

# FACILITATING LEARNING CIRCLES

## Facilitator Handbook

### Part 2: Self-Learning

Authors:

Jacek Królikowski

Content editing:

Magdalena Jackiewicz

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# INTRODUCTION

This Facilitator Handbook was developed as part of the Learning Circles in Libraries project, oriented at making adult learning more organized, interactive and fun. The purpose of this handbook is to help facilitators understand how people acquire knowledge through self-learning, as well as how they learn from others, so that they could subsequently train facilitators in running their own Learning Circles. This manual will guide you at every step of the process.

*Facilitating Learning Circles - Facilitator Handbook* is composed of 4 parts. You are currently reading Part 2 which focuses on the concept of self-learning. We believe that every facilitator needs to first understand how to optimize their self-learning process before they can begin to train facilitators in running Learning Circles within their communities. To this end, the module invites participants to reflect on their experience with self-learning, optimizing the learning environment and planning the self-learning process. The manual offers the complete scenarios for every training session and includes practical handouts that you can print out and distribute to future facilitators during the sessions.

*Part 1: Learning About the Learning Circles* of this Facilitator Handbook brings the concept of learning circles closer through a complete course, designed as a learning circle. *Part 3: Facilitating Learning Circles* explores how to best facilitate Learning Circles and finally, *Part 4: Virtual Learning Circles* provides practical tips on running the Learning Circles online.

The Learning Circles in Libraries project is a collaboration of 6 institutions: Information Society Development Foundation (Poland), Stadtbibliothek Koeln (Germany), Suomen eOppimiskeskus ry (Finland), Biblioteca Lúcio Craveiro da Silva (Portugal), Fundatia Progress (Romania) and Peer 2 Peer University (USA). It is implemented as part of the Erasmus+ program, administered by the European Commission.

## How to use this book

The *Part 2: Self-Learning of the Facilitating Learning Circles: Facilitator Handbook* can be run as a Learning Circle and will be an added value for future facilitators. The program is composed of five 90-minute sessions.

There are a number of handouts to accompany every session, designed to elevate the learning process. You will find them at the end of each session. Feel free to print them out and distribute among students of every Learning Circle that you run.

The Handbook contains a number of links to online materials that can be helpful at every stage of the training program. By using the digital version of this Handbook only, you will be able to access those resources easily and save a lot of trees.

# SELF-LEARNING - WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

*"After you finish school, you'll never again have someone giving you homework. And while you probably spent many years looking forward to that, it's important to realize that learning is a big part of what makes life interesting. When your learning is self-directed, it can be a lot more fun than school was. You were given a large brain for a reason. Use it."*

[Why Great People Never Stop Learning](#) by Erin Falconer

Most adults have to learn on their own after they accomplish formal education. It is necessary for their personal and professional development, as well as civic engagement. Non-formal education offered especially in some countries e.g. Poland a Romania is rather limited and focused on some formal aspects of professional career e.g. when certificates are required by employers (see the White Paper developed in the frame of this project). At the same time, formal education does not prepare students to be learners. They are not taught how to learn. As a result a lot of adults don't have sufficient competencies to use learning tools offered e.g. on the internet. The goal of this Module is to help participants to become more effective self-learners. This module is complementary to the module focused on set up of the learning circles in libraries but could be also used as an autonomous course for other library users.

## Where to start?

The sessions are designed primarily for the Learning Circle members. However, you may also run them for other library users who would like to:

- Know more on how they learn
- Share experience on learning with others
- Check if approaches / learning methods used by others work for them
- Be more effective self-learners

Everyone must learn all the time. However, some people may think that learning takes place in school or in the library during the courses run by librarians and other educators. In fact, most of the time we learn individually, sometimes with little help from friends or family members. For example if we get a new mobile phone, we have to learn how to use it. Some people use written instructions, others prefer to watch tutorials on You Tube or simply ask someone who has the same device. Those who are going to go on holiday have to learn how to buy tickets, what hotels are available on the spot, which tourist attractions are worth visiting etc. It's all about learning. That's the message you may use when explaining why library users should attend the sessions.

The sessions that make up the module cover the most important issues related to self-learning, so the best option is to run all of them. However, it is also possible to run selected sessions only. It's up to you to make a choice regarding e.g. what participants need most.

In order to prepare to run the sessions, you may take the following steps:

1. If you already participated in the training delivered in the frame of this project, remind yourself what you experienced, and read notes from Reflection Diary.
2. If you have already recruited participants, think about their needs, interests, educational experiences etc. All tips below should be considered in relation to what you think fits a given group. Take your own experience as a participant of the training delivered in the frame of this project into consideration. It's a huge advantage to know some key issues about the group members before the training. For example if you know their profession or hobby you may help them to choose what they would like to learn (Session 4). However, if you recruit participants after studying the manual, you may have better ideas on how to promote the training and explain why it will be beneficial for them, especially if you didn't attend the training delivered in the frame of this project.
3. Read all parts of the manual. Make notes in order to remember the parts that were most important for you and to better understand concepts. Make sure you understand everything. In case of doubts, think with whom

you may talk about it (other librarians, friends, educators available online if you are a member of any professional circles).

4. Check the proposed training methods. If you don't feel comfortable with any of them, think about alternatives. Take advantage of your experience as a trainer/educator. Remember that goals of the session can be achieved in different ways.
5. Check all the proposed online resources. As above, if you think you know resources that would be more relevant to a given group, feel free to use them.
6. Make a list of other training materials you need to run the sessions: flipcharts, markers, post etc. Make copies of handouts for each participant.
7. Read the guide "How to run the session – a 5-step guide" once again. If you prefer, you may re-write the proposed sequence of activities, rearrange it or simply express it in your own language. It is up to you how to run the session - you know better how to proceed to make yourself comfortable.
8. If it is possible, run one session for a group of your colleagues, librarians or friends, to check if everything (including timing of particular exercises) works well. If you can't arrange such a "pilot" session, explain to the participants that you are running this session for the first time and ask them for extra feedback at the end. That would be a practical application of the approach "learn from experience" and "learn from mistakes".
9. Reflect carefully on the first training. See what you can improve based on your own observations, and feedback from participants.

## Use your experience as a self-learner

We suggest you refer to your personal experience in learning during all sessions. When some examples are required, use your own e.g. *"I can tell you my experience from learning Spanish using some e-learning courses"*, *"When I plan to write a paper I usually start with ..."*, *"My biggest trouble when learning alone is ..."* etc. Don't hesitate to mention successes as well as failures. Such an approach will encourage participants to be honest when sharing their

experiences. As a result you will model some behaviors and attitudes of the effective self-learner, including learning from one's mistakes.

## Our approach to the concept of the learning styles

Many books, articles and training manuals, especially developed in the nineties, refer to the concept of learning styles. Considering that some of the training participants may refer to this concept, it is important to explain our approach to it. It seems that learning styles refer to the ways people memorize knowledge rather than learn. Learning is much more complex and includes the process leading to understanding (construct meaning), not only memorization. The recent research shows that there is no relation between the way people acquire knowledge and results of learning. In short, it is explained in [this video](#) by [Tesia Marshik](#). Some worth-reading research includes:

### [Learning Styles - concepts and evidence](#)

“The contrast between the enormous popularity of the learning-styles approach within education and the lack of credible evidence for its utility is, in our opinion, striking and disturbing. If classification of students’ learning styles has practical utility, it remains to be demonstrated.”

