

## **ESEC training course - Recommendations**

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### **Abstract**

These recommendations are the result of the training course experience carried out within the ESEC project.

They are based on the comments and suggestions of the training course participants and concern the organization, implementation, and delivery of the ESEC training course.

Social educators and social volunteers were the targets of this training course.

It was thought of as a face-to-face and e-learning course, but the COVID-19 pandemic changed this teaching-learning strategy in a distance strategy.

Accordingly, one of the main issues that emerged in preparing the training course was the transformation of the face-to-face and blended learning activities in distance learning and e-learning activities. Indeed, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdown, it was impossible to hold the training course in a face-to-face modality.

The workload to prepare and hold lessons at a distance was quite high. Trainers needed to revise the teaching-learning content adapting it to web conferencing tools (Microsoft Teams and Skype).

The other issues encountered in transforming the training course were:

- How to interact in an online environment;
- How to optimize the scheduling of the learning activities.

Ecoistituto tackled the above issues dividing the 25 participants in four groups and scheduling the learning activity according to the needs and preferences of learners.

To evaluate the training course, Ecoistituto prepared a questionnaire that was submitted to all participants.

All participants claimed to be very satisfied with the training experience, and most of them declared that they improved their competence and skills.

## **The most useful training units**

In the training course, Ecoistituto used the learning units realized following the indications by the Rezekne Academy of Technologies.

Ecoistituto prepared three learning units:

- Parent-training and evaluation processes
- Peer education
- Parent training techniques

Ecoistituto translated in Italian all the learning units used in the training course.

The topics of the distance learning lectures have been the following:

- Supporto parentale
- Strategie di modificazione del comportamento
- Apprendimento online
- Social Cognitive theory
- Social inoculation theory
- Differential association theory
- Uso dei social network
- Le ossessioni e le compulsioni
- Vecchie e nuove dipendenze

Participants found that the learning units about educational theories were the most useful.

Furthermore, they considered that it was fruitful to analyze and discuss the psychological theories underlying the various educational methodologies.

Participants also found relevant training content about online learning. They agreed that, nowadays, the teaching-learning process is influenced by the increasing spread of the internet. Accordingly, They discussed the impact of interactive content sources, such as blogs, wikis, and social networks on the teaching-learning processes.

They particularly appreciated the learning unit on peer education.

### **Teaching methodology**

Following the ESEC proposal, Ecoistituto adopted an interactive teaching methodology. Of course, with the limitation of the emergency remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For distance learning, Ecoistituto used two web conference tools, Skype and Microsoft Teams.

Usually, Skype was preferred for creating a group call with students. Alternatively, in the case of noises or bad connections, Microsoft Teams was used.

Teachers actively involved participants in the learning process by way of regular teacher-learner interaction, learner-learner interaction, and used audio-visuals materials. Learners were constantly encouraged to be active participants.

The interaction between the trainer and trainees and suitable learning materials are essential for active distance learning.

### **Learning materials**

To carry out the training course, Ecoistituto used the following learning materials:

- PowerPoint of the lectures held in a distance learning modality;
- Youtube videos to support the lectures in a distance learning modality or included in the learning units;
- Learning units for e-learning activities;
- Articles to support the group work or included in the learning units.

### **Organizational issues**

Participants appreciated the effort that Ecoistituto made to reorganize the learning activity at a distance.

Learners were aware that Ecoistituto adopted an emergency solution to hold the training course. This solution transformed the proposed face-to-face and hybrid teaching activities in distance activities.

However, transforming face-to-face and hybrid teaching activities into distance learning posed some issues.

The main issue concerned the interactivity with learners. It was impossible to ensure an effective online participatory environment to all the 25 people selected to participate in the training course.

To overcome this problem, Ecoistituto divided the 25 participants in four groups. Nevertheless, it was anyway difficult to manage peer-learning activities in a distance learning modality.

To reduce this problem, some activities have been shifted in the group work session.

Another issue was the scheduling of lectures.

Due to the lockdown, some learners haven't at disposal a computer in the morning since their children used it for emergency remote learning. Other learners had to continue to work in smart working modality and were available to attend the course only in the evening.

