

Hold your Aces

Trainers Competence Cards for Self-Assessment





Background

What is it about?

These competence cards have been developed initially for a long-term cooperation project between the national trainers' pools of Ireland, Netherlands and Poland. This project involves trainers working in the pools of these three National Agencies of Erasmus+: Youth (in Action) to improve the quality and quantity of E+ projects.

One of these cooperation activities - the second international pool meeting in Konstancin-Jeziorna in Poland, 7-10 of October 2015 – was facilitated by Gabi Steinprinz (Netherlands) and Dagna Gmitrowicz (Poland). They also designed the programme. The main focus of this meeting was to explore the ETS Competence Model for Trainers, that was presented in the 'Bridges for Trainers' in December 2014.

“Only trainers themselves can make the competence model a self-assessment tool!”

The facilitators of this meeting were convinced that it is worth exploring and trying it out, and they also believed that trainers have a responsibility to take the competence model in their own hands and work with it. Hence, they included the exploration of this competence model in their programme and to make it more digestible or inviting to explore as a self-assessment tool, Gabi Steinprinz developed a series of competence cards alongside some exercises. The competence cards and the exercises invite people to extract one competence or criterion to focus on, to support their reflection and their professional development as European trainers.

Since that meeting, the competence cards are being used in various training settings (national pool of trainers meeting, Trainer Skills Workshop, Training of Trainers, etc.).



Background

What is the tool for?

The competence cards have been developed to support and promote the self-assessment process of trainers and facilitators to accompany their professional development. They divide the whole ETS Competence Model for Trainers Working at International Level and its list of competences and criteria, into separate 'pieces', which makes it easier to focus on and work with.

The competence cards can be used individually, in newly formed trainers teams, in existing teams, or trainers' pools. The tool supports trainers in analyzing and mapping out their competences, can be used as a tool for feedback between colleagues, or as a support for other tools that have been developed for self-assessment.

Individual approach

Depending on the personality of the trainer, the competence cards can be used to:

- Explore to which extent a trainer feels confident about the development of his/her/hir competence in the training practice.
- Explore which trainer's competences are challenging or not visible to oneself or to others.
- Explore or analyse how a given competence has been developed throughout the trainer's development, experience and practice, and better understand how the trainer deals with a competence or a criterion.
- Find evidence for the competences developed.
- Develop a personal or individual strategy for further professional development.



Background

Team approach

The competence cards can be used both in new teams (for teams that deliver a single training) or for experienced teams (trainers that work together for a longer time, for a series of trainings, working together in a pool of trainers, etc.). In this case, the competence cards can be used to:

- Explore which of the trainers' competences (in teams or pools) are present, missing or less visible.
- Ask and give feedback to each other during or after working together.
- Further develop the competences of / in the team or pool.
- Expand the team or pool with new team members, based on trainers' competences that would complement those already present in the team.

Who is the tool for?

The tool is meant for trainers, working within the context of Erasmus+ and the youth field. However, it can also be useful for trainers working in other educational training areas. Trainers who are interested in working with the competences defined in the Competence Model for Trainers Working at International Level as part of the European Training Strategy, can use the competence cards and the exercises as a tool for reflection or as a self-assessment tool, to develop their profession as trainers.



Background

How to approach it?

The competence cards can not only be used as standalone tools or together with the exercises, but also in many other ways or with tools that have been developed by others. The invitation is to use them freely, with an approach that fits individual trainers best, using not only the cognitive level, but also other senses, 'gut feeling', creativity, movement and any other form or method that fits the one(s) using them.

One bit of advice: trainers can tend to search for the weakest or strongest competences to develop. 'I am not good at this, hence I need to work on it', is something that we can often hear. On the other hand, if someone feels confident about a competence, it is dealt with like a tick box: done! We must underline that no one can tick all the boxes, for no one is perfect. Neither the ETS competence model, nor the competence cards, have been developed aiming for perfect trainers.

They have rather been developed for trainers to [better] understand themselves and their identity, which competences come more naturally and which ones require more effort. The responsibility is with the trainers themselves, to develop their own strategy on which competences and criteria they would like to further develop.

