to focus clearly on the application of the presented knowledge.

Besides the presentation of new contents and the possibility to connect knowledge with the individual practice, nowadays more and more knowledge and know-how is generated through networks. Many HR and counsellor practitioners stated that they participate frequently in networks. Along with a growing knowledge society, a lot of knowledge is not inherited and generated by single persons, but from networks (Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008). That is why it is of a special importance for vocational trainings to allow an exchange of professional and practical experiences to respond to this learning style.

For this, the majority of the learning modules consists of a long exercise and exchange sequence, like discussion or group work. This also allows the learner to internalize the

knowledge and know-how and connect it to prior knowledge as well as to characteristics of the own organizational culture. Each learning module covers one topic field. From the needs analysis seven modules could be derived. They are almost equal to what was suggested in the proposal. The slight changes improve the structure as well as the content in regard of the needs analysis. The proposed content of two modules could not be distinguished clearly in relation with the analyzed needs analysis' data. Nevertheless, to respond to the revealed needs in an appropriate manner, two modules' contents and the structure had to be changed slightly.

The seventh module is rather an exercise-oriented module. It strives to teach learners new counselling methods that improve the consultation processes and the assistance itself.

2. Didactics: Content and Goals of the Training

While the following structure represents the face-to-face training, more detailed and broad content is covered by the self-directed online course to provide a complete picture:

- Module 1: Economics – 50+ on the Labour Market
- Module 2: Labour Legislation 50+ – Employers and Employees Duties
- Module 3: Organizational Behaviour – Business and Learning Culture
- Module 4: Gerontological Psychology – Professional Development 50+
- Module 5: Knowledge and Information Management
- Module 6: Introduction to Counselling 50+
- Module 7: Peer Counselling

Module 2 was adjusted to legal aspects of labour and employment regulations of older people. Besides economics, legislation contains essential information for both professions' activities with 50+ and, thus, is indispensable for training's participants. The structure follows a sequence from social oriented, over organizational to individual oriented. Only the module about knowledge and information management with an organizational view is set after psychology. This is because the knowledge of psychology is a prerequisite to the content of knowledge and information management. Both modules have to be realized before the counselling, as both modules' content has to be considered in counselling. In this way, all prior acquired knowledge and know-how can be applied in the counselling module. Due to this, the order from the proposal has been changed and the last two modules had been exchanged. At the same time, the counselling module sets the base for the additional methodological module 7 Peer Counselling that covers the American training method microcounseling. Its concept is content of a separate report.

It is left to mention that the second module about Labour Legislation 50+ requires a national adaptation in Poland, Croatia and/or Germany. The module covers general and specified



learning objectives and content, whereby the specified content is realized in cooperation with national partners.

a. Main Objectives

Because of the uniqueness and lacking ability for repetition of situations, each action to solve a problem is different and can be used to develop or deepen competences (Kaufhold, 2006). For competences' development, four necessary conditions are required:

1. The learner acts self-organized, and defines a problem individually.
2. The action is subject-related, and therefore individual.
3. The problem solution is complete, integral and relates to the individual's ability to solve problems.
4. The individual behavioural disposition, with which the action is carried out, covers several values including those of companies.

(Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008)

The third bullet point emphasizes the assumption that competences only can evolve in practice because an integral problem solving in a classroom cannot consider all influences and conditions of a real-life situation. Therefore, it is assumed that the development of the competences can only occur in real-life situations. To define overall competences gives direction to the training's content and methods, which strives to be authentic and realistic. These competences, at the same time, demonstrate prospect requirements of an HR practitioner and have to be taken into account in this training to guarantee its adaptability and transferability into practice even through change and adaptations of organizations. But for the content itself, it is necessary to depict objectives. These objectives are necessary to educate knowledge, know-how and skills in the training, on which the practical competences development bases (Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008). Through this design, the training is created in a way that different HR and counselling practitioners are able to participate in the training and adapt it to different individual requirements.

Thus, each module contains one superordinate objective and several subordinate objectives. The subordinate objectives paraphrase in a more concrete way the modules' contents and how they are presented or taught. The learning objectives definition allows the training to refer to the practice and real task field.

The superordinate objectives are listed in the following table:

Module	After the completion of the training learners are expected to be able ...
1. Economics	to analyse labour market statistics and reports in order to understand the situation and future development trends of people 50+.
2. Labour Legislation 50+	to understand legal aspects considering employment of people 50+, transition management as well as unemployment regulations for 50+.
3. Organizational Behaviour	to derive strategies from organizational structures and behaviour on how to integrate employees 50+, employees in transition and unemployed 50+.
4. Gerontological psychology	to arrange an optimal working environment under consideration of self-efficacy, self-regulation of people 50+ and possible consequences within the company.
5. Knowledge & Info. Mgmt.	to apply appropriate methods for securing knowledge and providing information with the use of technology under consideration of the target groups' characteristics.
6. Introduction to Counselling	to create a holistic and demand-oriented counselling process for people 50+.
7. Peer Counselling	to improve the counselling process to the individual's needs and requirements under consideration of counselling ethic regulations.

