



Education and Culture DG

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INTRODUCTION

In this handbook you can find a description of an innovative model for Ambassadors and Mentors that can be used in Adult Education Centres throughout Europe which may be transferred to other settings, e.g. Work Place learning or professional education and Industry or the Health Care sector. The partner countries – Ireland, The Netherlands, Lithuania and Sweden have developed a systematic model for the ambassador and mentor project, which has been tested and modified.

The model is described in the following chapters:

1. Motivation of using the ambassador model
2. Recruitment and selection of ambassadors
3. Training of ambassadors and mentors
4. Activities of ambassadors and mentors

The Appendix contains:

- Accreditation system
- Agreement
- Case Studies
- Certificates
- E portfolio
- Portfolio

The order of the chapters suggests how to use the model to best effect.

Initially the benefits of using the ambassador system are explained, as well as the possible pitfalls.

The next chapter demonstrates how to recruit and select ambassadors or mentors using methods that are appropriate for each of the partner organizations.

Chapter Three then acknowledges that ambassadors and mentors need special skills to do their job. These skills can be taught during the ambassador or mentor training.

The final chapter discusses the different activities which the ambassadors or mentors may undertake.

The ambassador and mentor model is a cyclical model. New ambassadors and mentors are being trained again and again, the process continues. *All of the chapters can be used in a flexible way according to the needs of the organization.*

Chapter One

MOTIVATION FOR USING THE AMBASSADOR MODEL

1.1 Overview

The Ambassador Model is an effective tool for the recruitment and retention of adult learners across many sectors and levels of adult learning. Whether there is good participation or low levels of engagement in adult learning in your country the Ambassador model is a useful tool in attracting hard to reach learners. It can also



Two Dutch ambassadors are talking about their experiences of being an ambassador

motivate learners as they continue their studies and move into higher levels of learning. It can provide a link with other organizations and help your learning centre to connect with a wider community.

Most importantly the Ambassador training and practice builds key skills and develops self-esteem. Changes in the everyday difficulties a student may have and through their increased confidence leads to long-term beneficial effects in society. The person becomes a more productive and happy contributor to society!

The model has become a useful aspect of developing specific skills. These skills can be applied in other aspects of the student's life, developing interview and presentation skills and building confident communication. This approach has been used in many different settings with different groups of learners.

1.2 Motivation for student participation in the ambassador model

The students are key to making the ambassador model a success, so the ideas must be presented to them in order to ensure their participation and to outline the benefits. In the words of a student ambassador the benefits are clear...

“My confidence grew when I realized I wasn't afraid of learning, when I was in school I never tried but now I can see how rewarding it is to learn. I never got a distinction in my life and when I started doing well in the exams and making a speech I just kept going.”

“I was full of fear before, but now I have confidence and I have left my fears behind.”

Participation will increase student ambassadors’ skills in a quantifiable and tangible way:

- It will build self-confidence.
- It increases skills in presenting information verbally to a large or small group.
- Allows the development of skills using video, audio recording equipment and power point to convey a message.
- The ambassador model develops skills in reflective practice, critical thinking and self-awareness.

Participation will help other students to engage in the education programmes and processes that are being promoted.

As the student ambassadors move on through the education system and into the workplace they can utilize their skills. They can use their accreditation to further their career choices and opportunities.

1.3 Avoiding pitfalls

In order to avoid pitfalls, certain aspects should be taken into consideration:

- One of the key aspects is to make the duties and responsibilities clear to the participants and to provide a clear legal agreement (see Appendix B). The legal agreement will make it clear that the organization will be able to use images and text produced by the student.
- The ambassador should be the right person for the job.
- The tutor should teach the ambassador about delivery techniques, limitations and provide guidance and feedback before and after presentations.
- The strengths of the ambassador should be encouraged.
- Insurance would be ideal for presentations when ambassadors leave the centre.
- When local or national media report on student ambassador activities the content should be controlled by the tutor or adult education centre.
- A tutor should teach ambassadors about boundaries and which information would be deemed inappropriate to share.

1.4 Motivation for organizations to use the ambassador model

The use of ambassadors to PROMOTE the organization and its activities has many direct and measurable benefits.

Participation and motivation

It has been the experience of many of the partner organizations that participation often comes about by a potential student hearing about the course or the activities of an organization from a current or past student. Although this process is a natural and organic one, it is also useful and important to capture and pay attention to this process. This is of

critical importance if we want to encourage hard to reach learners and learners with low levels of motivation.

Developing transferable skills

However the ambassador model does more than just attract and retain students. As the model has developed it quickly became clear that it was also a very useful learning tool across a wide spectrum of skills. Organizations have discovered ways that the model could fit into to existing testing structures and accreditation models and could be measured in a specific and quantifiable way.



3 Irish ambassadors (on the left) with the participants of the third project meeting

“The benefit to the individual student is immense from a personal development point of view. It helps build confidence and self esteem leading the student to move towards fulfilling their true potential.”

Learning pathways

The use of individual case studies can be a very useful tool in developing an individual pathway or learning plan for a student (see Appendix C). Participation in ambassador activities gives tutors an opportunity to review student progress in an open and positive way and is an excellent way of ensuring that potential students are attracted and retained within the education system.

Creation of marketing material

Student participation in the development of posters, leaflets and other materials has been very beneficial to organizations as students have produced materials that have a direct appeal to the target group and “speak the same language” – for example:

“Our Adult Education organization has also benefited from this project. It has increased our links with the wider community and raised our profile. It allows us to connect with other organizations and to maintain valuable links with past students.”

1.5 The use of mentors

We can define a MENTOR as one who guides or advises. Existing and established students are trained and encouraged to guide and direct new students.

This guidance can be of help to new students to learn about the course from a student point of view. The newcomers gain knowledge and experience from established students and established students have a focused opportunity to reflect on their own progress. This can be quite empowering for both groups of students. The mentors can also give informal guidance about course choices. They can help with study skills, organizational skills, learning to learn activities. Mentors can also provide a critical role in helping learners who are just beginning a course to stay motivated and to remain in the education system.

1.6 Conclusion

Through the direct experience of a number of partner organizations we have seen the development of a model of best practice that has utilized student ambassadors at every level in the promotion of learning activities and opportunities.

The key aspect is that all of the activities are student led. These activities can be developed according to individual need and ability. This is an abiding principle of

adult education practice. The ambassador model is individual, flexible and student led and not prescriptive. It takes into account that a person's social context is deeply embedded but through encouragement, the changes to the social aspect for the ambassador, their family, local community and ultimately society can be immense.

The activities should not be used in a task oriented way but rather as a transferable model – one that is appropriate for many different learners and target groups. These target groups range from the difficult to reach students, early school leavers, non nationals, migrant workers and those with special educational needs.

Engagement in the activities has allowed the ambassadors to undergo some level of transformational learning at a personal level it has increased their skills in a direct and measurable way.

It has allowed organizations to build and maintain links with the wider community. It is possible to incorporate elements of this model in a flexible way within organizations and at the individual student level making it a very adaptable tool with many benefits. These benefits range from the great personal development of the individual to the retention of the person in education or industry. The retention of an individual who is now newly motivated to succeed can only ultimately lead to higher levels of productivity and an increased benefit to society in general.

Chapter Two RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF AMBASSADORS

2.1 Ambassadors' selection criteria

The first step towards implementation of the adult education ambassadors' programme is the selection process. Although ambassadors' selection criteria vary from country to country depending on local circumstances, common tendencies and criteria can be established.

Selected ambassadors should be people who are willing and able to participate in the programme. Both past and current successful students can be selected as ambassadors. Past students can be very helpful and encourage participation of disadvantaged adults and retention of current students by recounting their own positive experiences. Similarly, current students who are delighted with the positive changes in their lives as a direct result of returning to learning may also be successful in attraction and retention of others. Students who actively participate in all aspects of the learning environment are the most likely to become successful ambassadors.

