

TRAINING COURSE RECOMMENDATIONS

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Supporting parents of children with behavioral, social or communicational difficulties

15 Hours course + 25 Hours individual study
ESEC Erasmus+ ESEC Nr. 2018-1-PL01-KA204 051126
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Abstract

As a leader of the international project called “Extending social educators competences” (ESEC), Janusz Korczak Pedagogical University in Warsaw, organized and implemented as well as other partners in the same time the training course that has been prepared by all partners of the ESEC Project. From the Polish part 25 participants, mostly educators, teachers, social workers and parents as well, took part in the ESEC course units, although almost 30 people were interested in attending the course at the first place.

In the time of 13th May to 5th June volunteers who wished to take part in the course were involved in the E-learning platform (the Moodle system according to the requirement of the Rezekne Academy of Technologies), distance learning tools (ie. Skype and Power-point slides prepared for distance learning purpose). Information on the Course was exchanged between participants in some platforms or communicators of social media as a Facebook, Messenger, Whatssup.

Organization of training consisted of a few (4-5) small groups of learners in order to manage interactivity and respond to the needs of those learners that cannot participate in the same learning session. Indeed, in some cases, in the morning, the same computer was shared for parents' smart working and distance learning of children. Duration of distance learning lessons lasted 40- 45 minutes.

Most of exercises tasks performed on the web consisted of searching on the internet parent training materials to realize a short report or organizing a parent-training event using the didactic materials of the training course.

In the context of Covid-19 most of Polish educators/teachers on almost all levels of education have used forms of distance learning in the time of quarantine. The forms of conduct distance learning which have been available in that time by Polish educators and teachers were:

- sending tests, work cards or homework assignments;
- online lessons (video conferencing);
- using e-learning platforms e.g. epodręczniki.pl (website of textbooks);
- using dedicated platforms by publishers.

Definitely the dominant form of distance learning was sending tests, work cards, homework or other forms that require the student to work individually at home and then send the completed materials to the teacher for checking. Also our participants/trainees who in the particular period through 13 May 2020 to 5 June of 2020 were heavily using distance communication and tools of distance learning too. After choosing such topics and units of course as:

Emotional Interaction, The Project course on Communication with professionals and educators, Family Disruption, Reducing stress, Preventing and responding to sexual abuse of disabled children, Parent-training and evaluation processes, Motivating Parents self care, The project course on Family Disruption, Parenting Science: "Theories and practices". Communication with Parents, Self Evolution.

17 of them were able to respond to the evaluation questionnaire. They were educators, social workers, parents of disabled kids or with special needs and teachers. They were all female, because an overwhelming majority educators in Poland are still women. The most of them hold BA diploma and 70 percent of them are pending MA in education. There was no person with only secondary or basic education.

As it emerged from the data of the final evaluation after the completion of the seminar by the Polish participants the evaluation of the satisfaction from the attendance of the seminar was

positive at 97%, where 62 % of the participants agreeing that their expectations were maximized. Only 3% of the participants claimed that the course has not improved their skills and competences at all.

The training course was based on agreement of all partners and was directed to the common focus groups but there were some situation during implementation that the learning units were implemented with transformations and sometimes were adjusted to Polish conditions of that time:

- a) specific content transformations that was emerged from the specific parents' and educators needs in Poland,
- b) specific organizational strategies that were applied due to specific locally derived needs
- c) specific teaching methodologies that were used following the participants' educational needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recommendations have arisen as a result of

- the experience received by JKPU after the implementation of the ESEC training program and units;
- the feedback from the 17 evaluations forms made by the participants after their participation in the courses;
- the global evaluation of the training course after the end of the seminar.

Among the topics of the proposed course units the Polish participants mostly were going through units such as *Emotional Interaction, Emotional Interaction, Motivating Parents self care*. Less trainees were interested in the rest of topics.

After the end of the training course important recommendations came out from the side of participants such as:

- *Extending the range of topics to enlarge the possibility of choice;*
- *Before introducing and implementing courses should be assess and measure expectations of educators or other focus groups;*
- *To clear up and put enough information referring to how to manage online materials and disseminate them;*

- *Encouraging to more flexibility of the content of the training course at each country;*
- *Terms, language and examples used in online learning in some units were too analytical and academic, therefore it caused that online materials sometimes were not easy to apply. There is recommendation to simplify some units or use less scientific style of language because it would help an acquisition of these skills for their practical application in handling situations.*
- *Organizing “after Covid 19 pandemia period” meetings between partners and exchanging own experience of courses inviting participants and educators.*
- *Creating more opportunities and platforms for exchanging national and local experience of parents with children of special needs, educators, teachers, care givers, counselors...etc., especially after situation of pandemia COVID-19.*
- *There is still a high need in Polish society of positive change of attitudes towards parents and families who dealing daily with problems of the disabled kids or kids with special needs. Therefore would be a very useful working on the strategy of social change.*
- *An appreciation, respect and more empathy from the trainers towards the trainees.*
- *The establishment of an online environment where the interaction between the trainer and the participants.*
- *Encouragement of the trainees to create their own diary or depictions of their own practical exercises or solutions (maybe blogging, vlogging...etc.)*
- *Evaluation or assessment forms through Google forms or the internet platforms...etc*

