

TEACHING NOTE

«Facilitate entry

into learning and work»

Facilitating access to learning

programs and labor market

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Keywords:

Professionalize the process of labour market orientation and access; interaction with clients, facilitating continuing education and learning; establishing a baseline based on a needs analysis; providing clients with holistic support; facilitate the process towards employment; the temporality of counselling, and process management.

Competence: «Facilitate entry into learning and work»

According to CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) employment services need to be 'fit-for-purpose', so that the new interface for employment services is one that can support and progress those with wide-ranging and sometimes complex requirements. Within this context, CEDEFOP notes that guidance practitioners (careers advisors) need to be equipped with the appropriate skills, knowledge and aptitude/attitude to ensure labour market access and progression is facilitated.

The competence in this case study is to facilitate access to training or employment. Considered a core competence, the guidance practitioner (careers advisor), requires this competence to enable and empower the individual in achieving their integration into the labour market. Therefore, the competence is directly related to the interactions between the guidance practitioner and the client.

According to CEDEFOP the main capabilities of this competence can be broken down as follows:

- › Agreement on placement or vocational training options for the client;
- › Advise and support the preparation of applications,
- › Promote learning from experiences.

Summary

This case study was conceived as a tool to explore and better understand the reality of a guidance practitioner (advisor's) job. It can be used to develop the competence of advice and guidance professionals working at different levels and within different contexts.

The case study traces the day-to-day work of a guidance practitioner (advisor) in Mission Locale and explores two particular case study stories. Both stories are 'real-life' events and each present a situation that require different support and decision-making processes. Although faced with some challenges, the first story is one that demonstrates how a successful outcome can be achieved by employing a process of reflection and facilitation. The second story does not result in a positive outcome and questions the professional choices and strategies of the guidance practitioner (advisor).

Both of the case study stories offer an interesting basis for discussion with guidance practitioners by questioning the professional choices and decisions of the advisor in Mission Locale. As a learning tool, it can be used to explore the reality of the guidance practitioners (advisors) in organisations similar to Mission Locale, and those mainly working with NEET young people.

Teaching Objectives

The case study facilitates peer-to-peer learning between guidance practitioners and encourages discussion and reflection on the competence of “Facilitate entry into learning and work”

The aims of the case study are:

- › To encourage debate among guidance practitioners regarding the skills related to this competence.
- › To use the case study stories to encourage discussion on the importance of the “learning to learn” concept (see Annex 2).
- › To use the case study stories to explore the meaning of helping clients to “take ownership” of their route into learning and work.
- › To share good practice and tools related to this competence and to think about both internal and external resources.
- › To explore methods and tools that help identify needs and obstacles in order to “recognize and solve” and help the client overcome barriers to entering learning and work.
- › To exchange and explore effective and creative practice.

Discussion Questions

- › What methods can be used to interact with beneficiaries?
- › What methods can be used to gain the confidence of the beneficiaries so they can speak freely and unveil their desire and interests?
- › Do you think that the tools and methods used by Paolo in both situations are appropriate? Would you have approached each situation differently?
- › Is it more efficient to work individually or in a group with clients? In which part of the counselling process does “facilitate the entry into training or employment” seem more effective?
- › How do you evaluate if a client is ready to start training or to start a job? You might want to consider how you would have assessed Mehdi’s and Omar’s situation?
- › How would you empower Mehdi and Omar and help them to be proactive in their integration into training and work? You might want to consider how you support similar clients to take ownership of their situation?
- › What are the key transition phases within the counselling process, and how do you promote and maintain positive dynamics, especially with clients in similar situations experienced by Mehdi and Omar?
- › What methods, tools or criteria could be used for detecting/measuring the client’s distance from the labour market? You might want to consider what tools/approaches that could be used identify the interests and to test the motivation of beneficiaries? (see cognitive abilities) Were any of these tools or approaches used by Paolo?
- › What methods, tools and/or approaches could be used to set realistic and motivating goals for those, like Mehdi and Omar, who have very few short-term options? How do you ensure that their ‘real-life’ options are respected and/or taken into consideration?
- › Do you agree with Paolo’s professional choice regarding Mehdi and Omar? What would you have changed in the counselling process?
- › As a fellow practitioner, how would you advise Paolo to continue the support he provides to Omar? Should he listen to Omar’s mother?
- › Should there be a holistic approach taken when coaching clients such as Mehdi and Omar? If so, why?

Target group

Guidance practitioners (e.g. providers of information, advice and guidance and employability support) with different levels and types of experience (including those supporting diverse target groups) and from a variety of organizations and fields of work.

Teaching Approach

Story 1 Mehdi

Suggested Method No 1:

Discussion in larger and smaller group:

Participants are asked to read the case study story with a view to identifying the competences used by the guidance practitioner in the story. Participants should be given the opportunity to ask questions and/or seek clarification on their understanding of the case study story before moving onto one of the following two tasks—each task provides a slightly different approach to exploring the story.

Option (1) Large → Group

All participants individually write up (on post-it notes) the skills, abilities and competences they have identified. Each individual is then asked to reflect on their own skills, abilities and competences and compare them with those that they've identified, and should be encouraged to make a comparison between the case study story work environment, and their own. Each participant is then asked to reflect upon possible areas for improvements that could be made at each step of the case study story.

Option (2) → Small Groups

In small groups, participants are encouraged to make and present an analysis of the strategy used and choices that Paolo made, and will be encouraged to discuss their professional point of view. This will encourage those from different environments and those working at different levels to exchange experiences and opinions. The individual groups will be encouraged to formulate an 'action plan' that sets out the sequence of support that they would provide if Mehdi was their client. A plenary presentation will close the session with the aim of linking skills and solutions.