The selected students should possess, or be willing to develop, certain personal qualities, such as:

- empathy
- enthusiasm
- self-esteem
- dependability
- adequate oral communication skills
- willingness to learn
- integrity
- independence
- stable personality
- courage to speak publicly
- openness
- willingness to be an ambassador

However, in separate cases, students who do not meet all these requirements can also be selected. Students with poor communication skills but a willingness to tell their life story and reveal



*Ambassadors of Jonava Adult Education Centre
(Lithuania)*

positive changes might be very persuasive ambassadors who will develop skills throughout the training process.

Although some methods for selection of ambassadors are spontaneous and individually driven, others are more formal. They involve the selection of an ambassador by a tutor/teacher for a specific task/learning goal or outcome. An organization or a tutor may select an ambassador who is of a particular gender or who comes from a particular social or cultural background for a specific purpose. If ambassadorial activities form part of the accreditation or certification for a particular course of study, the selection process becomes universal or general and is to an extent compulsory.

2.2 Ambassador Recruitment

In this section, ambassador recruitment experience in four countries (the Netherlands, Ireland, Sweden, Lithuania) are described.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, ambassadors that have been selected can be subdivided into 3 groups:

- ambassadors for Dutch (1st language) courses
- ambassadors for social skills (budgeting and parenting) courses
- ambassadors for Dutch (2nd language) courses
- ambassadors as mentors



Dutch ambassadors

The process of recruitment of the ambassadors for Dutch (1st language) courses was as follows. The course was announced in all Dutch language groups. A presentation was made by ambassador and ambassador coach in three Dutch language groups. An information meeting was organised for six interested students. The ambassador course began with three students. As the

recruitment was carried out by different teachers there was no uniformity in recruitment procedure. However, there was an emphasis on public appearance and on developing personal communication skills. Various key elements were identified for future selection criteria, such as motivation, i.e. willingness to work on personal development and to share (negative) personal experiences and to

talk about emotions of shame. Also qualities of empathy and articulateness were identified as important to develop.

Ambassadors for social skills (budgeting and parenting) courses were selected by the teacher. The teacher made a presentation about the required ambassador activity, a radio interview. The students were asked during the course if they wanted to become ambassadors. This selection was a good selection as the education level was relatively high and students needed little or no special training.

Ambassadors who belong to the third group aim to guide non-nationals in Dutch society, to participate in the so called "Buddy Project" – a special project for women to naturalize. The teacher explained the buddy project and asked the students if they wanted to participate.

Ambassadors who act as mentors were recruited in the following way. First, project leaders told the ambassadors for Dutch (1st language) courses that they have developed a mentor training. The ambassadors were very enthusiastic about that training. They really wanted to follow the training and they regarded this training as a next step in their development as an ambassador. Later on, the teachers of the Dutch (1st language) courses told their students about mentor training programme and stimulated competent students to follow the training. They also gave the students a flyer with information on this training.

Ireland

In Ireland, 3 following categories of ambassadors can be distinguished:

- ambassadors for attracting young males
- ambassadors for attracting adults to literacy
- ambassadors for retention

The aim of the first group of ambassadors is to attract young males to education. For these ambassadors, formal methods of recruitment were used. As part of a communications class, students were offered a choice of projects. One of these was to tell their own story. More than half the students chose to do so.

The presentation of their story to their classmates provided them with marks towards accreditation at national level. One student volunteered to tell his story at a presentation of certificates that included friends, family, VIPs and the press. This student then agreed to talk on the radio during a national festival to celebrate adult learning.



Irish ambassador Sharon

An ambassador who participated in the second program (attracting adults to literacy) is a literacy student herself. She developed her skills and was trained as a volunteer tutor and now teaches another adult to read and write on a one to one basis. Her confidence led to her joining the National Adult Literacy organization as a student representative. During National Adult Literacy week she told her story on national radio and television.

The third group of ambassadors (ambassadors for retention) was recruited in order to prevent new students from leaving a course in the first few days because of lack of confidence. Students were encouraged to come into the class on the first day and tell how they felt when they started the course the previous year. A special attention was paid to presentation and media skills.

Sweden

Teachers at CFL (Centre for Flexible Learning) met and started a discussion of possible future ambassadors. They listed the names and contacted the students. Teachers and headmasters contacted the potential ambassadors and out of 15 persons decided on 8 ambassadors. They met the group and then they spent two days at a conference facility where they prepared for interviews that were videotaped and edited. Three different ways of presenting life stories were chosen:

- a straight forward interview where a project leader interviewed an ambassador
- a conversation or discussion between ambassadors
- letting the ambassador freely tell her story



Lina- the first Lithuanian ambassador recruited

Prior to this, the ambassadors and the project leaders were given the opportunity to practice and discuss what to say in front of the camera. A relaxed atmosphere was created and due to a good balance between work and recreation it was not difficult to maintain the group for two days.

Lithuania

The aim of ambassadors' program in Lithuania is to attract and retain people who do not have certificates of basic or general secondary education. Both aspects attraction and retention are important to Jonava Adult Education Centre. Particular attention is paid to retention because many students leave school without getting certificates of basic or general secondary education or are left to

repeat a year. Therefore, it is very important to increase their motivation and to help them to adapt to school.

Two types of ambassadors have been recruited in Lithuania:

- successful current students
- successful past students

Information about ambassadors' program was announced in several adult education classes. Potential ambassadors were selected by the teacher and individual talks were organized. Students were interviewed in order to determine if they could become successful ambassadors, i.e. to reveal their life stories, to

find out their attitudes and to identify students' motivation and skills. It has been noticed that it is better to talk to every student individually than to approach the whole class. In this case students are more likely to be involved in a discussion; they are not ashamed to ask questions.

First of all, students who actively participate in school events were addressed. However, some shy students who are not usually active in school life were even more interested in ambassadors' program than these active students and they were selected. Naturally, these students need more preparation and training than the above mentioned category.

In order to persuade students to participate in ambassadors' program, benefits of being an ambassador were explained. These include an opportunity to help other people, personal development, acquiring skills that might be helpful at school leaving exams, gaining experience that can be included in a students' CV and increased chances for employment in the future.

Successful past students were contacted on personal basis. The aims of ambassadors' program were explained and students were invited to share their success stories.

2.3 Observations about selection

Many procedures can be used for ambassadors' recruitment, but each procedure should use a step-by-step approach. Some students would prefer to be approached individually and other gain confidence from participation in group activities. Inputs from an existing ambassador can be very beneficial at the early stage of recruitment of new ambassadors. It is important to attract ambassadors with different life stories and backgrounds.

2.4 Difficulties in recruiting

Many adults find it very difficult to speak in public and this is particularly true of adults who left school early. Describing a personal experience may be much more difficult than a theoretical topic. Some adults want to participate in the programme, but they are too busy: they have to combine their work and studies, home life and looking after children.

Chapter Three

TRAINING FOR AMBASSADORS AND MENTORS

In this chapter you will find a description of different training for ambassadors:

- Training of students who give information to other people about their life stories and the importance of following education again. The aim of giving this information is to attract more students to education. This training is developed in Ireland and Lithuania.
- Training of mentors. These students guide new students to give them a comfortable feeling in the beginning of the course, tell their own stories. The aim of the mentors is that the new students would remain on the course and would not drop out. This training is developed in The Netherlands.
- Training in media skills. Student ambassadors learn how to speak on the radio. This training is developed in Ireland.
- Video training. Some ambassadors have followed a video-training. The aim of this training is that ambassadors can tell their own story in front of a camera. The film or DVD can be used for information goals. This training is developed in Sweden.

If you want to use one of these training plans for your own students, you can choose all or just some parts of the training. The exercises are at different levels, so you can choose the level that fits your student. Not every ambassador needs to follow every assignment. It depends on the person himself. You also can change the sequence of the training assignments.

