Reproduction and use for non-commercial purposes is permitted provided the source is mentioned and youthpass@salto-youth.net is notified. We would be happy to hear about your experiences with the cards, especially if you invent new ways to use them.

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Youthpass

Wouldn't it be great to have a set of inspiring quotes on learning? We could use it in many different ways while tackling learning.

A group of facilitators-in-need, from a true story.

LEARNING OUT OF THE BOX

Erasmus+ | EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS | JUGEND für Europa – Nationale Agentur Erasmus+ JUGEND IN AKTION Europäisches Solidaritätskorps | Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend | SALTO TRAINING & COOPERATION

BACKGROUND:

In a constantly and rapidly changing world, lifelong learning has become a necessity and we are more than ever before confronted with the need to continuously further develop our skills and competences. As an effect of such pressure - for there is one - learning might seem to become 'compulsory', mainly performance-oriented and disconnected from a reflected personal choice. Still, learning can be a truly empowering experience, a way to realise our passions, to gain confidence, to take full responsibility for our lives and to grow. No-one can really disagree that learning ***IS*** a topic on the agenda that needs to be discussed, explored, experienced and reflected upon.

For many years the European youth field has been providing learning opportunities for young people, where the development of competences and enjoyment are both considered as important dimensions of learning and are working together. Hence, the field takes an active part in this process of 'learning with awareness' through non-formal learning activities. Nowadays, we do talk about learning much more than we used to and the need for better recognition of non-formal learning and youth work has also contributed to the debate: 'what do we do and how do we explain what we do?'

Youthpass, the European recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning within the EU youth programmes, has also supported to a significant extent the reflection on learning and learning processes. To produce a good description of the learning outcomes from projects, systematic reflection through the so-called Youthpass process is encouraged. Becoming better aware of the various contexts and aspects of learning is an important part of this process.

All the above is what lies at the root and in the reasons behind 'Learning Out of the Box' and we hope that it provides useful ideas for inspiring discussions on learning.

THE QUOTES:

The selection of quotes for 'Learning Out of the Box' was made mainly based on our previous experiences of using quotes about learning in seminars and training sessions. The quotes that really triggered debate are those you can find in 'Learning Out of the Box'.

The selection aims to provide a wide variety of aspects related to learning. It compiles diverse quotes on different pedagogical approaches (such as learning

to learn, learning by doing, self-directed learning); educational systems (such as formal, non-formal); values and practices of learning (such as fulfilment, usefulness) and various dimensions of learning (such as creativity, change, pressure).

'Learning Out of the Box' also provides 3 blank cards for the participation of players in increasing the number of quotes to select and even in the creation of new ones.

THE METHODS:

In the following pages, you will find proposals for different ways of using the quote cards. The methods presented are to be considered as 'guidelines' rather than as 'rules carved in stone'. We provide some indications for variations, or factors to consider if you would like to change certain elements.

As you will see, five fields or areas of use have been identified – and there are one or two methods associated with each of them. The methods are relatively easy to adjust according to different contexts, objectives and groups.

A TOOL TO SPARK REFLECTION ON LEARNING

LEARNING IS...

AIM: To initiate reflection on learning

SIZE: Up to 30 people per deck of cards

TIME: 20 to 30 min

DESCRIPTION:

Display the cards with the quotes visible on the floor or on a big table. Ask participants to walk around the quotes and to choose the one that speaks to or strikes them the most. The blank cards can also be used but in such case, the participant who chooses it has to come up with a personal quote.

Once the choice is made, ask participants to gather in duos or in trios and to exchange with their colleague(s) why they have chosen that particular quote. What does it evoke? Is it linked to personal and/or professional experience(s)? If yes, what type of experience(s)? Positive? Challenging? Does it remind participants of someone who helped them to learn? Does it generate emotions? If yes, which ones? Why?

DEBRIEFING:

If this session is considered as a teaser for a session on learning, it may not require much or any debriefing. The relevance or use of the quotes may rather be tackled in the debriefing of the overall session. Nonetheless, the facilitator has also the possibility to collect reflections (key words) from participants on a flip chart, which may allow linking the collection to an input afterwards.

TIPS:

If necessary, participants can ask the facilitator for clarification about certain words, but not on the meaning behind the quote. (As that would spoil the debate afterwards!)

Make sure to give enough time for participants to choose their quote and for the exchange in duos or trios. Usually, this exercise sparks a lot of thoughts and requires sufficient time for sharing.

