Cook Wise
ZERO WASTE

MANUAL FOR ADULT TRAINERS

Banki Żywności

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Project website: https://cookwise.eu/

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INTRODUCTION: HOW, FOR WHOM AND WHY WAS THIS MANUAL PREPARED?

WHY WAS THIS MANUAL CREATED?

The manual you are holding in your hands has been created to complement and build on the content developed as part of the **COOK WISE** project - a European educational initiative dedicated to preventing food waste, promoting a circular economy, and fostering a more informed, sustainable lifestyle.

The COOK WISE guidebook offers knowledge, while this **manual provides the tools and inspiration for action**. It is a response to a growing demand among those who educate not at the blackboard, but through workshops, cooking, local events, or social media. It offers practical support for those who wish to talk about food and avoiding its waste in a way which is **close, engaging and adapted to everyday life**.

WHO IT IS FOR?

The manual is intended for adult traingers who **teach by doing,** whether they work in a kitchen, at a community centre, a care centre, for an NGO or at a marketplace.

Recipients include, among others:

- chefs and cooks holding cooking workshops,
- community educators,adults trainers
- local actors and community leaders,
- persons working with groups with diverse needs - including those experiencing exclusion or food insecurity.

The manual is for those who want to change habits and support informed choices regardless of participants' age, status or place of living.

HOW DOES THE MANUAL DIFFER FROM THE *COOK WISE* GUIDEBOOK?

The guidebook is a **source of knowledge and factual content.** The manual offers **a set of practical methods and inspiration for work with adults**. It does not repeat the theory. It shows **how to translate it into specific educational activities**: events, games, challenges, social media, group cooking, street campaigns or activities in schools.

The guidebook, in turn, provides concrete knowledge, exercises to consolidate it as well as examples of activities and scenarios for classes with participants.

In other words: **the guidebook tells you 'what', while the manual shows you 'how'.**

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL?

The manual is divided into topics and designed in form of short inspirations, ready to be implemented. You will find:

- guidance on how to teach adults effectively (including elements of theory),
- tips on classes' structure,
- an overview of methods for group work,
- recommendations for working with different groups,
- guidance for online work,
- tips for improving your own competence in educational work,
- examples of educational activities "on site" – from festivals to murals,
- ideas for education in social media,
- tips for campaigns, visual communication and surprise actions,
- special sections for chefs and financial educators,
- ideas for activities with children, seniors and persons in a difficult life situation.

You can use the manual as a whole or in selected parts: **as an inspiration, ready-made scenarios or as a basis for creating your own projects**. It is a flexible tool, open to diversity, based on experience, respect, and facts.

Cook Wise
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WHEN COOKING TOGETHER BECOMES LEARNING

LEADING QUESTIONS:

- *How does sharing a recipe differ from supporting the learning process?*
- *How do adults learn and why is their learning process different than at school?*
- *How to create learning situations in the kitchen – respectfully, attentively and effectively?*

This chapter shows how cooking together can become a space for adult learning – not only an opportunity to gain culinary skills, but also to experience the educational process in practice. The authors explain the difference between simply demonstrating an activity and consciously supporting learning, introduce models and andragogical theories (including the conscious competence model, David Kolb's learning cycle, and Malcolm Knowles' concept) and indicate how they can be applied in a trainer's work. The chapter highlights that adults learn differently from children – through experience, reflection and practice – and that the trainer's role is to create a safe, respectful and inspiring space where participants can try, make mistakes and develop their competences.

Learning is part of everyday life. Throughout our adult lives, we learn new things – sometimes out of necessity, sometimes out of passion and sometimes by chance. We learn by cooking with someone for the first time, by changing habits, watching a tutorial, listening to stories. And then, sooner or later, someone asks: "Show me how you do it".

Showing HOW *to do something* is not yet education.

You can watch for hours someone chopping an onion or cracking an egg and still not feel confident holding a knife or an egg in your hand. You can listen to stories about zero waste and not make a single change in your kitchen.

HOW DO YOU LEARN TO CRACK AN EGG?

You can watch a tutorial, get the instructions: "hit it on an edge, split the shell, pour out the contents", but only when you hold an egg in your hand:

- you feel it is slippery,
- you do not know how much force to use,
- you are afraid it will spill over,
- you try to find your own method.

Only then the real learning begins. To know is not the same as to be able to do something.

Questions for the adult trainer:

- How to plan the activity so that everyone can try it for themselves?
- How to ensure safety without causing fear of making a mistake?
- How to support and not to correct?

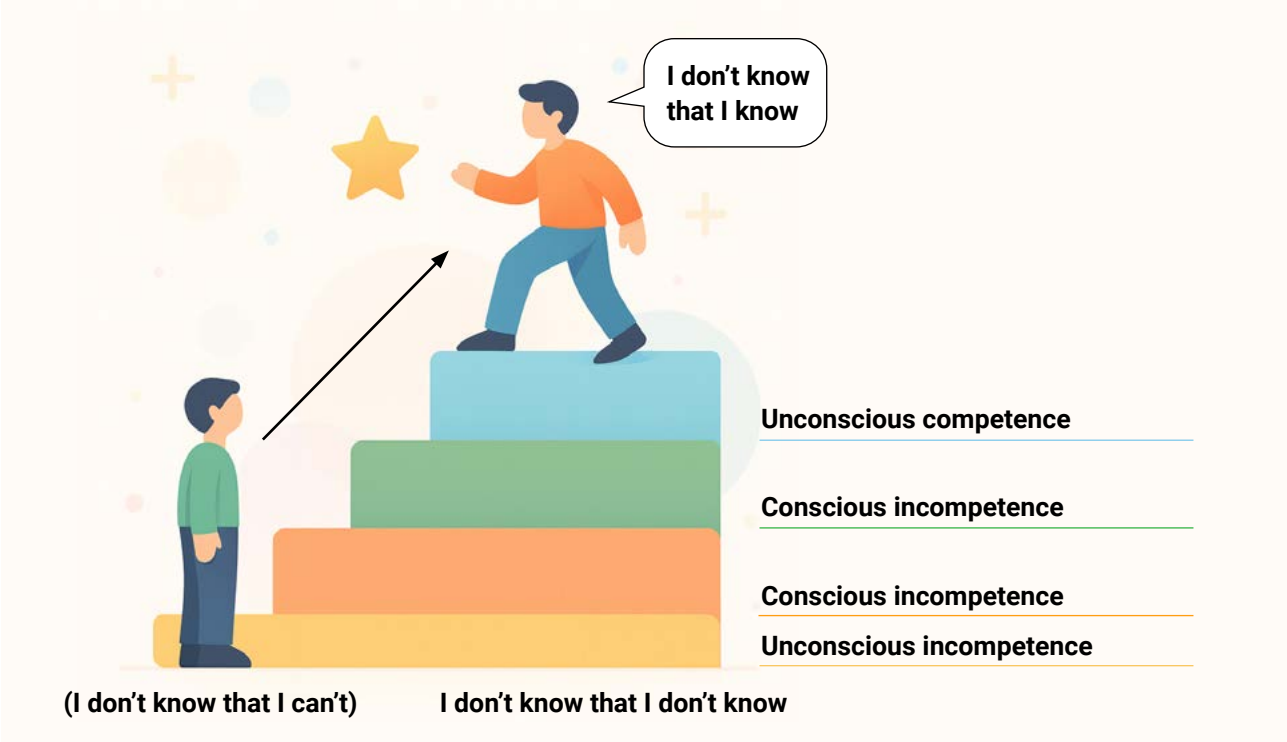
A training is – often for the first time – an invitation to act, to think, to try. With emotions and uncertainty. It is a space where you are allowed to make mistakes and ask, not just watch and repeat.

Culinary classes have enormous educational potential. It is worth noticing and making use of in an informed way. In the following sections, we will discuss the learning process of adults and how it can be supported.

CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE MODEL

The task of the adult trainer is to **guide the participant safely through the learning process** – from the state of "I can't" to the state of "I can", or more precisely: through the four stages of competence development.