The training assignments provided are examples of how students can be



Ambassador training (Lithuania)

trained for their job as ambassadors or mentors. Preparation for each presentation and feedback after it is a very important part of the programme. Special methods of educating ambassadors spring from the ambassadors themselves in that sense that they are very active in their own training. The ambassador's personality and personal abilities should be taken into consideration.

3.1 Training of ambassadors

Lesson 1: Introduction

It is important, that students get to know each other better. Equipment needed is just a small rubber or cloth ball. The tutor introduces her/himself as “*I’m Margaret and I like MILK*” and passes to next student who says “*That is Margaret she likes milk, I am Ian and I like igloos*”, next student repeats etc...Then, when everyone has spoken the tutor throws the ball randomly and shouts the “likes” of the person, who catches and throws to someone else – shouting out their name. This game is a good relaxation technique and often causes a lot of laughter.

The M&M game

Equipment – a bowl of sweets of different colours, a whiteboard or flip chart.
Purpose – to allow students to express hopes and fears in an informal and fun way. Put the bowl on the table and ask everyone to take a few sweets. (Don’t eat them!!) For each colour there is a question:

Red - Why you are here?

Green - What you are afraid of (educationally)?

Yellow - What are your talents?

Brown - What are your hopes for this course?

Blue - What is your ultimate ambition or outcome?

In pairs each student has to answer questions according to the colours s/he picked out.

Introduction of the aims and objectives of ambassadors’ activities by the teacher

The teacher introduces the aims and objectives of ambassadors’ activities. The main aim is to attract new students and to retain current students. The main objectives are:

- to emphasize benefits of getting a certificate of general secondary education
- to help overcome fears and build self-confidence
- to increase motivation
- to provide information about your organization
- to attract attention to the positive and cheerful aspects of studying.

The teacher’s instruction is followed by students’ discussion:

- What other problems can be addressed?
- How can they be solved?

Lesson 2: Life stories

The motivation letter

The purpose is to allow students to use some written techniques, to explore attitudes to education and reasons to stay on a course. Equipment needed: flip chart and pen, paper and envelopes. Explain the brainstorm technique and put down all words the students can

think of associated with EDUCATION on flip chart. Ask the students to write a letter addressed to themselves about how they feel about:

- Returning to education
- What they want to gain from it?
- How they would feel if they dropped out before achieving their goal?



Students at work (Sweden)

Put the letter in unsealed envelope and address it to themselves. The Tutor collects the letters then asks students what he/she should do with the letters. Options:

- To open and review at a specific time, e.g. the end of term
- To send out the letter if attendance is slipping or a student has dropped out
- To keep on file until the end of the course

Students then discuss the benefits and drawbacks of above.

Writing a story by using a questionnaire of building blocks

Students write an essay by using a questionnaire or building blocks.

The questionnaire:

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Where did you study before coming to our adult education centre? How did you feel in that school? Why did you decide to study in our institution? How did you hear about our school?
3. What were your first impressions of our school? What expectations and fears did you have before coming to study here and did they come true?
4. What can you tell about programmes in our institution?
5. What positive and cheerful aspects of studying in our centre could you mention?

6. How, in your opinion, will these studies change (or have already changed) your life? What, in your opinion, are benefits of getting a certificate of general secondary education?
7. What advice could you give to potential and current students of our centre (help these students overcome their fears, build self confidence or increase their motivation, emphasize the importance of education in a person's life).

Building blocks:

1. My name is... Thank you for inviting me
2. I am an ambassador: I tell other people what it means to have difficulties in reading and writing. I know this from personal experience.
3. What I wanted to improve was ...
4. I had difficulties in ... I was confronted with that especially when I had to ...
5. This made me feel ...
6. I am definitely not the only one. In the Netherlands, there are 1.5 million people who experience difficulties in reading and writing in their everyday life.
7. The moment when I decided to do something about it was when I ...
8. I heard that there are special reading and writing courses for adult learners. I heard that from ...
9. I now take a reading and writing course in ...
10. The course is ...
11. I am now better able to ...
12. This has made me feel ...
13. This was my presentation. Thank you again. Do you have any questions?

Biographical and informative writing

Biographical and informative writing includes the following stages:

- Explaining what topics should be included: student's way back to education, first impressions at our school, positive changes in a student's life, information about our school, positive aspects of studying in our centre, advice to new or current students
- Explaining the main principles of writing an essay: an essay should consist of introduction, body, conclusion; ideas should be arranged into paragraphs; including personal details and describing feelings would be desirable, etc.
- Raising awareness of the target reader: readers - other current or potential students who need encouragement, advice and support
- Compiling notes
- Planning the essay
- Writing the essay
- Commenting on the essay by the teacher or/and peer revision
- Improving the essay

Lesson 3: Listening skills

Interviewing

An ambassador is interviewed by the teacher and/or other ambassadors – brainstorming.

The aim of the activity is:

- to encourage an ambassador to reflect on his /her way back to education
- to share positive experiences gained in our institution
- to discuss the importance of education in a person's life

These and similar questions can be asked:

- Why did you decide to study in our institution?
- What fears did you have before coming to study here and did they come true?
- How, in your opinion, will these studies change (or have already changed) your life?

Listening skills

In pairs ask a student to tell her/his story to the other student in the pair. The student then retells what s/he has heard to the rest of the group. This creates a distance for the student and her story and uses/reveals the speaking skills of the teller. Then after hearing their own story retold, the tutor can ask the student what they would change if they had a chance to do it again. The students are then asked what advice they would give a new student or someone who was thinking of coming back to education.

Lesson 4: How to define a message

Message

First define what the MESSAGE is, then discuss:

- How to brainstorm ideas
- How to write notes/key points
- How to structure message
- How to manage emotion
- Relaxation techniques

Watch a commercial on TV. Define what the message is and what your feelings about it are. Be aware of colours, music and other things they use.

Written speech

Students practice a monologue based on the text they have written. This includes:

- Making brief notes –writing the main points
- Memorizing the text of the essay
- Preparation of visual aids (for example photos from school events in which a student-ambassador has participated)
- Preparation of handouts (not obligatory)

- Practicing a monologue based on the written text, but not repeating it word for word, but sticking to the main ideas and improvising
- Getting feedback from the teacher and/or other students - advice how to improve the speech
- Modifying the speech depending on the feedback received

Lesson 5: Speaking skills

Introduction of requirements

Requirements related to a presenter's voice:

- volume (speaking loudly)
- pace (speaking not too fast and not too slow)
- variety (avoiding monotony)
- articulation (speaking clearly)

Requirements related to a presenter's body language:

- appropriate facial expression
- posture, gestures, movement
- keeping eye contact and smiling as often as possible

Students are advised:

- to speak persuasively
- to sound confident
- to be conversational, as if you were talking with a group of friends to give audience energy and be excited about the topic
- to look for useful tips in written and internet resources
- to watch together a talk show on TV and pay attention to the use of voice and body language of the speakers

Overcoming fear of public speaking

Determine students' public speaking experience and their feelings about it. Raise awareness that many people experience fear of public speaking and that it can be overcome successfully (by listening to other students, reading stories, etc.). Encourage students to search for tips how to overcome fear of public speaking on the Internet and in written resources. Give recommendations, such as:

- to prepare properly
- to concentrate on information you want to give to others
- to do some relaxation exercises such as deep breathing
- to look for a friendly face in the audience

Teach to think positively about public speaking (to replace negative thoughts about potential failure by positive thoughts about success).