If the number of participants is smaller or if you have more than one deck of cards, you can also ask participants to choose two or more cards that would highlight a similar view on learning, complementarities, opposite views, etc.

VARIATION:

'Learning is…' can also be done with a focus on the values and principles of non-formal learning/education. Like that, it can help reflecting on what are the values and principles behind the selection of cards. Please take into account that for such a variation to work, it may require some prior knowledge of the participants or an introduction to the main features of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

A TOOL TO SPARK REFLECTION ON LEARNING

LEARNING TABLES

AIM: To initiate reflection on learning

SIZE: Up to 30 people per deck of cards

TIME: 60 min

DESCRIPTION:

Display the cards with the quotes visible on five tables. While dividing the quotes between tables, put them in clusters. For example, you could put them in clusters such as: pedagogical approaches/principles of learning (such as learning to learn, self-directed learning and learning by doing), educational systems (such as formal and non-formal education), values and practices (such as fulfilment, success), dimensions of learning (such as creativity, change), etc.

Ask the participants to walk around the five tables and look at the quotes. Form five groups and allocate a table to each of them. Ask each member of the groups to first look at the quotes and rank them individually, from the most to the least important/relevant.

Then, in each group, ask participants to share their ranking and to explain the reasons behind their choices. During the exchange in groups, ask participants to focus on: why did they go for that ranking? What was important while doing it? What were the dimensions/ aspects they identified for the ranking?

DEBRIEFING:

Before starting the debriefing, you may ask each table if they managed to identify the category or the dimensions of their table. It may be that different tables come up with the same one? If so, how come? You can then continue with questions such as:

- Was it difficult to rank the quotes? Was the ranking forced or did it come naturally? Why?
- Does such ranking make sense at all? Why? What does the ranking say about our view(s) on learning?
- Were there any surprising moments when listening to the rankings of the other members of the group? Which ones? Why?

TIPS:

If necessary, participants can ask the facilitator for clarification about certain words, but not on the meaning behind the quote.

While still in the small table groups, you may ask participants to attempt to reach a common ranking. Although reaching the group consensus is not the core objective of the method, it may be useful if you would like to encourage deeper discussions. If so, the time in groups and the questions for the debriefing have to be adjusted.

A TOOL TO REFLECT ON COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND APPROACHES TO LEARNING

LEARNING TABLES ON COMPETENCES

AIM: To initiate reflection on the relation between competences and different approaches to learning

SIZE: Up to 30 people per deck of cards

TIME: 60 to 90 min

DESCRIPTION:

Display the cards with the quotes visible on five tables. While dividing the quotes between tables, cluster the quotes tackling different pedagogical approaches/ principles of learning (such as learning to learn, self-directed learning, experiential learning, functional skills development and creativity in learning), etc.

Form five groups and allocate a table to each of them. Ask participants to identify the competences that can be developed through the approaches to learning they have on their table (bearing in mind that the competences may be multiple). Participants think

individually about what competences are linked to the quotes and share their reflection with their group.

DEBRIEFING:

During the debriefing, you can focus on the following questions:

- Was it difficult to identify the competences that could be developed in applying learning/education as implied in the quote? Why?
- Did you come up with similar competences or rather very different ones? If different ones, what was interesting when listening to the proposals of your colleagues? Were there strong disagreements or striking issues? If yes, which ones and why?
- Were the competences identified linked to your own learning experience(s)? Or rather to learning as you would like it to be?

TIPS:

If necessary, participants can ask the facilitator for clarification about certain words, but not on the meaning behind the quote.

This method may require an introduction to the concept of competence before the activity or a short input afterwards depending on the needs of the group and the programme flow.

A TOOL TO EXCHANGE TEAM MEMBERS' VIEWS ON LEARNING

OUR APPROACH TO LEARNING

AIM: For team members or members of a pool of trainers to exchange their opinions on learning and to share the degree of importance they may give to a particular approach/dimension/ principle compared to others

SIZE: Up to 8 people (in the case of a larger group, divide them in small groups and use several decks)

TIME: 90 min.

DESCRIPTION:

Display the cards with the quotes visible on a big table or on a wall/pin board (include the white cards). Each member of the team will have four removable sticky notes, each one of a different colour. Each colour stands for a degree of importance, for instance:

Purple: The most important, the 'must-have' or 'must-be'
Blue: Highly desirable
Green: Desirable not indispensable
Orange: Not desirable/to be disregarded

After reading all the quotes, each team member puts their respective sticky notes next to the quotes that they choose. In case they have chosen a white card, they also have to write what it refers to (either their personal quote or a key word related to learning). Once the selection is done, followed by an overall look at the results, each team member has some time to explain the reasons behind the choices.