We wish you a lot of inspiration, insightful reflection moments and exchanges with colleagues!



The Story of my

Find yourself one or two partner(s) to do this exercise, which is about storytelling of successful and unsuccessful development of a competence (in duo or trio, you will demonstrate how this competence was used / developed).

You tell your story and your peers support you by asking clarifying questions.

When you have finished, it is the turn of the other person(s) to share a personal story.

Storytelling:

The concept of storytelling in this exercise has the following structure:

- An existing situation / frame, e.g. a training situation, a target group, etc.
- A specific situation that called for action - this can be before or during

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your training, workshop, etc. What was the conflict / problem / unwanted situation?

- The action as such:
 - Did you create something on the spot?
 - Did you research before doing anything?
 - Did you develop a new method to deal with it?
- Conclusion and insight about why you did that action and the result

Step 1:

Select one of the Competences of the ETS Competence Model for Trainers Working at International Level by taking one competence card.

NB: it does not have to be the same competence for everyone in the duo or trio.



The Story of my

Step 2:

Think back in your history as a trainer/facilitator. Focus on one specific situation where you demonstrated having / using this competence or where you found yourself lacking this competence.

- What was the setting of your training / workshop / session?
- What happened? What did you discover that was calling for action?
- What did you do about it? Why?
- How did it work out? What was the effect?

Peers can ask clarifying questions to understand better the motive of the action. Peers can also ask the storyteller to give examples or to give more details.

Step 3:

Make a conclusion for yourself:

- What does this evidence say about your development of this competence?

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- What are your findings about this topic / dimension?
- Where do you really feel comfortable?
- Where is there space for improvement / learning?
- What challenges do you face with regard to this topic / dimension? Can you formulate them in terms of learning goals?

After conclusion, a new peer becomes the storyteller.

NB: since everyone will go through the steps, take into account time. According to available time, set a time for each one of you to tell the story.

Closing:

Record the outcomes for yourself by writing, mind-mapping, drawing, or expressing them in any other way that suits you best.



Historical Walk

Select one of the competences of the ETS Competence Model for Trainers Working at International Level by taking one competence card.

Find yourself a physical space to walk / make steps. This can be indoor (e.g. in a corridor or a large room) or outdoors.

- In case you do the walk individually, take the card and do the walk, following the steps mentioned below.
- In case you will do it in pairs, one person starts the walk, while the other one supports the walker. The supporter can write down statements, comments and observations. The supporter can also help the walker with questions that support exploring more in-depth rational and emotional aspects of this competence. When the first walker is finished, roles are swapped: the supporter becomes the walker and the walker becomes the supporter.

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The walk:

Step 1:

Make an (imaginary) line to start your walk. Stand behind this line and think about the start of your career as a trainer / facilitator / workshop leader. Connect for a short while to that moment.

Step 2:

Go back in your memory to the first time you worked with evaluation and impact assessment. Try to remember the first time you used or started to develop this competence, or the opposite: when you realised that you lacked this competence. Take a step forward and connect to the feeling of that moment. Ask yourself some questions:

- What were the challenges? How did you react to those challenges?



Historical Walk

- Which emotions are connected to that moment?
- To which extent did you develop this competence?
- Did you set for yourself new learning goals with regard to this competence?

Step 3:

Think about the next significant moments in the development of this competence. Try to remember important trainings / workshops / sessions where you used or started to develop this competence. Take another step forward. Together with the physical step, try to feel the emotional step in the development of this competence. Ask yourself some questions:

- How did you develop this competence? Which elements did you manage well?
- What were the challenges? Which elements were still difficult?

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- How did you know how you developed this competence?
- Do you feel (in your core) how this process affected you? Which feeling is getting hold of you?

Next Steps:

Take one or two or three more steps according to the amount of important moments in the path of the development of this competence. Follow the same reflection process as in step 3.

Last Step:

Take another step forward. You are in the *Now*.

- Look back to the beginning of your walk. How do you feel?
- Where are you now? How confident do you feel in this competence?