Interaction with an audience

The following activities can be carried out:

- Teaching to speak to the audience, listen to their questions, respond to their reactions (answering unexpected questions provided by the teacher or other students, pair work –role-plays)
- Practicing making the presentation shorter and longer (determining what can be left out if a student-ambassador is short of time and what can be effectively added if he has extra time)
- Learning to adjust the message to different audiences (encouraging students to think about the audience and their background knowledge, practice analyzing changes they would make in their presentations for several different audiences)



Lithuanian ambassador Marija telling her life story to small group of peers

3.2 Training of mentors

Lesson 1: Background knowledge

Getting to know each other

Assignment: Draw the outlines of your hand on a piece of paper and write:

- At the end of your little finger: your name
- At your ring finger: your civil status
- At your middle finger: children yes or no
- At your index finger: your address
- At your thumb: your hobbies

After that you go and find someone with about the same hand as yours. Tell each other about the things you have written down.

Explanation of the tasks of a mentor and the contents of the training

The teacher explains the contents of the training. Write down for yourself: “Is this task easy and why?” “Is this task difficult and why?” Exchange notes and encourage each other.

Practical agreements

Practical agreements concerning days, time, buddies, homework, holidays etc. are made.

Lesson 2: Coaching, listening

Listening

Write down the names of the people that you think of when you hear the following questions.

- Do or did you know any people that you liked/liked to listen to?
- Do you know any people who listen to you in such a way that it is easy for you to talk freely, to talk about what’s troubling you or put into words things that you are not quite clear about for yourself?
- Do you know any examples of conversations where people know how to strike the right tone?

Discussion in groups of 3. Take turns telling each other about one of the people on your list. Explain why these people are good listeners. Then collect all the qualities required for a good listener and write them on the blackboard

Verbal and non verbal

What is verbal and non verbal? Together make a summary in two columns on blackboard. Discuss with the whole group: “How can you see if somebody is interested in what you are telling him?” Write the tips on the blackboard. In groups of 2, sit opposite each other, so that your knees nearly touch. Choose persons A and B. B starts (effect of surprise). Tell A about the things that are important for you in your life, the aims you want to reach, what you dream of? Speak with passion, it is your dream. Try to convince the listener.

1. A listens carefully. Everything B says is great
2. A is not really interested and thinks that B is talking nonsense
3. A clearly ignores B, looks away and starts doing something else



An Irish ambassador gives a speech

Then switch roles: A speaks and B listens.

1. B ignores A
2. B is not in the mood to listen to A's nonsense
3. B really shows interest: the things B says are great.

Discuss afterwards: Was there a situation you didn't like? Which situation was that? How come? How did it feel? What body language did you see?

Sharing feelings around educational experiences

Discuss the themes and meanings in a poem such as *Literacy Class South Inner City* by Paula Meehan (Dharmakaya, Manchester, Carcanet Press, 2000) . The teacher should set clear boundaries around the sharing of personal stories. Acknowledge that there are strong negative feelings around educational experiences and that it is understandable to feel this way - allow students to express hopes for a different outcome.

Lesson 3: Coaching, open and closed questions

Open and closed questions

Ask open and closed questions

Explain the difference between open and closed questions.

My secret

The teacher thinks of a certain 'secret'. The students in the group try and guess the secret by asking open questions.

- They are allowed to ask 20 questions.
- They've got 10 minutes to find out the answer.
- You can ask only 3 closed questions.

After that the group is divided into smaller groups of 4. In each group one of the students thinks of another secret (either reality or fantasy, but realistic and not

too heavy) and they play the game again. Discussion afterwards: What was it like to think of open questions?

Conversation

Prepare a number of open questions to ask each other in order to get to know each other better. Write them down. Make groups of three and have a 5 minute conversation; A asks the questions, B answers them and C is the observer. How did it feel to do this?

Lesson 4: Feedback

Making and receiving compliments

What are you good at? Tell something about what you are good at. Do you get compliments for certain things that you can do? What for?

Exercise: On the table there is a deck of cards with all kinds of qualities written on them. Pick out one card for one of the other students. Give him the card and tell him why you chose that particular card for him. What have you seen in that person? Discuss: How does it feel to make or receive a compliment? Why is it difficult to receive a compliment?

A compliment for the first person you see

When you get up from the table for this exercise you make a compliment to the first person you meet. Make sure it is a real compliment. Do not say anything simple like: "I like your hair" but think about what you really appreciate or like about him.

Discuss: How was his reaction? How did you feel about it yourself?

How to receive compliments

Students are divided in groups of three: A, B and C. A makes B a compliment. C observes B, his body language and his reaction to the compliment. Give each other a 'top' (a compliment) and a 'tip' (something to pay attention to).

Lesson 5: Preparing and having a telephone conversation

Formal and informal telephone conversation

What is a formal conversation? What are the rules? Is a telephone conversation easier or more difficult for you than a normal conversation? Why is that? What can you do to make it easier?

Making a telephone script

Think of what you want to say about the reason why you are calling. Think of what you want to tell them about yourself. Think of the questions you would like to ask the new student. Make an appointment at school. Is it going to be a formal or an informal conversation? What should you think of? Practice with another student. Give each other feedback. What went well (tops)? What things should he work on to improve (tips)?

Lesson 6: Taking notes

Identifying main points and details

Read a story. Then choose the sentence that is the best match for the story.

Main points

Choose a text. Write down the main points from the text. Use questioning words to do this (“what”, “who”, “where”, “when” and “why”).

Taking notes of an interview

Watch an interview. Make notes while listening to the interview. Compare your notes with your classmates and check if you found all the answers.

Lesson 7: Giving instructions and working together

Speaking clearly

The teacher tells a story: rapidly, telling a lot of things at once, without checking if she’s understood correctly. Talk about it: How did it feel? Did you understand your task? Why? What is important when something is explained to you?

Explaining something

Two students: A and B. A is someone who has done a certain job. B is someone who knows hardly anything about this job. A and B sit in front of the group, the other students observe them. In about 10 minutes, A explains to B what his job was exactly. B asks questions, listens and checks if he understood A correctly. After 10 minutes, B checks again if he understood A correctly, by summing up the main points of A’s story, in one minute. In fact, B summarizes A’s story. The other students observe the following points:

- Did B ask questions?
- Did B listen actively?
- Did B check if he understood A correctly?

The activity is followed by discussion.



Helping another student (the Netherlands)

Giving instructions

What will you tell someone about the way you work in your class? Work in pairs. Try to give clear and concise instructions in short steps. Let the others hear how you would do that. Explain to each other how to start a certain program on the computer. Tell someone how to use the computer, in small steps. Remember: speak slowly, not too much at once, check if you're understood. Review: how did you do? What things should you pay attention to?

Working together

What's important for you when you work together? My personal top five Give points to the statements below: give 10 points for the statement that suits you most. The next best statement gets 9 points, then 8 points. Pay attention, it is about how you actually do these things at school.

1. I keep to the rules.
2. I keep working.
3. If something bothers me, I'll talk about it.
4. I hardly ever gossip about my classmates.
5. I'm open to criticism.
6. I show consideration for others.
7. I put in new ideas.
8. I try to help others.
9. I pay compliments to my classmates.
10. I don't make a promise I can't keep.

Explain to your classmate why you're giving many points to certain statements, and fewer points to other statements. Do this by giving examples of the way you work together at school. On the subject of working together with your classmates, write down three things that you need to practice.

Lesson 8: Learning to learn and organising things

A matchstick puzzle

Put 24 matches in a figure with 9 squares. Remove 8 matches to get only 2 squares. If you know the solution, try to give clues by asking questions or giving tips, without giving away the solution. Review: what did you learn from this?

Learning to learn

When you hear the word "learning", what do you think of? Assignment: think about something you have learnt not so long ago. For example: learning to drive, to use your mobile phone, a new recipe, a new language, a new procedure at work. What steps do you need to take? Make a list of those steps. Review: what has been useful for you?

Doing your homework

Talk about: when do you make your homework? At what time? Where do you make your homework? How do you make your homework? What method do you choose for your homework? Where and how do you write down your homework? How do you make it easier to manage your homework? Do you have any tips on the subject of homework?

