

This publication sets out to provide an overview of the long-term strategy for the field of Tools for Learning over the last 7 years within the Youth in Action Programme.

The Tools for Learning strategy is based on the Tool Box, Tool Fair and the working group. These pillars support the development of new methods in training and educational activities, reflections on the competencies and skills needed for running sessions and Learning activities based on such tools and methods.

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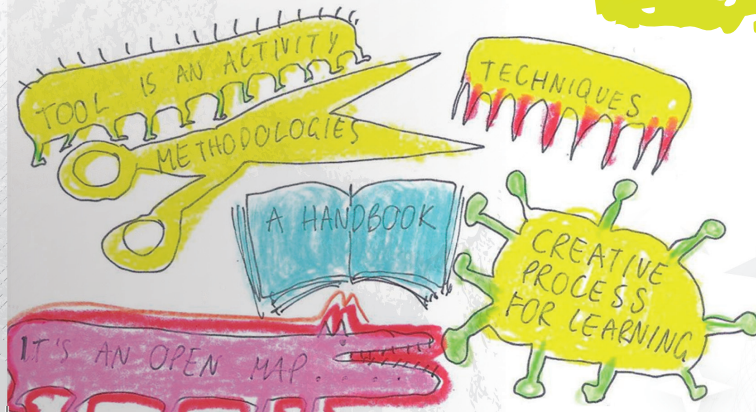
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TOOLS STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Tools for Learning
in Non Formal Education

salto|youth




Dear reader,

What will you find in this book?

- A summary of what happened at seven Tool Fairs held around Europe
- The outcomes of many interactions; readings and discussions about Tools to be used in training; seminars....
- Both trainer and expert points of view...their standpoints on education, non formal learning and their vision of the future of youth...

In a nutshell, you will find inspiration for your work....

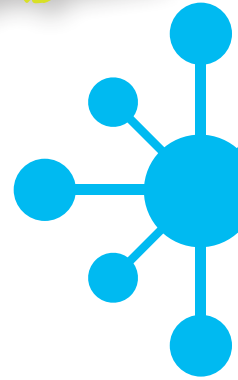
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This book will guide you through a trip along the Tools for Learning river... passing by the different interpretations of Tools for Learning and Non Formal Education along the way... and much more... A long adventure that had witnessed the involvement of many actors such as National Agencies and experts, along with the many participants in and contributors to activities.

You will also have an opportunity to enjoy a special contribution, namely the illustrations by Joomedia! The artists of Joomedia attended the Tool Fair in Tallin and they have since “commented” on your creativity in all the sessions. If you are curious to know more about them, please look at: <http://joommedia.blogspot.it/>





❁ TOOLS FOR LEARNING INTRODUCTION TO A LONG, LONG TRIP INTO TOOLS FOR LEARNING

❁ MAJOR CONCERNS OF THE WORKING GROUP

Ever since the first Tool Fair there has been an on-going critical discussion about the seemingly expanding use of “tools” or “methods” within international youth work - you just need to have a quick look at the input from Rui Gomes at that Fair to see that there are a number of issues

which are still pertinent today. During discussions in the working group we have tried to identify those concerns and look for strategies to address them. (There was even discussion about whether to change the name of our working group!)

In no particular order of priority, here are some of the main issues raised:

- What need(s) do tools really fulfil?
- What level of training do youth workers/trainers need in order to use the tools effectively?
- Who decides whether a tool is valid or not?
- What types of tools are we most interested in promoting? Really?
- How do these tools fit in with strategies for archiving, training and sharing?
- And, most importantly, what criteria should a tool have to meet in order to be seen as a “tool for learning”?

❁ DESCRIPTION OF A “TOOL FOR LEARNING”

We took our starting point from Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez’s working definition of “educational tools”, which had been used in the recent Tool Fairs:

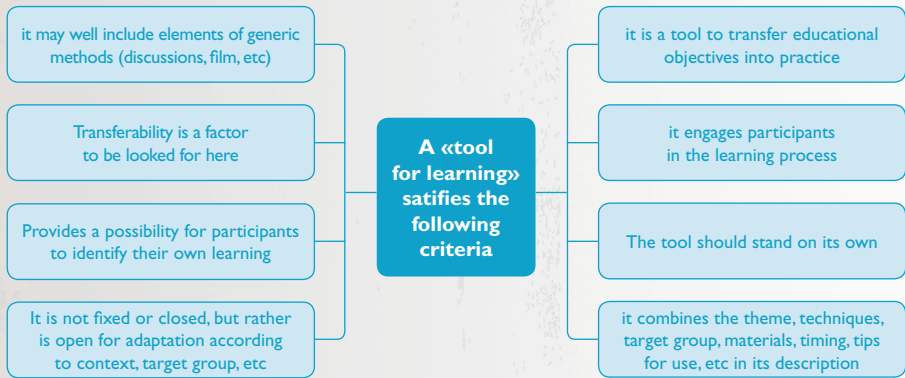
‘An educational tool could be defined as an instrument to transfer and implement educational objectives into a practice, which engages participants in the learning process. An educational tool should «stay on its own». This means that it should shape a, maybe short, but complete learning process with its theme, techniques, target group, materials, timing, evaluation, tips for use... It can be a simulation exercise, a creative workshop, a role play, an outdoor activity etc... A tool «staying on its own» does not mean that it should be something fixed or closed. When using it in another context it should be adapted, further developed, combined... Transferability is indeed one of the inherent characteristics and ultimate aim of any educational tool.



Experience tells us that one-off activities such as a video, a booklet, a facilitation or a discussion technique are normally part of a tool and just in some cases a tool, an educational process with its own «personality».

From this definition we constructed our criteria for what we called "tools for learning" within the context in which

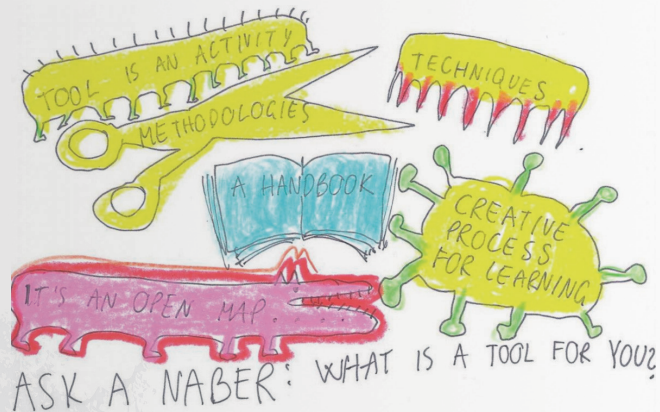
we work, namely non-formal youth education. They were used to evaluate tools in the current SALTO Tool Box and those that participants wish to present at the next Tool Fair. These criteria have been put into a mind-map to highlight the fact that they are also part of a work-in-progress. See what you think:

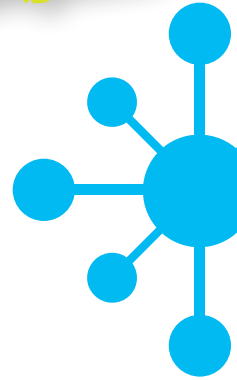


Feedback and suggestions for further improvement of these criteria are welcome!

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This is still description in progress!
Please feel free to add your ideas!
07.03.2012





✿ A TOOL FOR LEARNING, A MEANS OF TRANSFORMATION

Bernard Abrignani, coordinator of SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed RC

Benjamin Franklin: "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn"

A few years ago a huge storm swept through France and many trees fell victim to the wind. When the wind died down, a fine oak tree, almost 100 years old, lay across my garden and that of two neighbours. For reasons of safety, access and good neighbourliness, it had to be removed as quickly as possible. Unfortunately the only available resources were my hands and a few tools, the specialist companies all being busy elsewhere. The target to be reached was clear but the means at my disposal were not appropriate. Imagine «taking on» a tree some 20 metres high, with a diameter of 80 cm, with just a hand saw and a hatchet! At least David had the right tool when he fought Goliath.

My son, who was 9 years old at the time, seeing that I was somewhat distraught, wanted to help me. As the situation was potentially dangerous, I tried to explain to him that he was too young, using all the arguments that any father would come up with in similar circumstances; but faced with his insistence and disappointment I said to myself that it would be better first of all to

let him discover the tools, the technique required for using them, learn how to handle them before choosing the one he wanted to use. We began by examining the situation together and deciding on our strategy and the work began. The smallest branches were our objective, obviously not the trunk. My son managed very well and throughout the two days we spent working on the tree he was active and motivated, doing his share of the work in a very satisfactory manner.

What conclusion can we draw from this story? My son's desire to be involved enabled him to learn, to put in plenty of effort at his own speed and with his own possibilities, to discover himself and become more responsible; we can also see that a good tool is one that is adapted to the objective and that one should not overestimate one's abilities and skills.