Those elements are described in **the conscious competence model** – useful especially when working with adults, who often come with firm beliefs ("I already know how to do this" or "it's not for me").



STAGES OF THE MODEL:

Unconscious incompetence "I don't know that I don't know"	the person does not realise their lack of knowledge or skills; does not feel the need to change
Conscious incompetence (I know that I can't) "I know that I don't know"	awareness of the gap appears – this is often a moment of anxiety, shame, but also the beginning of development
Conscious competence (I can but I have to make an effort) „I know that I know"	the person is able to act, but needs to focus; is not yet sure, but already trying
Unconscious competence (I can without making an effort) "I don't know that I know"	the skill becomes natural, integrated into everyday life.

The role of the trainer is to accompany the learner. To accompany but not to relieve, to support but not to block. To create **a situation which facilitates learning.**

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT LEARNING ACCORDING TO MALCOLM KNOWLES

To know what we are talking about, let us look at the definition of learning:

Learning is a cognitive process which **leads to a change** in behaviour, knowledge, skills or attitudes, influenced by experience. Such changes are relatively permanent and usually serve the purpose of better adaptation to the environment, better orientation in the world and more informed acting.

Learning is not just about gathering information - it is **an active, often reflective process which involves thinking, emotions and actions.**

The definition applies to learning as a process, for people of all ages. It is worth remembering that **adult education is a reality different from school** – it does not start from scratch, but from the questions: "does it make sense?", "does it work?". This was the reasoning of Malcolm S. Knowles[1], the founder of modern andragogy.

Key characteristics of adult learning (according to M. Knowles):

- The learner's beliefs, that is the **need for autonomy and influence**

An adult knows what they want to learn – they are not a 'blank slate'. **They have their own views, goals, needs and expectations.** They want to have a say in the learning process – to decide what they learn, at what pace and in what way. They need **respect and partnership**, not instruction from a position of authority.

- The learner's experience, that is **personal filters and the need for dialogue**

It is of great importance what the adult has already experienced and learned previously. Their past experiences are not only a resource, but also a filter through which the adult passes new knowledge. **Effective adult education taps into those experiences, allows their sharing, processing and relating to current contents**.

- Readiness to learn, that is purpose **and relevance**

Adults learn when they feel they really need something – e.g. at work, in relationships, in every-day life. They are motivated by **the need to solve a specific problem** or the need for personal development. Training must be embedded in the context of the learner's life, otherwise it will not work.

- Attitude to learning, that is **practical and immediately useful**

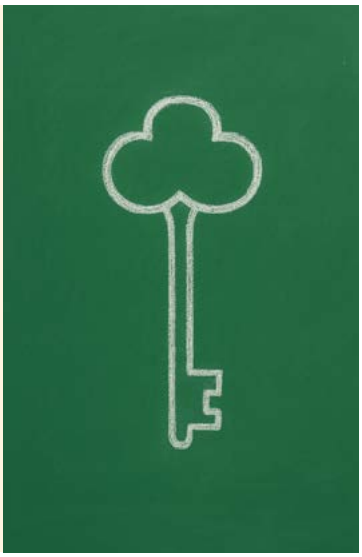
Learning is not about "acquiring material", but about **acquiring practical skills which can be**

1 Malcolm S. Knowles (1913-1997) was one of the most important American researchers of adult education in the 20th century. His most important works include: The Modern Practice of Adult Education (1970) and The Adult Learner (1973). Those publications defined the foundations of modern andragogy theory and remain a point of reference for working with adult learners today.

applied immediately. Adults do not want to learn 'just in case'. They are interested in what works and what they can use. They value efficiency and specifics. Therefore, **they respond better to activation methods than to passively listening to a lecture.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THE ADULT TRAINER? IT IS WORTHWHILE TO:

- invite participants to influence the process – ask them what they want to learn and how they want to work;
- build on experience – not to start „from scratch" – ask: „how do you do it?", „what do you already know?";
- embed in life situations – show applications: „what can you do with this in your kitchen tomorrow?";
- use a partnership approach – explain rather than give instructions, support rather than correct.



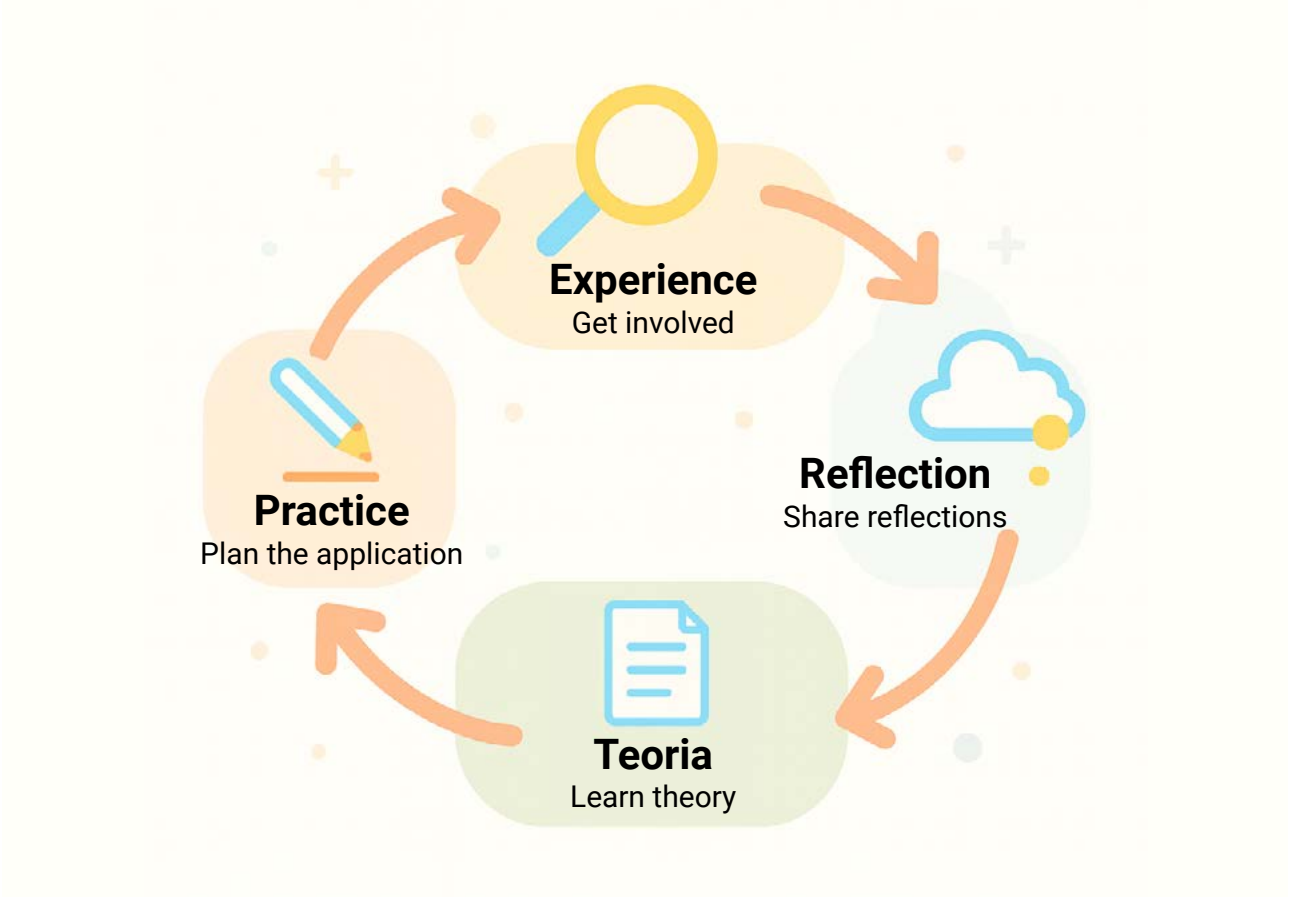
DAVID A. KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

You already know what adults need to learn. Now it is time to see **how to plan this process step by step**, so that it leads not just to a 'taste', but to the actual acquisition of knowledge or skills.