Table 1. Overview of superordinate learning objectives.

b. Learning Objectives for the Training

The training follows a competence-orientation, which is why learning objectives should not exclusively describe the content of the modules, but also relate to a skill or activity a participant should have acquired after completing the training. Of course, there are different levels of requirements, as there is a difference between remembering facts of legal aspects and apply appropriate methods to solve a problem. Due to Krathwohl (2002, p. 214) there are four different categories, which help to define the content:


1. Factual Knowledge

refers to the "knowledge of terminology and of specific details and elements"



2. Conceptual Knowledge
covers “knowledge of classification, categories, principles, theories and structures”
3. Procedural Knowledge
describes “knowledge of subject-specific skills, techniques and criteria for determining an appropriate procedure”
4. Metacognitive Knowledge
is “strategic as well as self-knowledge, and the knowledge about cognitive tasks”

In a second step, the level has to be defined, on which the content is processed cognitively. It is about how learners acquire the new content. In opposition to many theories with six taxonomy levels, a simplified system of four taxonomy levels is approached for the training. The four taxonomy levels follow a more practical orientation and respond in a better way to

Level	Taxonomy	Explanation	
1	Acquisition of theoretical knowledge	Knowledge of theories	Simple & concrete  Complex & abstract
2	Understanding of knowledge	Know-how the theories function	
3	Transferring of knowledge	Know-how to influence reality	
4	Problem solving	Intervention skills as a base for professional competencies	

vocational education and ‘professionalizing career guidance’ (Cedefop, 2009).

Table 2. Taxonomy in Transnational Vocational Counselling of Banka & Ertelt (2005).

From the knowledge category and taxonomy level can be derived concrete methods and exercises for the training. Both, knowledge and taxonomy level are the main components of a learning objective. Definitely, the higher the level of requirement is, the more time the acquisition of knowledge and know-how should take in the training. In general, the entrance requirement level usually increases over the lesson’s proceeding. Nonetheless, it is important to include a variety of requirements levels to keep up participants’ attention and enhance the acquisition process.

It has to be highlighted that the transition between the taxonomy levels are fluent and not always clearly to distinct. For the definition of learning objectives, it is important to choose an

appropriate taxonomy level that can be realized in the training taking into account participants' prior knowledge and time management.

Although the concrete level of prior knowledge cannot be evaluated from a current point of view, it is obvious that participants inherit profound experience of their activity field and, therefore, require either an extension of their knowledge, a deepening of their knowledge or reflection for knowledge discovery.

As said, the level of participants' prior knowledge and skills is difficult to evaluate as they hold different activity fields, and the sizes of their companies vary. The level of prior knowledge is crucial for the training's development though. Since this level is hard to estimate in advance and to respond to a broad scope of possible participants, sufficient time buffer is calculated in the lesson sequences. Likewise, a variety of methods and social forms can be adapted to this. Thereby, participants can keep up. Furthermore, it is recommended for participants with low prior knowledge to take part at the self-directed online course (SDC) in advance. The SDC is a complementary online training to the face-to-face training and provides more content in short sequences that are easier to keep up.

3. Methodology: Organization of the Training

a. Definitions and Preconditions

Learning can be described as „the transformative process of taking in information that—when internalized and mixed with what we have experienced—changes what we know and builds on what we do. It's based on input, process, and reflection.“ (Conner & Bingham, 2011, p. 27). The corresponding learning environments cover all external conditions and factors that are relevant for the learning process. In the present work, learning environments are especially provided for HR and counselling practitioners.

Learning environments have to be developed in a best optimal way to enhance the acquisition and learning process. New conditions from the business world and private life arise that should be integrated in such learning environments. For instance, modern and social media show a profound impact on learning, for example learning is more interactive, therefore, the concentration period shrinks (Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008). Anyways, only the consideration and/or intergration of realistic preconditions make learning processes usable and allow a transfer of the acquired content into practice and translation into competences. Derived from that the three preconditions are: Learning in a labour context happens in an informal, self-organized way and is also frequently generated in and trough networks (Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008). For a better understanding, the three preconditions are explained in the following.