In a certain way I had instrumentalised instruments and the tools had become tools for learning.

What is a tool for learning, a teaching tool?

A teaching tool is above all a medium that we associate with an approach and which is developed with the aim of helping or accompanying "a public" to understand, to learn or to work... It is therefore a tool at the service of the learning process.

What is a teaching support or aid?

- A white board, paperboard, computer, video projector, book, documentation, photos, graphics, exhibitions, videos, maps ... are the most common media. But a medium can also be mixed up with a technique: games, stories, role-play, case study...

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- Since everything becomes more complex by itself, we have to acknowledge that any kind of medium is a potential teaching tool and that conversely, a number of existing media will never be teaching tools!

What transforms a tool into a teaching tool?

- The association between the medium and the process, the teaching approach. The medium is only a means at the service of the educational approach or strategy: the path that the medium causes the mind to take in order to achieve knowledge or understanding.
- When it is adapted and adequate, this becomes the "right way". There are no inherently "good" or "bad" teaching tools, there are only tools that are - or are not - adapted to a certain public. A teaching tool should focus on involving learners in situations where they must complete a task in which they test themselves difficulties and discover the difficulties and their resolutions in action.

In the Salto EuroMed approach we use an acronym that enables us to memorise the different stages necessary for facilitating learning: the T.A.R.E. (which reminds us of a tape-recorder)

The T is for Test: the participant tests himself, his attitude, his reaction etc. and also tests the tool, the method, and the technique. The A stands for both Appreciate, because without the idea of pleasure there is no learning, and Analysis, for without analysis there is no theorisation of practice, which in turn makes appropriation more difficult.

The P is there to remind us that any learning situation should allow for Production: contributing to the success of an exercise through one's involvement is already a sort of production. Finally, the E is for Evaluate: we must not forget that any learning process should be associated with a critical dimension that does not eliminate subjectivities, values, or discussion.

This approach is based on the step-by-step method, but as the French philosopher *Alain* put it: "*Steps not only lead to a goal; each step should be a goal*".

The tool for learning, a vehicle, a means of locomotion at the service of a transformation?

The terms used to talk about a tool or explain it and the process for using it are often linked to movement: mobility, "step by step", approach, "the right way", accompany, transmission...

It is useful to return to the origins of teaching and discover the history of the teacher. The person, usually a slave, was in charge of a child (pais in Greek) and took him (agein, agôgê in Greek) to school; to begin with the "*paidagôgos*" was someone who just accompanied and supervised the child entrusted to him. It can be considered by extension that the teacher led his protégé along the path to knowledge and that the most basic definition of the Greek word teaching is «*the journey of learners*». Without particularly taking into account his slave status, the teacher was in fact a «tool» in the service of a goal: to accompany a transfer, a movement from ignorance to knowledge.



It is during this «journey» that a tool takes on its full dimension. Thomas Mann in his book the «Magic Mountain» explains that «all physical movements are also doubled by a mental movement»; we assist, in the sense assistance-support, a change, which means that feelings can also metamorphose as we move in space.

There are two types of «travel» in the context of non-formal education and international mobility: one real and the other virtual. Sometimes physical mobility comes up against barriers, the obtaining of a visa, for example, or an erupting volcano. Sometimes intellectual mobility is limited by self-erected defensive barriers among which we can find prejudice, stereotypes, fear of other people and of oneself, etc. These barriers, according to Carl Rogers, the American humanistic psychologist, must fall if we are to move forward. When they persist, there can be no learning and no transformation.

From my point of view, the “right tool” must contribute towards breaking down “defensive barriers” by placing the participants at the same level, in a “neutral” context that is new to all and that causes them to question their certitudes. We must not be afraid to provoke since provocation is a way of putting reality back on its feet. If I had listened to the advice given to me during my work in EuroMed, the themes of religion, politics and sex would never have been addressed. In my opinion, putting so-called sensitive subjects «under the carpet» is one of the surest ways to have explosions; the

ostrich strategy of burying one's head in the ground in the event of danger never provided good protection: on the contrary, not seeing the «danger» prevents us from assessing it and dealing with it.

Two tools illustrate my subject:

The NASA Test:

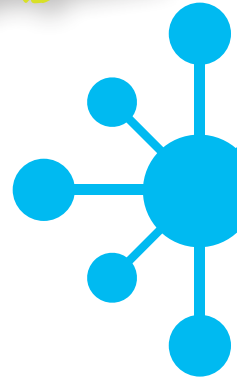
You are members of the crew of a spaceship originally planned to join a parent rocket on the light side of the moon. Technical incidents occur and dashboard instruments have been damaged. The list given to participants only shows those that are still in working condition. The task is to classify all the objects in accordance with their usefulness to join the mother rocket and its crew on foot.

Obviously, none of the participants have ever been to the moon, so this virtual voyage offers a place where everyone is on the same level in terms of ignorance. They are forced to think differently because they find themselves in a new and rather strange context. In fact, they are, in both a real and figurative sense, on a different planet!

The Vikings:

You are invited to become investigators and to discover why the Viking civilization in Greenland disappeared. Using the theory of Jared Diamond - the American evolutionary biologist, physiologist and geographer - as set out in his book «Collapse: How societies choose their disappearance or their survival», analyse the factors that might have led this society to collapse.

At the end of the exercise the participants are invited to transfer this method to their own countries: what is the situation



today? How many of the theory's five criteria have already been met in your country?

The first part of this task takes them on a voyage through time and space with the support of music and images, towards a place and a time they discover together, before gradually being brought back to present concerns.

This transposition is nourished by the method dear to Bertolt Brecht: "the distancing effect". He wanted to break with the theatrical illusion and force the spectator to think. His plays are therefore openly didactic: using panels with maxims, actors who address the audience directly and comment on the play, songs that interrupt the action, etc., he forces the spectator to maintain a critical eye. This process, which he called «distancing» (Verfremdungseffekt or effect V), greatly influenced some French directors. These processes are designed to disrupt the passive linear perception of the spectator and break the tacit covenant of belief in what he sees.

Brecht says that the distancing principle places itself at the "border between aesthetics and politics», so as to "make one perceive an object, a character, a process, and at the same time make it unusual, strange», and «distance oneself in relation to reality».

This provoked "destabilisation", contributes towards a lowering of the defensive barriers mentioned earlier. In our field of intervention, a trainer is someone in search of balance who must provoke imbalance so as to better find balance. He must be able to

arbitrate potential collision zones. He must allow these collisions to occur as they can create a dynamic, even if there will always be some uncertainty as to the outcome.

The notion of unstable balance is one of the conditions of the performance. A frank and radical position may endanger. To force the learner out of his comfort zone places him in a difficult position and a balance must therefore be found that generates attention rather than tension, concentration rather than distraction, work rather than amateurishness. In other words, the trainer never reassures or promotes a feeling of security but at the same time does not terrorise.

Is there specificity with regard to a tool in non-formal education?

All tools are intended to improve the learner's way of thinking and of solving problems and to strengthening his capacity for acquiring knowledge. However, if we want to learn something, a direction must be found. This is what we call "syntonic learning", as opposed to "dissociated learning", which is usually presented in school, in which what is taught does not correspond to the learners.

This idea of direction is where the peculiarity of non-formal education lies: to give a sense, a direction to find a sense, to facilitate understanding, the whole within a dynamic system, the action for learning or what is more often called "learning by doing".

The tool takes its full place in this process because it facilitates the transition from one state to another by being able to



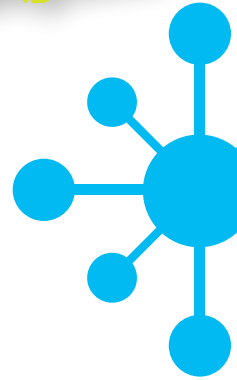
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take on any possible form in any possible space with no constraint other than that of the limits to our imagination and our ability to adhere to this invitation to travel.

During the 80s Seymour Papert - an MIT mathematician, computer specialist and instructor - created the "Logo" computer language in order to create conditions that would allow children to acquire even more knowledge based on the spontaneous learning process dear to Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist, biologist, logician and epistemologist. Logo was designed to be a reflexive object-oriented programming language that facilitated syntonic learning, as opposed to the BASIC language that

offered a structured and linear approach to programming.

The analogy with non-formal and formal education is striking; in one case we have a tool allowing one's own knowledge to be built through a reflexive approach and in the other a tool not allowing a pre-established pattern and codes to be overruled. While the first is continually evolving, the second is de facto limited. This does not mean that actors in the education field are to be classified in categories based on their field of action, simply that there are indeed two different approaches and that the methods, techniques and tools used clearly determine to which "camp" we belong.



