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FINAL REPORT

THE ART TO REFLECT

ABOUT MEANINGFUL REFLECTION IN TRAININGS
TRAINER'S SKILLS WORKSHOP

26 FEBRUARY - 1 MARCH 2019 | ARNHEM, NETHERLANDS

INTRODUCTION

Trainer's Skills Workshops [TSW] are offered twice a year as part of strategic long-term cooperation between National Agencies (NAs) and SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, coordinating European training offers for trainers in the framework of the 'Trainer Competence Development project': www.salto-youth.net/trainercompetencedevelopment. The Austrian, Dutch, Czech, Estonian, German, Irish, Polish, Slovenian and Spanish Erasmus+: Youth in Action NAs together with the SALTO T&C RC carry out this long-term strategic partnership project.

Supporting the competence development of trainers is an important aspect to ensure the high quality of youth worker training in Europe. The project supports trainers exploring a certain area of trainer work and related competences of the [ETS Competence Model for Trainers Working at International Level](#) (hereinafter, Competence Model for Trainers) In the context of the project, advanced means that the trainer-learner has the capacity to reflect on their practice as a trainer. This also implies a capacity for [self] assessment.

This TSW was the fifth edition, after:

- ❑ 4th: Coaching in Training Design, 2018 in Tallinn, Estonia
- ❑ 3rd: Graphic Harvesting, 2017 in Dublin, Ireland
- ❑ 2nd: IT Tools in the youth work field, 2016 in Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland
- ❑ 1st: Impact Assessment and Evaluation. 2016 in Vienna, Austria

GENERAL FRAME

The team was composed two experienced trainers: Joanna Wrońska (Poland) and Gabi Steinprinz (Netherlands), who designed and implemented the course with the support of Peter Pieters (Dutch NA) and Gisèle Evrard Markovic (SALTO T&C RC).

Participants

TSWs target trainers who already have long-term experience with training in the field of youth and who have the capacity to reflect on their practice as trainers, which generally require several years of regular practice. The training activity is for trainers who wish to develop their competences with regard to particular areas/skills and transfer the learning to their youth work practice.

Over 400 people applied and 22 participants from 13 countries joined the course, supported by their respective NA. The participant list can be found in Annex 2. Most participants are active as trainers or workshop providers in different educational contexts. Not all participants were familiar with the European Training Strategy and the ETS Competence Model for Trainers.



PURPOSE AND INTENTIONS

The purpose of this TSW was to expand participants' toolkits with reflective approaches and equip them with the skills to plan and implement reflection as part of the learning process.

Intentions:

- to experience a broad variety of reflection tools and methods.
- to self-reflect: the trainer as a learner.
- share experiences and creative methods of reflective processes during training and other educational activities.
- explore the Learning to Learn competence area from the ETS Competence Model for Trainers and link it with other trainer competences.



APPROACH

During all phases of the process, the emphasis was not on the topic of reflection itself, but on the ability and competences of trainers to work with this topic in their training as supporters of learning. The main sources for this TSW were:

- ❑ The ETS Competence Model for Trainers (developed by SALTO T&C RC).
- ❑ Holding the Space:- facilitating reflection and inner readiness for learning.-
https://www.reflecting.eu/wp_cont/uploads/2016/08/Holding-the-space-website-small.pdf
(developed by the reflect Strategic Partnership project)
- ❑ Reflection Methods- Practical Guide, <http://www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection>
(developed by the University of Wageningen, Netherlands)



In this TSW, participants have been invited to look at two different layers of this competence development on the topic of reflection: as a learner themselves through self-assessment and as a supporter of learner providing space and ways of reflection in their training practices.

The team also decided to use the group as a resource and give space to exchange good practices and share tools, methods and experiences. During the process, participants shared their tools and methods. The quantity and quality were high, and the trainers team decided to collect these tools and methods in a toolkit. Participants described their methods and tools in a template and the team added the tools and methods they used during this TSW.

As the group was composed of experienced trainers and the topic of reflection was related to the Learning to Learn competence, the trainers decided to invite participants to self-direct their learning. Even for experienced educators, this seems to be challenging. This approach resulted in the Reflection-360° session, where people were invited to try out and explore in their own way the topic of trainers' competences related to reflection.

As a principle, the team of trainers agreed to be transparent to the group about 'why they do what they do'. This also meant to share the credits (or at least, where trainers knew the tool or where the method was coming from). The team invited participants to do the same.