Organising your materials

Discuss: which materials would you like to keep? Why do you want to keep those? How do you organise your materials? What system do you use? What is important to teach someone?

Evaluation

What do you think of this training? Was it useful for you? How? What do you think of the materials? Do you know now, how to help someone? Do you have any tips?

3.3 Training in media skills

Lesson 1: The speech

Famous speeches

Ask a group of students to look up famous speeches – such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama. Analyse and define how they are effective and powerful. Show videos of politicians – to demonstrate body language. Ask students to give a part of the speech which they have researched. Video them (when they feel comfortable in a small group setting) to allow them to become familiar with the filming process and to review their skills.



Conference for unemployed youth where two of CFL ambassadors participated (Sweden)

The speech

Using skills from previous classes, students put together their own speech or presentation regarding their own experiences – it is then delivered to the small

group and videotaped (This builds the skills needed for presenting to a larger group). This can be followed up by further work around the areas of:

- Radio / media skills workshops
- Talking to new students
- The public presentation /award ceremony

Lesson 2: Radio interview

The message

As preparation for the interview, the tutor worked with the students on a one to one basis.

It was decided that a clear message should be put across.

The information

It was also very important that information was given about what was available in terms of adult education and *how* to apply for it. So the phone number needed to be given out very clearly several times – both during the interview and at the end.

Steps

Having decided on the clear message we wished to convey, we contacted the radio stations and made this clear. The interviewer was then aware of our purpose. The students prepared by making a list of five key points they wanted to mention. They practised a mock interview using key phrases or points but did not have a text written down as we felt this could lead to a stilted delivery. The students also made a note of phone numbers and contact details that should be mentioned.

How to give information

One of the key points is that the contact phone number should be given out. To avoid this information getting lost at the end of the broadcast, the student was encouraged to give the number out near to the start of the interview and use a phrase like “if you have a pen and paper handy” and “I’ll be giving that number out again”. When the number was given out a name was given too, to make it easier to remember. The radio station was asked to post contact details on their website. It is advisable to prime them to respond to queries from the public by passing on the number. The ambassador makes his broadcast on local radio with support from his tutor.

Monitoring the outcome

We felt it was important to monitor the effect of the broadcasts and so we made contact with the station day or so after broadcast to see was there any feedback from the public. We feel that in an on-going basis and in few of future ambassador work that it would be beneficial to continue to build the relationship with local media organisations by making regular contact with them regarding ambassador

activities. The outcome for the students was that it was confidence building and improved their communication skills at a personal level, as well as giving them the satisfaction that they could be beneficial to a potential fellow student.



Two Swedish ambassadors telling their life stories in front of young unemployed boys and girls

3.4 Video training

The training aimed to film ambassadors telling their life stories. The films are used to inspire and inform other adults who might want to return to education. Another aim of the training is that the ambassadors are able to participate live in front of an audience.

Lesson 1: Searching for ways how to present life stories

The aim of this session is to decide how to present different life stories of individual ambassadors. The different groups are free to create their way of presenting their different stories. One way is to let the ambassadors write down their lifelines, focusing on adult education. These lifelines become springboards and the basis of any discussions that might follow. The different groups will have a different emphasis in their stories, although focus is on how/why they decide to start studying as adults and where this has taken them professionally and privately. The experiences during education, motivation and the need to create meaning were lead themes throughout the groups.

Lesson 2: Filming the life stories

Each life story takes 20 – 45 minutes to film. The approach is:

- A straight forward interview where a project leader interviewed an ambassador
- A conversation or discussion between two ambassadors
- Letting the ambassador freely tell her story. Prior to this the ambassadors and the educators are given the opportunity to practice and discuss what

to say in front of the camera.

Lesson 3: Opportunity for the last interviews and re-shoots

The purposes of the films are:

- Create a sense of identification with the ambassador on the film
- Share experiences of adult education
- To be personal and not private

Chapter Four ACTIVITIES OF AMBASSADORS AND MENTORS

4.1 Initial ambassador activities (no coaching required)

After the selection and training of the ambassadors they will be ready to take part in the activities that organization requires. Initially they may accompany and observe existing ambassadors to learn more of what is expected from them as new ambassadors. They can also meet ambassadors from others institutions and by comparing their own adult learning centre to others they may learn from each other. Being a new ambassador of adult learning you can also cooperate in designing certain learning facilities such as “easy reading sections”. All three of these activities demand little or no coaching. This is how the initial activities may look for a new ambassador:

All activities can be used in a flexible way according to the needs of the students. As can be understood from chapter three in this handbook, the training of the ambassadors may differ depending on the characters, traditions and needs of the adult learning centres.

4.2 The production of an ambassador video

For some ambassadors it is very difficult to give presentations. Instead of a live presentation you can use a DVD with presentations of life stories.

In Sweden they use a DVD for attracting new students with a need of special education. One of the students at Centre for Flexible Learning, CFL, Anna Berglund, was asked to participate in the project because her education is operated in a non-traditional and non standardized form. The way in which special education is designed at CFL has proved to fit Anna really good. She has made great progress and wants to spread her positive experiences to other



Swedish ambassador Anna

students in need of special education. The CFL approach to flexible learning will fit in perfectly within the broad framework of governing documents, and due to the flexible education policies at CFL, we have built up a teaching method that suits individuals in need of special education. For four years Anna has attended a special programme and she has documented her

educational success story by participating in a video. Anna and her mother, Irene Berglund, have planned and written the screenplay of the video. They started by deciding on the contents of the video:

- what persons should participate?
- what setting would fit in?
- should Anna be interviewed or should she tell her story herself?
- what props would be needed?
- Anna is interested in Manga – could this contribute to the video?

Anna's teacher, Ingalill Stefansson, who is also a doctoral student at the University of Karlstad, noticed how engaged and motivated Anna was for working with the video.

In order to create a pleasant and secure atmosphere it was decided that Anna's mother should be involved in the video by giving her version of the progress Anna had made while studying at CFL. The video filming was performed by the headmaster of adult education at CFL. He is familiar with Anna and the way she studies. After preparations in the classroom the team decided to shoot the video and after a second session the material was sent to a professional video film producer.

4.3 Activities requiring coaching

The progression of the ambassadors' skills start by one to one discussions and ambassadors telling their story to tutor and to their peers. They speak to other small groups of students within their own organisation. During this phase the training focus on planning answers for predictable questions and students also prepare some written notes in order to create student life story profile.

Next step in ambassadors' progression could be to start giving presentations. Ambassadors tell their story to a larger group outside the organization. Such as organizations and people who refer students to education such as council or social welfare and former workplaces or schools that the ambassadors have a relation to. Students may also tell their story at graduation and presentation ceremonies.

The ambassadors train to plan and organize different types of events. It is important for the ambassadors to feel secure in guiding the form and content of the presentation. Presentations can be given in other educational institutions, workplaces, social welfare organizations, volunteer organizations, etc.

Activities such as being interviewed by media do not occur too often but it is a very good marketing tool.

Lithuanian ambassadors got the opportunity to inform about their life stories and educational journey in newspapers, Irish and Dutch ambassadors had interviews on the radio or by television. The skills that are required for different interview formats are explored. Students prepare their speeches before they are recorded



A radio interview (Ireland)

and they write their lines in advance to make a good video tape.

The training is now quite advanced. Preparation of student consists of relaxation exercises and practice of breath control techniques. The ambassadors learn how to take time before answering questions and plan their responses. Also important is to master your body language and your voice.

When the ambassadors are more experienced they are involved in producing written promotional material. Creating and developing leaflets, pamphlets and DVDs are now possible for the ambassador. They plan and research the outcomes and search for images or create images.