Informal learning processes take place in real life and happen non-intentional and not purposeful (European Commission 2001). From a lifelong learning point of view, this type of realistic, informal learning is the most sustainable way of learning but it is linked to work activities and tasks (Overwien, 2005). That is why the training enhances reflection processes at a broad extent. The outcomes of such reflection processes can, afterwards, be applied in the daily work activities, through which informal learning takes place (Overwien, 2005). That is why participants are stimulated to reflect also prior knowledge. They might not have reflected this yet and, through this reflection, it gets activated and possible interrelations can be shown. The reflection processes allows simultaneously an easier transfer and application of presented knowledge into practice. As suggested above, individual definitions of problems or adjustments to the own company can improve the transferability of information into practice (Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008) and respond to training's preconditions derived from informal learning.

Secondly, the self-organization in the sense of a learners' independent organization about when, where and what to learn is not explicitly covered by the face-to-face training. This is due to the various and broad topics that HR and counselling practitioners have to get to know before being able to self-regulate acquisition processes in this context. Several interviewees stated a lack of knowledge in this context, which emphasizes that learning in the face-to-face training should take place in some parts structured or guided and in some parts self-organized. To include a self-study phase allows a revision and an independent internalization of the acquired knowledge that promotes the self-organization of knowledge and know-how. Regardless of the face-to-face training, the self-directed online course follows a more intense self-organized learning and enables an independent and more individualized learning style, which in turn enhances the mental absorption of knowledge and more crucial linkages to important prior knowledge. But for this, the participant requires a profound knowledge base. Otherwise, the independent learning complicates or hinders the absorption of knowledge. The self-directed online course is explained in detail in section "d" below.

As a third precondition, the training has to consider the growing network learning in practice, which especially HR and counselling practitioners face in labour environments. Therefore, the face-to-face training integrates discussion and colleague exchange and an additional part, in which practical experiences after the face-to-face training can be discussed and reflected. At the same time, this enhances the establishment and formation of a network between HR and counselling practitioners. For the self-directed online course, the web portal incorporates a chat and discussion platform.

b. Structure and Procedure of Face-to-face Training



The sequence and structure of the face-to-face training and the self-directed online course are explained in this section. Both are either complements or alternatives to each other. The face-to-face training will be developed firstly, and afterwards the online course. The face-to-face training is split in three parts. The first part lasts two days and covers seven modules with knowledge input and an enrichment of theoretical know-how. Each module should last a maximum of 120 minutes. It always consists of a presentation and an application phase. As the informal learning in networks should be encouraged, all modules are designed with a more or less short presentation sequence and a useful, longer application sequence. This could be group work, an exercise, a case study or even a simulation of a counselling consultation. Although, the modules and the training should consider the three preconditions informal and self-organized as well as network learning, it could be that the structure varies from module to module. This could be for example, module 1 economics and module 2 legislation. Exercises should be used for logical reasons, whereby mainly modules 3 – 6 set a focus on exercises and case scenarios.

Due to the content, the focus should be on the application phase so that the theoretical knowledge can be easier transferred to practice. Therefore, tasks have to guarantee a realistic and authentic learning environment that also permits to connect the content to the business culture and considers the three preconditions for learning. Additionally, it is important that participants have enough time to exchange between each other. In this context, there can be an exchange between exclusively HR colleagues, or exclusively counselling practitioners or both of them. At the end of the second day there should be an additional discussion that resumes the contents and conclusions of the training. It is important to harmonize the contents of all modules in a way that the learner understands the entire training in a complete, coherent and cohesive manner.

The second part is the self-study phase in which learners get back into practice and implement the acquired knowledge and know-how.

The third part is another face-to-face meeting, in which learners get together to mainly discuss experiences and reflections. In addition to the exchange, more input about counselling can take place with the an additional part of module 7. This depends on the prior knowledge level of participants as well as the participants' knowledge and task field diversity. Additionally, it could be that some participants need more time to reflect and internalize the presented knowledge, which is necessary for a counselling exercise.

c. Indication for the Methods, Learning and Social Form

Before the description of the overall direction of methods for the training, the relevance of business cultures and values for the learning environment has clearly to be pointed out.



Internal values that are inherited by staff's individuals are carried out in activities and altogether represent the learning culture of the enterprise. As a part of the business culture, the learning culture's design sets fundamental goals for strategic processes including the development of the human resource (Kuhlmann & Sauter 2008). These authors (2008) also state that innovative learning concepts require a consideration of the company's strategy and, thus, should be integrated into the learning environment as well. To respond to these entrepreneurial requirements, HR practitioners need to be familiar with tools and methods that fit to the learning culture, which in turn acknowledges and integrates the staff's diverse characteristics. With reference to the training's content, organizational, sociological and psychological knowledge require a consideration of the learning and business culture as well as different individuals' needs. This also has to be considered and integrated systematically in the overall enterprise's and HR development's goals. Thus, this consideration, or reference, always has to be kept in mind when it comes to the selection of the training's method.