Suggested Method No 2:

"Moving debate" (See Annex 3)

Using the "moving debate" strategy, an animation tool that makes public speaking easier in a group setting.

The role of the facilitator/trainer will be to tell the story. At each key moment in the story, the facilitator/trainer asks the participants to physically position themselves in the room: on one side, those who agree with what is said, and on the other side, those who don't. Nobody has the right to stay in the middle (without opinion), the compulsory choice between "agree" and "don't agree" encourages everyone to decide and present an argument. Once everyone has chosen his/her side, the facilitator asks one person in each group to explain his/her choice and to link it to his/her professional background.

If there is a challenge/difference of opinion or an agreement with the statement being made (from the opposite group) it is considered as valid and this person can change groups. Then the facilitator keeps on reading the story until the next key moment, and the process is repeated.

Story 2 Omar:

Suggested Method No 1:

In small groups, the participants discuss the case study and particularly the approach and methods used by Paolo; the group should be encouraged to explore and explain what they would have done differently. Once a group have agreed, their next task is to find a common strategy and to “rewrite” and act out the story. At the end of the exercise/ task, the group will explain their choice of tools, methods and approach, and will present skills that will be used to help improve the outcome for Omar.

This method is particularly useful for a peer-to-peer learning environment when guidance practitioners are from wide-ranging environments and/or operating at different levels, as the analytical observation will differ for each group; this should stimulate a dynamic debate.

Suggested Method No 2:

Encouraging all participants to take part, the method of “Theatre Forum” or “Role Play” will enable guidance practitioners to play the roles of Paolo, Omar, his brother, and his mother. Those not taking part in the theatre forum/role play will be assigned roles as “observers”.

The observers will have an important analytical role and will need to note/record elements regarding culture, context, interests, values, and how the participants overcome obstacles together; and make note of which skills are developed, as-well-as recording the value of the role play.

Annex 1: Mission Locale (ML)

Mission Locale was created in France in 1982 to promote the social and employment integration for young people between 16 to 25 years old¹. It operates in a field that includes an orientation/initiation phase; welcoming, information and guidance; training and education level upgrading, employment and creation of professional partnerships. Proactive in local development, it contributes to the development and implementation of professional and social integration policies. Further, provides clients with holistic support that includes access to advice and support in the following areas: Healthcare, Housing, Training, Professional Guidance, Culture, Leisure, and access to learning and employment.

Mission Locale is dedicated to providing each client (between 16 and 25 years old) personalised and tailored support that is appropriate to his/her education level, needs, and socio-economic background.

Guidance practitioners (advisors) employed by Mission Locale come from wide-ranging professional backgrounds, which results in a client-led service that offers face-to-face interviews, group workshops led by sector-based professionals, skills and guidance assessments, education level upgrading, tutoring/mentoring, and meetings with professionals. Each guidance practitioner is required to be creative in their practice and constantly review their methods and approach to ensure that their exchange with clients is both dynamic and motivational.

Mission Locale is driven by a Policy Charter and code of conduct that contains four main principles, as follows:

- › a willingness to work in the whole territory
- › a global activity to serve young people
- › a space for initiative and innovation
- › an approach to construct local policies for youth integration and local development.

The purpose of Mission Locale is to create, facilitate and support a network of public, private or associative organizations, enabling them to offer a wide and complete range of support to young people. By working in collaboration diverse initiatives addressing disadvantage, discrimination and equality of opportunity, including gender equality, for young people are developed and delivered.. Mission Locale also collaborates with organisations concerned with integrating those newly arrived (refugees and migrants), and particularly those young people experiencing integration challenges including personal and family issues where access to confidential medical help and access to psychologists can be provided.

The willingness to work together has enabled links to be established between the national, regional, departmental and local levels providing national coherency regarding youth integration.

¹ 60% of young people coming to ML are considered as NEET (they left school with no qualification or with no more than a vocational certificate; they were unemployed for more than half of the first three years of their working lives).

Annex 2: “Learning to Learn” Concept

As defined in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2006/962/EC):

‘Learning to learn’ is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organize one’s own learning. This competence includes awareness of one’s learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully.

Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence.

In all cases, learning to learn requires an individual to know and understand his/her preferred learning strategies, the strengths and weaknesses of his/her skills and qualifications, and to be able to search for the education and training opportunities and guidance and/or support available.

Learning to learn skills require firstly the acquisition of the fundamental basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that are necessary for further learning. Building on these skills, an individual should be able to access, gain, process and assimilate new knowledge and skills. This requires effective management of one’s learning, career and work patterns, and, in particular, the ability to persevere with learning, to concentrate for extended periods and to reflect critically on the purposes and aims of learning.

Annex 2: “Learning to Learn” Concept

Moving Debate is an activity that encourages learners to think about all sides of an argument.

- › Introduce the idea that at the beginning of a debate learners may be clear about whether he/she agrees or disagrees with a given statement
- › After all aspects of the issue are discussed learners may be persuaded to change his/her mind
- › It can identify the many complexities involved in human rights issues
- › It can include dialogue, debate and the resolving of conflict

The process:

- › Place two signs AGREE/DISAGREE on opposite sides of the room
- › Ask the learners to stand in the middle of the room
- › Tell them you are going to call out a statement
- › If they agree with the statement they must move to the agree sign
- › If they disagree with the statement they must move towards the disagree sign
- › They can persuade those standing at the opposite side to change positions by explaining to the group their ideas/opinions on the topic
- › If others agree with what is said they can move nearer the speaker

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