In the participating countries the ambassador activities may differ due to former traditions or local needs. We have, during the lifetime of the project, detected new areas where the need of ambassadors is obvious. Today we focus not only on unemployed people or those who are socially disadvantaged, but we also manage to direct the ambassadors towards people in need of special education and people coming from other regions of the world and would benefit from adult education.

4.4 Coaching and guiding the ambassador before the presentation

Before his presentation the ambassador shall prepare the story he wants to tell his audience. For this preparation the ambassador can use a questionnaire or building blocks. Some ambassadors like using the questionnaire, while the others like using the building blocks (see Chapter 3).

Coaching

It is very important for the ambassador and the teacher to find an optimal level when coming in contact with a new group of people. This means that the ambassador has to adapt the presentation according to the listeners. The ambassadors have to change their story with regard to their audience. The content of the presentation is consequently altered to suit the public. We have also experienced in the project that it is necessary to practise before you perform the presentation. We developed a form that is useful for every ambassador.

Preparation form for ambassador presentation

While preparing for a presentation, the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- Background information of the organization where the ambassador gives his presentation

What and when?

Presentation for Date ... Address ...

I will go with ... Phone number ...

- What do I have to bring?

This form and my story. Do I need extra information?

- How much time do I have for the presentation?
- Target group
- Number of people present
- What do I want to achieve?
- What is the beginning of my presentation?

Introducing myself, telling about my own education problems, how that felt

- What is the end of my presentation?

I will tell what my training course has meant for me. How I feel now.

- What do I have to discuss beforehand with my coach?

- Do I want my real name mentioned?
- What points from my presentation are most important?

After an ambassador activity the ambassador and the coach go through what went well and what can be better.

4.5 Ambassador being a mentor for new ambassadors

When an ambassador reaches a point where he or she is secure and self-confident they can manage a role as a mentor for new students. Below we have listed activities a mentor can perform:

- give information about : the course, materials, the computer, homework, daily routine
- talk to a new student about:
 - how things used to be at school
 - how it feels to be at school again
 - how it is to be new in this group
 - what they think at home about you going back to school again

Remark: The teacher is and stays responsible and asks the mentor (quarterly) how things are going and if he needs any support.



Some ambassadors off ROC Nijmegen (the Netherlands)

This table displays graphically the activities that ambassadors may perform:

ACTIVITIES REQUIRING SOME COACHING			
INDIVIDUAL / ONE TO ONE TALKS	GIVING PRESENTATIONS	BEING INTERVIEWED BY LOCAL OR NATIONAL MEDIA	PRODUCING PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL
<p>Ambassadors tell their story to tutor and to their peers.</p> <p>They speak to other small groups of students within their own organisation.</p>	<p>Ambassadors tell their story to a larger group outside the organization, e.g. to organizations and people who refer students to education, such as council or social welfare.</p> <p>Students tell their story at graduation and presentation ceremonies.</p>	<p>Skills required for different interview formats are explored.</p> <p>Interview – written / recorded / video taped.</p> <p>Prepared speech.</p>	<p>Use ambassadors to produce and develop leaflets pamphlets and DVDs.</p>
<p>Training requirements:</p> <p>Create student life story profile.</p> <p>Plan answers for predictable questions.</p> <p>Students prepare some written notes.</p>	<p>Training requirements:</p> <p>Planning and organization of the event.</p> <p>Guiding the form and content of the presentation.</p>	<p>Preparation of student:</p> <p>Relaxation /breath control techniques.</p> <p>Planning responses.</p> <p>Taking time to reply to questions.</p> <p>Body language and voice coaching.</p> <p>Adapting key messages and points.</p>	<p>Plan and research the outcomes – search for images, create images.</p> <p>Prepare text and format the text based materials.</p>

APPENDIX A: Accreditation system

Accreditation System for Ambassadors at Athlone VTOS (3 graded certificates)

Stage 1 Certificate

The students participate in the initial lessons as preparation for the Ambassador project. It is expected that students should be able to:

- listen effectively
- communicate orally
- take initiative for their own learning
- recognise the kinds of listening/speaking required in different contexts e.g. understanding, interpreting, receiving or partaking information
- demonstrate a range of listening/speaking skills
- participate effectively in group discussion
- be aware of contextual indicators such as eye contact, facial expression as a form of encouragement
- be in control of own responses
- co-operate and contribute effectively in formal meetings
- prepare and deliver an oral presentation and answer questions

Stage 2 Certificate

The students will have demonstrated an ability to speak or make a presentation to another group within the Adult Education centre. They should demonstrate the ability to:

- understand key terms used in communications theory such as: sender receiver, message, code, channel, communicate, noise, feedback, context
- practise communications techniques relevant to different situations in work and leisure, such as conversations, interviews, formal presentations, message taking/giving and telephone dialogues
- demonstrate an awareness of ways in which the body communicates non-verbally through gesture, posture,
- be aware of the importance of appearance, eye and physical contact, facial expression, proximity and orientation, etc
- demonstrate appropriate non-verbal communication in a range of settings including one-to-one, group, formal and informal
- Prepare an oral presentation of their own personal educational journey and deliver it to a group of incoming students

Stage 3 Certificate

Students should have completed stages 1 and 2 and gained the majority of the skills necessary for presentation to an outside body, e.g. speaking on local or national radio, making a speech at the Annual Award Giving Ceremony or making a presentation to a group such as Social Welfare recipients who are seeking information on courses.

Students should demonstrate all the above skills as well as ensuring that:

- Diction is clear, with a well measured pace
- The full potential of the medium of speech making is realized
- The student is able to tell their personal story without compromising themselves and yet conveying a convincing, honest and powerful message
- There is evidence of thorough preparation and rehearsal
- There is evidence of a clear structure with signposting and linking
- The ability to sustain interest is shown and a very good rapport with the audience is established by tailoring the speech to the occasion and environment
- Good breathing and voice control is evident
- Body language, gesture and stance is all excellent
- The ability to answer questions clearly, fully and to the point is clearly shown

APPENDIX B: Agreement

Explanation of agreement using pictures

The undersigned agrees that one or more pictures of him/her may be used as promotion material for ROC Nijmegen. The pictures have been made by order of the project Attract and Retain. The pictures can be used as information material for websites/newspapers/handbook/brochures/ and or flyers.

Name	
E-mail-address	
Address	
City	
Signature	
Date	

Explanation of agreement using DVD-material

The undersigned agrees that DVD material of him/her may be used as promotion material for ROC Nijmegen. The DVD has been made by order of the project Attract and Retain. This DVD can be put on websites and shall be used as information material.

Name	
E-mail address	
Address	
City	
Signature	
Date	

APPENDIX C: Case Studies

Case study 1 Katherine from Ireland

I was after being at home with the kids for sixteen years, then I was doing bits of cleaning jobs for two years. I was talking to a good friend Paula and I was down a bit, this wasn't what my life was meant to be about. I was happy and proud of the job I had done with my children but I just felt that they were moving on and I was being left behind.

Paula was in second year of VTOS – she was one of my best friends from childhood. She arrived with an application form and she stood over me while I filled it in. My husband fully supported her and made he bring the form back in.

So that was the start of it. Finding that courage, to get up and do something for myself. That is what it means to me, courage. I knew I had the intelligence but it was just the courage to get up and do it.

When I was nineteen I was working in Elan. I was waiting to get into nursing. I was happy with my life and then got pregnant with my first child. This baby was not going to change my life. I had lots of support my mother said she would help with the baby and I would move on and do my nursing.

But when Sandra was born she was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect. For the first while I kept working and Mammy minded Sandra but it wasn't fair on them. So we made a decision that it would be best if I give up work to mind Sandra. We had just bought a house and so I took in three students from the college to help with the finances. Sandra has got over three major heart operations since then. It was the right thing to do, it gave her strength and confidence – me being there at home. We were determined that she wasn't going to be just a person with a heart defect – it was just a small part of her life. But I was her rock. It would be hard if I was still there giving so much but now Sandra is only a part of my life. If I didn't have this I would be resentful.