This problem was solved by organizing distance learning activities as follows:

- Group 1, (9:30-11:00), May 11, May 13, May 18, May 19, May 20, May 21, May 22
- Group 2, (11:15-12:45), May 11, May 13, May 18, May 19, May 20, May 21, May 22
- Group 3, (19:00-20:30), May 12, May 14, May 18, May 20, May 22, May 26, May 28
- Group 4, (19:00-20:30), May 13, May 15, May 19, May 21, May 25, May 27, May

From the Ecoistituto experience, it emerged that internet connectivity can adversely impact learning through online modality. A low-speed connection and make difficult the use of distance learning tools.

Moreover, the workload to prepare and hold lessons at a distance was quite high. Trainers needed to revise the teaching-learning strategy adapting it to web conferencing tools (Microsoft Teams and Skype).

Finally, some learners found it difficult to use distance learning and e-learning tools since they had low skills in digital technology use.

### **Alternative and supplementary content**

In the group work, participants were stimulated to seek alternative and supplementary content related to parent-training.

They were asked to search on the internet to answer the following questions:

1. Why is parent training important?

2. Should Parents Take Parenting Classes –Pros and Cons
3. Why is it important to learn about parenting?
4. how to build an effective parent-training program

Learners worked together in small groups collecting data on the internet, analyzing, and discussing it. The result of their activity was preparing some short reports that were presented to trainers and other learners and discussed with them.

## **Bibliography**

Here following the list of articles suggested to learners in the training activity:

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Gordon, T. (1980). Parent effectiveness training: a preventive program and its effects on families. In *Handbook on parent education* (pp. 101-121). Academic Press.

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Matsuo, R., Inoue, M., & Maegaki, Y. (2015). A comparative evaluation of parent training for parents of adolescents with developmental disorders. *Yonago acta medica*, 58(3), 109.