In conclusion I would like to propose 10 principles for the conception of a tool for learning in the field of non-formal education:

- To be easy to use by all, not be exclusive
- To use non-specialised but nevertheless precise language that provide clear and convivial messages
- To allow for additions, modifications, appropriations and adaptations by everyone
- To be attractive, interactive and dynamic
- To facilitate the "voyage", the transformation
- To provoke and force learners out of their comfort zone
- To destabilise without being frightening
- To search for balance and an individual and collective understanding
- To give a sense
- To do and make done to be seen as a "tool for learning"?

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PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS AND ACTIVE EDUCATIONAL METHODS IN THE NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FRANCE.

Jean- Claude RICHEZ, coordinator of the observation/evaluation assignment in INJEP

The recommendation adopted jointly by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe on 18 December 2006 on « Key Competences for Education and Lifelong Learning¹» officially confirmed the inscription on the political agenda of the necessary complementarity between initial education and lifelong learning on the one hand and formal and non-formal education on the other. By formulating questions on education

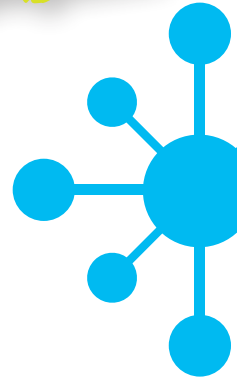
in terms of the development of competences rather than simply access to knowledge and learning, this recommendation completely revolutionised the terms in which educational questions have been traditionally and almost exclusively (at any rate in France) couched. The obvious next step is to find new terms to describe the relationship between formal and non-formal education.

As soon as education is examined in terms of key competences, one of the most important elements it has to consider is the question of the transfer of different types of knowledge in different contexts and in the greatest variety of situations possible. Education can no longer be looked at solely in terms of school learning, but must instead take into account all the players and learning situations that can play a role. This in effect means that we are looking at what is generally referred to in France as shared education, which is the articulation between formal, non-formal and informal education, the development of a learning territory way of thinking and the mobilisation of educational resources as a whole. This new input transforms the question and what we then need to focus on is the uses made of the pedagogical tools used respectively by both non-formal and formal education, their transferability and their complementarity.

This is not the first time the issue has been debated in France. Formal education has, or at least part of the formal system has, via the input of a small group of committed teachers and within the framework of the formal school, availed of some tools borrowed from non-formal education, or from non-formal education sources, notably the movement in favour of a new type

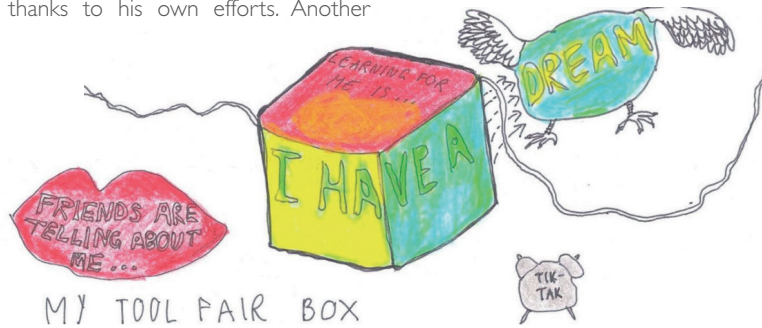
of education. This movement was personified in France by emblematic teachers such as Célestin Freinet (1896-1966), who placed experience at the heart of the pedagogical approach². **« The idea is to allow children to put forward their own hypotheses, make their own discoveries, recognise and admit their own failures when necessary, while also feeling personal ownership**

1. Recommendation 2006/962/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council, dated 18 December 2006, on the key competences required for both education and lifelong learning [Official Journal L 394 dated 30.12.2006].
2. The dancer on the wire : a life of the freinet school, Ginette Fourmes-Sylvia Dorance, Ed. École vivante, 2009.



of some outstanding successes. What do we gain from this approach? Pupils with very high levels of motivation, the immediate involvement of every child, with each of them gaining confidence in himself and his ability to progress thanks to his own efforts. Another

added benefit is the fact that there is absolutely no need to learn by heart something that has been discovered by experimentation and trial and error since you remember it without any effort at all [...]"



His inputs on learning reflect the thinking and experiments carried out all over the world by people such as John Dewey (1859-1952) in the United States with his « Learning by doing », Olivier Decroly (1871-1932) in Belgium, who focused on centres of interest and Edouard Claparède (1873-1940) in Switzerland. New education is an international movement founded on the basic principle of the active participation of individuals

in their own learning process. It considers learning to be first and foremost a factor of overall advancement for the person, ahead of the accumulation of knowledge. To accomplish this, the starting point must be the person's centres of interest and an effort must be made to draw on the spirit of exploration and cooperation, which is the basic principle of active methods.

The pedagogical tools based on these principles, which were little used and sometimes even condemned by the traditional school system in France, were for the most part used in what is known in France as the community educational system. It essentially covers the same ground as non-formal education and largely follows the ideas developed by community universities in Northern Europe, the Fabian Society in Great Britain, experimental schools such as A.S. Neill's (1883-1973) Summerhill in England, Francisco Ferrer's (1859-1909) Escuela moderna in Spain, Maria Montessori's (1870-1952) Casa dei Bambini in Italy and the thinking of the Polish educator Janusz Korczak (1878-1942).



Thus, since the end of the Second World War, there has been a significant convergence in France between a part of the national education system, even if only representative of a minority³, and community education (non formal education) in the development of teaching tools based on new education principles and active methods. This convergence took on a concrete form in the exemplary development of associations such as the CEMEA (Centre d'éducation aux méthodes d'éducation active), which brings together teachers using active education teaching tools both in their classrooms and in the development of outside school leisure activities, mainly in holiday and leisure centres. In fact, the association was first started to train group leaders for holiday centres.

The downside was that for a long period in France these new teaching practices were at best tolerated by the academic authorities, in some cases forbidden - but never encouraged. Another negative has been that community education, which provided the breeding ground for such tools, has always been considered as something of a second cousin in the educational field, subordinate to the School system and certainly not recognised as a fully-fledged educational partner. This is essentially still the case, even if France has formally committed itself to the project launched by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe with notably the adoption in 2005 of a common set of core skills that more or less regroups those adopted at European level (the

seven key competences) and promoted by the OECD. The shared education policy begun in 1998 should also be noted: this involves the implementation of local educational contracts regrouping schools, associations and families in a common educational project in a particular area, which were followed by local education projects. Despite all these advances, we are still far from a real convergence that would see schools (formal education) borrowing teaching tools from (non-formal) community education, which still only occurs to an insignificant and subordinate extent.

The weight of French socio-cultural inheritance remains heavy and has contributed to the limited degree of convergence to date. The approach begun with the adoption of « a common core » remains theoretical to a great extent. We can only hope that the experimentation begun in the autumn of 2011 in a little over 150 schools on the theme of « a book of competences to highlight the added value of (their) learned competences, what they have learned in both the formal and informal educational sectors as well as their potentialities and commitments » will eventually bear fruit.

It should also be said that experience has shown that convergence is not always positive: this is the case when convergence involves the aligning of non-formal education objectives, methods and tools with those of formal education. This negates exactly what is interesting and innovative about the

3. Guy Avanziani put the number at around 5% of the teaching body at the beginning of the 1970s, while Henri Peyronie suggested between 1 to 2% by the end of the 1990s. They did not include those using the Freinet methods in this headcount. The percentage of those who either borrowed tools from him or from other similar pedagogical methodologies is certainly higher. See Guy Avanziani in Pierre-Claude et alii, *La pédagogie Freinet (The Freinet teaching method). Update and prospects*, pp. 15 to 23, 1994, Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux and Henry Peyronie, *Celestin Freinet. Pédagogie et émancipation (Pedagogy and emancipation)*, 1999, Hachette p.110.

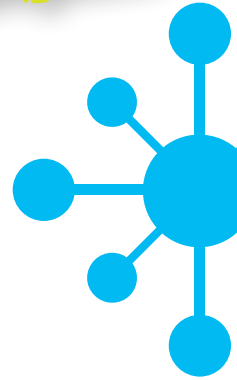


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approach: namely, putting approaches to the acquisition of knowledge and know-how into a new perspective, taking into account types of knowledge other than the academic by breaking away from the limiting impact of disciplinary teaching methods, using tools that transform students into players responsible for their own learning acquisition and which use competences that are not usually taken into account and valued in the traditional school framework.

Needless to say, a teaching method that only exists in terms of tools can be dangerous too. Learning must not be restricted to only a tool-based methodology, to simple recipes that can be used again and again as part of an "assembly line" approach to the learning process. While going totally

technical can be very tempting, a tool is not a teaching method. It is useful for creating a link and generating interaction. A tool takes on its full measure when it is used as an end in itself. Depending on its nature and the use made of it, a teaching tool can either disorient users or enable them to acquire new competences⁴. The acquisition of a competence is never based on repetition but rather on the capacity to use it in different situations and contexts: in other words, the capacity to transfer what has been learned to new situations. The tool must provide an added value for the action undertaken; facilitate learning through the personal and active experience of the learner. This is the vital lesson that we need to remember from the work of Célestin Freinet.