In a way I was the one suffering this condition. Because I kept everything going for the other kids but I was the victim. But this has brought me back to the person I was at nineteen with ambitions. My family are stunned and are all really proud of me, to be doing something for myself.

The next step is starting AIT in September to do office management at third level. I am apprehensive but I am not afraid and I am not nervous.

Case study 2

Bernie from Ireland

I was gone from home at fifteen, working in a factory, I had to stay put, I was married with kids. I felt the lack of being educated. I was uncomfortable in a group talking. I was about thirty before I was mature and got wiser and more confident. I had one friend, she was intelligent and she was wasting her time the factory, I would say “would you move on!” she did in the end and went to America.

When it came to being made redundant it was straight into education I wanted to go. First a computer course in Loughrea and Communications Level 3. It finished and home again until outreach computers came to the local hall, and I did a typing course after leaving the factory.

Then a friend Frances encouraged me to come to VTOS she said “You’ll be well able for it.” But my worry was sitting exams, would I be able to complete them. She said you don’t have to sit the exam if you don’t want to and you’d still be learning something. But she said when you are in there you will want to sit the exams!

When I first started in VTOS the 2nd years talked about going into college, to AIT. To get over the two years was enough for me and I never thought of college then. But now I want to stay learning , I loved every moment that I was here , I don’t think I missed a day. I have to continue to learn because I worked so hard to get to where I am now.

I always felt inferior to my husband; he was maintaining me, though I always had my own money. I wanted my independence, improving my education not feeling that I needed his help. I used to leave everything to him and now I have taken all that back. I have confidence now to do it, I’ll try it now whereas before I wouldn’t.

I found if someone comes to the door, like canvassers, I felt I won’t say anything, even if it was bothering me, now I will say – I know I have an opinion and it is worth as much as anyone.

Case study 3

Ite from the Netherlands

Seven years ago, there was no way I could ignore the new developments any longer. Before, I could pass a message by just walking over to the colleague in question. But computers set in and I was expected to pass messages by e-mail. I then told my manager I had trouble reading and writing.

My manager’s reaction was fine and enabled me to go back to school. I started my lessons at ROC de Leigraaf, and went on as an ambassador. My teacher

thought I was independent enough to tell my story. My very first performance was nationwide, as a part of the actions for the Week of Learning. I was asked to cooperate on a DVD, telling my life story. For me, it was a great experience to cooperate on this program, to see the results and watch myself on screen. After the broadcast on TV, I never got any negative reactions from the people around me.

About four years ago, I moved to Mook and continued my lessons at ROC Nijmegen. When my new teacher found out I had been working as an ambassador for literacy, he asked me to do the same for ROC Nijmegen. I never thought about it twice. I think it's very important to reach other people and to convince them to go back to school. I want to tell them no one will laugh at them, there's no need to be ashamed, no need to be afraid that others will think "you are so stupid".

Going to a literacy course has made my dream come true. I really wanted to become a truck driver. This seemed out of reach because the exam was very difficult and the preparations required a lot of reading. But because of my effort and perseverance, I managed to get my truck drivers license, and after that even a license for transport of hazardous materials.

For ROC Nijmegen, I have been giving information at a primary school, for the council of Mill and in a literacy course. I also did an interview on local radio. I want to reach out for people with similar problems, but I also want to discuss matters with middle management.

I know many people have problems reading or writing and I know they aren't attending a course. I think it's a shame, I would really like to get in touch with them, especially locally. For me, being an ambassador has enriched my life. I've got more confidence and I'm not afraid to tell my story or to be myself. I dare to show myself just the way I am.

Case study 4

Rob from the Netherlands

Recently, I have become an ambassador. I had never thought I would do this, yet I took the step.

I soon found out it's difficult if you can't read or write. Although I started working at an early age, I still had to deal with situations where I needed to read or write. Being afraid that other people would find out, I used to hide my lack with all kinds of excuses. But carrying this secret with me all the time made me very tense at work.

When my wife fell ill, I had to take it upon myself to do the administrative work and that confronted me even more with the fact that I couldn't read or write. It

was my family doctor who finally convinced me to go to school again and sent me to the ROC. My experiences with education weren't exactly positive and it was hard for me to take this step. In spite of that, six years ago, I decided to go back to school. I still am grateful to my family doctor for referring me to the ROC. I have learnt to read and write and every day I experience the benefits.

All this made me realize I would like to talk to other adults and persuade them to go back to school as well. By personal experience I know how difficult it is if your literacy skills aren't sufficient. I would love to reach others and tell them how good it feels if you can read and write. I know I'm not the only one, more and more I see people around me who I believe have similar problems. It would be very satisfactory for me if I could reach them and make them go back to school. Now, working as an ambassador, I can reach those people and help them.

I also would like to go to various organizations and tell them how difficult it is in our society, if your reading or writing isn't good enough. I want to tell what they can do about it. I would like to explain how hard it is to tell anybody this. Often, people don't believe you and that makes you feel so small, it makes you want to run away. This was the most important reason for me to become an ambassador. Now, that I have enhanced my literacy skills, I 'm not afraid anymore to expose myself and bring my story in the open. I'm not afraid any more for the outside world, now I want to contribute. By giving radio interviews and by giving information I reach my aim: to wake up organizations and make them aware of all the people who lack sufficient literacy skills. At last I get the chance to tell middle management everything I always wanted but was afraid to. I meet the world with much more confidence and as an ambassador I look at everything around me with a fresh view. I don't have to hide anymore, I am less lonely. I dare to show myself: here am and this is what I can do. Being an ambassador gave me confidence and made me take steps to reach my goals. And that feels good.

Case study 5

Marija from Lithuania

My name is Marija. I am 30. I am married and have a son. I left secondary school many years ago. Now I work in a kindergarten and I have to study in order not to lose my favourite job. Nowadays, it is very difficult to find or keep a job if you don't have a certificate of maturity (secondary school leaving certificate).

About Jonava Adult Education Centre I heard from my future husband. We both tried to study here some years ago. My husband finished this school successfully with good grades. But I found it difficult to combine my job and studies, it was difficult for me to study Lithuanian, I and my son were often ill and I left this school.

After some years I returned to Adult Education Centre and tried the second time. At the beginning I was afraid I would not be able to study after so many years

because I had forgotten everything. But teachers helped me and everything was OK. Now I am already a 12th form student. Soon I will finish this school. I would like to study at Pedagogical University very much.

If you are an adult but haven't finished secondary school, overcome your fears, hesitancy and come to study to Jonava Adult Education Centre. When you study, you feel that you really live and improve yourself. Your circle of acquaintances expands. Moreover, a person who has a certificate of maturity is treated differently by surrounding people. In my opinion, a person who does not have a certificate of maturity is zero in this world. The only choice for such a person is to go abroad and do blue-collar jobs. But don't we all dream about something more? And getting a certificate of maturity is the beginning of a new road.

Case study 6 **Viktorija from Lithuania**

My name is Viktorija. I live in Jonava. I am studying in Jonava Adult Education Centre. Earlier I studied in another school, but my studies were not successful enough. About Jonava Adult Education centre I heard from my friends...

My first impressions here were very good. My all fears suddenly disappeared. I was given a very warm welcome. Teachers and students here are very friendly, help each other.

Our centre offers primary, basic and secondary education. You can choose full time or part time studies, you can also study independently. If you choose full time studies, you attend school every day and teachers give you marks regularly. Extramural students attend consultations and take credit tests. Lessons take place in the evening; therefore it is very convenient to combine your job and studies.

Our school has nice traditions; many interesting events take place. In autumn, we celebrate European Day of Languages and Teacher's Day; christening of new students and teachers is organized. Before winter holidays, we gather for Advent Evening; every year Christmas basketball match between teachers and students is held. In spring, we celebrate One Week after Easter Day and have a Hundred Days before the School Leaving Exams Party. It is great fun!