An aid can be one of the most well-known and **practical theories of adult learning – the experiential learning cycle model by David A. Kolb**. It is characterized by the simplicity of assumptions and the ease of application in a wide range of situations – from the kitchen to the classroom. The cycle consists of four stages which form a loop – and can be repeated each time we learn something new.

Each of those stages is important – if you skip any of them, the participants may remember something, but they will not necessarily learn.

The picture shows the individual stages of the cycle, which are described below:



1. Specific experience, or direct entry into action

A stage when something happens – sensually, physically, emotionally. Without theory, without instructions, questions, tensions, curiosity and first mistakes are born – without them, there is no real learning.

e.g. Someone takes part in a workshop and cooks a dish with others from leftovers. Something goes well and something burns.

2. Reflective observation, i.e. looking at what has happened

Time to stop and look from a distance. What worked? What surprised me? What did I feel? Reflection structures the experience and allows us to come closer to understanding – the stage 'in-between' doing and thinking.

e.g. After cooking, the group discusses: "Why was the soup too salty?", "What worked in our collaboration?", "What was surprising about it?".

3. Abstract conceptualisation, i.e. creation of meaning and rules

A stage where chaos gradually settles into structure. Learners begin to understand why something worked – and form their own conclusions. It is the "Oh, I see!" moment, when someone says: "Now I understand what you mean".

e.g. The group notes: "When cooking with leftovers, it's a good idea to plan the ingredients first – chaos reduces efficiency." A common rule is established.

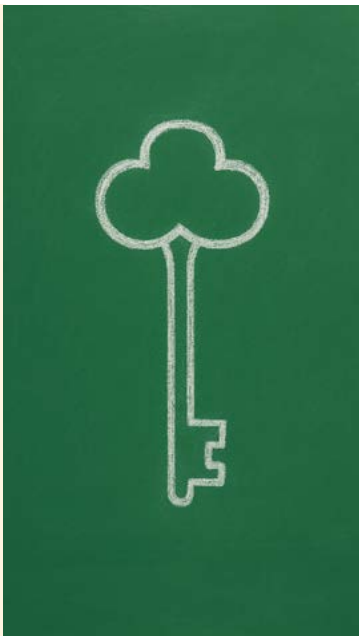
4. Active experimentation, i.e. putting a new approach into practice

Knowledge without application quickly evaporates. This stage allows to test new ideas, strategies, methods in action – outside the workshop. It shows whether the learning really made sense and what still needs to be improved.

e.g. A person comes home and cooks a new dish, starting this time by inspecting the fridge and planning together with the family.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THE ADULT TRAINER? IT IS WORTHWHILE TO:

- give space for action – allow participants to act, to test, to make mistakes;
- stop and ask – after each activity, create the conditions to talk, share observations, reflect;
- help draw conclusions – provide support in naming what worked (and why) so that knowledge, and not just a memory, is created;
- encourage attempts in everyday life – suggest how a new approach can be applied in the home kitchen or at work.



The knowledge of the Kolb cycle is also supported by contemporary brain research. Increasingly precise guidance on how to effectively support cognitive processes is provided by neurodidactics, which is a combination of neuroscience, psychology and pedagogy. It identifies activities which promote learning and those that may inhibit it, such as stress, lack of motivation or information overload.

Neuroeducational research conducted so far shows, among others, that:

- **the brain is a lifelong learner**, so age is no barrier to education;
- testing one's knowledge (even through a **simple quiz or questions**) supports its memorisation better than multiple repetitions;
- learning is more effective when **different forms of activity** are used interchangeably;
- **emotions** and motivation have a strong influence on the memorisation process;
- in order to absorb new information effectively, **the brain needs time for regeneration, sleep and movement**;
- **vision and sensory engagement** strengthen the encoding of information into memory;
- the brain is a social organ – **social relationships and a positive atmosphere promote learning**.

WHAT TO REMEMBER AND USE?

- emotions and relationships support learning,
- our brain is a lifelong learner,
- a diversity of methods supports memorisation.

DO YOU NEED TO LEARN HOW TO TEACH IN CLASSES?

YES AND NO

You do not need a trainer's degree to conduct good training.Many people start with their intuition, passion and life experience – they share and inspire. They can create an atmosphere of trust, talk respectfully and respond to needs. This is a great value – and a starting point.

But... **it is worth learning how to teach in classes because it makes the job easier.** With a basic knowledge of how adults learn, how to plan a session, how to respond to difficult situations, the adult trainer gains:

- ease of mind and confidence,
- tools for the moments when 'something goes wrong',
- ability to adapt content to different people and situations.

Learning of methods and tools does not mean rejecting intuition; on the contrary, it enhances its effectiveness. There are times when something goes wrong during a class: the group gets distracted, someone interrupts, another person withdraws. In such moments, knowledge of communication, group dynamics, learning stages, emotions and cognitive barriers can be an anchor to hold on to. This is why it makes sense to develop a trainer's workshop. Also to *better understand what is happening and to support learners more effectively.*

Just like in the kitchen, you can cook by heart, but if you learn the techniques, spices, cooking times, you will cook easier, faster, smarter. The same applies to teaching.

In the world of adult education, **there are many paths and opportunities** for development, and each of them may enrich the competence package: from facilitation to evaluation, from neuro-education to storytelling.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PERSON TEACHING THE CLASS TO THINK ABOUT

- Where has my journey as an educator begun? What was my strength in the beginning? Intuition, experience, relationships?
- In what situations do I feel confident as an adult trainer? What helps me?
- What else would I like to learn in order to teach classes with more confidence and ease of mind?

FOR THOSE INTERESTED

The article ***Development of Adult Education in Europe and in the Context of Knowles' Study*** is a synthetic study of the development of adult education in Europe against a historical background and according to the concept of Malcolm Knowles. This publication is worth reading to better understand how andragogy differs from pedagogy, how the aims and forms of adult education have changed in response to social and technological changes, and what teaching strategies are effective in working with adults.

Link in EPALE platform resources:

> **Development of Adult Education in Europe and in the Context of Know...**
> (https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/development-adult-education-europe-and-context-knowles-study)

The **website of the EBLS organisation**, where David Kolb is a board member and chief operating officer, offers tools and knowledge based on his theory of experiential learning. It presents, among others, the learning cycle model, videos, publications and courses to develop competences in work with adults. Useful can be in particular the section on strategies to support reflection, create a safe space and to adapt the teaching style to various needs of participants.

> **Home | Experience Based Learning Systems, LLC**
> (https://learningfromexperience.com/)

The article *The Neuroscience of Lifelong Learning:* ***How Our Brains Adapt to Continuous Education*** presents the latest findings in neurobiology, focusing on phenomena such as neuroplasticity, neurogenesis or the role of neurotransmitters in memorisation and motivation. It provides not only theoretical explanations but also practical guidance to be used in educational work with adults.

> **The Neuroscience of Lifelong Learning: How Our Brains Adapt to Continuous Education | Edujournal**
> (https://www.edujournal.com/the-neuroscience-of-lifelong-learning-how-our-brains-adapt-to-continuous-education/)

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EFFECTIVE CLASSES – THREE STEPS TO SUCCESS

LEADING QUESTIONS:

- *How to plan a class which is engaging and effective?*
- *Where to start and where to finish so that participation really makes a difference?*
- *What is the difference between online and offline classes?*

Before starting work with a group, it is useful to realise that effective teaching of classes is a process which involves three key stages: the part BEFORE the class, then the WORK WITH THE GROUP, and finally the SUMMARY and REFLECTION after the event. Each requires the adult trainer to be attentive, show planning skills and be ready to respond to the needs of the participants.

Let us take a closer look at each of these stages, to point out their key elements and suggest what to plan, what decisions to make and how to build an atmosphere which supports the learning process.

PREPARATION BEFORE CLASSES

Two equally important issues which should precede class planning are:

- identifying, clarifying and understanding **the purpose of the meeting**,
- **adapting the content and the methods** to the abilities, needs and background of the participants (more on that on p. 28-33).

The goal you set for yourself determines the choice of methods, the way you work and, importantly, is also the azimuth you stick to during storms in the classroom. If you know the goal, you know which exercises and tasks are crucial and which elements can be skipped or added. This allows you to act with greater flexibility and to remain calm when teaching classes.

In order to set the goal for the classes, you need to have at least a minimum knowledge of the context of the planned activities: whether they are aimed at a specific group or can anyone enrol.

When defining the goal, it is useful to use the division into three outcome areas: knowledge, skills and social competences acquired in the process of broadly understood learning, not only at school or at university, but also in the course of professional work and various other activities.

The learning outcomes listed in the qualification description apply to:

- knowledge: what one needs to know and understand,
- skills: what one needs to be able to do,
- social competence: what kind of responsibility one needs to be prepared for[2].

2 Training outcomes are described in the same way also in the European Qualifications Framework.

EXAMPLE:

The aim of the classes is to increase the environmental awareness among elderly persons and to increase their commitment to reducing waste of resources.

- knowledge: participants will learn at least three principles of the circular economy and two selected zero waste practices,
- skills: they will practice two specific methods to reduce waste at home (e.g. composting, planning of purchases),
- social competences: they will develop a readiness to share their experiences and inspire others to change their habits.

Additional tip:

It is often helpful for the persons teaching classes to express the goal in the following way:

- *After the workshop, the participants **will know** three principles of the circular economy and two zero waste practices, they **will be able** to reduce waste at home in two ways and **will be ready** to share their experiences and encourage others to change their habits.*

A well-thought-out goal and knowledge of the meeting's context allow to move on to **the next stage - designing of specific modules and activities**.

Let us organise the content material in order of importance in relation to the goal of the class:

- What **must** be communicated? – absolutely crucial information and skills, without which the goal of the class cannot be achieved.
- What **should** be communicated? – content which supports the main goal, useful but can be shortened or postponed.
- What **can** be communicated? – optional elements which enrich the class, if there is enough time and group energy allows it.

The above division helps maintain flexibility when working with the group and facilitates decision-making during the class, especially when something is takes a longer time than planned.

TEACHING IN THE CLASS

With the goal and the scope of material defined, a detailed structure of the class can be planned. **A good class is not a set of random activities**. It has its own pace and internal logic. This helps not only the learners, but also the adult trainers – it provides a framework to return to.

Let us discuss the structure of a class divided into an introduction, a main part including methods and a conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

The first few minutes of a meeting are of huge importance – this is when the participants decide whether to get involved or to observe from a distance. **It is worth to start with attention.**

This part is not just about 'getting started' or presenting a plan. It is **a moment to build trust, clarity and a sense of purpose,** and an opportunity to feel that you are there not by chance – but together, in a shared process.

What to plan and include at the start?

- **Saying hello and introducing yourself** (not just your name – also your role and why you are teaching the class).
- **An opening question**, e.g. "What are you bringing with you today?", "What do you want for yourself today?", "What is your inner weather today?".
- **Introduction to the topic and the goal:** briefly, specifically, no 'dry' presentation.
- **Establishment of rules for cooperation (a contract),** invitation to co-creation of the rules.
- **Checking the mood of the group**, e.g. in the form of a round, a vote, a movement or a metaphor.

Opening method	What it involves	When to use it
Humour or a situation joke	Natural relaxation of the atmosphere, but tactfully.	When the group is tense or new.
Metaphor or quote	A short sentence to open the topic, e.g. "Cooking together is like a conversation without words".	For deeper or relationship-related topics
Prop or object	Bringing with you something tangible, e.g. a fragrant spice, an empty jar, leftover food.	For practical, sensory or culinary classes.
Question round	Each person answers a short question in a circle or a pair.	Always – a great starting point.
Visual question	A photo, a card, a picture with a question: "Which of these graphics depicts your mood?"	When a group has difficulty verbalising, they prefer visualisations.
Silence and pause	30 seconds without words, a time just to enter, look around, close your eyes.	When a group comes from another activity, to enter a new situation.

MAIN PART

The main part is the heart of the meeting – this is where **the learning** really takes place. It is worthwhile to ensure a proper **pace, variety and attentiveness to the group** so that each person can contribute in their own way.

Keeping adults engaged requires a balance between **action and rest**.

The human brain has a limited attention span: after 15-20 minutes it needs to be stimulated anew. It is therefore worthwhile to:

- mix forms of work (conversation, action, note-taking, movement),
- give time for reflection and silence – a **pause is also a method**,
- ensure physical comfort: breaks, access to water, good lighting.

Note: sometimes less is more!

You do not need to include a lot of content and activities in one session. It is better to discuss fewer topics, but attentively and with space for experience and reflection. This is particularly important in culinary education – it is about taste, rhythm, attentiveness, not pace.

Now that you know that a combination of varied activities makes a difference, it is worth looking at **specific methods** you can use.

AVAILABLE METHODS

Demonstration

What it involves:

One person – usually teaching the class – demonstrates a particular activity and the group observes. This can be, for example, a demonstration of a technique, a tool, a recipe.

Why do it:

- the method helps to see what something looks like 'live',
- it makes it easier to understand the process step by step,
- it builds a sense of security as one does not have to act alone.

When to use it:

- when introducing a new tool, a recipe, a technique, e.g. "how to safely peel a pumpkin",
- when a group needs a model or inspiration for action.

Options:

- a demonstration with or without commentary,
- a demonstration with an element of error (to be noticed and discussed),
- a 'dry' demonstration before a joint activity.

Tip: After the demonstration, always leave the space for questions and the opportunity to try for oneself.

Work in pairs

What it involves:

Two persons perform a task together, talking or analysing the situation at a calm, safe pace.

Why do it:

- it lowers the entry threshold (it is easier to speak to one person than to a broader public),
- it allows each person to have their say,
- if fosters relationship building and trust.

When to use it:

- as a warm-up, e.g. "what do you do with leftovers?",
- after a mini-lecture – to share experiences,
- before a larger activity – as a 'starter talk'.

Options:

- fixed pairs throughout the whole workshop,
- random pairs for every module,
- a conversation or joint notetaking/drawing.

Work in small groups (3-6 persons)

What it involves:

Individuals work together on a task - they come up with a recipe, analyse a situation, plan an action, organise knowledge.

Why do it:

- the method supports cooperation and dialogue,
- it encourages experience sharing,
- it allows to look at the topic from different perspectives.

When to use it:

- when you want to foster a sense of community and team action,
- for creative tasks, e.g. 'Make a list of five zero waste rules for beginners'.

Options:

- working with sheets, blocks, cards, a board,
- groups selected at random or by topic,
- presentation of results or without a summary.

Tip: Give clear instructions and set a time. Chaos discourages, while structure supports.

Moderated discussion

What it involves:

Joint discussion of the topic – led by the educator using guiding questions and based on the rules of good conversation.

Why do it:

- the method allows to confront different points of view,
- it promotes critical thinking and coming up with arguments,
- it encourages listening to each other.

When to use it:

- when working with issues concerning values, dilemmas, experiences,
- to look for solutions or to deepen the topic.

Options:

- a storm of arguments 'for' and 'against',
- discussion based on a quote or a photo,
- 'rhythmic' conversation – everyone says two sentences.

Tip: Make sure that the rules are clear: we listen to each other, we do not interrupt, we do not judge. Invite less active people, but without forcing them.

Individual reflection

What it involves:

Each person works alone – writes, draws, thinks in silence, summarises.

Why do it:

- the method supports the processing of information in an individual way,
- it gives time to self-reflects, to stop,
- it allows introverted persons to get fully involved.

When to use it:

- after an intense activity, e.g. cooking,
- before the end of the session to facilitate the drawing of conclusions.

Options:

- a question sheet,
- a drawing of the 'map of the day',
- one sentence to complete: "I am taking with me..."

Tip: Do not comment on reflections – respect privacy. It is a moment for the learner.

Case study / Situation analysis

What it involves:

The group analyses a specific situation: a realistic one, which can be encountered in everyday life. The group looks for solutions or considers possible action.

Why do it:

- the method allows to translate theory into practice,
- it supports empathy and analysis from different points of view,
- it prepares the participants for acting "in the world".

When to use it:

- for difficult, complex topics,
- as an introduction to the development of specific strategies.

Options:

- a case described or acted out as a scene,
- individual or group analysis,
- concluding with a question: "And what would you do?"

Tip: A good study is detailed but leaves room for guesses and interpretation – it invites conversation.

SUMMARY

A well-designed class does not end when the watch shows the last minute, but when the participants **take with them something more than a recipe** – a thought, a decision, an idea, a new way of doing things.

Reflection at the end of the event helps structure the experience, make sense of it and decide what to take with you from the class. Adults learn more deeply when they have the time and space to realise: *what did I achieve? what surprised me? what will I do differently?* **Reflection helps** not only them, the adult trainer also gains insights into what works and what should be changed.

Evaluation methods – examples:

- **Final round** - "What am I leaving this class with?", "What has moved me?"
- **Papers/questionnaire** – one anonymously written sentence: "I will remember most...", "Next time please..."
- **Thermometer** – the participants mark their level of satisfaction from 1 to 5 (e.g. with pace, clarity, atmosphere)
- **Recipe to take with you** – each person adds their own rule/conclusion/association to a recipe

Supporting change after the class

What happens **after the workshop** is just as important as the session itself.

It is worthwhile to:

- encourage the **sharing of results** (e.g. photos, recipes in an online group),
- propose **a challenge after the workshop** (e.g. "Zero waste for a week"),
- suggest **where to look for further inspiration** (a book, a blog, an event).

After the workshop, it is also worth asking some questions of yourself:

- What worked better than I had planned?
- What was difficult – and why?
- What will I change next time?
- Has the goal been achieved?

Reflection of the adult trainer is **a moment to pause, to reflect on one's own working style,** to improve, from which professionalism is born.

OFFLINE AND ONLINE – HOW TO BE CLOSE REMOTELY

Online educational work is already well-established in our projects, in the landscape. It is not just a 'substitute for a classroom', but a completely **different form of contact, dynamics and**

attentiveness. It should not be treated as an 'inferior substitute' – it has its potential, also for work with adults. It simply has to be learned and used consciously.

Mainly, **transfer of offline activities to the online world requires their rethinking, not only 'copying'.** What works well in a classroom – e.g. work in a circle, discussion at the tables – may prove difficult or ineffective in the remote version. However, this does not mean that it should be abandoned.

Instead of trying to replicate the layout of the classroom:

- **think about the goal**: *what do you want to achieve?*
- **and only then choose the online form**.

Examples of transferring offline methods online:

- instead of drawing on a flipchart → a shared board (e.g. Jamboard, Padlet),
- instead of discussions at tables → breakout rooms,
- instead of voting with hands → emoji reactions or forms (e.g. Mentimeter, Forms),
- instead of notes in a notebook → a chat, a virtual board or notes on a shared drive.

In online work, special consideration should be given to **less digitally proficient people** – no shaming, no 'making up for them', no lenient tone.

- **Start with a simple introduction**: how the platform works, how to turn on the microphone, how to post in the chat room.
- **Offer a technical 'rehearsal meeting'** – 5 minutes to practise in peace without pressure.
- **Prepare short instructions** with pictures or step-by-step hints.
- **Avoid embarrassing comments** ("it should be obvious"). Support patiently.
- **Ask questions with empathy**: instead of "click on the icon on the left", it is better to say "can you see the microphone icon on the left?".

Small changes in language make a big difference, **protect dignity** and build a sense of agency.

People can also be active online. One often hears the opinion that remote classes are 'less lively', 'passive', that 'nothing happens'. It all depends on the attitude of the adult trainer.

Online activity can be effectively supported by encouraging participation through questions in the chat room – for example, in form of a single word, an association or a suggestion. Taking notes on a piece of paper and sharing a reflection, a quick quiz or a survey, as well as gestures in front of the camera such as a thumbs up or showing a colour. It is helpful to organise work in pairs or threes in breakout rooms and to collaborate on a shared document. Online participation does not have to mean sitting quietly – you can talk, create, interact and share experiences.

What online and offline education have in common is that relationship and trust are the foundation, and clear communication, rhythm of work and breaks are still important. In both forms, it is useful to close processes and leave space for reflection. Differences? In online education, body language and emotions are harder to read. It requires greater attention to non-verbal signals. Sometimes, there are also hardware limitations and technical barriers.

For an effective education process, it is helpful to treat the online mode as **an autonomous adult learning environment**.

FOR THOSE INTERESTED

The author of the article ***Top 7 Effective Teaching Methods For Adult Learning*** clearly and specifically presents proven approaches – from active and problem-based learning through microlearning to coaching. It is a compact guide to help enrich your own workshop and make your classes more engaging and effective.

> https://www.digiformag.com/en/top-7-effective-teaching-methods-for-adult-learning/

10 Tips for Effective Online Teaching for 2025 is a concise article which reminds of the basics of effective remote teaching**:** from planning and updating of materials through creating of a welcoming space for interaction to making content accessible and becoming familiar with the technology. It is worth consulting to get your own workshop in order or to find inspiration.

> **10 Tips for Effective Online Teaching for 2025 | Research.com**
> (https://research.com/education/tips-for-effective-online-teaching)

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WHO YOU TEACH – EDUCATION AS A RELATIONSHIP

LEADING QUESTIONS:

- *How to tailor classes to different people and not lose the relationship?*
- *What does it mean to teach 'inclusive classes' – not only in theory but also in practice?*
- *How to work with diversity – in age, experience, language, living situation – with respect and attentiveness?*

In planning and teaching classes, **the most important thing is to adapt them to the participants – their capabilities, experiences and needs**. They set the rhythm of the meeting and determine which methods will be effective. The role of the adult trainer is not to be the centre of attention, but **to direct it to the people involved, the participants**.

In the best-case scenario, there is time to analyse in detail the needs of the group you are working with. In reality, especially in the case of open classes/workshops or very diverse groups, you have only general information about the participants. All the more reason to remember the key rule:

you do not teach a group, you teach individuals

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking in categories: "these are migrants", "these are elderly people", "these are mums with children". Such labels tend to get in the way of effective work. **They make you move away from the given person sitting in front of us.**

The label carries with it **a whole package of biases and stereotypes** – often unconscious. If you do not realise this, you can easily trigger the mechanism of **a self-fulfilling prophecy**: you treat the group as 'weaker', 'less advanced', 'difficult' – and this is exactly how you then perceive it. Rather than thinking of the group as a single formless being, it is useful to cultivate attentiveness to individuals and to what is happening here and now. Pay attention to signals – what the look says, why someone is backing off, whether the pace is right for everyone and whether the topic being discussed really resonates with the participants.
Scenarios, structures, materials are tools, not objectives. They should not obscure what is most important: the encounter with another human being.

The approach we propose is based on inclusive education – that is education where each person has the right to feel safe, be taken seriously and noticed in their individual way of learning. It is education that **does not take one standard as a benchmark** but reacts to diversity as a value – not an obstacle.

We encourage you to look at education in this way. Not from the angle of 'standards', but through questions:

- *Is what I am proposing really accessible to that person?*
- *Am I not imposing my perspective as the only correct one?*

Inclusivity is the willingness to change the plan when someone needs more time, a simpler tool or support. It is teaching focused on individuals, not just the curriculum. Even without full knowledge of the group, it is worth to be open to diverse needs and experiences of the participants.

Presented below are descriptions of some of the groups one can encounter in classes for adults. The tips are intended to facilitate **attentiveness, readiness and understanding** for them.

ELDERLY PEOPLE

Educating people of an older age is not just about 'working with seniors', but much more importantly – about **meeting people who bring with them years of experience, choices, joys and losses**. They do not need a pace 'for the elderly' or materials 'for the grandparents'. They need a space where they are taken and treated **seriously, with respect and genuine interest**. One should not forget the age, but also not lock a person into its stereotype. After all, a senior can be a leader, an excellent storyteller or a quiet person can be an attentive observer asking sharp questions. Each person brings something different with them.

When working with seniors, **pace** is important **– but not because 'they are slower',** but because **rhythm provides a sense of security**. Repetition, introductory and summary rituals, clearly naming what is happening – all that builds a sense of competence, reduces anxiety and makes it easier to teach the class.

Do not infantilise, use diminutives or oversimplify the language. **Talking to adults** as if they were children, using diminutives, speaking more slowly than necessary, using a limited vocabulary, using collective forms is sometimes described as a form of symbolic violence – it takes away the sense of agency, is discouraging and sometimes simply hurts. **This is known as elderspeak.**

It is useful to **support the cognitive functions of the participants** by using worksheets to take home, visual aids, numbering the steps, using colours, symbols and bold letters in the texts, as well as ensuring a clear order of activities.

PEOPLE WITH MIGRATION BACKGROUND, IN CRISIS OR WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

When working with a life-diverse group, first of all, one needs to rely on flexibility. Activities can – and often should – be modified. In such groups, **the rhythm of the day, the level of stress and the ability to concentrate** depend on many factors which are beyond our control and can

vary considerably. Empathy means that you respond to such changes without judgement or reproach – allow a break, repetition, silence and sometimes shorten the whole block if you see a drop in energy.

In mixed language groups it is a good idea to use:

- simpler sentences → supported by gesture, demonstration, drawing,
- new concepts → linked to an image or emotion,
- understanding checks → through action, not through tests.

Instead of: "tell me what you understood", you can ask: "show how you would do it", or "match the elements".

Important is **the tone of voice, eye contact, presence.** Not every person is fluent in the language you speak; not every person understands the cultural code you use. Support communication with a gesture, an image, a movement, a pause or sometimes just a look that says: "you are welcome here". Safety and good relationships are created through **attentiveness and acceptance.**

Equally important as the content is a suitable **space**. It can be supported, for example, by creating a children's corner (with blocks and cushions), permission to enter and leave the room freely or acceptance of silence as a form of presence. **Participation takes many forms** – also when someone comes with a child, leaves without saying a word or, during online classes, does not turn on the microphone or stays only in the chat room.

For education to be truly inclusive, sometimes it is enough to:

- allow to take materials home,
- share a recording,
- offer a cushion, tea, a quiet corner,
- make a simple invitation: "you can be here in your own way".

Those are the things that one does not see on attendance lists, but that determine whether a person is able to come and benefit from the class at all.

INTERGENERATIONAL GROUPS

Working in a group where people from different generations come together offers a **potential to build a shared purpose**. Such a group contributes different experiences, languages, rhythms and frames of reference. The task of the adult trainer is to create not only a space for learning, but also a place where such differences do not divide but **become a resource**.

Generational differences can include:

- communication style and vocabulary,
- attitudes towards authority, norms and rules,
- approach to technology and science,
- readiness to express oneself or disclose emotions.

It is worth to support intergenerational by offering various – not only verbal – forms of activity. One person can tell a story, another draw something or ask a question. You can encourage sharing of experiences by asking questions: "What do you think about it?" or "What did it look like in your family?". It is worth to stimulate interest in one another, but without comparisons. Balance is also of key importance – stopping dominant voices and inviting to speak those who are silent – always without pressure.

An example of an inclusive question – instead of: "What do you know about circular economy?", it is better to ask: "What do you do with leftover bread?" This question can be answered by an elderly person, a student, or a dad who only finished a primary school.

EDUCATIONALLY DIVERSE GROUPS

Educational diversity in a group is not only a question of the education level. It also means different learning styles – some people prefer to write, others to act practically, some learn quickly, others prefer to deepen their knowledge. We differ not only in the scope of our vocabulary, tools or habits resulting from previous education, but also in the level of confidence. Those with more school experience are more likely to speak up and tend to dominate the space, while those with less experience withdraw to 'stay out of the way'.

How to support educationally diverse groups?

- Ensure a variety of 'introductions to the topic': an image, an action, an example from everyday life, a key word, an emotional question.
- Avoid language based on 'school knowledge', e.g. 'definition', 'homework', 'answer key'.
- Instead of evaluating, celebrate different ways of thinking and expressing oneself.
- Appreciate micro-competences - e.g. perceptiveness, attentiveness, associations from daily life.

Rather than trying to even out the level or average out the needs of the group, it is worth to create a space for different forms of answers, work in micro-teams with a clear division of roles, and ask questions which do not have only one correct answer. For example, instead of asking: "Explain the 3Rs principle", it is better to ask: "What goes to waste in your home and why?".

In education of a cognitively diverse group, equality does not mean identical treatment but rather allowing each person to be present **in their own way.**

FOR THOSE INTERESTED

Digital Manual of Best Practices in Intergenerational Learning, which was developed as part of the Erasmus+ project "Intergenerational Bridge: Connect to Create", includes the theoretical foundations of intergenerational learning, two scenarios for staff preparation workshops and descriptions of twelve proven practices – ready for implementation. The manual is based on experiences gathered in six countries and shows how to build bridges between generations through joint educational activities.

> **Final_Digital Manual_Connect to Create**
> (https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/b22ec771-e1b7-4c9b-aefe-24b976b6f5a0/Final_Digital_Manual_Connect_to_Create.pdf)

As part of the Erasmus+ *Cooking Cultures – Migrants' Integration through Culinary Arts* (2019-1-TR01-KA204-074418) project, a Trainer's Guide was developed. Worth reading is the section on strategies for teaching adults, especially in a multicultural environment. It includes modules for trainers, which allow them to develop intercultural competences and soft skills.

> **COOKING CULTURES Migrants' Integration through Culinary Arts Erasmus + Programme 2019-1-TR1-KA204-074418**
> (https://cookingcultures.net/TR/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Cooking-Cultures_IO3_TRAINERS-GUIDE.pdf)

The trainer's manual from the project 'APPROACH - How to Apply Practical and Successful Work Styles in Training Situations' offers guidance for working with adults in risk situations.

The material can be downloaded from the project drive:

> **Edited versions_2212 – Google Drive**
> (https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NDInOb3VlZRorrl-U2_w_Cyd9Jx08EIP)

> **Link to project description on the platform:**
> https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2020-1-UK01-KA204-078975

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ADULT TRAINERS

LEADING QUESTIONS:

- *How can I develop my educator workshop – at my own pace and on my own terms?*
- *Where to get inspiration, methods, support and how not to get lost in abundance?*
- *What helps build courage, attentiveness and sustainability in the role of an adult trainer?*
- *How to take care of yourself in a profession which requires constant giving to others?*

To teach others is to continually learn yourself. Every meeting with a group, every question or unexpected pause can become a moment of change.

Development is not just about trainings and new tools. It is also about reflection, conversations, failures and successes. It means readiness to ask yourself questions: "What moved me?", "What do I wish to understand better?", "What limits me and what opens me up?".

A competent person teaching a class does not need to know everything. Adult education is not a race but a shared journey – like a contribution feast where everyone contributes something from themselves and deserves to be treated as a partner.

Being a person who teaches others is not a function – it is an attitude. Development is not an addition – it is a natural part of the journey.

To grow, you need fresh perspectives, conversations, practical examples and, most of all, being open to the fact that you are not always the source of knowledge. Inspiration comes from many directions: from groups, from experiences of other educators, from self-reflection, from personal growth. Most importantly, **look around and use everything available to you.**

Here are some inspirations:

Participants bring to the group their real needs and tested ideas. They share what works in their daily lives, they are often the source of solutions which would not have come up with ourselves.

Take an interest and ask: "What do you cook from leftovers?", "What recipes have you learned from others?", "What do you do with things others throw away?".

Educators, mentors, experts – people with practical experience – can inspire you with their methods, language, working style. Their approach often allows you to take a fresh look at our role and our group. Learn good practices, ask: "How did you plan it?". Share your own ideas, too, even if they are not perfect. These are the ones that can prove most helpful.

Webinars, podcasts and online courses offer quick access to knowledge, tools and inspiration. You can learn at your own pace, often for free. For example, after listening to a podcast which uses plain language, you can rewrite your own materials, to make them shorter, clearer, more specific. It is worth bookmarking your favourite sources and returning to them for even 15 minutes a week.

Conferences and seminars are spaces for learning, exchange and taking a look from a distance. They allow you to establish relationships and gain new insights into your own practice. Before an event, make a 'minimum plan': what do you want to understand, who to meet, what questions to ask; and afterwards, write down at least a brief conclusion.

Reports, publications, associations and think tanks help to better understand the educational and social context. They allow you to follow change directions and new approaches. Choose one source to follow regularly. You do not need to know everything, but it is useful to have your own 'map of changes'.

Networks and groups of educators, including informal ones, offer support and a sense of community. There, you can share questions, exercises, concerns or ideas.

Local and international projects provide space to test ideas, collaborate, and learn by doing. They also allow you to develop the ability to look at your own patterns from a distance. Take part in them!

Everyday life and micro lessons from it. Sometimes what we experience in a shop, in a conversation with a neighbour, is the most valuable lesson. Daily observations teach empathy, communication and attentiveness.

The development of persons teaching classes consists not only in updating their knowledge, but also in continuous **improvement of the workshop**. It is worth drawing inspiration from outside education – from theatre, animation, psychology, social work, or art – and adapting it to your own practice. It is also helpful to train your speaking skills: speaking clearly, specifically, attentively and without simplifications.

Fostering development in the field of adult education means not only caring about the quality

of work with a group – it is also an **investment in oneself**, which strengthens your own position, builds confidence and allows you to find meaning. Adult education is constantly changing. You should participate in it in a planned and informed manner.

FOR THOSE INTERESTED:

EPALE (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) is an initiative of the European Commission aimed at specialists in adult education. It provides a space for collaboration and knowledge sharing, offering access to high-quality educational resources, expert articles, information about projects, as well as opportunities for professional networking. The platform operates in multiple European languages and promotes values such as inclusivity, diversity and lifelong development of competences. EPALE supports the professionalisation of the adult education sector and enables active participation in the European education debate.

> **EPALE | Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe**
> (https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en)

The tool, developed as part of an Erasmus+ project, allows self-assessment in six key areas such as planning and teaching classes, diversity management, group communication or use of technology. Working with the form, not only you can identify your strengths and areas for development, but you are also inspired to reflect on your everyday practice. This can be a good starting point for team discussions, planning of individual development or preparing your own trainer's portfolio.

> https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/1c445dcf-b884-4953-a416-9db1a109f2ad/AdUP_IO1-T3_DiagnosticTool.pdf

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CREATIVE WAYS TO EDUCATE ADULTS

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD (EVENTS, SOCIAL ACTIONS)

Inspire through experience here and now.

People learn best when something happens here and now. Such activities get people's attention in their daily routine. The aim is to meet them where they are - at marketplaces, festivals, on the street or even at a local grocery shop - and raise curiosity, make people take the topic of food waste personally, and inspire them to act immediately. That way, learning about reducing food waste becomes fun, surprising and easily relatable to everyday life.

Activity	Purpose	Result	Examples
Educational stands and pop-ups	Engage people in spaces where they are already relaxed or curious.	Raising awareness; starting a conversation; presenting the issue.	A colourful stand at a local market with the slogan "Eat, don't throw away!"; an interactive board "Guess how long this vegetable will last in the fridge!".
Cooking demonstrations	Demonstration of practical ways to reduce food waste in a tasty and engaging way.	Immediate acquisition of skills and motivation to try things out at home.	"Turn yesterday's rice into fried rice with 3 ingredients!"; cooking live at festivals or local kitchens.
Participation in local activities	Learning by doing; building a community spirit.	Increasing engagement through action; fostering sharing and fun.	"Challenge - a leftovers picnic": everyone brings leftovers to cook together; "Recipe sharing day" as part of a neighbourhood event.
QR codes with micro-resources	Immediate access to practical tips or recipes exactly when interest is growing.	Turning curiosity into action on the spot.	QR code in a café window: "Too many apples? Scan here to learn 3 ideas on how to use them!"
Leaflets different than usual	Educational content is more attractive and memorable.	People are more likely to keep, read and share creative materials.	A cartoon: "The secret life of a tomato"; recipe sheet: "Grandma's Bread Pudding – saving stale bread since 1950!"

Activity	Purpose	Result	Examples
Boxes with challenges in public places	Turn education into a fun game with achievable tasks.	An incentive to take the first step towards reducing food waste.	This week's task: "Take a photo of your fridge before going shopping", "Cook one meal using only leftovers. Tag us when you do."
Pocket-sized educational games	Teaching through play; involving children and families.	Acquisition of positive learning experiences; encouragement for discussion.	A "Kitchen myth quiz" on "true or false" sheets, e.g. eggs float when they are stale. Memory card game to match leftovers with recipes.
Participation in local activities	Learning by doing; building a community spirit.	Increasing engagement through action; encouragement to share and have fun.	"A leftovers picnic" – everyone brings leftovers to cook together; "Recipe sharing day" as part of a neighbourhood event.

EDUCATION IN EVERYDAY COMMUNICATION CHANNELS (SOCIAL MEDIA)

Teach where people are already present.

Not everyone will attend a workshop, but almost everyone scrolls their phone. That is why it is a good idea to offer light, friendly education in social media – the kind that looks like advice from a friend rather than a lecture.

Activity	Purpose	Result	Example
Education in social media	Reaching people where they already spend their time.	Learning habits and normalising food-saving behaviour through regular exposure.	A short video: "How to freeze herbs in 30 seconds"; a carousel post: "5 foods with a shelf life longer than you think".
Educational micro-series	Dividing key topics into short fun episodes.	Keeping the audience engaged; maintaining interest in following the series.	"60 seconds on the topic: Best before and use by"; "One day – one trick: Keep the lettuce crisp in a jar of water!".

Activity	Purpose	Result	Example
"Myth/Demo/ Suggestion" posts	Tailoring the learning process to individual needs	Reflection on one's own habits.	"I used to throw out perfectly good yoghurt, and then I learned THAT...".
Community-led accounts	Showing real stories of real people who try to waste less.	Building trust and inspiration through relatable examples.	"One week of cooking with grandma - tips from the old days"; "Dad and son prepare dinner only from things they find the fridge".

EDUCATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND MARKETING

Learning without teaching - surprise, make people laugh, maintain their attention.

It is not always necessary to educate directly, sometimes it is better to inspire, to arouse curiosity or to tell a story with an image.

Activity	Purpose	Result	Examples
Creative educational marketing	Arousing curiosity, which leads to learning.	People are actively seeking more information; creating an "oh, I see!" effect.	Poster on a bus stop: "What do potato peelings have to do with your wallet? → Find out at cookwise.eu".
"Dish of the day" campaigns	Collaboration with catering facilities to link food choices with waste reduction.	Making waste-free cooking visible and desirable in everyday life.	A menu board in a café: "Today's soup is made from vegetables not sold yesterday – cheaper for you, better for the planet".
Unexpected education	Placing short educational messages in the space of everyday life.	It reaches people who usually do not get involved in sustainability topics.	Coffee bag: "Ripe bananas = the best pancakes in the world";
Murals	Using art to tell a story or raise awareness about a topic.	Attracting attention; making the topic part of visual identity of the community.	A large mural on the school playground: "1/3 of all food produced gets wasted – let's change it together!".

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TIPS FOR ADULT TRAINERS– HOW TO INTRODUCE ZERO WASTE TOPICS IN WORKSHOPS

FOR CHEFS AND OWNERS OF CATERING FACILITIES – CULINARY WORKSHOPS

LEADING QUESTIONS:

- *How to use cooking as a space to talk about social and environmental responsibility?*
- *How can cooking workshops support the sense of agency of the participants to reduce waste at home?*
- *How to encourage joint experimentation and sharing of culinary experiences to build an engaged community around the idea of zero waste?*

Cooks play a key role in inspiring people to look at food in a different way. Culinary workshops focused on zero waste are not just cooking lessons – they offer a full learning experience which shows that reducing food waste can go hand in hand with creativity and taste. Workshops should encourage participants to experiment, share ideas and learn practical skills which can be used immediately in everyday life.

One of the best ways to introduce zero waste principles is to **incorporate them into live cooking shows**. Show how to use the whole vegetable – for example, roast broccoli stalks or add cauliflower leaves to a stir-fry dish. The idea is to show that the basis of good cuisine is respect for every part of the product.

Planning of the menu is another skill which should be developed during workshops. Instead of starting from a shopping list, teach the participants how to cook by using what they already have in their fridge or pantry. Organise an activity to which everyone brings random leftovers from home and you plan recipes together, cook and share the meal. It is fun, practical and teaches a new way of looking at ingredients.

It is also worth sharing kitchen techniques such as freezing, fermentation or food processing. Show how to freeze fresh herbs in oil, make quick pickles from cucumbers or use overripe fruit in smoothies or compotes. Such techniques help prolong the shelf life of food and prevent it from being thrown away.

Most importantly, the **workshops should be interactive**. Participants remember best the things they have participated in themselves. An attractive form can be a ‘surprise box challenge’ – participants prepare a dish using only random leftovers. This stimulates creativity, emotions and refers directly to everyday situations.

If you are also the owner of a catering facility, consider introducing zero waste recipes to your menu. This is not only an expression of environmental responsibility, but also a strong marketing argument – it shows that your company is acting consciously and with care.

FOR FINANCIAL EDUCATORS

LEADING QUESTIONS:

- *How to show that changes in everyday shopping habits are a form of care for both the household budget and the planet?*
- *How can a conversation about finances lead to reflection on lifestyles and values?*
- *How to create workshops which encourage participants to look for solutions together in their households?*

Reducing food waste not only means caring for the planet but also brings **tangible financial benefits for households.** Many people do not realise how much money they lose by regularly throwing away good food. Financial educators can help families make a connection between daily shopping habits and waste in the kitchen.

Start by showing real economic benefits of reducing waste. Use concrete data to illustrate the scale of the problem: "A family of four can save up to PLN 2,500 a year – that's the cost of a short holiday or bills for several months."

Crucial is teaching how to plan. **Help the participants draw up shopping lists**, starting with what they already have at home. **Encourage planning of meals for the whole week**, especially to include products with a short shelf life. Those are small but effective steps which can bring big savings.

Introduce practical exercises. An effective method is to ask the participants to monitor food waste at their home for a week. Next, calculate together the value of the food thrown away and discuss why that happened and how to change it. That way, abstract concepts become personal and specific.

Helpful are also visual comparisons, for example: "Throwing away one loaf of bread a week for a whole year is equivalent to the cost of a new winter jacket." Such images help the understanding and increase motivation to change.

To engage the participants even more, **combine budgeting activities with culinary inspiration.** Show how to make tasty dishes from inexpensive ingredients or how to use up leftovers in a quick and creative way. This makes financial education immediately practical and rewarding.

Culinary workshops and financial education have a common goal: **to help people waste less, save more and fully enjoy their food**. The more practical, close to life and engaging the learning is, the better its results.

FOR NUTRITIONISTS/DIETITIANS AND HEALTH EDUCATORS

LEADING QUESTIONS:

- *How to combine the topic of healthy eating with building environmental awareness among participants?*
- *How can cooking and planning of menus together become tools for talking about health, the environment and change of habits?*
- *How to encourage participants to share their own ways for avoiding wasting to create a space for shared learning?*

One of the tasks of nutritionists/dietitians is to educate about healthy lifestyles and to support the treatment of various diseases through an appropriate diet. Those topics can also be expanded to include knowledge about reducing food waste. A good example is the **planetary diet,** created in 2019, with **recommendations combining care for human health with the wellbeing of the environment**, including plants and animals. One of its important messages is the global reduction of food waste.

During workshops where specific recipes or entire menus are proposed, one can suggest:

- **Recipes in the spirit of zero waste,** using often vegetable and fruit parts which are often thrown out (stems, leaves, peelings).
- **Recipes for economical dishes using leftovers** from the fridge or different options for serving the same product.
- Composing the entire menu so as to ensure that **all products are fully used during the week.**

Information on food safety can also be successfully integrated into the topic of healthy eating and avoiding waste. **How to recognize if a product is still suitable for consumption and when it should definitely be thrown away?** One should be careful not to instil in people the feeling that they have to eat products which are already dangerous to their health. On the contrary: some products may be consumed past their 'best before' date (e.g. dry pasta or tea).

Of course, education about the rules of meal planning and food storage already links the topics of healthy eating and not wasting food.

ADULT TRAINER AS INITIATOR OF SOCIAL CHANGE

LEADING QUESTIONS:

- *In what situations does a social animator become an educator?*
- *How can local challenges become a starting point for collective action in the community?*
- *How to turn such action into an educational process? How to support a group not only in action, but also in drawing conclusions and reflecting on what they have learned?*

The Adult Trainer takes on a variety of roles – supports, initiates and organises activities, and sometimes acts as a social animator. The aim here is not just to impart knowledge, but mainly to **engage the local community** in important topics. That person helps groups notice problems – such as excess waste, lack of shared space or low environmental awareness – and shows that joint action can make a real difference.

They inspire action by their own example: they not only talk about values but also put them into practice by becoming part of the community. They bring their own mug to the meeting, organise recycling workshops and encourage people to exchange clothes instead of throwing them away. This makes education something close and understandable.

It supports awareness-building by creating a space for conversation, reflection and looking for solutions together.

It allows sharing of knowledge and experiences – so the educational process becomes engaging and based on partnership.

It is also important to remember that the role of the adult trainer does not end with an invitation to action. It is equally important to create a space to **reflect and summarize the experiences together**. Such a person supports the group in noticing and naming what they have learned, what was important to them, what went well. As a result, the participants strengthen their competences, build a sense of agency and are better prepared to get involved in other initiatives.

Example of action: "Zero Waste Week"

The adult trainer notices a problem of excessive litter in the neighbourhood and organises **an open meeting for residents**. They encourage people to think together about what can be done locally to reduce waste. During the meeting, they **support the conversation** and help bring out the strengths of the participants – one person knows how to sew, another is proficient in social media, someone else has experience in organising events.

Together, they plan a **'Zero Waste Week':** prepare posters, a workshop on sewing reusable bags, a clothes exchange stand and a screening of a film on the concept of zero waste. They carry out the activities together, dividing tasks according to their skills and wishes.

At the end of the week, they meet again to **summarize the activities and draw conclusions**. The adult trainer creates a safe space for reflection: what worked, what could have been done differently, what everyone has learned. That way, knowledge is consolidated and the group becomes stronger and ready for a next action.

Tips for teaching the class and social activity

1. **Listen to the community**
   Start with a conversation – get to know the needs, ideas and local challenges.
2. **Inspire by example**
   Show that you are acting in the spirit of what you are talking about – for example, using zero waste solutions.
3. **Support sharing of knowledge and experiences**
   Encourage the participants to share what they already know and can do – teach each other.
4. **Bring out the strengths of the group**
   Help discover who can do what – each person has something to contribute.
5. **Plan together**
   Involve participants already at the planning stage, this increases their commitment.
6. **Adapt activities to local conditions**
   Propose specific, simple initiatives, e.g. workshops, a stand to exchange things, a community garden.
7. **Ensure accessibility and openness**
   Make sure that each person feels welcome and is able to speak.
8. **Create space for reflection**
   After the action, take a break. Talk about what happened and what you have learned.
9. **Appreciate and reinforce**
   Give thanks, notice involvement, support the development of people in the group.