4. Joseph-Luc Blondel and Didier Noye, « Faut-il encore se soucier des outils pédagogiques ? », Actualité de la formation permanente, May-June 1993, n° 124, pp. 37-40.

INFORMAL EDUCATION, A PROGRESS STRATEGY FOR YOUTH

Margarita Rodríguez Rodríguez, University of La Laguna. Canary Islands. Spain

Today, not only Formal educational systems (FE) must structure themselves towards educational purposes, but the Non-Formal/ Informal must also fulfil its educational role, meet people's demands

in a complementary way, facilitate access to knowledge, spur the full integration of people into society and contribute to the individual and collective progress for which we all yearn.

Young people in this context acquire a specific protagonism in the collective variations and groups present in the social world.

By definition, young people fully involved in the process of adaptation and integration into society, present the maximum potentiality in terms of improvement and social transformation to achieve individual and collective improvement. Youth as a heterogeneous and diverse social collective has a historically assumed aspect of convergence, which is to maintain the "intergenerational takeover".

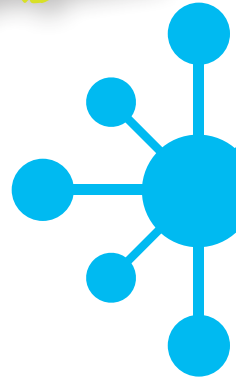
Because of all that and the importance of the social role assigned to young people, we must concentrate on planning and implementing actions to help them, facilitate access to and spur them on to fulfil that social role via educational processes of permanent social teaching based on the acquisition and support of their capacities and skills.

By Non-Formal Education we mean "**Any organised, systematic and educational activity realised outside of the framework of the official system to provide precise teaching classes to specific population groups, both adult and children!**"

1. Generally we consider that NFE is a voluntary process, previously planned by the educational agents, flexible and open; it is developed in many operational contexts, with different methodologies adapted to the educational-social reality and with contents and methods that are characterised by diversity.

All these characteristics do not presuppose reducing rigour in the non-formal teaching processes given the fact that, by planning them previously, we successfully complete a selection of purposes, contents and activities; we specify the resources, materials and the timeframe, based on teaching theories and socially established educational principles. The

European Union tacitly recognises **NFE in the circle of Youth**. There are repeated references to the idea that "its value in the circle of youth should be more recognised (considering) the skills and qualifications young people acquire thanks to it and its role in the teaching process."².



Greater impetus and a significant increase in the number of the agents involved in NFE development is encouraged,

given the fact that this ambit is essentially based on the idea that:

It complements the formal ambit of education.

- The methodological presentations focus on the educational aspect and the development of social involvement.
- Its voluntary dimension guarantees the link between the interests, needs and aspirations of young people.
- It is a compensatory resource for less qualified young people or those with fewer opportunities.
- Directly or not, it has an economic and social impact on the structuring of educational processes and personal retraining.
- It is developed at different local, regional, national, European and international levels.
- The impact of the non-formal teaching-training processes is situated in the social and individual dichotomy.
- It is one of the tools that presuppose social changes, innovations and transformations.
- It is an attractive model for youth given that it presupposes teaching and promotes social integration processes.

The contents and the methodology are adapted to the social demand and contribute to setting out the social role youth must play today.

- The sectors supported by the NFE are those referred to as transverse and integrated topics that contribute to practical education. They therefore create sectors of social education, along with education on the environment, media and communication technologies; they promote sociocultural activities, education for leisure and spare time, consummation, occupational education, education on sustainable development, education on social and universal values, intercultural education, education on peace, diversity and solidarity, education on and for equal opportunities, etc.

- The knowledge that is acquired is varied: from acquisitions with a cultural dimension, cognitive strategies, social aptitudes, values, skills, to the structure of abilities that promote life in society.
- The educational operation contexts are open, flexible and adaptable.
- The educational agents are varied and are not necessarily institutionalised in educational structures (more often social).
- The educational agencies are private, public, mixed and generally represent the structure of the service sector to promote education.
- The educational agents can be professionals and/or volunteers.
- The operational processes are planned, systematised and are both intentional and accessible.

The abovementioned characteristics make NFE social and educational tools that legitimise the operational processes with young people. Thus social agents must structure themselves in an efficient way to promote those socio-educational actions that could enable these socially

needed aspirations, with a required efficient structure for these resources and ready to use social and educational tools (Tool). **These aspects are the basis of the ideal of an “EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY”.**



✿ A JOURNEY THROUGH THE XX CENTURY (PUBLISHED IN COYOTE, 2009)

Miguel García López, Member of Tools for Learning Working Group, trainer and evaluator

Introduction

This article explores and reflects upon some approaches of the tools for learning used in training, looking at them from a certain perspective, namely the evolution of Psychology over the last century.

This journey and reflection is not about psychological models but rather about the educational approaches inspired by those models. For this reason the aforementioned psychological models have been simplified and are only used to explain the associated educational implications and give us new perspectives and criteria for using and combining educational tools.

Those new criteria and perspectives for the planning and running of training activities aim to complement other already widely used concepts in non-formal education such as different learning capacities, styles and traditions, the characteristics of learners, the possibilities of the learning environment, the specific objectives of the learning session...

Without pretending to be normative, this article might also help us recognise eventual deficits or errors in our work and correct misleading educational practices.

Individual focused tools for learning

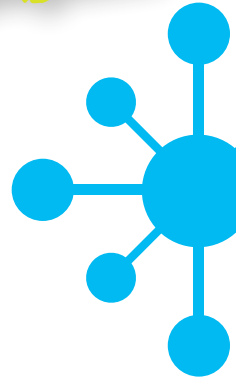
At the beginning of the last century -around 1900- two different schools of Psychology (the Freudian and Behavioural Psychology approaches)

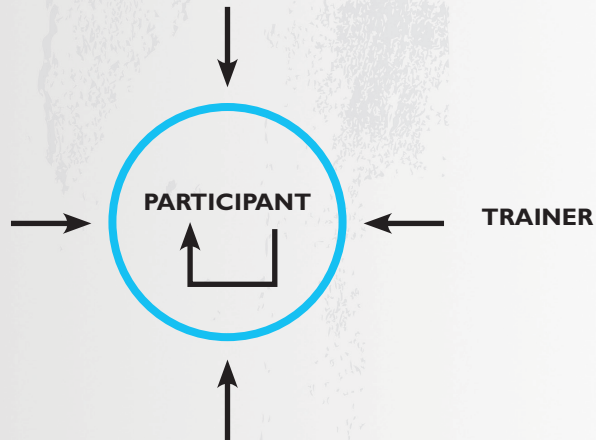
concentrated their efforts on «studying» the individual.

Freud was responsible for popularising the idea of the conscious versus the unconscious mind. He suggested that the unconscious layer of mind is the largest and that it is the source of human motivations, whether in the form of simple desires for food or sex, neurotic compulsions, or the motivation of an artist or scientist. The goal of Freudian therapies is to get to know the individual from inside by «making the unconscious conscious.»

Behavioural Psychology advocates the use of strict experimental procedures to study observable behaviour (responses) in relation to the environment (stimuli). The learning process such as a dog associating food with the sound of a bell was called «conditioning». Key Behaviourist figures like Watson, Pavlov and Skinner devoted their efforts to knowing the individual from outside, through the causes and effects of human behaviour and activities.

The educational implications of these two «individual focused» approaches for tools for learning essentially mean an emphasis on getting to know the participants in the learning process; trying to understand what is inside them and interpreting their behaviours. This approach is sometimes called the «medical» approach, where the object of study is also the subject (the participant).





The ultimate aim of such an approach in non-formal education normally goes beyond just «knowing» the participant. That is simply a step; it is important because getting to know participants makes it possible to fit the training programme to them. Questionnaires, interviews and assessments are some of the tools for learning rooted in this educational approach.

While using those tools for learning, the role of the trainer initially consists in defining the perspectives for studying the participant. After receiving the answers or outcomes, the trainer is responsible for understanding and interpreting what they mean in order to adapt the training practice to the individuals taking part in it.

The main advantage of such an approach (among others) is the high attention/consideration given to individuals. It ensures that the training programme better meets the participants' needs.

The disadvantages of this approach come from the difficulty of understanding the meaning of the received outcomes. It is often very difficult to know what is happening on a personal level. Quite often, trainers lack the experience, sensitivity or competencies to decode it. Another risk is drifting into a paternalistic relation with the participants due to the asymmetry in the relation (the participant is (at least at the outset) the «patient» and the trainer the «doctor»). This can easily happen when, after the diagnosis of the participants' capacities and limitations, the trainer fails to involve them in the development of training initiatives to overcome them.