First of all, a learning sequence starts with a motivation and activation phase. For this, a cartoon, a critical sentence, picture etc. can be presented to the plenum. It attracts participants' motivation and sets the initial point for the topic of this unit. The initial point also addresses according knowledge a participant has and in which the training's content later gets embedded. To allow the participant a realistic reference to the individual company, practices and values at the beginning of the training, this initial anchor should show a reference to participants' real work life. A possible method could be that participants define an own problem or to reword a given, general problem draft. Another example for a realistic anchor would be to collect experiences and issues from participants to one specific topic or issue.

When it comes to the presentation of knowledge, the information should be presented in a general way so that it is easy to adapt knowledge and know-how to realistic scenarios with specific values and conditions. For an easier transfer, real-life or best-case scenarios can be given. Depending on participants' knowledge level this can be designed more or less guided and allows an individualization of the training's implementation. This sequence should be as short as possible, because the training follows a practical and exercise intensive methodology for several reason that were explained above.

The practical and exercise intensive orientation requires from the training and enables the participant, first, the possibility to mentally embed the newly acquired knowledge and link it in a sustainable way with prior relevant and more frequent used knowledge and know-how (Gagné, 1975). Kuhlmann and Sauter's perspective (2008) underlies that knowledge and only then know-how can be connected with values and objectives of the business and

learning culture. And that is why a relation to the participants' organization at the training's very beginning is reasonable. To provide authentic and realistic tasks is one way to put knowledge and know-how in a practical context. Anyways, for the development of competences learners have to transfer and carry out the acquired skills (Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008) in practice, which was made obvious in a previous section.

Before learners can realize this process, they have to be aware of the own enterprises' values and strategies. If the own enterprise's values are not known, it is crucial to add a reflection sequence for this. Afterwards, they can connect new information with business values or strategies. Also for the exercise sequence and the work with cases, learners can define the problem individually (Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008). To exemplify this: After the presentation of information, participants can apply the new knowledge to one general exercise. In a second step, learners have to adapt the general exercise to the own enterprise, which is discussed with other training's participants afterwards. To design an individualized case it has to correspond with a partly self-organization and transfer of the newly acquired knowledge into a realistic scenario.

The discussion, with other professionals occupied in partially similar work activities, facilitates the building or extension of a network. At the same time, this type of colleague exchange fulfills the preconditions of network learning. Through exchanging and discussing others' cases and solutions, new information and solutions can be derived.

In addition to that, learning in networks enriches the individual reflection processes as externals might be more neutral in evaluating other company's procedures. This refers to the reflection processes that are of high importance, as the ability to reflect is the basis to continuously improve the problem analysis and problem-solving processes. Due to the broad experiences of participants, it is assumed that all of them are familiar with reflection. That is why this training aspires to enrich the ability of reflection. Specifically, learning in networks can reinforce this.

The application part is guided with a textbook with exercises that consists of three different parts for each module. The first part contains explanations of the most relevant knowledge facts. Secondly, in the interactive exercise part learners have illustrated bracket texts or cases, etc. to secure and apply the newly acquired knowledge. This further application enhances the mental absorption and supports the reinforcement of knowledge. In a third step, there is enough space where learners can fill out some sort of logbook as well as reflection processes during or after the period in practice. The reflection part is guided with leading questions that are worked out during the first part of the training. In addition to that, it is foreseen to put a column for comments or notes, that participants want to write down during discussions and summary sequences. This textbook with exercises is handed out at

the beginning of the training and accompanies the learning process. Due to the project's proposal this is part of IO 4 the participants' handouts. To be able to recapture and repeat the training and the individual learning process enhances the absorption of knowledge and reflection processes.

The self-directed online course can be made afterwards to gain more detailed knowledge of the separate modules. Another option would be to do the online course simultaneously to the face-to-face training. In this case it is recommended to take part at the course during the self-study phase, between the first and third part of the face-to-face training. The online course can also be realized in advance. As the online course is self-organized, it is the learner's responsibility and task to connect the contents from the training and the course. The training is complementary to the online course. The textbook with exercises gives hints which learning nuggets are linked to which content. In addition to that, it is foreseen to implement learning nuggets that apply knowledge from several modules.