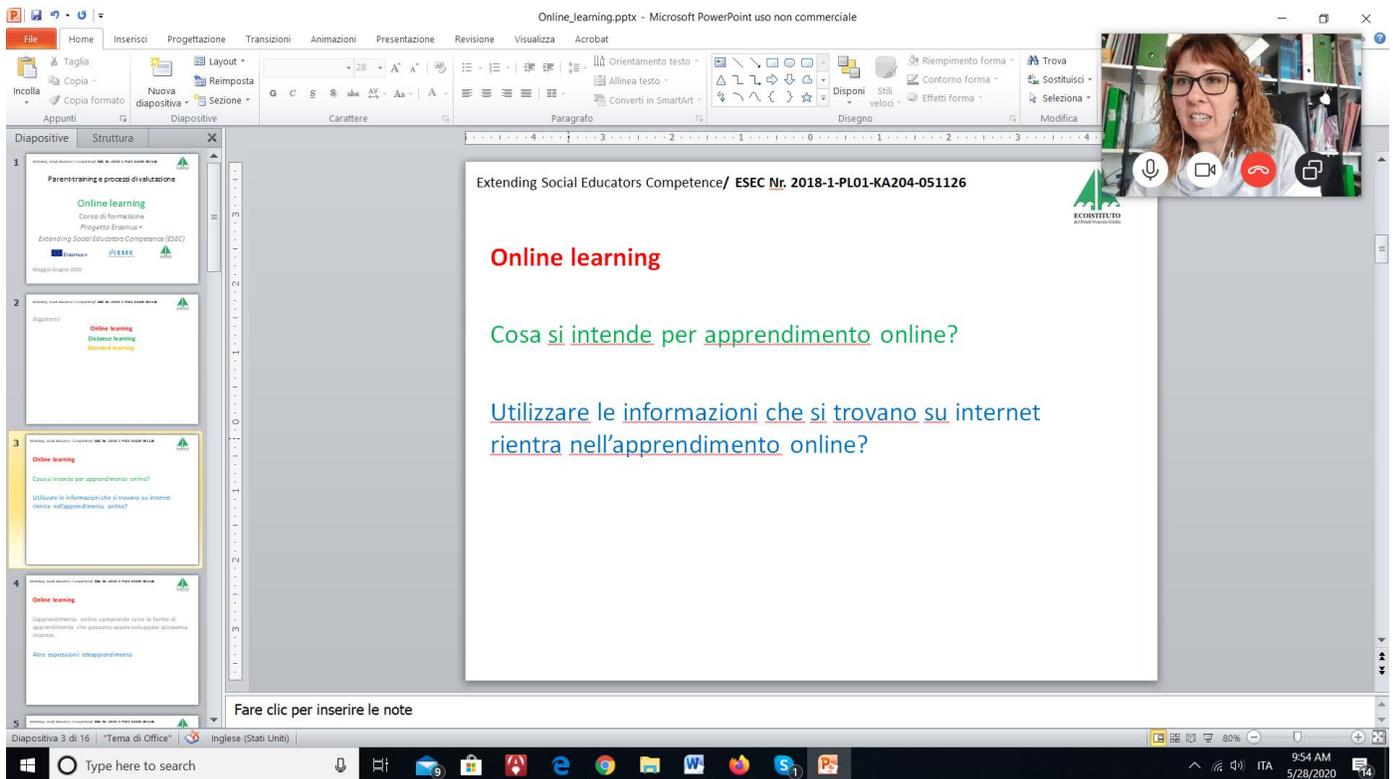
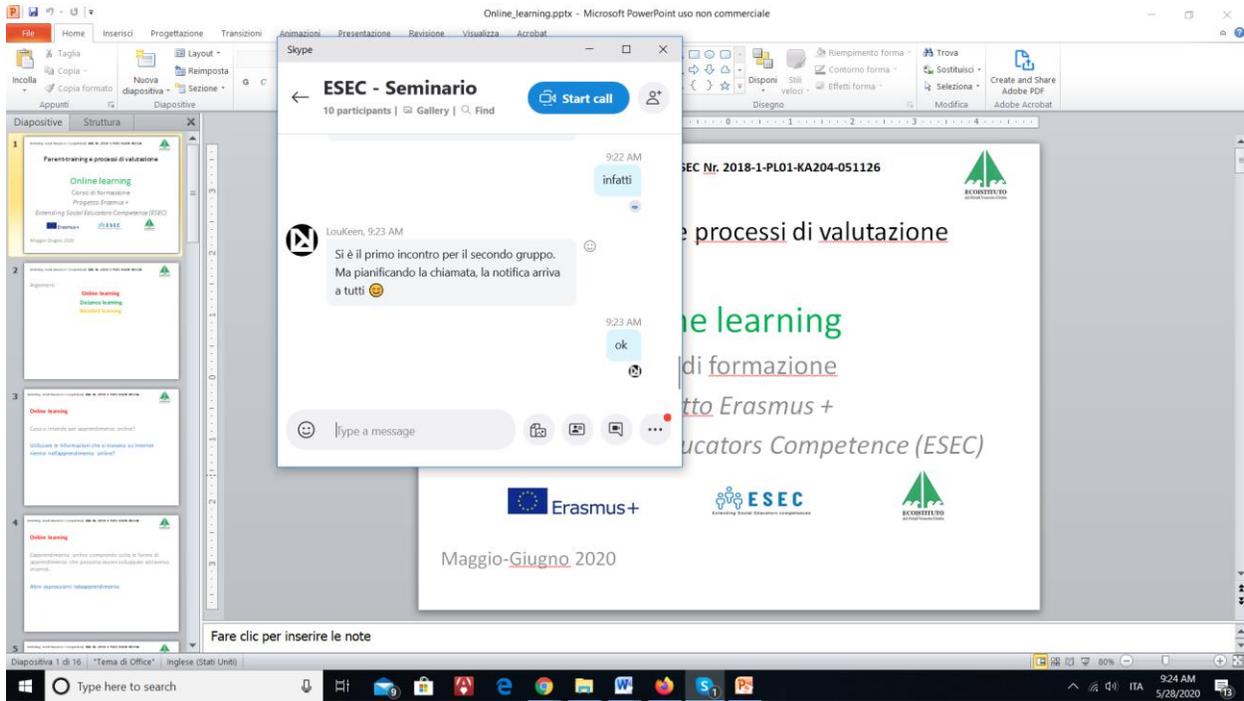
Menghini, D., Tomassetti, S. (2019). *Il Parent training oltre la diagnosi*, Erickson.

Saccà, A., Cavallini, F., & Cavallini, M. C. (2019). Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: a systematic review. *Journal of Clinical & Developmental Psychology*, 1(3).

Valeri, G., Casula, L., Menghini, D., Amendola, F. A., Napoli, E., Pasqualetti, P., & Vicari, S. (2019). Cooperative parent-mediated therapy for Italian preschool children with autism spectrum disorder: a randomized controlled trial. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1-12.

# Annexes

Here following some pictures of the training course.



## Online learning

Attraverso social networks come Facebook e whatsapp, gli studenti possono entrare in contatto tra loro per scambiare informazioni riguardanti i corsi che frequentano e i docenti possono inviare agli studenti link a materiali didattici.

## Pro e Contro