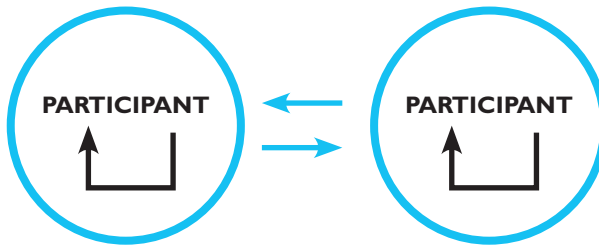
Humanistic tools for learning

In the 1950s, the humanist paradigm emerged as a response to both the determinism inherent in Freudian psychoanalysis and the limited place left for empathy and freewill in behaviourism.

Carl Rogers was one of the founders of humanist psychology, which promotes a more person-to-person approach to the traditional therapist-patient relationship, emphasising responsibility and intention in human behaviour. Rogers believed that human interaction was very powerful and the main source of learning. He trusted in human potential to learn, grow and “become».

Consequently, he promoted the autonomy of the individual: “If I trust you, I give you the autonomy to develop». “Freedom to Learn» is a classic statement of his educational approach; «One chooses - and then learns from the consequences».

He saw himself as a facilitator - one who created the environment for engagement and provided educators with some important questions on their way of interacting with participants and the processes they employed. He believed that different methods could be used for learning to happen. In his view, informal education was not so much person-centred as dialogical.



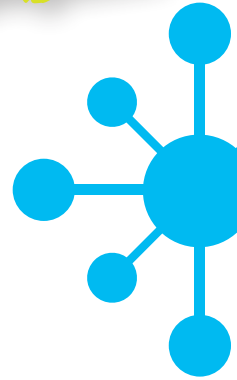
In non formal education, this approach would involve putting the focus on interaction and the participant-participant and trainer-participant relationships. The learning experience happens through the growth and development of participants together with others.

The role of the trainer in such an approach is to define the terms of the interaction and to participate in it. While the trainer has a special role, to be successful he must interact with the

same human qualities of empathy, respect and sincerity as do participants. The trainer becomes a facilitator of the learning process.

The advantages and positives of such an approach are the rich mutual learning experience, the use of individuals and groups as learning sources and the promotion of individual capacities.

Some of the disadvantages or difficulties of this approach are the following: the mutual interaction between parti-



Participants can get out of control and learning is limited to the capacities of the persons involved in the process. Additionally, the exclusive use of this approach can create a close circle where "what (it) is between us comes again and again". When there is a lack of sincerity and openness, there may also be a lack of challenges in an overly comfortable environment of «nice friends».

Tools for learning as systems

Humanism is not without its critics. One of the most frequent criticisms is that humanism emphasises the «here and now» ignoring «the socio-political context» and on another level denies the importance of common ethical or spiritual values. A second criticism is that humanism is sometimes believed to be a highly selfish approach to life. Typically, the argument goes something like this: «If an individual is concerned primarily with personal growth and development, how can that person truly be concerned with what is good for society as a whole?»

The so-called «system theory» became very popular at the end of the 1960s. Many social political and economic structures and their inter-relations were described as systems: «economic system», «political system» «social system» «values system» «welfare system» «ecosystem».... «. In the last resort, however, it is always a system of values, of ideas, of ideologies - choose whatever word you like - that is decisive⁵».

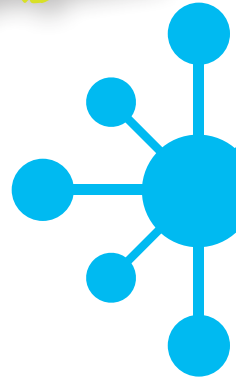
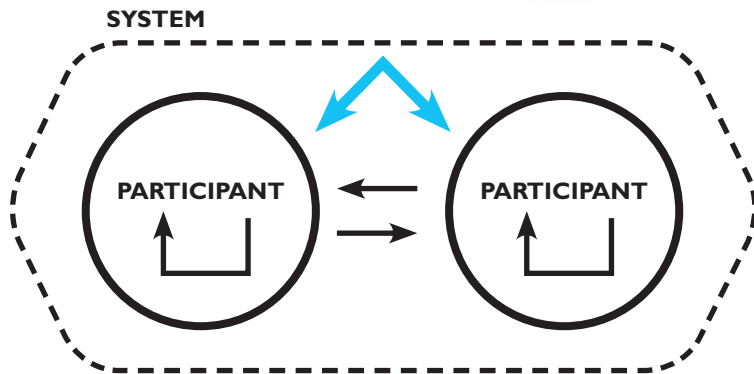
Typical examples in training of tools for learning inspired by such an approach are pair work, mutual interviews, presentations, working groups... and in general any dynamic that uses the group of participants as a learning source and focuses on mutual enrichment.

The system theory was derived from the General System Theory (GST), applying the principles of the natural sciences systems to social sciences. Systems theory basically holds that objects and subjects in the world are interrelated to each other. Those objects and subjects and their interrelations form systems. Each system needs to be looked at as a whole rather than as individual components, which can then be put together. The system is greater than the sum of its parts because the system includes elements that cannot be broken down and applied to individual members. It is thus possible for the system to have characteristics that no individual element possesses except when they are put together.

The system theory looks at society from a more general perspective; the reasons and answers are located in systems and only then is the question put to individuals: «What kind of system do you like? How do you want to act in it? Do I want to influence it? How do I find my place in it?»

5. Ludwig von Bertalanffy «The world of science and the world of value», Teachers College Record, 65:244-255





Educationally, this approach invites us to analyse how different systems affect individuals, without necessarily trying to solve the problems a system creates for them. The focus is on the importance of the context and how it influences individuals.

To do so, systems related to social realities are created or reproduced in the tools for learning. Some examples of tools for learning where participants are put into a system in order to learn from their immersion in it are: the statements exercise (or “where do you stand?”), many outdoor training exercises, simulations when the roles of participants are pre-determined and clearly defined, multimedia projections in which participants are spectators...

At first, the role of the trainer consists in defining the system precisely and controlling it during the running of the tool for learning with all its characteristics.

Fourth approach: “The open systems theory”

The “open systems theory» tries to overcome the rather static and rigid

The facilitation of the learning process puts the focus on analysing and reflecting on how the different characteristics of the system affect the participants. In this kind of method, communication is essential.

These kinds of tools for learning allow the trainer to plan and decide the learning fields in advance. By using them, the trainer can get «directly to the point». In terms of the achievement of the learning objectives -at least in terms of contents- this is clearly an advantage. They are normally very powerful.

The principal disadvantage is that they can be too directive. Consequently, when this kind of tool is not combined with others, it can damage the personal learning and group dynamic, because there is no real possibility of influencing the educational framework in which they find themselves for both the group and the individuals concerned.

nature of the system theory and to «explain» the growing complexity of societies. Open systems are non-stationary, dynamic, multidimensional

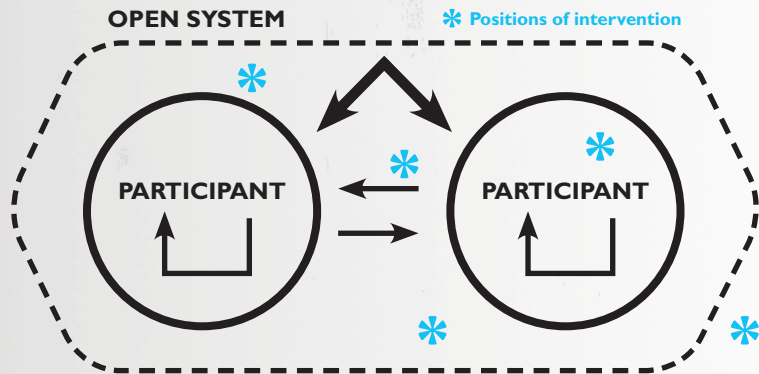


and self-organised structures. This approach is based on the latest developments in social and empirical sciences and can be linked to the ideas of existential psychology and the post-modern way of thinking.

Existential psychology does not have a single founder. It has its roots in the work of a rather diverse group of philosophers (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger or Sartre to mention but a few), who are in many ways as different as night and day. However, all existential philosophers and psychologists have one thing in common; they start with real people and real life. They believed that human existence cannot be captured in systems whether they are rational, religious or philosophical.

With the development of Phenomenology and inter-subjectivity, the focus is no longer on getting to know the personality but on reflecting on how individuals LIVE in a group, interact in this complex society, go beyond themselves, transcend it.

Most recent social phenomena such as inter-culturalisation, internationalisation or globalisation have been studied using this approach; on one hand identifying some general common trends (which would characterise a kind of «open system») and on the other focusing on how different individuals in different contexts experienced them.



This approach stresses the complexity of phenomena and on the transformation of the «open systems». The focus is on the mobility of the individuals involved and their flexibility to intervene in the open system and interact with others. The questions for them in this instance

are: Which perspective do we/I choose? How do I orient myself within complexity?

There are several examples of tools for learning based on this approach in non-formal education: open space technology, simulation exercises where



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the roles and situations are not pre-determined, forum theatre... In those methods, the role of the trainer is basically to define and manage the parameters of the «open system» to ensure it is manageable, then to facilitate the learning process by prioritising certain aspects - mainly by simply naming them without making any judgement.

The advantages of such tools for learning are the extensive amount of different learning possibilities they offer; their interactive and participative nature and their huge learning potential.

Concluding comments

In the course of their evolution, psychology and the social sciences have logically followed the main concerns of society. They highlight some of the most important socio-political preoccupations of the last century, namely knowing the human being at the beginning of the century, the socialisation process in the 1950s, the socio-economical system/s in the 1960s and 1970s, and phenomena such as inculturation and globalisation in the 1980s and 1990s.

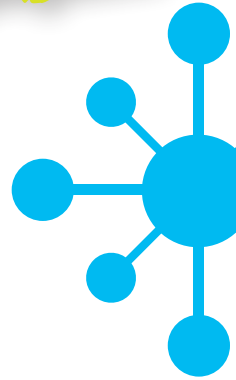
In most cases, the evolution of Psychology and of Educational sciences has been integrative, with every new approach incorporating a significant amount of the previously accumulated knowledge and experiences. The chronological order does not imply any judgement. It does not mean that the last approach is the best or that the first the worst. As already mentioned, all of them have advantages and disadvantages, positives and limitations.

Among the disadvantages we could mention the difficulty of respecting a “common thread” during the running of the activity and the difficulty of prioritising without being insensitive to the different learning processes. Contrary to first impressions, the use of these tools for learning requires very competent and experienced facilitators able to deal with those difficulties and to exploit their full learning potential. The main challenge for the trainer is being able to deal with everything the exercises can throw up.

Participants feel more or less comfortable with a specific approach. In addition to other reasons (cultural, geographical, personal...), the formal educational system has a strong influence on this preference. The fact that participants feel better working with a specific approach should not prevent them from being challenged by all of them. Everybody can learn from all of them (and probably learn most from whichever one they like least!).

For this reason, it is very enriching to combine the different approaches during a training activity, even during a session. Experience tells us that the order of this combination is very relevant; it has a strong impact on the learning process and the group dynamic. The outcome will be very different if, for example, we start with an open system or with an inter-personal exercise.

In addition to combining them, the other essential is to apply the different



approaches correctly, particularly in the debriefing session. In most cases, it is the debriefing session that allows the trainer to introduce the main focus for effective learning.

It is very difficult to find a tool for learning that only reflects one approach. At the same time, we can clearly identify a predominant approach with most of the tools for learning used in training sessions (see the tools for learning mentioned as examples of the different approaches above).

Using a tool for learning whose main characteristics correspond to an «open system» for a «interpersonal learning» process might be possible, but this kind of unnatural «stretching» of a particular method would probably lead to an ineffective and confusing learning process, which in my opinion happens relatively often. The necessary creativity, flexibility and adaptation needed in training should not work against the «respect» due the main logic behind the tools for learning, simply because it contributes to a more effective learning.

That said, it is true that quite a few tools for learning can be used with different approaches. If we take, for example, the exercise called “law electric fence”, the trainer could use it as a space for interaction on a personal and interpersonal level, or as a system, or as an open experience that gives participants the opportunity to learn from whatever happens during the exercise. It is nevertheless important for the trainer to avoid any contradiction between

the educational aims and the declared approach. Trainers should avoid stating that they are going to work with a system approach to learn how to work in teams -for example-, and then go into personal interpretations about the reasons of a personal behaviour. There is sometimes a lack of coherence between the declared logic of a tool for learning and the learning focus, especially during the debriefing session. This inconsistency prevents us from exploring the most important learning aspects of a certain tool.

The last question should be: Is there a new educational approach on the horizon for non formal education at the beginning of this new century? E-learning? Self directed learning within the framework of life-long learning? The answer to that question might be the starting point for another article!



☀️ “OF TOOLS AND PEOPLE”

Rui Gomez - Programme Manager - Youth Co-operation and Euro-African Dialogue
(North-South Centre of the Council of Europe)

About the purpose

When I was an apprentice for one of the many jobs I have since abandoned, I was often confronted with the inadequacy of the work tools I was provided with. As a young apprentice, I would normally be assigned the most used and damaged tools, as apprentices were always the last to choose their tools. Consequently, the tools I had to work with were often blunter, less accurate and certainly heavier than those used by the regular workmen. When we complained, the politest answer we got was “a good worker does not blame his tools”. Needless to say, this came from the workers who had the privilege of choosing first! It was obviously a ploy used on the young and unskilled.

This attitude has lingered in my memory for a long time. I cannot avoid referring to it when thinking about tools for youth work and even more so for international youth work.

What is more important:

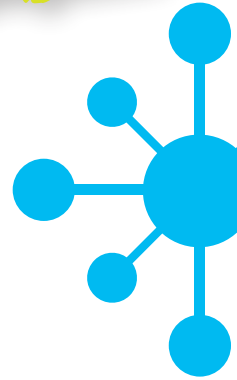
The tool or the worker?
The method or the trainer?
The process or the people?

Non-formal education and youth work in any of their multiple and diverse forms are about people, not about material objects or transformation processes such as brick-laying, wood-cutting or repairing tractors. If (young

people are at the centre of learning processes, tools for learning can never be more than an accessory or help, as in the Wikipedia definition of a tool: “a device that can be used to produce an item or achieve a task, but that is not consumed in the process. Informally the word is also used to describe a procedure or process with a specific purpose (...)”.

When we speak about tools in intercultural youth work we are really referring to ‘procedures and processes’ enabling young people to communicate, interact, collaborate, discuss and ultimately learn. Because they refer to processes applying to people, educational tools are extremely important because they are the depositary of approaches and values about youth work, non-formal education, intercultural learning and, inevitably, about the values and abilities of those who use them, be they trainers, youth workers or facilitators of non-formal education.

Youth work and non-formal education in Europe face unprecedented challenges that risk undermining their credibility and function. The economic and social crises impacting many European societies place an ever-increasing expectation on non-formal education as a provider of alternative possibilities of education and training, even entrepreneurship and employability. Youth policies are increasingly asked to respond to the challenges that young people encounter



in their quest for economic and social autonomy. At the same time, events in different parts of Europe involving young people suggest that this expectation is neither realistic nor serious: youth work and youth policy budgets are being slashed, the rising levels of youth unemployment and precariousness cannot be explained by poor opportunities for education and training alone. The numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) would suggest a greater rather than lesser need for youth work, although this is rarely the case.

In such a difficult context, it would seem that **the recognition** of the value of youth work in promoting the social and economic integration of young

people is not the issue at stake. It is rather youth work itself that seems to be a disposable commodity alongside the stated intention of providing "equality of opportunities" for young people to develop experiences enabling them to become autonomous citizens. The values are of course not put into question; it is rather as if they were suspended: they remain important but we cannot really "afford" them. The future will tell us how long such a suspension can be maintained without putting the values themselves into question, even if the deeply pacific nature of youth protests suggests that young people do not believe in violence as a form of protest, change or socialisation. Violence, at least in the form of physical violence, is clearly not an acceptable tool for social change!

Overall, this is good news for our democracies.

There is something deeply transformative in the intention of intercultural youth work, which is the assumption that education has more than an utilitarian function in the social and economic integration of young people: it also serves to teach us how to live together.

Learning to live together implies also an awareness of global citizenship that takes into account the deep complexity and interdependence of the issues affecting our societies, ranging from climate change and environmental challenges to armed conflicts and divisive identity politics. Articulating the relation between the very global and the very local is in itself a task, one that connects the issues with the lives of young people. The complexity

of the interdependence cannot be a reason to give up on the challenge: young people need to make sense of the world today and we ought to be able to understand and take on their aspirations, concerns and priorities.

The exponential development of global instant communication, as illustrated by social networks, adds to the complexity but probably should not overly change the nature of the role of youth work: citizenship goes together with



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socialisation and interaction. Experiential learning, the grounds upon which many of the tools of youth work are sup-

Tools and approaches

The development of methodological tools (activities, games, exercises, “dynamics”) ought to be driven by the need to find ways of engaging young people, engaging with young people and respecting the agency of young people in the processes of youth work. It needs to take into account the full cycle of experiential learning, including the reviewing of what was learnt and its application to the realities facing young people.

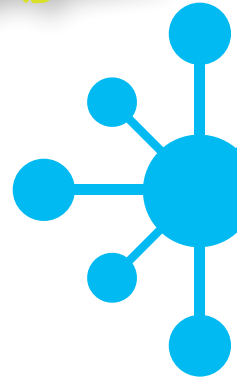
If there is a legitimate criticism to be made about the thirst for new tools - and the Salto Tool Fair has to be included in that criticism - it might be that the focus is often on the method, the group atmosphere or group dynamics rather than on the result or end aim of the activity. This ought to include not only what young people learn, but also what they can do with what they learn. A tool, in this respect, remains a tool. If we need to change tools in order to secure better results and communicate better with the youth

posedly built, is about life experiences and social experiences.

groups we work with, we should do so. However, we should also be able to question whether the problems lies with the relevance of the tools or with our own ability to use them to their full potential. How much can and do we need to learn in order to bring out the full potential of the tools available to us?

In activities at the European Youth Centres we sometimes encounter scepticism from youth organisations about the tools we propose and, when a request is made for “expert” intervention, it is limited to a specific exercise or activity. This is because youth organisations tend to resist methods or processes that, in their view, could put into question their own social-educational approach to youth work. The question is not about the compatibility between the tool and the approach, but rather about the visibility of our own approach because tools can hide the approach and can, in some cases, make up for an absence of a consistent and reflected on educational approach.

The open-ended nature of non-formal learning processes calls for non-dogmatic and flexible approaches that are centred on the learner rather than on the approach or ideology. But non-formal education is not an approach per se and cannot make up for the absence of one.



The contexts of youth work in international activities, including many of those held at the European Youth Centre or supported by the European Youth Foundation are very special: they are limited in time, confined to a specific space or place and involved temporary partners in learning. The flexibility provided by these contexts is also their weakness: it is more difficult to build on previous knowledge, individual learning styles and preferences are overtaken by the needs of group dynamics and the results may be superseded by the need to secure a successful activity. To this, one should add the variety of trainers and facilitators, some working together for the first time.

Having or developing a common approach is, in this context, much less important than securing a consistent programme for the activity that is acceptable to all the partners in the educational process. There is of course a consensus about the need to start from "where young people are", exploring and developing a common understanding of issues that can lead to some kind of action plan, project or commitment that connect intercultural learning experiences with the realities to which participants will return. A process that is not very far from the "See, Judge, Act" common to youth organisations of Christian inspiration or from "Think globally, Act locally".

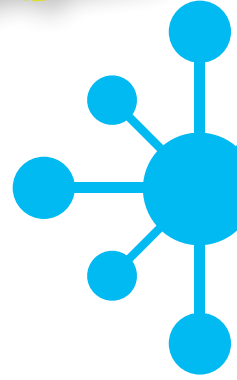


Quality in tools

What must be kept in mind, in my opinion, is that the nature of international youth activities - especially those open to participants from various organisational backgrounds (or none at all) - will always place more emphasis on the tools and methods used than on

a consistent process that can fully take into account the educational development and social involvement of young people over time. The potential of many activities lies therefore more with their specific and targeted nature, which can also be very "aggressive" in upsetting comfort zones, than with the coherence between the process of the





activity and the life of the young person. The experiential learning is therefore compressed and applied in very specific ways, which is not a reason to doubt its effectiveness. But learners may find themselves alone in the last phases of the cycle, which is why “learn to learn” is so important, after all. This of course is not the case with long-term training courses and explains their success (and difficulties too!).

This is also why the quality of the activities and the inherent quality of the tools for learning are so important. In the open-ended approaches of non-formal learning, the varieties of methods are also endless even if they probably resemble each other more than we think. When we first started identifying and discussing quality criteria for the activities of the youth sector of the Council of Europe we were stunned by the difficulty of pinning down acceptable criteria and communicating them to others.

The key principles of intercultural learning and human rights education are very helpful despite their inherent ambiguity and the diversity of their practice across Europe. At the very least the design and usage of tools for learning should thus include:

- Knowledge about human rights, what they are, and how they are safeguarded or protected;
- Learning through human rights, recognising that the context and the way human rights learning is organised and imparted has to be consistent with human rights values
- Learning for human rights, by developing skills, attitudes and values for the

learners to apply human rights values in their lives and to take action, alone or with others, to promote and defend human rights.

Even when activities do focus on human rights, most of what is outlined above should be applicable. To this we must add what we have learned about intercultural learning, including:

- De-constructing stereotypical, ethnocentric and prejudicial views about diversity or “the other”
- The recognition and respect of human dignity as a common denominator upon which tolerance and respect for diversity are placed
- The development of a tolerance of ambiguity, including the ambiguity of notions of culture
- Curiosity and openness to other world views
- Dialogical learning approaches for, as Paulo Freire puts it, “without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education!”
- The possibility of connecting global intercultural issues with local multicultural realities as part of a cosmopolitan rationality, «a way of thinking that does not waste any person, knowledge, experience and by doing so, rises and amplifies the possibilities of finding the ‘right’ and harmonious answers to our demands and ensure that all single persons or community have a place in our world» in the words of Teresa Cunha².

This is radically different from the stereotyped view of youth activities as a collection of methods and of

1. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

2. Teresa Cunha in «Recognising the Unknown», paper presented at the Diversity Fourth Forum, Budapest 25-29 October 2006



international youth work as a form of simulated activism in which the reflection on social commitment replaces commitment. This is part of the underlying philosophy of manuals such as Compass and Compasito and, especially, Mosaic – the T-Kit on Euro-Mediterranean youth work. Action without reflection may be futile activism, but reflection without action is pure verbalism or “blah, blah”, in Paulo Freire’s words.

Good tools require therefore skilled practitioners and sound approaches.

But while a skilled practitioner can work with a poor tool, a good tool can be counter-productive in non-skilled hands or when used with a different approach. This applies as much to bricklaying and carpentry as it does to intercultural non-formal education activities.

We are lucky that our educational tools are far more accessible and cheaper than building tools. It is really up to us to make sure we get the best, and only the best, out of them.



THE SHIFTING BOUNDARIES OF LEARNING TOOLS

Alessio Surian - Laboratorio Politiche Pubbliche, LPP

I have a vivid memory of my first experience of walking into the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg back in the 1980s where - among a series of ten A4 booklets displayed on a wall on the ground floor - I found a clear focus on and legitimization of experiential learning and games and simulation educational approaches. Transformed before my eyes, the "Bafa Bafa" exercise was no longer an activity being shared by word of mouth among trainers but had finally found an "institutionalized" appearance which included both guidelines about how to run it and reflections upon its educational use. Those booklets were helping the understanding of the difference between learning "about" and learning "to be".

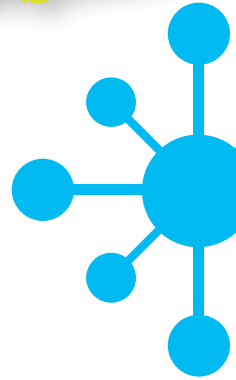
The way technologies are being "adopted" in society by educational agents and by sectors of the population has had an impact on general and specific expectations about where and how learning takes place.

Whatever the technology's appearance (mental, paper, outdoor, digital...), understanding its specific ways of functioning is essential, especially for those who are particularly interested in learning-by-doing as an effective way of learning. It is encouraging to see educators and trainers trying to understand not only how new technologies work but also how they can support learning through personalised, social and contextually-based interactions.

Of course, a major role is being played by issues related to web 2.0 (the semantic tagging of Internet contents) and augmented reality (blending real and virtual environments) and it helps educators' critical mind to address them while keeping in mind Neil Postman's words of warning² that "all technological change is a trade-off (...), a Faustian bargain. Technology giveth and technology taketh away. This means that for every advantage a new technology offers, there is always a corresponding disadvantage". In "Growing up with Google. What it means to education" (2008), Diana G. Oblinger (Educause) sums up the Net Generation as students who were born after 1982 and who have never known life without the Internet. In their own words:

- My computer is the nucleus of my workspace
- When I need information I go online
- My cell phone is my primary method of communication along with IM or email
- I'm usually juggling five things at once.

According to Oblinger, even though "educators may see students every day, we do not necessarily understand their habits, expectations or learning preferences (...). Today's students bring a consumer orientation to education, which is viewed as a commodity to be consumed, acquired and accumulated", echoing Mark Taylor (2006) .



Is there a different perspective that does not consider education and its related technologies as a commodity? Such perspective implies in-depth and multidimensional reflection about how different issues relate to each other and it is probably best summed up by the thematic circle that echoes the

informal-non-formal-formal learning continuum and it is marked by four sectors: policy-practices-participants-professionalization suggested in "Tracks and tools for trading up in nonformal learning" by Lynne Chisholm and Bryony Hoskins (in Lynne Chisholm, Bryony Hoskins with Christian Glahn (eds), 2005).

What is the role of technologies in education in relation to policy-relevant perspectives on and practices of education and social change?

How do such technologies contribute to making such practices more or less inclusive and participatory in relation to participants?

Do they contribute to the professionalization processes in relation to participants and policymaking?



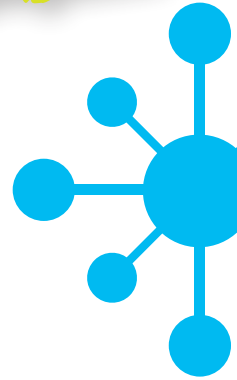
Diagram: Thematic cycle of trading up

How do available and desired technologies impact on the multidimensional character of the issues at hand? **Postam reminds us that "to a person with a computer, everything looks like data (...) every technology has a prejudice. Like language itself, it predisposes us to favor and value certain perspectives and accomplishments".**

It is the very definition of "data" that is shifting towards visual options with the ability to take and share pictures from mobile phones, post and share

images on social networks such as Flickr; video on YouTube, Vimeo, UthTv etc. Tagging such images and videos can go beyond a conceptual description and pinpoint the images' exact latitude and longitude. Geotagging them makes it possible to integrate these images into Umapper or Google Maps environments therefore allowing users to populate locations with tags and documentation, intersecting and representing personal narratives and space. Combining stand-alone technologies





into a novel application is the rule of the day, the mashup that allows us to put together different types of data with mapping mashups (overlaying maps with information) being just the tip of the iceberg in terms of ways of combining softwares in the same way as a music mashup mixes tracks from two different sources: those who are

less familiar with it can look at MIT's Piggy Bank [http://simile.mit.edu/wiki/Piggy_Bank] and experiment with a browser extension that turns the browser into a mashup platform, making it possible to extract data from different web sites and mix them together in interesting ways.

LEARNING
TO LEARN = EXPLORING
? → ...

One of the effects of the new wave of information and communication technologies in education is a shift of the core focus from “education” to “learning”, which is probably an unexpected help in understanding the difference between learning “about” and learning “to be”.

As Mizuko (2008, viii) acknowledges, “many of the more radical challenges to existing learning agendas are happening in domains such as gaming, online networks, and amateur production that usually occur in informal and non-institutional settings. This does not mean we are prejudiced against learning as it happens in the classroom or other formal educational settings. Rather, we hope to initiate a dialogue

about learning as it spans settings that are more explicitly educational and those that are not”.

These issues go together with the age-old question of access to knowledge, a question to which SALTO is responding with on-line as well as printed and face-to-face technologies: the over 1000 “tools” featured in the SALTO ToolBox² presentation calling for scenari reminds us that a commitment to research and documentation carries with it a responsibility to extend the circulation of the researched and documented work as far as possible. An on-line open database re-defines our perception of the spirit of access spirit, whether it be to Mediterranean knowledge temples (such as the third

1. Five Things We Need to Know About Technological Change, available at: <http://www.mat.upm.es/~jcm/neil-postman-five-things.html>
2. Generation NeXt Comes to College: Today's postmodern student, available at: <http://globalccc.edu/tirc/blog/files/Gen%20NeXt%20handout%2006%20in.pdf>
3. <http://www.umapper.com/>
4. <http://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/find-a-tool/>



century B.C., the Alexandria collection or the XVI century Cairo mosque library at al-Azhar) or more recent Western small-town libraries. Such an effort places reflection on technologies at the core of the ability to respect diversity and accessibility prin-

ciples through open-source options, acknowledging different agendas and differing approaches to elaborating and producing information while at the same time encouraging and enabling dialogue and joint efforts among them.

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USING CREATIVE TOOLS IN YOUTH WORK

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When developing and using creative tools for youth work we need to be mindful of the learning environment. The learning environment can be seen as formal or informal and we have tried to define what is formal and non formal education and informal learning many times. Where attempts at defining these terms have been made, the boundaries between the different kinds of learning and their uses are not always clear. There is also the related issue that attempted definitions of formal and non-formal education carry value judgements on the relative value of each approach.

Since the 1970s, the International Standard of Classification of Education (ISCED) has defined formal education as regular school to university education, based on acquisition of knowledge and theory, using syllabi and curricula, employing standardised teaching and professional practice and characterised by being directive and compulsory. Non-formal education is seen as out-of-school or continuing education characterised by being voluntary, cooperative and supportive. Informal learning has often been characterised as family or community-based, incidental and self-directive. Formal education has often been seen as biased towards theory and knowledge, where non-formal and informal learning have been seen as biased towards attitudes, doing and reflecting.

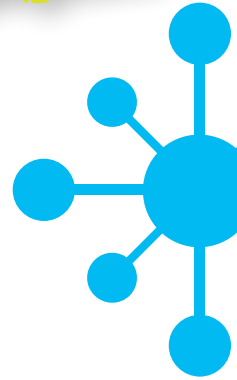
From an historical perspective, the focus has long been on formal education and its supposed superiority to non-formal education. Formal education (earning)

was seen as giving access to the accumulated wisdom of humanity institutionalised in schools, colleges and universities and in the process advancing the cause of human development. Formal knowledge was universal; it could be used in most places and at any time. In contrast, non-formal education was seen as context specific.

In recent decades the dominance of formal education has been increasingly challenged. It is increasingly claimed that many things can be learnt more effectively in non-formal or informal settings. In fact social anthropology showed that sophisticated learning took place in communities without formal education. It was also suggested that formal education was not context free but took different forms in different cultures.

In addition, there is the complex relationship between education and learning. For many years learning, in whatever form, was seen as the outcome of an educative process. Learning resulted in the acquisition of knowledge, skills values and attitudes etc. However, in more recent times learning has come to be seen as participation and ultimately belonging. We cannot learn without belonging to something and we cannot belong without learning the practices, norms and values of the community we belong to.

To further complicate matters there is the relationship between learning and empowerment. Formal learning was seen as a means of upward social mobility –



moving from “disadvantaged” to “privileged” status. Conversely, formal education was seen as dominated by middle-class values and seen as a means of perpetuating economic and social elites.

Developments in the last twenty years have seen an exponential increase in the sources and the means of learning. Learning in the community, workplace learning, up skilling, mentoring, the Internet, are but some of the means through which the sources and means of learning have become lifelong. This has resulted in an increased awareness of the importance and potential role of non-formal education. As a consequence there has also been a focus on the formal recognition and accrediting of such non-formal and informal learning through qualification frameworks that seek to accredit and regulate all learning. This has given rise to fears that what are seen as the unique strengths and benefits of non-formal education and informal learning will be increasingly straight-jacketed into more formal learning environments.

What does all this mean for the development of creative tools in youth work? First, it highlights the importance of the learning environment in which tools are developed and used. Whatever the historical background or the theoretical debate, the dividing lines between formal, non-formal and informal learning have become increasingly blurred in the context of a world dominated by multiple forms of change: technological, social and in the mode and means of learning. Non-formal education plays an important role in learning just as aspects of formal education are of increasing importance in non-formal and infor-

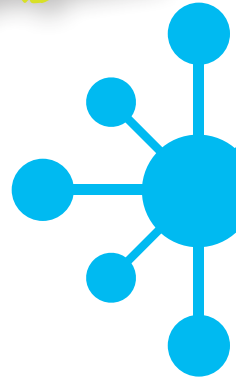
mal learning. The differences between formal, non-formal and informal learning are only meaningful in the context in which learning takes place and, more specifically, the historical, social, economic and political context in which it takes place.

Can all of us involved in working with young people say what the learning environment or context is or should be? A better understanding of our learning environment could in turn help us develop and use effective tools in youth work. I would suggest that the learning environment in which we work is one dominated by change – both external and internal. The external change is evident in the world around us: it is political, social, environmental, economic, technological, behavioural and attitudinal. The internal change is more deeply personal in character: I learn if I change as a consequence of experience. I can change my mind and heart, my thinking, my motivation, my behaviour and attitudes and these in turn can change my present actions and enable me to take different actions tomorrow. This process of learning involves a personal development cycle where learning to learn and learning to live are mutually supportive. The continuous cycle of personal development involves increased self-awareness, setting goals and acting in pursuit of these goals that in turn will lead to enhanced self-awareness.

What would be the features and characteristics of creative tools for such a learning environment? They would be characterised by thinking, feeling, doing, listening and watching. They would be activist (adopting a hands-on approach); pragmatic (combining theory and practice);

theorist (concept building); and reflective (reviewing and renewing). Such creative tools would focus on developing constructive attitudes (what we are), skills (what we can do) and knowledge (what we know). Creative tools are interactive, involve heterogeneous groups while at the same time providing for autonomy.

Such an approach to developing creative tools for youth work takes cognisance of and utilises the interplay between formal, non-formal and informal learning as well as both the external world environment and the internal environment of each individual human being.



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