d. Structure and Procedure of Self-directed Online Course

The self-directed online course (SDC) will be implemented to give participants an in-depth understanding of the contents. Therefore, it aims to deepen the knowledge of participants after attending the face-to-face training or to provide a basis before attending the face-to-face training. If participants prefer the second option it is an advantage for connecting different topics in the face-to-face training and for participating actively in discussions. The SDC can be used without participating in the face-to-face training, so HR practitioners and counsellors can learn more about working with persons aged 50+ independently. This also includes approaches of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The self-determination theory includes the idea that competences, relatedness and autonomy are the basic human needs. Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that fostering those needs will ensure a high quality of intrinsic motivation. In particular, online courses encourage autonomous learning because participants are able to choose when and for how long they want to learn. This seeks to foster motivation and, therefore, a better learning result (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The content will consist of additional topics as described in the previous section. It is to mention that it doesn't represent a repetition of the face-to-face training. In contrast, the SDC focusses on special topics of each module and on cross-topical learning nuggets.

The following section will focus on the methodology of the self-directed online course. The content will be implemented via learning nuggets. The overall idea of those nuggets are stand-alone learning activities that vary in their size and scope (Bailey, Zalfan, Mohd, Davis, Fill, & Conole, 2006). It is special for this approach to use short learning units, which can last from a few minutes up to 15 minutes (Kogga, Krawietz, Cevik, Brandau & Li, 2017). The content can differ regarding subject area and level of difficulty (Bailey et al., 2006). It is



important to split complex topics in smaller easier parts but to point out the relation and links to the overall context. To achieve this, learning nuggets should be designed in a creative and motivating way (Kogga et al., 2017). For example, learning nuggets could include different representation methods and techniques, e.g. weblinks, videos, graphics, animations (Bailey et al., 2006).

In this project, learning nuggets will consist of short learning sections of maximum 10 to 15 minutes. They consist of two parts. First of all, knowledge and theories are explained briefly with a video, pictures or graphs. Afterwards the learner secures the knowledge with interactive exercises. For instance multiple choice, yes or no questions, bracket texts and/or sort the order of several options. Each nugget covers one topic. Thus, there can be more or less nuggets for each module. In addition to the module related nuggets, cross-topical nuggets provide the application of knowledge from several modules. The cross-topical nuggets, from the current point of view, are going to consist of mostly case studies and scenarios. The second application part for the cross-topical nuggets comprises different closed or semi-closed possibilities to secure the knowledge and its application.

To enhance the application and internalization of knowledge, the learning nuggets are embedded in a web portal, which allows an exchange between participants through a chat feature. The sum of all online features enhances the blended learning style.

Altogether, it has to be highlighted that the face-to-face training and the self-directed online course represent a blended learning approach. Although the application and input is not clearly separate between both training and online course, different social forms and media are used (Kuhlmann & Sauter, 2008) to guarantee the incorporation of various learning cultures and goals as well as to respond to various learning types.

Regardless, the assessment of the face-to-face training will solely highlight links to the SDC and focus mainly the content of the modules.

4. Assessment and Evaluation

In a last section the assessment and evaluation of the training is explained. Although, the proposal does not anticipate a training's assessment or evaluation, any of both is crucial for the learning process as the knowledge is revised by the learner.

First of all, the textbook with exercises, that was described in the previous section and that is content of IO4, is not only used as an accompanying tool. At the same time, it serves as some sort of a logbook in which the learning process is captured. To capture the acquisition and exercises supports the absorption of knowledge. When it comes to the revision of the content, the knowledge and know-how can, then, be processed in a more profound manner and the along going reflection takes place at a deeper level. The revision and reflection

processes of all training's parts can be noted in the textbook with exercises. This guarantees an overall capturing and securing of the knowledge and information that is acquired in class, through network exchange and experiences in reality. The illustration of this learning process provides on the one hand a better internalization of information and on the other hand, allows an easier transfer into practice. At the same time, the textbook with exercises always illustrates a complete picture of the overall content. In this way, the textbook with exercises can be viewed as a type of ongoing self-assessment.

In addition, an evaluation of the participant's acquired skills and competences can be realized. It would be possible to carry out a self-evaluation with a questionnaire twice, first at the beginning of the training and secondly at the end of the training. The profiles, then, can be contrasted with the own one or a colleague's one and the individual can compare his/her competence development from one point in time to another. It has to be noted that a self-evaluation of own competences is prone to be biased by, for example, overconfidence or self-underestimation (Bandura, 1977). However, several tools underlie that normal individuals are well aware to evaluate their own competences, and tend to be more accurate and more precise as they know themselves best (Sedikides & Strube, 1997).

As prescribed in the proposal there is going to be a feedback of the trainer and the training's method. This feedback serves to adapt the methods and social forms of the training and guarantee a continuously improvement of the learning environment.

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