### [Matching Learning Style to Instructional Method: Effects on Comprehension](#)

“While it is hypothesized that providing instruction based on individuals’ preferred learning styles improves learning (i.e., reading for visual learners and listening for auditory learners, also referred to as the meshing hypothesis), after a critical review of the literature Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, and Bjork (2008) concluded that this hypothesis lacks empirical evidence and subsequently described the experimental design needed to evaluate the meshing hypothesis. Following the design of Pashler et al., we empirically investigated the effect of learning style preference with college-educated adults, specifically as applied to (a) verbal comprehension aptitude (listening or reading) and (b) learning based on mode of instruction (digital audiobook or e-text). First, participants’ auditory and visual learning style preferences were established based on a standardized



adult learning style inventory. Participants were then given a verbal comprehension aptitude test in both oral and written forms. Results failed to show a statistically significant relationship between learning style preference (auditory, visual word) and learning aptitude (listening comprehension, reading comprehension). Second, participants were randomly assigned to 1 of 2 groups that received the same instructional material from a nonfiction book, but each in a different instructional mode (digital audiobook, e-text), and then completed a written comprehension test immediately and after 2 weeks. Results demonstrated no statistically significant relationship between learning style preference (auditory, visual word) and instructional method (audiobook, e-text) for either immediate or delayed comprehension tests. Taken together, the results of our investigation failed to statistically support the meshing hypothesis either for verbal comprehension aptitude or learning based on mode of instruction (digital audiobook, e-text)."

That is why we don't use the concept of the learning styles in this module. We just help people to understand how they learn in the most effective way (understand, create meaning of concepts), and propose several self-learning methods that fit their routine but also require a little bit of experimentation. To an extent, we follow Daniel Willingham's approach: "[Everyone is able to think in words, everyone is able to think in mental images. It's much better to think of everyone having a toolbox of ways to think, and think to yourself, which tool is best?](#)"

## MODULE 1. MY EXPERIENCE WITH SELF-LEARNING

### Goals of the session

Everyone has some experience as an individual learner. This session is based on that experience - helping participants to recall it, and reflect on how the process

of learning went. In this way, we set up the foundation for deeper reflection during the next sessions.

After this session participants will:

- know each other,
- know the goals of the whole module, assumptions related to the concept of learning and logic of all sessions,
- know the rules supporting learning set up by them,
- be aware what learning means to them and other group members,
- start their reflection on how they learn based on recent experience,
- be aware that people may learn in different ways, using different approaches, strategies, and methods.

## Running session 1 - a step-by step guide

OVERALL DURATION: 90'

### STEP 1: INTRODUCTION - 10' - depending on the number of participants

Greet the participants. Remind them that during the next five sessions they will spend 8,5 hours as a group. Explain that the whole process of communication and learning will go smoother if they know something about each other. Ask everyone to introduce themselves by name, profession and hobby / interests, and favourite way they use the internet. In order to give an example start with yourself.

*> You may use another method to let participants know each other, something you like, something that proved to be effective with similar groups. However the purpose of asking about hobby / interest and profession is to refer to the issues which may inspire them when thinking about what they have learned recently (Exercise 1 in this session) or what they would like to learn in near future (Exercise ..., Session 4.). Usually such issues are related to personal hobby / interest or professional needs. Question on favorite way to use internet make you some initial idea about participants' digital skills, what is important in the context of further sessions (participants will be asked to use some of them) and their further education after completion of the module or between the sessions (if the module is delivered with some breaks between the sessions).*

## STEP 2. PARTICIPANTS' EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS OF THE MODULE - 10'

Ask people what they expect from this module or if they have any idea on what the module on "self-learning" is about. Refer to expectations explaining what is/what is not in the scope of the sessions. If possible, help those who have expectations out of the scope of these sessions to find relevant resources / learning opportunities.

You may also ask participants about their motivation: why did they decide to participate in the sessions?

Explain the goals of the module in your own words. Refer to the goals of particular session shortening them e.g. to the following sequence:

You will learn:

- what helps, what disturbs your learning,
- how to set up supporting learning environment,
- what methods are most effective for you,
- how to plan your learning,
- how to look for support from the family members / friends and make this help effective.

Make sure that participants understand these goals. Answer their questions if needed.

*> Participants may have different expectations / ideas about the content / goals of the sessions. It may depend on their previous experience with training courses or their basic knowledge of the concepts used in your introductory statement e.g. self-learning, learning environment etc. At that stage you should explain these concepts in general terms to maintain their initial motivation and encourage them to build deeper understanding during the sessions.*

*This course has a limited number of sessions and obviously cannot cover everything that is related to self-learning. That's why you can't respond to all participants' expectations but you can, if possible, to help them to find additional resources / learning opportunities e.g. online courses and tools.*

*If you decide to ask for participant's motivation be ready for answers like "because my friend asked me to join". Even then this seemingly irrelevant motivation may be changed*

*during the sessions when people will get involved. In other words people may start with different intentions, but you as a trainer still have a chance to make them interested in the content of the course.*

## STEP 2.A: TRAINING CONTRACT WITH THE GROUP (OPTIONAL) - 15', only if this group meets first time

If this module is delivered to the group that haven't met before to study other modules, it is highly recommended to set up some rules together with all participants. Use the following steps:

1. Ask participants to recall the situations when they learned something working in a group and at the same time felt safe and supported by the trainer and other participants. Give them 1-2' to reflect.
2. Ask participants what specific behaviours made recalled learning experience effective, safe and supportive. Let them express this behaviour in the form of the rules for these groups (e.g. *"I liked that I could really speak up"* = *"I propose as rule for our group to let all participants to speak up"*).
3. Make a list of proposed rules on flipchart. Clarify if needed and ask additional questions (e.g. *When you say that "all participants should be able to speak up" do you mean that everybody should have a right to speak as long as she / he wants to?"*)
4. After writing down all proposed rules, ask participants if they agree to keep it as rules for this module. Make changes if needed e.g. if someone proposes some corrections which all other participants support.
5. Put the list (contract) on the wall in a visible place.

Explain briefly the reasons for setting up the contract. Ask participants what their opinion is on that. Do they plan to set up contracts with the participants of the modules they will deliver as facilitators? If so, underline that now they have a chance to experience how the contract works between group members, so they can use this experience to better understand the perspective of their future trainees. Ask them to observe how the contract works during all sessions.

> *If you know other effective and already checked ways to set up the contract, follow your experience.*

*Remember that the role of the contract is to:*

- *Make participants feel safe. Knowing the rules dictates the behaviors that are allowed / expected,*
- *Create environment that supports learning,*
- *Share responsibility for learning between trainers and participants. When participants' behaviour disturbs learning, the trainer may refer to the commonly set up and accepted rules, not only to his / her personal authority.*

### STEP 3. WHAT LEARNING MEANS TO US? - 20'

This module is about self-learning, so it's good to spend some time on the meaning of the concept of "learning". Ask participants to talk in pairs for 5 minutes. What does the concept of "learning" mean to them? What does it mean to "learn" something? Ask each pair to report briefly about conclusions they came to. Write down answers on a flip chart. Make sure you understand correctly what participants mean. Ask questions to clarify if needed. Avoid imposing your meaning. At the end, comment on what was written on the flipchart, pointing out similarities and differences e.g. some of the meanings may refer to the new knowledge, other to practical skills or change in attitudes.

Explain the basic assumptions on learning adopted in this module:

- Underline the role of experience as starting point in the learning process,
- Make sure participants understand the role of reflection on experience, when they try to understand what happened,
- Explain that new knowledge, skills and attitudes are better understood in the context of already existing knowledge, and in that way their personal meaning of experience is discovered and internalized, and, finally, that this new meaning is applied in real situations creating the new experience.