Studying in Jonava Adult Education Centre and participating in multilateral AAR project has changed my life very much. I have learnt a lot and built self-confidence.

I think it is very important to get a certificate of maturity (secondary school leaving certificate). When you have it, you can enter college or university, find a better job. I would like to invite you to study in Jonava Adult Education Centre and not to leave this school. It is really good to be here. And the knowledge and skills gained will open you new opportunities.

Case Study 7

Anna from Sweden

My name is Anna Berglund. I was asked to participate in the project Attract and Retain. I am going to be an ambassador for students in need of special education. This is my final term in upper secondary school for students in need of special education.

I was invited to a first meeting at CFL. The project was described in detail by the project leader and the participants got to know each other. The second meeting we spent two days at a conference hotel. The actual work was done in groups and my mother and I were in one group. During the first day my mother told me about my first experiences of school. I did not like school at all. When I started at CFL, it was much better. Here I can learn in my own way. Next day we talked and wrote down what I thought of the first school and we compared it to CFL. We talked about old and new school experiences. We went back to CFL after two days of conferencing. I liked to be at the conference hotel. We had good food and nice time together.

Back at CFL I worked on five occasions together with my teacher to finalize a script for a video about me. I spent many hours producing images, captions and music. My mother and I rehearsed the script two times before the video. Two sessions, each lasting one hour, we filmed. The headmaster of the CFL was the cameraman. Then the film was edited by an authorized film producer.

I like to be an ambassador, for instance I can speak to other students or show the video for them.

Case Study 8

Per from Sweden

My name is Per Jansson and I am an ambassador for the adult education at CFL in Söderhamn, Sweden. The first contact with the project Attract and Retain took place during a two days' assembly at a conference centre, together with the tutors and ambassadors to be. The work during these two days aimed at how to get the ambassadors' experiences to reach out to other people. We came to the conclusion that the best way is to record interviews and conversations with the ambassadors. In this way, the messages would reach the receivers and appeal to them in the best way. Our thought was that the receivers will see the film, recognize themselves in the ambassadors' live situation.

I think that the days at the conference centre were successful with a good result. It felt that the idea of recording films was correct. When it concerns my own participation, I feel that my story meets a need. Many can probably be influenced

to take the same decision that I did: to begin to study. In conclusion, I could say that my work as an ambassador commenced when I began to study in CFL in 2004. Then I was asked to be an ambassador and it was not therefore so awkward.

APPENDIX D: Certificates

ROC NIJMEGEN



Certificate

undersigned pronounce that

«Initial» «name

Give information about low literacy

to:

Name functionary:

Organisation:

Date:

Place:

APPENDIX E: E portfolio

Centre of Flexible Learning, CFL, is the provider of adult education in the municipality of Söderhamn. In the middle of November 2005 we were asked to join a meeting in Bologna, arranged by the Osmosys project, see: <http://www.eife-l.org/activities/projects/osmosys>.

During the meeting the coordinator of the project, Mr Carl Holmberg, from the National Centre of Flexible Learning in Sweden and Mr Serge Ravet from the EIFEL organisation in France, informed all partners about digital portfolio, or e-portfolio. The following definition comes from Wikipedia and teaches us what e-portfolio can contain:

*An **electronic portfolio**, also known as an **e-portfolio** or **digital portfolio**, is a collection of electronic evidence assembled and managed by a user, usually on [the Web](#) (also called [Webfolio](#)). Such electronic evidence may include inputted text, electronic files, images, [multimedia](#), [blog](#) entries, and [hyperlinks](#). E-portfolios are both demonstrations of the user's abilities and platforms for self-expression, and, if they are online, they can be maintained dynamically over time. Some e-portfolio applications permit varying degrees of audience access, so the same portfolio might be used for multiple purposes.*

An e-portfolio can be seen as a type of learning record that provides actual evidence of achievement. Learning records are closely related to the [Learning Plan](#), an emerging tool that is being used to manage learning by individuals, teams, [communities of interest](#), and organizations. To the extent that a [Personal Learning Environment](#) captures and displays a learning record, it also might be understood to be an electronic portfolio.

E-portfolios, like traditional [portfolios](#), can facilitate students' reflection on their own learning, leading to more awareness of learning strategies and needs. Results of a comparative research between paper based portfolios and electronic portfolios in the same setting, suggest use of an electronic portfolio leads to better learning outcomes.

Mr Håkan Helmersson, teacher in mathematics and very experienced in distance- and blended learning took notice of the information and together with Mr Dan Jonsson, head of adult education in Söderhamn , he started to plan for an implementation of E-portfolio at CFL.

At first we focused on non-national students who were studying Swedish for Immigrants, SFI. We also planned to include students at the Health Care Programme at upper secondary level to join the course in E-portfolio. We soon detected problems in finding good facilities on the Web. It was difficult for the students to log in and the teachers complained that a lot of time was spent on technical problems instead of pedagogical work. We had to find a better and

easier way of using the digital portfolio if we seriously meant to implement and develop an E-portfolio that was accepted and useful at our adult learning centre. The solution so far is to provide the students with a USB-MEMORY, a so called a USB-stick. By training the immigrants, at a very early stage, in using the computer we have accomplished spin-off effects such as better spelling and increased motivation. After a period of basic computer training many of the students will be able to save their texts, digital photos, certificates of earlier education from their homelands and also write and present their CVs. So far we have achieved modest results, but we know that development is a long term job, so therefore we feel confident that the e-portfolio will benefit our students.

A very promising way of using e-portfolio is developed by one of the teachers, Charlotta Lindekrans. She has built a system of folders on the USB-stick. Her students - who all start from a position as being illiterates - have made fast progress in learning how to read and write. In the folders the students can - from a very basic level - develop their life stories, establish a CV, scan their adequate documents and certificates, publish digital photos, show the progression in their studies, future plans, and etcetera. The students benefit very much from working a lot with their laptops or computers and they can develop their own e-portfolios and they can easily follow the progression of their learning.

APPENDIX F: Portfolio

Explanation using portfolio of ambassadors and mentors

General

The using of portfolio gives the student sense off his education process as ambassador or mentor. In the portfolio the personal action plans are included, the growing process of the ambassador and mentor is showed and evidences are collected.

Content

The portfolio includes:

- A: The Curriculum Vitae (personal information, personal qualities, life story,)
- B: How the ambassadors and mentors think about learning (which activities they do, evaluation form)
- C: Evidences (presentations certificates and result forms)

Procedure

The tutor uses the evaluation form after every presentation and fills in this form together with the ambassador and on this way the ambassador can reflect his own presentation. The tutor encourages the student to tell his experiences and to indicate his progress. Also the tutor tells him where he has to pay attention to. After each presentation the tutor gives a supporting document and the tutor encourages the student to collect evidences. Evidences are a photo, a written note, video tape, a radio tape. and so on.

After three presentations the ambassador gets a result form, when he has reached 80% of the competences on the form. The tutors fill in the evaluation form and they criticize the competences. The teacher delivers the student the form of results.

A mentor receives a result form when he has guided the new student three times. The teacher criticizes the competences of the form and handles the norm of 80%.

More information about the portfolio you can find on our website:
www.attractandretain.eu



Portfolio

Ambassador Low literacy



GLOSSARY

Ambassador: a student who tells his story to other people
Attract: using ambassadors to reach and recruit new students
Case studies: the lifestories of some ambassadors
CFL: Centre for flexible learning
JONAVA: a city in Lithuania
Lifeline: the life story of an ambassador
Life story: mostly the educational story of an ambassador
Mentor: a student who guides a new student
Retain: using mentors to motivate new students
ROC: regional education centre
VEC: Vocational Education Committee
VTOS: Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme