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EQAVET
4-INCLUSION

EQAVET4INCLUSION
training curriculum for
vocational school's staff

Module 5

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EQAVET for Inclusion Training Curriculum

This curriculum aims to use EQAVET in general and Indicator 8, Prevalence of vulnerable groups in specific, for quality improvement in their VET school. The training material will assist schools in creating a long-term plan to detect and prevent dropouts by the selection of policies, strategies and activities that address the particular needs of the school. Most schools nowadays are taking corrective actions to keep pupils in danger of dropping out of School. What the Prevention Plan training material will do is train teachers, managers and other school actors in order to develop preventive actions instead. It will offer step by step advice on how schools can focus their efforts to keep young people connected to their VET school. It will help VET schools to create an inclusive school through the improvement of the school climate and also a process to identify and track pupils who are at risk of drop-out and respond to the warning signs. It will cover school-wide actions enabling VET schools to take steps towards excellence by creating an inclusiveness atmosphere.

Target Group – To whom it may concern

The target groups of the training are:

- teachers,
- school management officers
- guidance counsellors

Training Methodology

The EQAVET for Inclusion will be developed in the form of a distance course through Moodle open-source

Objectives of the training

The objectives of the training include:

- Inform the school staff about using EQAVET
- Develop the Prevention Plan training material
- Develop a process to identify and track pupils who are at risk of drop-out and respond to the warning signs

Module 5: Collaboration and information

Introduction to the module:

“It Takes a Village to Raise a Child”
(Ancient African proverb)

It is now commonly recognised by the experience of thousands of teachers and the pedagogical literature that individual educational agencies alone are not enough to foster student's well-being and deep learning; it takes a broader network, a community that can offer additional relationships and opportunities for growth, and a safe, healthy, and inclusive learning environment where students can develop and flourish. What students learn, how they learn and how much they learn is not only a matter for the teachers and other people working in the school but is a real priority for the entire surrounding social context (Wright and Saks, 2000).

Since *"nothing motivates a child more than when learning is enhanced by schools and families/communities working together in partnership"* (M. Fullan, 1997, p. 42), it is necessary not only to convey this message to parents and other community members to make them active members of the learning community that has its focus in the school, but also to be aware that *"...these forms of involvement [...] do not happen by chance or even by invitation, but happen through explicit strategic intervention"* (ibid. p. 43).

In Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence model (1987;2002), schools, families, and communities are depicted as spheres that share the goal of "caring" for students. These three spheres of influence do not operate independently of each other but are mutually reinforcing or weakening and may positively or negatively influence a student's cognitive and emotional development. Although the three spheres are separate because they have their philosophies, experiences, and practices, it is up to the school to activate the practices to bring the three spheres closer together and to create an overlapping of them through interaction and communication, namely partnerships, among families, schools, and the community.

This process is especially important for disadvantaged students or those from vulnerable groups who:

- 1) are overrepresented among dropouts;
- 2) are in educational poverty i.e., with a lack of access to opportunities for growth both in the family and in the broader community and life context;
- 3) and who come from families who, to a greater extent than others, tend to be less involved in their children's VET programmes

Learning Objective:

The goal of this module is to equip secondary school teachers with the knowledge, skills, and competence necessary for fostering effective collaboration with parents and external stakeholders. By exploring diverse communication approaches, involvement strategies, and relationship-building techniques, participants will enhance their ability to create a supportive and inclusive educational environment.

Units:

5.1: Collaboration with parents

Cooperation between schools and parents to support student learning is a protective factor against dropping out of school. A good family-school relationship implies better student achievement, greater motivation, improved emotional and mental well-being, setting long-term goals, and building broader and more realistic career ambitions and prospects. (Epstein, 2019; Ishimaru, 2014; Jayne's, 2012; Fan and Chen, 2001, and many others). It also constitutes a benefit for teachers, since knowledge of students' social and family life is a valuable source of information for meaningful teaching and instruction.

According to Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence, there are at least two views of the influences exerted by the three spheres (school-family-community) on the achievements and well-being of students: an interdependent view of school-family-community influences and a separate view of influence that can be exemplified in this way:

<In some schools there are still educators who say, "If the family would just do its job, we could do our job." And there are still families who say, "I raised this child; now it is your job to educate her." These words embody a view of separate spheres of influence. Other educators say, "I cannot do my job without the help of my students' families and the support of this community." And some parents say, "I really need to know what is happening in school in order to help my child." These phrases embody the theory of overlapping spheres of influence>

(Epstein et al., 2002-2nd edition, School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, p.22)

It has been shown that there is a link between the overall quality of the school-family relationship and the overall quality of the school, as well as between school failure and the social and cultural distance between teachers and parents (Siles, 2003). Against this backdrop, Indicator 8 of the EQAVET framework provides an additional key not only in terms of outcomes (the percentage of vulnerable students who complete the program compared to the total number of participants/the number of those entering), but also in terms of quality processes, e.g.: welcoming attitudes and behaviours of teachers and school staff which include making parents, especially the disadvantaged ones and/or who have children in a vulnerable condition, feel wanted and valued; teachers' competences in inclusive education, which also refer to the ability to approach parents, who are usually not involved in their children's learning paths, and build trusting relationships with them; cooperation and consultation with families to get their input as the main experts on their children, etc.

Therefore, considering indicator 8, this module deals with the cooperation of teachers, especially with families who are usually distant from the school for various reasons, either their own (low socio-cultural and economic status, migratory background, single parents, etc.) or about the condition of their children (learners with special educational needs, drop-outs, learners with disabilities, etc)

1. Changing perspective, knowing, understanding

The first step in interacting with families who are usually not very involved in their children's schooling is to change our perspective: instead of saying that these are hard-to-reach families, we should start by considering why school is for hard-to-reach families.

It is therefore important:

- know what the main barriers to family participation in our schools are;
- recognize the educational styles of parents. This is essential to decode the different reactions and attitudes of parents toward their children's school performance (both positive and negative) and toward the teacher, to define strategies that the teacher can use to manage conflicts and/or build a collaborative relationship with families.
- be aware of teachers' communication patterns, that is, how the school-family relationship can take.

2. Involve parents by considering them experts on their children

Many parents, especially underprivileged parents, do not perceive themselves to be able to interact with the school and express disinterest or an attitude of total delegation to the school precisely because of this negative self-perception. The factor that most supports parental involvement in their children's education is the perception that their participation is actively encouraged by teachers and the school. Parents must get the message that their knowledge about their children is an important source of information and learning for the school.

- Take time to listen to and gather information from family;
- Avoid starting conversations with observations or recommendations from teachers but rather ask parents what they think about what the school is doing, the activities proposed, and their children's behaviours and achievements;
- Be clear when asking parents for information about their children. Parents need to have a clear understanding of what is being asked of them, otherwise, there is a risk of increasing their sense of frustration and inadequacy.
- Share with parents the knowledge teachers have about their children/students. We need to be specific to allow parents to provide us with the most detailed information possible.
- Ask for feedback on the effectiveness of the proposed teaching/learning strategies.

3. Adopt a supportive and sensitive relational approach with underprivileged families

Social and educational research has shown that low-income or minority families are more reliant on interdependent cultural norms compared to privileged families who tend to be more reliant on independent cultural norms (Brady, L. et al. 2020). Cultural norms guide people's behaviour, so parents with interdependent cultural norms will place more importance on the well-being of the family rather than the individual, on caring rather than performance, on belonging to a group rather than self-realization, they will tend to place more trust and reliance on teachers to make good educational decisions, they will place more value on characteristics such as perseverance and persistence to achieve good school results rather than cleverness and personal qualities, etc.

To facilitate the relationship and involvement of underprivileged families, it should be taken into account the following further aspects:

- interests, needs, and well-being of families not just the individual;
- ask not just "how is your son/daughter?"/or "How are you?" but "How is your family? How are things in your family?", "What does *your family* need?"
- make the collaboration family-centred. Other family members (siblings, grandparents, cohabiting uncles) should also be invited to attend meetings, not just parents;
- if families have multiple children in classes at the same school, it would be effective to hold joint meetings to discuss the family as a whole rather than individual students;

organize collective meetings between families. Meetings in which several families participate are even more useful in the case of underprivileged families because they can prove to be valuable opportunities not only to deepen their knowledge of each other but also to initiate or nurture confidence in the school environment in which their children are placed and in the teachers who care for them.

5.2: Collaboration with other schools and external organisations

Collaboration with other schools and external organizations provides significant benefits for students, teachers, and institutions, creating a dynamic and interconnected educational environment.

Students gain access to supplementary resources and diverse learning opportunities through collaborative projects.

For teachers, collaboration facilitates the exchange of ideas and continuous professional development. School-to-school collaboration enhances the school's reputation through participation in innovative projects, enriches educational offerings with new programs, and promotes operational efficiency through resource sharing. It stimulates educational innovation, preparing schools to tackle the challenges of an evolving world. Exchanges of best practices, external monitoring, and transparent reporting contribute to overall quality.

Collaboration between schools and external organizations is crucial for ensuring the quality of education, accountability, and the enhancement of the local community. Territory enhancement occurs through local projects and the integration of local resources into educational programs.

Furthermore, collaboration between schools and local businesses creates valuable connections that extend beyond the classroom. By engaging with the professional community, students gain insights into real-world industries, fostering a practical understanding of various vocations. This direct interaction with local businesses not only enriches academic learning but also provides students with mentorship and potential pathways for future careers.

This holistic approach to career development enhances the overall educational experience and contributes to the long-term success of both students and the local community.

Listed below are some key points to consolidate and enrich collaboration between schools and external stakeholders, with a focus on quality and continuous development:

Creating a collaborative Committee: establish a committee involving representatives from various schools and external stakeholders to lead collaboration.

- **Defining clear objectives:** establish specific and measurable goals for collaboration, focusing on continuous improvement and quality.

- **Promoting workshops and training sessions:** organize joint workshops and training sessions for teachers, students, and external stakeholders to enhance skills and knowledge.

-**Involving local businesses:** establish partnerships with local businesses to provide practical learning opportunities and enhance the relevance of educational programs.

-**Encouraging active participation:** create opportunities for active participation in collaborative projects, involving students, teachers, and external stakeholders.

-**Monitoring and continuous evaluation:** implement a continuous monitoring system to assess the effectiveness of collaborations and make real-time improvements.

-**Implementing a feedback system:** create a structured feedback system involving all stakeholders to gather opinions and suggestions for improving collaboration.

Key words: Collaboration; Parenthood; Involvement; Sensitivity; Territoriality

Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the nuances of diverse parenting styles, recognizing their impact on communication dynamics between teachers and parents. - Acquire knowledge of practical tools for meaningful parental involvement, recognizing parents as valuable contributors to the educational process. - Grasp the challenges faced by disadvantaged families and comprehend tools aligned with the family-centred participation approach. - Understand the core principles and components of EQAVET quality criteria as applied to educational partnerships. - Acquire knowledge of effective strategies for assessing and ensuring the quality of partnerships with other schools and external stakeholders.
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply personalized strategies to adapt communication styles effectively, considering the diversity of parents encountered. - Implement innovative tools and practices to involve parents more meaningfully and leverage their expertise in their children's education. - Demonstrate practical skills in supporting the participation of disadvantaged families, emphasising sensitivity and inclusivity. - Develop the ability to apply EQAVET quality criteria in the design and evaluation of partnerships with other schools and external stakeholders.
Competences	<p>A comprehensive competence in building collaborative partnerships. This involves adapting communication approaches, fostering meaningful parental involvement, supporting disadvantaged families, and establishing effective partnerships with external stakeholders. The overarching competence encompasses an inclusive and responsive approach to diverse educational contexts.</p>

Please see below some indicative Training Techniques per type of training methodology.

- **Case studies**

In a group exercise a cohort of trainees work together through a given scenario or problem to identify and explore a solution. Then they have to present their solution(s). This technique provides the opportunity for participants to use multiple skills, from problem solving to presentation skills as well as appreciating the opinions of others and working effectively in a team.

- **Power Point Presentation**

The most well-known technique used for classroom training. Power Point Presentation can be combined with any other lecturing technique. For its effective implementation, a Power Point template has been designed, in order to help trainers to deliver their lectures. Apart from basic written information, PPTs will also include visual stimulators, such as images, graphs, and tables, to better describe and frame their topic of interest.

- **Open Questions**

Open questions consist of a question that cannot be answered with a single yes or no but requires a developed answer. It is raised over a matter which is undecided and invites trainees to provide longer responses in order to demonstrate their understanding, using their own knowledge and/or feelings.

Open-ended questions also tend to be more objective and less leading providing trainees the context to construct a free-form answer. Open-ended questions typically begin with words such as "Why" and "How", or phrases such as "Tell me about...". Open-ended questions are useful for examining in-depth understanding and comprehension while at the same time, they may question reasoning or critical thinking.

- **Closed Questions**

The closed Questions and answers technique consists of composing specific questions that will be asked to the trainees. This technique increases trainees' participation and encourages active learning. In this project, six different formats of Closed Questions and answers will be used, namely:

- True or False,
- Multiple Choice,
- Multiple Response,
- Multiple Choice Text,
- Sequence Matching Questions

True or False format is mostly used in order to emerge a crucial difference between two sentences, while multiple-choice asks the learner to select the most appropriate option. Multiple response is similar to multiple choice but provides more than one correct answer. Multiple-choice texts extend the multiple-choice technique in the context of a whole text with gaps filled by various provided choices. Sequence matching is a procedure that asks the learner to match terms of two groups while Word Bank consists of a text with gaps and a provided pool of words aiming to be placed in the correct place in order for the text to make sense. Closed questions are often used in assessments; therefore, this technique is useful when preparing trainees for exams.

- **Video Analysis**

The main aim of video analysis is to create resources that objectively display key information and facts about an activity that can be used to support and enhance the feedback process. When delivering training sessions on video analysis tools to a group of trainees, whatever their level of education or experience, it is a good practice to base the analysis on three main but trivial steps:

- Present video
- Ask the trainees for key messages
- Ask important questions and get the feedback from the trainees
- Provide additional coaching or feedback

- **Self-directed Activity**

In a self-directed activity, the learner is provided with a case study or another type of challenge and is requested to provide comments, express opinions, or resolve an issue. Feedback is provided to the learner at the end to ensure that the activity is effective enough for the learner.

- **Bibliographic Review**

A bibliographic review or literature review is a type of review resource. A bibliographic review is a scholarly paper, which includes the current knowledge including substantive findings, as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. Literature reviews are secondary sources and do not report new or original experimental work.

A literature review has four main objectives:

- It surveys the literature in your chosen area of study
- It synthesizes the information in that literature into a summary
- It critically analyses the information gathered by identifying gaps in current knowledge; showing limitations of theories and points of view; formulating areas for further research and reviewing areas of controversy
- It presents the literature in an organised way

A literature review shows that its contactor has an in-depth grasp of a subject.



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