Underline that to learn something doesn't mean just to REMEMBER or to MEMORIZE, but to UNDERSTAND concepts and to make them MEANINGFUL in the context of experiences to date ("new" knowledge has to be related to

“existing” knowledge in order to be meaningful). People have different experiences and their meaning of concepts may differ. It’s like in the previous exercise when participants discussed their understanding of “learning”, they discovered that what they mean by those concepts may be at least partially different.

Ask participants how they learn and write down their answers on a flipchart. We may expect answers like: reading books, watching videos, listening to others (presentations, informal conversations), participating in courses organized by the library, asking others to demonstrate something (e.g. how to use a given tool) etc. Point out that people learn in different ways. Sometimes we may have a chance to select the way we learn, sometimes not. That’s why it’s advised to experiment with learning methods we haven’t used up to now. If you want, you may use the following [quotation by Daniel Willingham](#) to support your statements:

*"Everyone is able to think in words, everyone is able to think in mental images. It's much better to think of everyone having a toolbox of ways to think, and think to yourself, which tool is best?"*

Or the following [by Caroline Lawless](#):

*"The key is to give learners access to the whole toolbox that's available to them instead of confining them to one type of learning, even if it may be their favorite one. By combining different learning styles and repeating the most important information in a variety of ways, you reinforce your materials in your learners' minds and give them the strongest chance of remembering their training and putting it into practice effectively."*

Explain that in this module participants will share experience on how they learn and how they can improve their learning. They will be asked to use some digital tools as well, because the internet is a great source of tools each learner can use to support their learning.

If participants refer to the concept of "learning styles," please use suggestions from "Comments for trainers regarding the whole module". Briefly explain why we don't use this concept, and encourage them to read relevant articles or watch a video.

*> This is the first session of the module. Participants just get to know each other (assuming that they didn't know each other before). They need some time to feel safe in the group. That's why in the first exercise we ask them to talk in pairs, which is safer than speaking on the forum of the whole group.*

*For the same reason, when asking participants to share "how they learn" on the forum, at first let's speak to volunteers, and in case there are people who have not participated, ask them if they would like to contribute (but not push them to do it). Sometimes at the beginning of the module some people prefer to be asked to speak.*

*Referring to the issue of "learning styles" it's not your role to convince participants to skip the concept. Simply explain why it's not used in this module and encourage me to read / watch resources on that subject. It's enough if you explain that despite "one's preferred learning style," we don't always have a chance to learn in the way we think we like (e.g. if you decide to attend the lecture you have to listen to the lecturer, however it is up to you how you make notes), and it's always good to experiment with learning methods we haven't tried so far). See Tesia Marshik's TEDx speech on the controversies around the concept of the learning styles included in "Recommended online resources".*

#### STEP 4. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH SELF-LEARNING

40' or 25' if you took step 2.A.

Let participants reflect on their experience with self-learning. Ask them to think individually for 3-5 minutes about something they have learned recently on their own, or with little help from the family members or friends. Underline that it must be something important, something they are proud of. Then distribute Handout 2. Ask everyone to answer the questions, and reflect on the recalled learning experience. Give about 10 minutes for this part. Then ask participants to talk in groups of three about the results of self-reflection: e.g. each person talks briefly (up to 5 min.) what she / he learned and how this process went (answers to the questions 2-10 from Handout 2). Encourage group members to ask questions if something is not clear, or if they are interested in something in particular.

After this, ask all participants to briefly say on the forum how the way they learn is similar and/or different to the way others learn, and what they consider especially interesting in the approach of others to learning (e.g. learning methods, what helps and what disturbs learning etc.).

Comment briefly on the above exercise underlining that people may learn in different ways, but it is always worth testing some new methods or approaches and see if it works for us.

*> This step is very important because it refers to the participants' experience with self-learning, which is the clue of the whole module. All other sessions build up on that experience, extending key aspects: supportive learning environment, learning methods, planning and looking for external support. Make sure you allocate enough time for this Step. If you are not sure you can make it, skip or shorten Step 3.*

#### STEP 5. REFLECTION DIARY - 5'

Distribute the "Reflection Diary" (Handout 2) and explain its role for participants referring to what you have previously said on the role of reflection in learning: *"Reflection Diary will help you to write down your reflection on how you learn, what helps and what disturbs your learning etc. In that way it contributes to the improvement of your learning."* Tell participants that what they write down depends on them, as well as decide if they want to share it with others, including the trainer. Explain that at the end of each session they will have 5 minutes to write down their reflections.

Say that those who prefer to use the "Reflection Diary" in digital form may be provided with relevant files or links by mail.

Since the participants' role will be to deliver similar modules to the Learning Circles members or other library users, underline that their reflection must be also focused on that role. They should think how they would run particular sessions to their target group: What would they change? What may not work with the people they probably know as library users?



Ask participants to spend 5 minutes answering questions for Session 1 in their "Reflection Diary".

> *"Reflection Diary" is basically for self-reflection, which means individual work, but if some participants need to talk about their reflection with others, let them do that, remembering that those working individually may require silence to be focused. Use this opportunity to point out that people may need a different environment for efficient self-reflection. Use this approach in all other sessions. You may also use a similar tool for your self-reflection as a supertrainer, making notes about how the sessions went in general, what worked, what should be improved etc. See also video on critical writing included in "Recommended online resources".*

## STEP 6. ONLINE RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPANTS

5' min

Recommend some online resources for participants to let them deepen specific issues and continue their learning. Point out the special importance of online resources for self-learning. Encourage participants to exchange resources they know and consider as useful or interesting.

> *You may use online resources recommended in this manual but it's even better if you recommend some tools you personally consider valuable.*

## Handout 1. Questions for self-reflection

1. What have I learned recently (knowledge, skill, attitude) on my own or with little help from family members/friends?
2. Why was I selected for the given issue (knowledge, concept, skill) to learn? What inspired/motivated me to make this choice? What was interesting in it? Why was it important? What was the goal of my learning? Did this goal change during the learning process?
3. What did you know about that issue before?
4. How did I learn it? What did the process look like? What methods did I use (reading books/articles, graphs, websites, videos, tutorials, e-learning courses, chats with friends, audio materials, practicing some manual skills etc.)?
5. What kind of online tools I used to support my learning? How important were these tools in the whole process?
6. How much time did it take me to complete this process? Did I learn every day or with breaks?
7. What helped me to learn? How?
8. What disturbed my learning? Was I able to manage this disturbance? What "yes", what "not"? How?
9. How long did it take me to complete learning?
10. Did I ask/get any support from others (friends, librarians, family etc.)? If yes, who and how provided this support? Did it work well? What could be done better?
11. Did I achieve everything I planned? If not, why?
12. How I benefited from achieving results of my learning?

## Handout 2. Reflection diary

My name:

### **Session 1**

1. Key findings on my learning taken from the exercise:

a)

b)

c)

2. One thing I learned and I am ready to apply during the next sessions:

3. Other issues worth to remember for me as learner:

4. What I would change in the subject and methods of this session to make it more relevant to the library users I know from my experience as librarian:

5. Other issues worth to remember for me as facilitator:

## **Session 2**

1. Which elements of the environment support my learning, which disturb me?
2. What is the most disturbing factor? How can I deal with it?
3. What helps me to stay motivated?
4. Taking advantage of the exercise on motivation, what new ideas on how to motivate myself I consider as worth trying?
5. Other issues worth to remember for me as learner:
6. What I would change in the subject and methods of this session to make it more relevant to the library users I know from my experience as librarian:
7. Other issues worth to remember for me as facilitator:



## **Session 4**

1. Attach the results of your work to this sheet: vision of success, goals, mind map with steps in learning and deadlines. Write down 1-3 things you liked from the process of developing these elements of learning plan, and 1-3 things you think need improvement:

I liked:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Needs improvement:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

2. Other issues worth to remember for me as learner:

3. What I would change in the subject and methods of this session to make it more relevant to the library users I know from my experience as librarian:

4. Other issues worth to remember for me as facilitator:

## **Session 5**

1. What is most difficult for me when I learn alone? What are the most relevant experiences / ideas shared by other group members during Exercise 1.?
2. What partner's behaviors are especially helpful for me when talking about my problems related to learning / behaviors I may ask for my partner:
3. What behaviors my partner liked when we talked in pairs about his problems with learning:
4. Other issues worth to remember for me as learner:
5. What I would change in the subject and methods of this session to make it more relevant to the library users I know from my experience as librarian:
6. Other issues worth to remember for me as facilitator:

# SESSION 2. SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

## Goals of the session

Learning takes place in a given environment. For each individual, some elements of the environment may support learning, for others - they may disturb it. It is similar with motivation, its internal and external aspects. This session will help participants to recognize what supports their learning, and actively shape the environment and influence motivation to be more effective learners.

After this session, participants will:

- know what is a learning environment,
- be more aware of what support and what disturb their learning,
- have some ideas how to improve their learning environment,
- be ready to implement this ideas during the sessions and then in everyday life,
- know what motivates them to learn.

## Running Session 2 – a step-by step guide

OVERALL DURATION: 90'

### STEP 1. WHAT ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS MY LEARNING? - 45'

Start with a short exercise that demonstrates what it means to be focused/concentrated. Ask participants to stay silent for 1 minute and be focused on sounds around. Then ask them what sounds they heard? Did they hear any sounds they hadn't heard before?

Comment briefly that in this exercise they experienced what it means to stay focused. It required some special effort but at the same time it showed that they



may do something to reach this state of mind. Being focused helps in learning and may be part of the learning environment.

Explain to participants that the word “environment” means in this context everything that is around us during learning. That includes space, furniture, sounds, colors, interaction with others etc. It’s everything we see, hear, touch, think and feel in a given learning place - everything that influences our self-learning. Some elements of the environment may support while others may disturb learning of given individuals. Some of them might be a “physical” part of the room e.g. chairs, some others exist in our thoughts e.g. if I have some personal problems I think about, it ruins my concentration and makes me unfocused.

Ask participants what supports/disturbs their learning in the training room you’re in. You may ask everyone to mention at least one thing or just let a few random answers from volunteers. The reason for this question is to support the definition of “environment” by some additional examples.

Split participants into groups of three. Distribute Handout 1. My Learning Environment – Checklist. Ask each sub-group to review the list of questions included in the Handout. Participants may just read questions one after another and briefly talk about what works for each of them. If you think it’s workable, you may let participants make choices about the method, assuming the ultimate goal is to let everyone speak up in the context of each question. After about 20 minutes, ask sub-groups to report briefly focusing on similarities and differences in the learning environment that supports and/or disturbs their learning.

Then ask participants to continue work in sub-groups and complete the following steps:

- Each person selects one element of the environment that seems to be especially disturbing for them e.g. *I like silence when I learn, but it is difficult for me to find a silent place for learning...*
- One person at a time explains what is the nature of that element/disturbance.

- Two other group members brainstorm trying to develop ideas how to overcome this disturbing element.
- Recipients provide short feedback on ideas e.g. which one sounds especially interesting, what seems really possible to implement etc. and thanks colleagues for support.

Sum up this exercise pointing out that different elements of the learning environment work for different people and sometimes we can do something to make this environment more supportive.

*> At this stage of the module, you may ask participants to split into sub-groups consisting of different members than in the previous exercise. Explain that it lets them get to know other participants, and benefit from their experiences. Use this opportunity to underline that the advantage of group learning is that we can learn from others, and each person – as it was said at the beginning of the first session – has a different experience we can benefit from. This explanation may let participants accept your proposal and overcome inclination to work with the same group members, which might be considered by them as easier and safer. You may also point out that sometimes in order to learn something we have to risk a little, or step outside our comfort zone.*

Step 2. What motivates me to learn? - 40'

Ask participants what "motivation" means to them. Try to clarify or ask additional questions to deepen their understanding of this concept. Sum up, pointing out that motivation is a state of mind that drives us to do something. That's why motivation supports learning.

Explain that one of the theories on motivation divides factors that influence this state of mind on internal (related to my own feelings, convictions, self-esteem), and external (related to what other people do, and how informal and formal social structures influence my efforts). You may add that some people are more dependent on internal motivation, some others on internal, but basically all of us are influenced in different proportions by both internal and external factors.

Distribute Handout 2. Internal and External Motivation – what works for me? Ask participants to spend some time (5 minutes) and reflect which internal and external factors from the list are especially important for their motivation to learn, and how these factors work for them specifically e.g. *If they give themselves some award after completion of a given task, what award specifically do they mean?* Then ask them to talk about it in pairs.

Ask participants to reflect on how others' are dealing with motivation and check if there is any idea they could use to increase their own motivation for learning. Then encourage them to write it down in their "Reflection Diary" and start to experiment with this idea during the next sessions.

> *It is not important to develop a very sophisticated meaning of the concept of motivation. The goal of this introductory exercise is to make participants think about the concept and compare their views with opinions of others. If you think it is suitable for a given group, you may refer to the definition provided by one of the English Dictionary e.g. [Lexico](#).*

#### Step. 3. Reflection Diary - 5'

Ask participants to spend 5 minutes answering questions for Session 2 in their "Reflection Diary".

#### Step 4. Online resources for participants

Recommend some online resources for participants to let them deepen the issues tackled and and continue their learning. Point out the special importance of online resources for self-learning. Encourage participants to exchange resources they know and consider as useful or interesting.

> *You may use online resources recommended in this manual but it's even better if you recommend some tools you personally consider as valuable.*

## Online resources for participants

- [5 ways to listen better](#) by Julian Treasure
- [How to improve listening skill effectively?](#) animated video

## Handout 1. My best learning environment - checklist

- Sounds around: Do you like them? What sounds? Music? If so, what kind of music? If don't how can you separate from the noise? Headphones? Quiet places? What kind of?
- Interaction with others if you learn alone: am I able to ask others to not disturb when I am learning (piece of paper with information in the library: "I am learning now, please be calm!") – during the last session we will refer to the situation when you ASK OTHERS for help.
- Places: home (where?), library, coffee bar?, bus/tram/metro? Your car? Outside e.g. park, meadow close to the river etc.
- Some specific order in a given place e.g. do you clean your room/desk before learning?
- Which time of the day/night?
- Objects around: do you like some specific order? Have you rearranged your desk/room before?
- Food: do you eat something during learning?
- Do you like to change the way you learn from time to time e.g. learn for some time and then watch video?
- How often do you make breaks? What do you do during the breaks e.g. make coffee, physical exercise, take a walk etc.?

- Other habits: What kind? Share with others if you want ...

## Handout 2. Internal and external motivation - what works for me?

### **Examples of internal motivation:**

- Clear vision of success in something important for me
- Satisfaction from my own achievement/success
- Award I plan give to myself after completion of given task
- Decision on sequence of tasks e.g. some people prefer to start with easy one, some with most difficult
- Influence on decisions concerning what and how to learn
- Something else?

### **Examples of external motivation:**

- Appreciation and support from my friends, family or boss
- Formal awards/certificates e.g. delivered after completion of the given course
- Positive feedback from the group in which I learn
- Safe learning environment e.g. conviction that I will not be assessed by others
- Trust in the trainer and other group members
- Something else?

# SESSION 3. LEARNING METHODS THAT WORK FOR ME

## Goals of the session

People acquire knowledge by listening, watching, reading and writing or creating. During this session, participants reflect on how they learn from different sources. They also experience the value of teaching others as a learning method discovering principles of mind map.