TIPS:

If several quotes are spotted several times, this may indicate a common vision of learning which should be highlighted in the exchange/discussion. Nonetheless, major differences do not necessarily indicate contradicting views but can also highlight the diversity in the team. This may also lead to a discussion about the competences of the members in the team and how to possibly use them to their biggest potential while implementing the activity. For instance, if only one colleague has chosen a quote related to 'learning to learn' and has a vast experience in dealing with that approach and the related principles, it may be a plus not only for the team but also the designing of the activity.

In the case of clearly contradicting views, the discussion may also turn towards the values and principles upon which that specific activity will be built (taking into account the target group and the objectives).

VARIATION:

The discussion may be led towards building a consensus or reaching an agreement among the team members.

'Our approach to learning' can also be used for meetings of trainers' pools. Divide the big group into smaller ones (5 or 6 persons) and provide each group with a deck of cards. Each person selects 2 or 3 quotes based on their feelings about which quotes talk to them the most. There is no need to rationalise at that stage or to proceed from a trainer's perspective, for instance. The explanations will come later on when the persons will share with their colleagues in the group why they have chosen those quotes.

Once the sharing is done, each group develops a common message to the rest of the pool, highlighting the main values and/or principles in relation to learning they would like to see in the work of the pool.
The debriefing goes as for the initial method but will include an exchange on the messages.

A TOOL FOR MENTORING AND/OR COACHING

LEARNING ON THE AGENDA

AIM: To address the topic of learning in a mentor talk

SIZE: One to one, or a group up to 8 people

TIME: 60 minutes

DESCRIPTION:

Set the frame of the talk by reminding the mentee(s) that during a long-term learning experience (such as voluntary service or participation in a long-term training course) it is useful to regularly reflect on the learning process and outcomes. At the same time recognize the fact that 'learning' can be abstract and hard to put into words, so the quotes can help us to make such concepts concrete.

Display the cards with the quotes visible on a big table or a floor and ask the mentee(s) to think about some 'good learning experiences' (a personally important one or a rewarding process of learning). Then ask the mentee(s) to take three cards that seem to be associated with those positive learning experiences.

DEBRIEFING:

Following the choice of cards, you may ask the mentee(s):

- How was it to remember these learning experiences?
- How was it to choose the cards?

Then invite the mentee(s) to share the cards and their understanding of learning with you (and/or with each other).

Collect these important aspects of learning for the mentee(s) and explore the links to this kind of learning for the context in which mentor talks take place (such as voluntary service or participation in a long-term training course). You may also encourage the mentee(s) to explore future possibilities in experiencing more of this kind of learning.

TIPS:

During the mentor talk, you may also wish to use the cards as a warm up for the final self-assessment and for describing learning outcomes.

A TOOL TO DEBRIEF AN EXERCISE ON LEARNING OR WITH A SPECIFIC LEARNING COMPONENT

OUR LEARNING THEORY

AIM: To support participants in constructing their own opinions on learning after a challenging learning experience

SIZE: 10 to 30 people

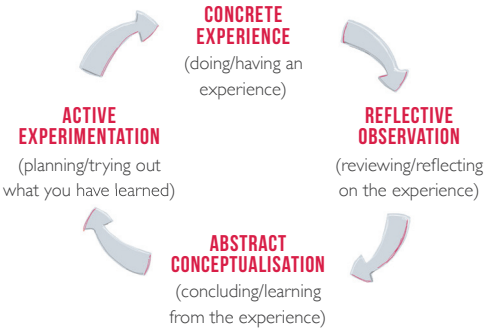
TIME: 90 to 120 min

DESCRIPTION:

In case you would like to work on the topic of 'awareness and understanding of learning' using experiential learning as your main approach, you may wish to provide participants with an experience of learning something new and challenging (such as learning how to juggle, walking on a tightrope, playing ukulele, etc).

In the basic experiential learning cycle, the concrete experience is followed by a reflection. This reflection mainly focuses on the feelings, behaviours and perceptions of participants during the experience.

The next step in the cycle is conceptualisation, the step at which theories and concepts are presented and integrated. The last step of the cycle is where participants apply their learning through active experimentation.



During the conceptualisation step and while looking at how to apply the learning, you invite participants to create their own theories about learning.

Divide the participants into small groups (5-6 people) and give each group a deck of cards. Invite them to select 5-7 cards that they find most inspiring and then use them as the basis for their own theory about what is learning and how it happens. Invite the groups to present their theories in plenary.

TIPS:

It is important that the facilitator using this method has a working knowledge of David A. Kolb's 'Experiential Learning theory', especially for the first part of the exercise.

'Our Learning Theory' can also be used as a standalone activity without making the direct connection to a specific experiential learning approach.

'LEARNING OUT OF THE BOX' QUOTES ARE TAKEN FROM:

1. Erica Jong (born on 26 March 1942), American author and teacher.
2. Henry Ford (30 July 1863 – 7 April 1947), American industrialist, founder of the Ford Motor Company.
3. Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde (16 October 1854 – 30 November 1900), Irish writer and poet.
4. William Butler Yeats (13 June 1865 – 28 January 1939), Irish poet.
5. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (2 October 1869 – 30 January 1948), leader of the Indian independence movement.
6. Eric Hoffer (25 July 1902 – 21 May 1983), American moral and social philosopher.
7. Claude Bernard (12 July 1813 – 10 February 1878), French physiologist.
8. George Bernard Shaw (26 July 1856 – 2 November 1950), Irish playwright and a co-founder of the London School of Economics.

9. Paulo Coelho (born on 24 August 1947), Brazilian lyricist and novelist.
10. William Edwards Deming (14 October 1900 – 20 December 1993), American statistician, professor, author, lecturer and consultant.
11. Peter Honey, British occupational psychologist and management trainer who contributed to popularising the concept of 'learning styles'.
12. Edward T. Clark, Jr, American educational consultant specializing in integrated curriculum design and site-based educational change.
13. Lloyd Chudley Alexander (30 January 1924 – 17 May 2007), American author of primarily fantasy novels for children and young adults.
14. Confucius (551–479 BC), Chinese teacher, editor, politician, and philosopher of the Spring and Autumn period of Chinese history.
15. Felice Leonardo "Leo" Buscaglia (31 March 1924 – 12 June 1998), American author, professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Southern California.

16. Aldous Leonard Huxley (26 July 1894 – 22 November 1963), British writer and editor of the magazine Oxford Poetry.
17. See n.11
18. Swami Beyondananda: cosmic comic alter ego of American writer, humorist, performer and 'uncommontator' Steve Bhaerman.
19. Henry Alfred Kissinger (born on 27 May 1923), American writer, political scientist, diplomat, businessman and Nobel Peace Prize receiver.
20. Chinese proverb
21. Baruch Spinoza (24 November 1632 – 21 February 1677), later Benedict de Spinoza, Dutch philosopher.
22. Sir James Matthew Barrie, (9 May 1860 – 19 June 1937), Scottish author and dramatist.
23. Papua New Guinea proverb.

24. **Alvin Toffler** (4 October 1928 - 27 June 2016), American writer and futurist, known for his works discussing the digital, communication, corporate revolution and technological singularity.

25. See n. 7

26. **Doris May Lessing** (22 October 1919 - 17 November 2013), British novelist, poet, playwright, librettist, and biographer.

27. **Donald H. Blocher,** American academic, Professor Emeritus and Professor of Counseling Psychology at the State University of New York, Albany.

28. **John Dewey** (20 October 1859 – 1 June 1952), American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer.

29. **Galileo Galilei** (15 February 1564 – 8 January 1642), Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher.

30. **Ann Landers** was a pen name created by the Chicago Sun-Times advice columnist Ruth Crowley (American) in 1943 and taken over by Eppie Lederer in 1955.

31. **Ursula K. Le Guin** (21 October 1929 - 22 January 2018), American author of novels, children's books, and short stories, mainly in the genres of fantasy and science fiction.

32. **Franklin Patrick Herbert, Jr.** (8 October 1920 - 11 February 1986), American science fiction author who was critically acclaimed and commercially successful.

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The contributors to 'Learning Out of the Box' acknowledge that the methods compiled in this booklet are adaptations from various similar, widely used methods in non-formal learning activities within the European youth field since many years. A special word of thanks goes to all facilitator colleagues from the field, with whom we developed and keep on growing together. We hope that this material inspires you to continue designing methods for learners.

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