THE FLOW OF ACTIVITIES

26.02 Tuesday

The evening of the arrival day was dedicated to "get to know" and "team building" sessions after dinner, though they were limited since the group was not yet complete. A short introduction and information about the evening programme were also provided. In order to set the tone for this TSW, the room had been filled with mindfulness tasks that could be tried out in a self-directed way.

After a short name game, participants exchanged 'vulnerable' information about each other with sharing *nerdy*, *crazy*, and *unusual* personal connections. When 'forbidden' to talk about their work, a whole new world opens for trainers and this generates interesting interpersonal connections. The sharing in plenary brought the group together. Participants were invited to craft their own *reflection puppets*, which closed the evening working at the crafting tables, chatting and creating either a reflection buddy/puppet or make some bullet journal templates in the notebooks that they received. An invitation to try out a body scan mindfulness activity later was also shared, as to wish a good night sleep. The evening finished with a welcome drink and informal chats at the venue's bar.



27.02 Wednesday

Peter Pieters, from the Dutch NA, welcomed participants and explained the why of this TSW. Trainers introduced themselves. The variation of the passport exercise supported to remember the names, but also served as a tool for the individual reflection posters, which were part of the *Slow-start*. The team presented the aim and objectives and the programme flow, together with the approach adopted for this TC. As the *Slow-start* is an important and repetitive part of the programme, the method was introduced here, together with the hashtag: #Art2reflect. To share expectations, participants set their learning goals for the training and shared it in the digital cloud.

The morning was dedicated to create a common understanding and gather questions to work on. To kick off with the topic of reflection, participants explored the concept of reflection together in a creative way, or actually the 22 ways of...

- ❑ how reflection looks like by building a collective construction with 22 chairs;
- ❑ how reflection sounds like by making a human sound machine with 22 own 'body sounds';
- ❑ how reflection feels like, by exploring blindfolded the shape, sound, texture and flexibility of 22 different objects.



The activity closed with the group work on collecting questions that popped up during the exercise. Each group presented the most calling question. This was useful as a base for this whole course.

The weather was beautiful, so after the break, the participants were invited outdoor first in small groups to answer their most calling question from the previous activity and then individually to a position discussion over the statements about learning and reflection. The exercise aimed to bring more dimensions to the topic of reflection in order to create a common understanding of what reflection is. This worked well as the discussion was vivid and deep. For the closing, participants created a body sculpture or natural art that represented the most important features of meaningful reflection to them. These methods were useful and effective for group dynamics and diving into the topic.

After lunch, the 'Me as a (reflective) learner' session started with an imagination as an intro to talking trees individual outdoor activity, which aimed to encourage self-reflection, digested later with creative expression and plenary debriefing.



During the break, Gisèle from SALTO T&C RC arrived. She introduced herself and the background of the TSW series. The team also introduced and distributed "Hold your Aces" cards (developed by Gabi Steinprinz and published by SALTO T&C RC) that have been designed to serve as a reflective self-assessment tool for trainers competence development and participants were invited to use one of the methods described in order to link reflection to the Learning to Learn competence area.

This activity was flowing into a group's sharing of strategies for maximizing and minimizing learning during the training. Trainers decided not to do the usual reflection groups at the end of the day but chose to implement the method of Learning support groups" (based on the method used in Comets 2018, by Nik Paddison and Alexandra Beweis) in trios. It was challenging not to evaluate the day, but just reflect on what supports one's learning and what hinders it, but participants seemed very involved and focussed.



After the dinner, the first rounds of participant's sessions started, based on peer learning and sharing practices on personal reflection. Five methods were carried out, twice in two parallel sessions and the final one altogether. It was a long day, but very rich and participants seemed very content with the whole process. In the evening part of the group had lots of interactions, as they did stand-up comedy between themselves. Good vibes according to trainers.

28.02 Thursday

The day started with the silent activity Slow-start (an adapted version of the method Morning reflection, developed by Nik Paddison and Alexandra Beweis in Comets 2018) which had been introduced the day before.

It aimed to start the day, with taking time to think and feel, to reflecting on the previous day, and to look forward to the coming day. Participants were invited to spend time alone and reflect in ways that suit them, or that they want to explore, like writing, thinking, drawing, crafting, etc. Additionally, participants were invited to define and share a learning goal for the day in the digital cloud. Slow-start was a new concept for almost all participants and they were very much engaged and into reflection.



The main focus of the day shifted from being a reflective learner to supporting reflection in training. This second day started off with taking a look at the European Training Strategy (ETS) as the context and the ETS Competence model for trainers as the tool for development and assessment. Five main questions concerning reflection (each one on individual and group level, in session and programme design) were discussed through the World Cafe method. Groups closed the last paper by identifying 2-3 essential elements or key-words and shared these in plenary. It was a meaningful reflection on reflection and participants wanted to collect outcomes, so they offered to type all that was written. The second part of the morning session was the second round of sharing practices offered by participants. Again, diverse methods were introduced and peer learning was very much appreciated by all participants.

In the afternoon, a learning space has been created for Reflection-360° on trainer's competence development, related to reflection. About 10 different tools and methods have been offered (including some of the participants) and people were invited to explore and be curious about the topic. The day was closed with two more traditional, parallel reflections of the day groups, done by participants.

As the last 48 hours had been very demanding, the team closed the day with a long walk through the park and a wonderful dinner out (and for some, even a night out). Participants and trainers were content and in a very good mood, as it had been a productive and meaningful day.

1.03 Friday

The last day had a focus of transforming the outcomes into actions and also into participants' everyday practice and wrapping up. The team introduced new possible elements in the Slow-start, like describing their Learning to Learn competence development that took place during the training - which later was copied into the 3rd part of the Youthpass.

The intro to the day was made outdoors accompanied by a beatboxing group energizer conducted by one of the participants and a beatboxing birthday song for another.

In order to be able to envision, how all this could be used for their own practices, the team introduced the method 'Social dreaming' to exchange thoughts and feelings about a new vision on reflection in training. After this, participants defined which tool they could adapt or use in their own practices and how that would look like, or how they could integrate the outcomes of their competence development related to reflection. This part was closed with a sharing round of one action, one tool or one way that people were going to incorporate the learnings.

To finalize the implementation of participants tools, and to record learning outcomes, the method 'Letter to myself' was introduced by one of the participants. These letters have been sent to participants by NA together with their printed Youthpasses a month after the TSW.

To close the group process we invited to collective salt painting reflection with images that people were taking with them back home and as the last task was to fill in the evaluation form.



TOOLS AND METHODS USED

List of reflective activities introduced by trainers

- Reflection buddy puppet craft
- Bullet journal craft
- Mindfulness activities
- 22 ways of reflection
- individual and Collective painting
- Talking trees - outdoor
- "Hold your Aces" cards
- Learning support groups
- Sharing participant's practices
- Slow start
- World Cafe
- 360° Trainer's competence development
- Social dreaming



List of activities during Reflection-360° trainer's competence development

- Videos with recorded reflection methods
- Star interview
- Introspective journey
- Natural mandalas - outdoor
- Take the shower in the dark
- Meeting over the lake
- Hardest quiz ever
- The hand
- Mike cards
- Wooden blocks and Lego
- Learning in transition cards
- SALTO learning out of the box cards
- Percipio cards
- Book "Creative Flow"



Participants 20 min presentations during Reflection-360°

- Trainer's reflection
- Balancing our relations
- 3P

Practices on personal reflection introduced by participants

- The story of my journey
- Visual Mind Mapping
- Listen, feel, reflect and create
- Magical performance
- Free-flow writing

Practices on reflection during training, introduced by participants

- Wicked question game
- The way of strategy
- Catharsis & meditation
- Find your progress Zone
- "In learning" board game
- Rope connection
- Positioning reflection

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions from participants' evaluations

About the concept of TSW: participants were highly positive about this TSW. Many of them expressed how important it is for their personal and professional development to be in a community of like-minded, to reflect with peers. They strongly expressed in their appreciation.

Most of them find the duration ok, some too short. The programme was dense and packed into 2,5 days. For most of them, this was acceptable, for some it was not. Some mentioned there was too much emphasis on how short it was from trainers' side, and that was hindering. Trainers rather should have mentioned how much can be done in the time available.



All participants appreciated very much the number of tools presented in this course, and that it was not only coming from trainers, but participants inputs were taken so seriously. A few mentioned that having this amount of tools, it meant not going deeper into some questions or methods or understanding better questions related to reflection, which they would have liked more.

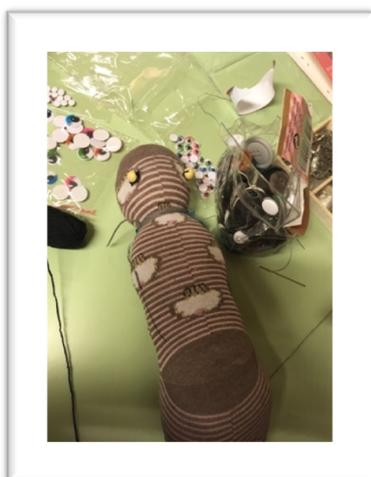
Participants expressed that they take many things home to their practices. Some take questions, others answers. Many of them are happy with the new tools, or the fact that they understand the variety of tools and methods that one can use in training. Another talk about having a new mindset, related to understanding better the link between reflection and learning. On the question on what and how they will concretely implement the learnings, most of them mentioned the tools and methods, and less mentioned something about changes in their approach to the topic or elements of the specific trainer competence development.

Participants highly value the relevance of the topic of reflection, both as learners and as trainers in their practices. They concluded that it is part of the learning process and it makes non-formal learning meaningful. It is important to plan and give time for reflection, and that reflection can appear in different forms and use all the senses. This was revealing for many of them. Some participants mentioned the relation between how they reflect themselves, how they apply reflection in their training and their identity as trainers.

The conclusion from the trainers' evaluation

Working space and material

The Stayokay of Arnhem provided basic accommodations for participants. Two people shared a dormitory for 4 people. Food was good, healthy, diverse and enough. Diets and food preferences were taken in considerations seriously.



The working room was in the attic. Space was hardly big enough for a group of 25-27 people for long working days, especially as we used different settings and changes were sometimes difficult to make. For 2 days we had a second seminar room. That was very useful and needed.

Dutch NA supported trainers to buy and use all kind of materials, like the bullet journals, materials for making puppets, special roles of paper and artistic materials. This allowed trainers and participants to use a broad variety of methods, also artistic ones. Trainers and participants were grateful for that.

reflection itself, to approach the trainer skills from the being a learner- perspective all worked out well. Especially very experienced trainers in Erasmus+ were very positive about this chance to reflect on their practice and learn about their skills and competences regarding reflection. Being learner-centred and transparent about why they do what they do, certainly paid off.

The ETS Competence Model

Quite some participants did not know (well) the ETS Competence Model for Trainers or were not familiar with Trainers Competences. Trainers think that it has been communicated well in advance, but still many did not know. This has been a challenge for the team. Participants all received a pack from SALTO T&C RC, with publications, the Competence posters and cards. The 'Holding your Aces' cards were used immediately in the sessions and were very useful.

Self-Directed Learning

Quite some participants were not familiar with the concept of self-directed learning and have not really experienced this. Trainers think that it is good to have offered this to participants for that reason. As this Trainer's Skills Workshop is so short, and all participants have different learning needs, the team believes that self-directed spaces work very well and they would recommend it to future TSW's.

Including participants methods and tools

The team decided to propose and share many methods and include many of the participants' methods, so the programme was filled with 'reflection appetisers'. Trainers were transparent about this approach, knowing that this would bring a broad range of reflection tools and methods, that speak to different learning styles, using different senses and different part of the brain. Participants were invited to explore some of those in the Reflection-360°, so it was their own decision to explore many or explore one more deeply. Participants felt engaged and their inputs were enriching and added to the quality of the TSW.

Duration of the Trainer's Skills Workshop

2,5 days is very challenging and it is tempting to fill the days and evenings. It was packed, the first 2 evenings had programme, last evening not. Trainers felt it was doable to include many elements and aspects of the topic. They managed to get everything in what they wanted and more. The negative side is, that they provide appetisers, rather than opportunities to explore, hoping that participants will take it on in their own practices. The SDL afternoon gave the opportunity for people to decide for themselves how much they want to invest. The team can recommend this for future TSW's.



Support

Trainer team felt very supported by both Peter Pieters from Dutch NA for Erasmus+ Youth and Gisèle Evrard Markovic from SALTO T&C RC. Directions and expectations were communicated well, but trainers also got the freedom to 'sculpt' the programme with their own approach. Trainer wants to express their gratitude for this support.

Trainers felt supported by each other and cooperation was evaluated as very good, smooth and supportive. Trainers took time to reflect on the teamwork and evaluate it during and after the TSW. We are proud of the work done and satisfied with the results so far.



ANNEXES

- ❑ Link to annex 1: [Programme for participants](#)
- ❑ Link to annex 2: [List of participants](#)

CREDITS

Pictures in this report, have been made by Joanna Wrońska and Gabi Steinprinz. The picture on page 10 has been made by Mirijam Endres.