After this session participants will:

- reflect on how they learn from different sources, and make it more effective,
- know learning methods used by other group members and be ready to test some of them,
- know principles of mind mapping and its practical application.

## How to run the session – a step-by step guide

OVERALL DURATION: 90 min

### STEP 1. STEPS IN MY LEARNING - 40'

Start the session by reminding the participants that all of them may need different environment and motivation factors to learn successfully. In this session they will reflect on how they learn, what strategies (approaches) and methods they use to learn something.

Prepare a few sets (depending on the number of participants) of post it cards and write down on each of it one of four typical ways of acquiring knowledge: (1) **Listening** – lectures, presentations, music, podcasts etc., (2) **Watching** – other people doing something, videos, movies, pictures etc., (3) **Reading** –

books, articles, blogs etc., (4) **Writing/creating** – a paper, presentation, graph etc.

Split participants into groups of four and ask each participant to pick one card randomly. Explain that each card represents one of four typical ways of learning: listening, watching, reading and writing/creating. Ask everyone to reflect how they learn using given type of source:

1. If they have to learn something from the lecture, what do they really do to learn a given topic?
2. What do they do to learn something using video?
3. What do they do to learn something by reading books or articles?
4. What does the process look like when they have to write a paper or create a presentation on a given topic?

Ask everyone to check if there is any difference in learning given concepts (theories, ideas etc.) and practical skills. Point out that the ultimate goal of learning is not only to understand something, but also to be able to do it e.g. you learn instruction how to put together furniture from IKEA in order to finally put this furniture together, not only to know the procedure. Explain that they should be prepared to explain results of reflection to other group members. In order to do that, they may prepare a short speech or presentation, make a scheme with the learning steps, create a drawing etc. After 10 minutes of reflection and preparation, each person in the group will have up to 5 minutes to explain how they learn. After that, participants will have about 5 minutes to comment on the presentation e.g. what they like about the given learning approach/procedure? What do they do similarly/differently?

Ask participants to tell on the forum of the group an example of one learning method they heard from others, and which they would like to test. Let them explain why they like the given method.

Distribute Handout 1. List of Learning Methods. Ask participants to spend about 5 minutes to review the list and underline with one colour the methods they use



quite often and with different colour methods they would like to try in near future. Check out if they have any questions. Finally, ask everyone to attach this list to the Reflection Diary.

*> The clue of this step is to make participants aware that people may learn in different ways even though they use similar ways to acquire knowledge. The role of the facilitator is to encourage them to constantly reflect on how they learn and what they can adapt from the approach of others to learning.*

## STEP 2. LEARNING BY TEACHING OTHERS - 45'

Split participants into groups of three. Distribute Handout 2. Learning about Mind Mapping, delivering randomly one version (A, B or C) to each group members, so in each group person 1 gets version A, person 2, version B, and Person 3 version C.

Ask participants to take the following steps (it is also included in the Handout, so they may look at it if they forget the instruction):

- **Step 1:** You are provided with different resources on the same subject: the mind map method. Respectively: read, listen and watch your resource. Those who use audio or audiovisual materials should use headphones.
- **Step 2:** Make notes in the way that works for you in order to understand key issues.
- **Step 3:** Because your role is to teach other group members about the mind map method, prepare relevant teaching methods and materials e.g. drawing, graph, scheme, key points for presentation etc. It is totally up to you how you are going to teach.
- **Step 4:** You have about 5 minutes to use your method/materials and teach other group members about the mind map method. Listen carefully to what other group members teach you about and refer to that in your teaching. Do not repeat what has already been said. You may point out that similar issues were in your resource but rather focus on what was

different: show different aspects of similar issues or use different examples.

- **Step 5:** When teaching is over, talk with other group members on how preparation for teaching looked like: What was difficult/easy about the resource you had to use? How did it fit the subject? How did you make notes to understand the issue? Why did you select a given teaching method? How did you prepare for teaching? How did you feel when teaching? What did you like about your teaching, and what would need to be improved? Ask other group members if they have any questions about what you said.
- **Step 6:** Thank other group members for this experience.

After the exercise, I pointed out that all group members participated in a very challenging process of fast learning and then teaching others. Ask each participant to say briefly on the forum of the group how they feel now, and what was the most important experience from the exercise for them personally. It is a time for each participant to talk freely, rather than time for questions or comments from others.

Summing up the session explains that teaching can be a good method of learning. When we prepare ourselves to teach others we have to be sure that we understand some issues deeply, and developing teaching methods we have to re-thing what is really important. Point out that the mind map method will be used during the next session, when participants will learn how to plan their learning.

*> Remember that especially during this step participants have to have access to the Internet and some device they can use to listen and watch video (their own smartphone, tablet or laptop or a device provided e.g. by the library). Be ready to help participants if they have any problem using online resources or make sure they can get such help from other group members.*

*At this stage of the group process (after two sessions), when participants know each other better and trust the facilitator ("guardian" of the rules set up at the beginning of the first session), it is likely that they will be willing to share their feelings/experiences on the forum of the group. However, make sure that each participant feels comfortable and let each of them decide if and what they want to share.*

### STEP. 3. REFLECTION DIARY - 5'

Ask participants to spend about 5 minutes answering questions for Session 3 in their "Reflection Diary". Remind them to use somehow what they said after the exercise on the forum of the group.

### STEP 4. ONLINE RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPANTS - 5'

Recommend some online resources for participants to let them deepen the tackled issues and continue their learning. Point out the special importance of online resources for self-learning. Encourage participants to exchange resources they know and consider as useful or interesting.

*> You may use online resources recommended in this manual but it's even better if you recommend some tools you personally consider as valuable.*

## Online resources for participants

[10 Really Cool Mind Mapping Examples](#) by mindmappingunleashed.com

[Reflective writing](#) by University of Melbourne:

[How to Improve Listening Skills Effectively?](#) by Helena Daily English

[How to take great notes](#) by WellCast

[How To Use A Mind Map](#) - with Tony Buzan

### Videos on mind mapping:

[Study Tip: How to save 69 hrs revision a year mind mapping](#)

[7 steps to mind maps](#)

[Mind Mapping Explained and Demonstrated in Five Minutes!](#)

[Mind Mapping Training - Learnt to Mind Map in 99 Seconds](#)

[Three Mind Mapping Tools You Should Try Right Now!](#)

### Other

[The Mind Mapping Show](#)

[Mind Map Mastery: 10 Tony Buzan Mind Mapping Laws You Should Follow  
Learn To Create A Mind Map In Word? Here's How!](#)

## Handout 1. Learning methods

Underline methods you have already used and (using different style/colour) methods you would like to try. Write it down in your 'Reflection diary'.

- E-learning course
- Mind mapping
- Chats with friends / family members
- Chats online with other learners interested in given topic
- Watching videos (speeches like TDx, educational movies, documentaries etc.)
- Reading books, articles (off/online)
- Reading aloud e.g. when you practice your English
- Listening to audio materials, podcasts, lectures recorded on the mobile etc. e.g. as audiobooks during driving, traveling, jogging.
- Developing presentations (e.g. with digital tools like PP or Prezi)
- Write a paper, article, essay etc. based on different resources,
- Practice your presentation to check the flow, timing etc. Teaching others is a learning method as well.
- Developing of the training/workshops/presentations for others
- Self-reflection after delivery: What went good? What would I change to make it even better? What was the reaction from the audience? Did it fit planned time?
- Making notes from reading, listening, watching videos (on paper, by recording your notes on smartphone, drawings, graphs, schemes, doodles, using online applications e.g. for mind mapping etc.).

## Handout 2. Learning about mind mapping - steps in group work and resources

### Steps in group work

**Step 1:** Read, listen and watch your resource. Those who use audio or audiovisual materials: please use headphones.

**Step 2:** Make notes in the way it works for you in order to understand key issues.

**Step 3:** Because your role is to teach other group members about the mind map method, prepare teaching methods and materials e.g. drawing, graph, scheme, key points for presentation etc. It is totally up to you how you are going to teach.

**Step 4:** You have an app. 5 min. to use your method/materials and teach other group members about the mind map method. Listen carefully to what other group members teach you about and refer to that in your teaching. Do not repeat what has already been said. You may point out that similar issues were in your resource but rather focus on what was different: show different aspects of similar issues or use different examples.

**Step 5:** When teaching is over talk with other group members on how preparation for teaching looked like: What was difficult/easy about the resource you had to use? How did it fit the subject? How did you make notes to understand the issue? Why did you select a given teaching method? How did you prepare for teaching? How did you feel when teaching? What did you like about your teaching, and what would need to be improved? Ask other group members if they have any questions about what you said.

**Step 6:** Thank other group members for this experience.

### Resources

#### 1. READING: "CREATE YOUR OWN MIND MAP"

*Think of a problem you want to solve or a project you want to launch. Grab a pen and write down your central idea in the middle of a paper. Then add branches and sub-branches to your idea; use one word per branch where possible. If you have a long phrase in mind, break it down into sub-branches.*

*Add colour, images, dimension, and contrast to enliven your mind map. Make connections between branches; add notes, summaries, and more. Make your mind map personal and revisit it later to find out what could make it more engaging.*

*If you use a mind mapping tool, you could attach files, insert images; add comments, links, and even audio notes. Mind mapping isn't for tech-savvy folks only! Technically it's nothing more than hitting the Tab and Enter keys a couple of times—most mind mapping software let you create a new branch by hitting the Tab key and then create siblings by hitting Enter.*

*It's time now to see the seven reasons why you should learn mind mapping.*

### **Reason #1: Brainstorming**

*Mind maps are particularly useful for brainstorming. Mind maps boost creative thinking, let you connect ideas, and gain perspective. Next time you have a problem you want to solve, do a brainstorm via mind mapping. Begin with your problem as the central idea and then add as many branches and sub-branches as you can without any further analysis. Later, you can screen your mind map and throw out ideas that won't work.*

### **Reason #2: Project management**

*Clearly, there are much more sophisticated tools to use for project management, but you can make good use of mind maps for some projects, at least in the initial phase. The most important benefit comes from the big picture view a mind map can provide. Some mind mapping tools offer built-in Gantt charts along with basic to advanced task tracking functionalities.*

### **Reason #3: Creating a book summary**

*For me, creating book summaries is one of the most important elements of productivity. A book summary helps me engage with the book's content and lets me define my next actions to incorporate any new ideas into my life. Mind maps are perfect candidates for creating book summaries because they serve as visual cues and boost memory recall. Don't approach book summaries as a mere list of TOC; they're much more than that. Jot down the main takeaways which will best aid you in the coming years. That said your book summary is a personal reflection of how you as an individual might benefit from the content. Make it unique.*

### **Reason #4: Creating content**

*Creating great content, be it a blog post, a scientific article, or a report, requires that you do your homework behind the scenes and make an outline. If you take your time to jot down the major elements of your article and make it flow like a story, it will serve as a backbone for your content. If you sit in front of a blank page, it's hard to build engaging content. I always start with a mind map, which then I copy into my blog post template in Evernote to guide my writing step-by-step.*

### **Reason #5: Goal setting**

*There are complete books dedicated to goal setting. I can't cover the details here; Michael Hyatt is the perfect author to start with. Mind maps, by their very visual nature, provide an excellent framework for outlining and managing your goals. Part of it is that, according to experts, you should check your goals each and every morning to engage with them. A mind map offers high complexity and at the same time, it's easy to scan. If you're ready to kick-start your goals with a mind map, you may find this blog post helpful: [Supercharge your goal setting with mind maps](#).*

### **Reason #6: Note taking**

*Mind maps can be used for taking notes during lessons and meetings as well. You can prepare the meeting agenda as a mind map, circulate it, and then pull out in the meeting to guide the conversation. Take notes right in your mind map during the meeting. Alternatively, you can take notes during your English lesson in a mind map format. As you already know, mind maps help connect ideas and boost memory recall. Try to involve your peers and your teacher.*

### **Reason #7: Learning**

*This is strongly connected to reason #6. You could either make notes in a mind map during your lesson or convert your notes into mind maps later. The mere conversion will shed light on hidden links within your material because mind maps assume that you get a big picture view and want to see how different ideas connect with each other.*

*Don't forget to make your mind map stand out by adding colour, images, dimension, and contrast.*

[What's on Your Mind: 7 Reasons to Learn Mind Mapping](#)

## **2. LISTENING: "MIND MAPPING WITH TONY BUZAN"**

[How to Mind Map with Tony Buzan](#) by Tony Buzan, the author of the method, speaks

[Mind Mapping Podcast](#) [play the following time period: 1:00 – 10:34]

## **3. WATCHING: "7 STEPS IN MIND MAPS"**

[7 Steps to Mind Maps](#) which explains the basics of mind maps



# SESSION 4. PLANNING MY SELF-LEARNING

## Goals of the session

Sometimes learning happens spontaneously but other times it is worth making a plan. During this session participants develop their planning skills including set up of the vision and goals, as well as steps and deadlines in the learning process.

After this session participants will:

- be aware of the approach they apply when planning something,
- be able to set up vision, and goals as well as to plan steps of what they would like to learn/accomplish,
- be aware of how they deal with deadlines,
- be able to set deadlines using some digital tools.

## How to run the session – a step-by step guide

OVERALL DURATION: 90'

STEP 1. MY EXPERIENCE WITH PLANNING - 15'

Explain to participants that during this session they will reflect on how they plan their learning. Explain that it doesn't mean they should always plan. A lot of learning happens spontaneously, without planning. However from time to time it is good to plan if they want to learn something important, that requires special effort and longer time. Everyone probably has some experience with planning if not directly related to learning, then for sure with something that needed to be accomplished e.g. probably everyone planned their vacation or trip abroad. Such experience can also be used during this session. You may add that participants will learn how to set up goals, deadlines and how to use mind map methods for planning.

Ask participants to talk briefly in pairs (app. 10 min., app. 5 min. for each person) on some experience with planning. Let them answer the following questions: *What did I plan recently? What did I have to make a plan for? How the planning process went? Did I stick to the plan? If no, why? Did I accomplish my plan? If I had to make one advice about planning based on my experience it would be ... .*

Ask participants to share their tips on the forum of the group. Clarify if needed and write it down on the flipchart.

## Step 2. What I would like to learn in near future: vision and goals - 15'

Ask everyone to think individually (about 3 minutes) and answer the question: What would I like to learn in the near future, something that would be important and need planning? Give some examples if needed e.g. *"If you want to travel abroad you may need to know something about the country/city you are going to visit, about history, current issues, food etc. If you plan to learn how to cook a new soup, you need to know a recipe, ingredients, procedure, and practical tips from someone who has already cooked such soup."*

After individual thought, let participants talk in the same pairs to make the answer a little deeper (about 5 minutes for each person). The Questions they may ask are the following: Why did you decide to learn that? Why is it important to you? What will change in your personal/professional life when you accomplish this task?

Ask all participants to write down what they would like to learn and express a vision of what that would change in their personal/professional life. Then ask them to express words in the form of drawing/cartoon/scheme. You may ask additional questions e.g.: *"Imagine that you have just accomplished what you wanted to learn. What do you know? What are you able to do? How does it change your life? What difference does it make for you and maybe other people around?"* Let them use a sheet of paper (e.g. half of the flipchart) and markers

of different colours. Ask them to show the results and comment briefly on them on the forum of the group.

Ask participants to watch [this video](#) explaining how to set up SMARTER goals and make notes. Let them meet in the same pairs and talk about it to check if they have a common understanding of the SMARTER goals. Check if there are questions that can't be answered within pairs. In case there are such questions, let participants ask them on the forum. Before you give the answer, check if anyone in the group is able to do it.

Then ask them to write down their SMARTER learning goals in the same sheet of paper they used to express their vision. Let them read these goals in pairs and help each other to correct/clarify.

*> In case your participants have a problem to pick what they would like to learn you may ask them to think about something they wish to know however, because of different reasons, that seems impossible to them to accomplish, e.g. they would like to learn the basics of Spanish but they are too busy now to start learning. Say that during this session they have an opportunity to at least plan something they may accomplish in the future. If you know your participants as library users or community members you may suggest something they may want to learn: "Hey John, I remember you mentioned some time ago, that you would like to know some Spanish ...".*

*It is not necessary that participants write down all elements of the SMARTER goals. They may start during the session and finish at home. Important is that they understand the method.*

### Step 3. Setting up steps in learning using mind mapping - 25'

Remind participants of the first exercise during this session, what they reflect on planning their learning. Ask them – still working in the pairs – to plan steps to reach the goal they just set up using the mind map method. Distribute Handout 2. Planning My Learning Using Mind Mapping. Explain that it includes the set of auxiliary questions they may use when working on their mind map. Say that however the work is rather individual they may help each other in pairs, clarifying, asking for opinion, checking meaning etc. If digital skills of the participants are sufficient you may ask them to use a digital tool e.g. [MindMap](#)

If not, they may develop their mind map manually using sheets of paper and markers of different colours. Explain that they don't have to develop a complete mind map. If due to lack of time they will not be able to do it it's fine. They may finish it later at home. It's enough if during the session they understand the idea of mind map as a planning tool.

After setting up time ask participants to say briefly on the forum of the group about the experience with mind maps. What went good? What problems they encountered? Were they able to solve these problems? How? How went cooperation in pairs? How can they use this experience for their own learning and as facilitators?

*> If some group members have limited digital skills let them make a mind map manually or make sure they work in pair with a colleague who may provide relevant support. Ask them to reflect on that experience. The same comments refer to the below exercise on setting up deadlines using Gantt Chart. You may use this opportunity to recommend different forms of digital skills development offered by your library and other local organisations and institutions.*

#### Step 4. Setting up deadlines using Gantt chart - 25'

Ask participants to work with the same colleague and talk about deadlines. Explain that deadlines are typical elements of planning. They have already set up a timeframe for the goal they want to achieve. However usually we set up goals for each step in our plan. Ask participants to reflect in pairs on their experience with deadlines. Do they usually determine the time frame for a given task? How good are they at sticking with deadlines? Do they miss them sometimes? How do they feel about upcoming deadlines? Are they nervous? If so, how do they deal with that? Let them sum up this conversation in the form of a few tips they would recommend, based on their experience, in order to make achievable deadlines people can stick to.

Ask each pair to present the tips on the forum of the group and write them down on the flipchart. If some of them are very similar, negotiate to write down one tip acceptable for everyone. Add something you consider as useful.

Ask participants to use these tips to set up at least a part of the deadlines to their plan. Explain that one of the ways to write down tasks and deadlines is called "Gantt Chart". Show the logic of that tool. For those with sufficient digital skills propose to do IT using online tools e.g. [InstaGantt](#), or [Office Timeline](#).

Those who prefer to do it manually may use sheets of paper and markers. Like in the case of a mind map it is not necessary for participants to complete all tasks and deadlines, but rather to experience the tool.

#### Step. 5. Reflection Diary - 5

Ask participants to spend on the app. 5 min. answering questions for Session 4 in their "Reflective Diary". Ask them to attach all they developed on the sheet of paper or digitally.

Ask participants to think of the idea of a mind map as a planning tool and Gantt Chart may work for Learning Circle members / library users.

#### Step 6. Online resources for participants - 5'

Recommend some online resources for participants to let them deepen the tackled issues and continue their learning. Point out the special importance of online resources for self-learning. Encourage participants to exchange resources they know and consider as useful or interesting.

*> You may use online resources recommended in this manual but it's even better if you recommend some tools you personally consider as valuable.*

## Online resources for participants

[MindMap](#) online tool

Videos on how to set up SMART goals:

[A Complete Guide to Goal Setting](#)

[Setting SMART Goals - How to Properly Set a Goal](#)

Gantt Charts online:

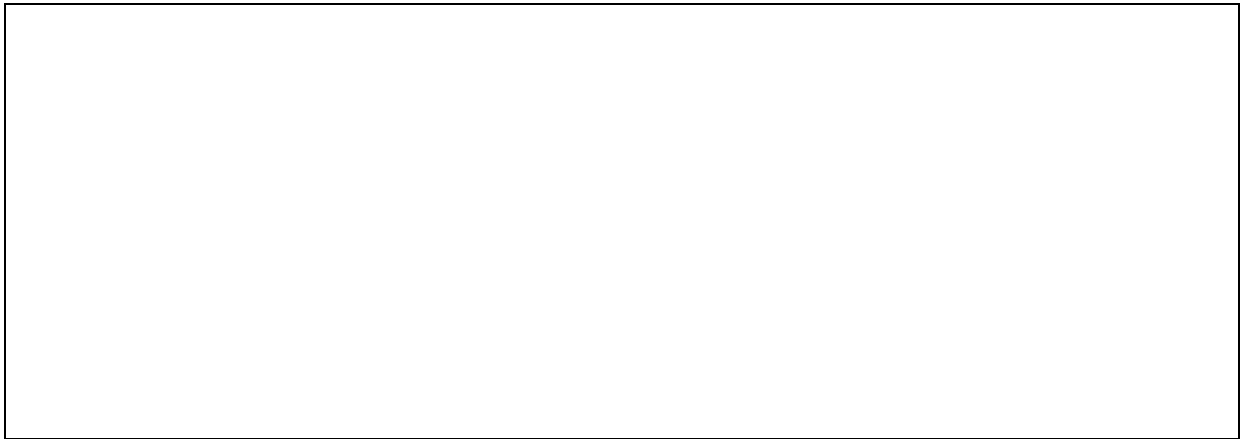
[InstaGantt](#)

[OfficeTimeline](#)

## Handout 1. What and why, vision, goal, mind map

Think about the issue you want to learn about. Imagine a vision of success you are drawing (picture symbolizes achievement, what will change in my life when I complete the task?).

Write a vision of success in this frame:



Imagine how you will check out that your learning goals are achieved. Make a personal check list (what I know, what I can do, how I approach things differently, what I feel).

Watch this video [Setting SMART Goals - How to Properly Set a Goal](#) on YouTube

Write down your goal using SMART approach:

S -

M -

A -

R -

T -

E -

R -

## Handout 2. Planning my new learning using mind mapping

Write down/draw your goal from previous exercise in the center. Link it with other concepts, use below questions for inspiration:

- What I already know about the issue expressed in my goal:
  
- What I don't know:
  
- With what/whom can I start to learn?
  
- What resources do I have to use? Where to look for them?
  
- What steps do I have to take to achieve my goal?
  
- What methods can I use?
  
- Who can I ask for help?



# SESSION 5. MEETING WITH A “LEARNING FRIEND”

## Goals of the session

Self-learning is effective but has its limitations. During this session participants recognize what problems they experience as self-learners and look together for solutions. They also practice some rules and tips for effective meeting with a learning friend, someone who is willing to support them on any step of the learning process.

After this session participants will:

- be aware what difficulties related to self-learning they experience,
- use other participants' experience to look for solutions,
- understand and apply rules for effective meeting with a learning friend.

## How to run the session – a step-by step guide

OVERALL DURATION: 90' min

Step 1. My problems with self-learning - 40'

Explain the goals of the session. Say that self-learning means that most of the time we learn alone, without teacher, facilitator etc. Ask participants to reflect on their experience, and make a list of what they consider as difficult when learning alone (about 3 minutes). Then let them speak in the round (one person after another/on the forum of the group) answering the question. Start with one question, and repeat the round as many times as necessary to make all group members exhaust their lists. Write the results down on the flipchart - try to avoid identical/similar proposals asking authors for permission. Comment on the list e.g. what are most common difficulties for most of the group members.

Split participants of the groups of four (A, B, C, D). Ask them to take following steps:

- 1) Person A selects what is most difficult for them in learning alone and say it briefly to the others (usually it will be one issue from a previously developed list, but allow participants to select something that was inspired by other group members, and what they didn't think before).
- 2) Persons B, C, D have about 5 minutes to share experience/ideas on how they usually deal with this kind of difficulties or what they think could be a solution. In other words, we encourage participants to start with their experience, but if they think they don't have any, they may propose an idea of something that in their opinion may work.
- 3) Person A listens, clarifies if needed and – if they want to – provide feedback on relevance of experiences/ideas. Then thanks others for their time and effort.
- 4) Exercise ends when all people talk about their most difficult issue.

Ask participants to think about experiences/ideas they consider as worth trying in the near future. Let them write it down in a "Reflection Diary".

*> In this exercise participants experience the importance of careful listening as a learning tool. You may underline how important it is to listen to what others experiences are, and decide what part of this experience we want to try out. Note that nobody should feel pressed when making this decision.*

Step 2. Effective meeting with a "learning friend" - 40'

If during the previous exercise people mentioned help from others as a solution to the problems related to self-learning, it's a good opportunity to refer to that. If not, explain that self-learning doesn't necessarily mean that the learner is alone all the time. One may ask for help from a family member, a friend or a member of the Learning Circle – point out that such experience happened during these sessions. This help might prove to be useful even if provided only in some steps of the learning process e.g. selection of the subject of learning, creating visions and goals or searching for sources of knowledge.

Ask participants to recall any situation in their life when they asked someone to talk about a given problem, and they had a feeling that this conversation really helped them to solve this problem. Let them reflect a few minutes. Then ask them to talk about this situation in pairs for about 5 minutes. After that, ask participants what behaviors of their interlocutor were helpful. What this person specifically did or didn't do. Write down these behaviors on the flipchart. Clarify if needed. Try to summarize similar behaviors if participants agree. If anything important is missing (see Handout 1.) you may add new tips to the list, explaining why they are important.

Explain that the list covers behaviors they (you) considered as helpful. Any time they help others they should try to implement it. Any time when asking others for help, they may first explain what behaviors would be helpful. In other words they may set up some kind of contract similar to this set up by the group at the beginning of the module.

If you have enough time, use [this video](#). Explain that listening is the key skill when we try to help others. Talk with participants about the rules proposed in the video. Ask them to select at least one specific technique and test it during the next exercise.

Distribute Handout 1. Tips for a good meeting with a learning friend. Comment on the tips and show similarities with the list of behaviours developed earlier. Point out the new elements if needed. Use examples to illustrate each rule, check out if it's clear

Let participants talk in pairs about all problems/doubts related to the vision, goals, steps and deadlines developed during the session 4 (what they want to learn in near future). Ask them to implement tips from the Handout as well as behaviours from the list during this meeting with a learning friend (twice for 10 minutes). Then let them provide short feedback (about 5 minutes): "*In your behaviour especially helpful was ...*".

> Here again you can underline the importance of listening as a learning tool. You may explain that when we ask others for help and then interrupt or try to explain its

*relevance we waste time offered by others. Repeat that it's each person's decision if/to what extent use suggestions/opinions expressed by others.*

### Step 3. Online resources for participants - 5'

Recommend some online resources for participants to let them deepen given issues and continue their learning. Point out the special importance of online resources for self-learning. Encourage participants to exchange resources they know and consider as useful or interesting.

*> You may use online resources recommended in this manual but it's even better if you recommend some tools you personally consider as valuable.*

### Step 4. Summing up the sessions - 5'

Ask participants to review questions for session 5 in their Reflection Diary (app. 5 min.). Then ask them to say on the forum of the group three most important things they learned during all sessions. Something that will improve their self-learning, help them to become an effective learner.

Ask participants to meet in pairs. Let them spend time on the app. 10 min. (5 min. for each person) and provide the partner feedback on "What I like about you as a learner? What behaviors and attitudes make me feel you are a good learner?"

Thank participants for their involvement during all sessions. Express your hope that they will continue efforts to become more effective learners. Ask those who are willing to stay in touch to exchange email addresses (other forms of contacts) and support each other e.g. as a learning friends / Learning Circle member. Remind participants to continue their reflection using Reflection Diary or other forms they consider useful.

## Online resources for participants

- [How to REALLY listen to someone](#) by Dr Jordan Peterson
- [Being a good listener](#) animated video

## Handout 1. Tips for good meeting with a learning friend

- Set up the environment and rules:
  - o Appoint right (quiet) place and time
- Just the rules of active listening:
  - o Let your partners to show you are listening (words, gestures)
  - o Paraphrases to make sure you understand well ... Did you mean ...?  
Do I understand well you wanted to say that ...?
  - o Don't interrupt unless something is not clear
  - o Maintain eye contact
- Set up subject of the meeting (what do you want to talk about – it could be about the given issue / content as well as about the process of learning) e.g.
  - o What I already know?
  - o What I still don't understand?
- Share experiences and feedback:
  - o "I" rule .. It seems to me, I have similar experience
  - o Start feedback with what you liked
  - o Talk about what was said not assess the person
  - o Share your experience
- "coaching" given person if you are asked to listen about given PROBLEM (first: try to get to know more to really understand the nature of the problem, THEN share your experience– not expecting that it will be simply followed – it's given person call what to do with offered help) How to set-up such cooperation – contract with
- Say "thank you" at the end, you may add what was especially helpful

# RECOMMENDED VIDEO RESOURCES FOR FACILITATORS

[Learning styles and the importance of critical self-reflection](#) by Tesia Marshik

[Train the Trainer - How to run a great training workshop](#) by Alan Matthews

[What's wrong with learning styles models?](#) by Alan Matthews

[Train the Trainer - using KOLB to design training](#) by Alan Matthews

# PRACTICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Research on lack of evidence of learning style concept:

[Learning Styles: Concepts and evidence](#)

[Matching Learning Style to Instructional Method: Effects on Comprehension](#)

And relevant articles on that issue:

[Learning Styles as a Myth](#)

[Learning Styles Debunked: There is No Evidence Supporting Auditory and Visual Learning, Psychologists Say](#) by Association for Psychological Science

[The Problem with "Learning Styles"](#) by Cindi Mai

[Do Learning Styles Exist?](#) by Jason Burns, Michigan State University

[The Myth of 'Learning Styles'](#) by Olga Khazan in The Atlantic

[How to Study: Use Your Personal Learning Style to Help You Succeed when It Counts](#)

[P2PU Facilitator Handbook](#)