Historical Walk

- What challenges are left? Which element would require further development? Where are your insecurities now?
- What does it say about your willingness, strategy and / or focus to develop this competence?

If you work in pairs, you swop places and the other one is doing the walk.

Closing:

If you work in pairs, the supporter can share observations and thoughts. Record the outcomes for yourself by writing, mind-mapping, drawing, or expressing them in any other way that suits you best.

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A large, stylized letter 'O' graphic that serves as a background for the page. It is composed of three concentric, slightly offset shapes in shades of gray, creating a 3D effect. The innermost shape is the lightest, the middle is a medium gray, and the outermost is the darkest. The 'O' is positioned vertically, centered on the page.



Collect Evidence

Select one of the competences of the ETS Competence Model for Trainers Working at International Level taking one competence card.

Step 1:

Think back in your history as a trainer/facilitator. Focus especially on that competence.

- When did you use it for the first time?
- What challenges did you face and how did you deal with them?
- How did you develop this competence until now?

List your findings in keywords, in a mind map, in a drawing or... whatever suits you best.

Step 2:

Think of evidences that demonstrate the development of this competence or which challenges you had to overcome. What could be an evidence?

- Evaluations of participants
- Feedback from participants
- Feedback from trainer team members or other colleagues
- Notes that you made in some notebook
- Reports that you elaborated
- Self-assessment that you did before, e.g. for Youthpass
- Pictures
- Methods that you have developed
- Articles that you wrote

Make a list of evidences for yourself.



Collect Evidence

Step 3:

Make a conclusion for yourself.

- What does this evidence say about your development of this competence?
- What are your findings about this topic / dimension?
- Where do you really feel comfortable?
- Where is there space for improvement / learning?
- What challenges do you face with regard to this topic / dimension? Can you formulate them in terms of learning goals?

Closing:

Record the outcomes for yourself by writing, mind-mapping, drawing, or expressing them in any other way that suits you best.





Reflecting on

This exercise is meant to be individual, but it is also possible to go through the reflection process with someone else. Nonetheless, it might be interesting to first reflect for yourself and maybe later find a reflection to exchange on the outcomes, the concept, or the questions that came up.

You are free to reflect the way you want. You can walk, write, draw, build, making mind maps; whatever suits you best. For that reason, find a good space for yourself and sit on a bench, or find a couch, a table, get to your computer or just go outside. It does not matter as long as it is the best space for you.

Reflecting:

Select one of the Competences from ETS Competence Model for Trainers Working at International Level by taking one competence card.

my competence

Step 1:

Go back in your memory to the first time you worked with evaluation and impact assessment. Try to remember the first time you used or started to develop this competence, or the opposite: when you realised that you lacked this competence.

- What were the challenges? How did you react to those challenges?
- Which emotions are connected to that moment?
- To which extend did you develop the competence?
- Did you set yourself new learning goals with regard to this competence?



Reflecting on

Step 2:

Think about the other significant moments in the development of this competence. Try to remember important training / workshops / sessions where you used or started developing this competence. Reflect on how you developed this competence and which challenges you are still there?

Step 3:

Below you find some support questions that you do not have to go through, but that can help your reflection:

- How did you develop this competence? Which elements did you manage well?
- What were the challenges? Which elements were still difficult?
- How did you know how you developed this competence?

my competence

- Do you feel (in your core) how this process affected you? Which feeling is getting hold of you?
- Where are you now? How confident do you feel with this competence?
- What challenges are left? Which element would need further development? Where are your insecurities or fears?
- What does it say about your willingness, strategy and / or focus to further develop this competence?

Closing:

Record the outcomes for yourself by writing, mind-mapping, drawing, or expressing them in any other way that suits you best.

Impressum

Published by

JUGEND für Europa / SALTO Training and
Cooperation Resource Centre
Godesberger Allee 142-148
53175 Bonn, Germany

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IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal
Republic of Germany

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This card game was produced in November 2018.

The contents of the card game are based on the
ETS Competence Model for Trainers Working at
International Level.