These recommendations may be completed by some suggestions and practical solutions such as:

Because of the Covid -19 pandemic was truly an unexpected factor that led to the suspension, or even cancellation and postponement of regular training curriculum. Therefore most of Polish educators/teachers on almost all levels of education were using forms of distance learning in the time of quarantine. But in the Covid-19 circumstances definitely the dominant form of distance learning in Poland was sending tests, work cards, homework or other forms that require the student to work individually at home and then send the completed materials to the teacher for checking. At the beginning of pandemia in Poland around March and April using remote tools of learning and e-learning platforms in Poland were still not a popular

solution. Despite the low popularity of distance learning, this proposition of ESEC courses offer interesting interactive materials of which trainees were quite satisfied. There were also other popular means and tools to recommend:

- Zoom is a video communications tool with a cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, collaboration, chat and webinars. It can be used across mobile devices, desktops, laptops, and telephones. Its features like chat, screen share, annotate, whiteboard, polling, breakout rooms, raising the hand, and managing participants lend themselves to creating engaging virtual and hybrid classrooms and collaborating on projects. Users have the option to record sessions. Here is a comprehensive guide for teaching using Zoom - <https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Comprehensive%20Guide%20to%20Educating%20Through%20Zoom.pdf>. These are training tutorials - <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>. Teachers and students develop cognitive and SEL skills as they navigate the virtual environment. The site supports nine languages.

- "Microsoft Teams" offers chat, meet, call and collaboration features integrated with Microsoft Office software and is therefore suitable for classwork, teamwork and management. There were from many sides a recommendation to unify the remote education system within tools to one platform common for all beneficent. In particular, it was pointed - "Microsoft Teams" platform, which offers extensive opportunities for communication, work organization and interactive work with students during online lessons. Appropriate system configuration should be on the school management's side in order to provide all students with comfortable access to lesson materials provided by teachers.

Recording unit lectures which had been sent to platforms such as YouTube in the form of a film, is also a form of distance learning that some educators/teachers use. Students also indicate that the ability to re-play a lecture or lesson is useful in this solution. External sources are also increasingly used, to which students get access via teacher's internet links (films, radio programs, press articles). Therefore the ESEC course based on the Moodle, which is an online learning platform designed to provide personalized learning environments. It is free and uses open source software. The target users are educators, administrators and learners. Moodle can be used with downloaded software or online, and it is available on a variety of devices. Moodle prides itself on being able to support the needs of small classes and large

organisations including Shell, London School of Economics, and the Open University. In terms of skills, as Moodle is a learning platform it can be utilized to support cognitive as well as socio-emotional skills. It can be used by a wide range of learners, from primary students up until adult learners. It is available in 120 languages.

Other useful tools that can help manage teaching and learning, such as communication tools, learning management systems or other tools that teachers, parents or students can use to create or access educational content:

For instance may be considered the SuiteGoogle Suite for Education, which is a cloud-based suite of free tools and features tailored for schools and home schools to manage educational material from anywhere on any device. It includes Google Classroom, as well as Google's core services, including Gmail, Calendar, Docs, Sheets, Forms, Slides, Hangouts, and more. Additional services include products like Chrome and YouTube. Following are the features of each tool. Classroom - designed for teachers to create classes, distribute assignments, give quizzes, and communicate with students. Docs, Sheets, and Slides - collaborate, share feedback, and work together in real-time on documents, spreadsheets, and presentations. Forms - create forms, quizzes, and surveys to collect and analyse responses with the help of machine learning. Jamboard - a cloud-based smartboard where you can sketch and collaborate on an interactive canvas. Gmail - create school or university wide email system, or to exchange secure emails with classes. Drive - store and organize assignments, documents, or class curriculum securely and access them on any device. Calendar - share calendars or create joint schedules with your institution or class members. Sites - an easy-to-use web builder to create websites, host course curriculum, and build development skills. Hangouts Meet - connect with students virtually through secure video calls and messaging. Groups - class forums for communication and conversation. Vault - add students, manage devices, and configure security and settings, so your data stays safe. G-Suite for Education can support cognitive and SEL skills, as it is a learning platform. Its admin consoles can support 28 languages, and other apps can support more than 120 languages. Here are some helpful website - Resources for teachers - the teacher centre <https://teachercenter.withgoogle.com/> Website - https://edu.google.com/intl/en_ca/products/gsuite-for-education/?modal_acti

Google also launched *Teach from Home*, a central hub to support distance learning. The website includes training, tools and resources from across Google for Education to help teachers continue to teach even if they aren't in the classroom. The platform helps teachers make decisions about teaching from home with video, without video, how to make distance learning accessible to all, how to keep students engaged, and how to keep in touch with other teachers.

Recommendations concerning the content of the training course.

In the time of distance learning and e-learning the content can be completed by other resources of curriculum for instance using other platforms:

For searching alternative materials to complete the ESEC courses there can be recommended “TED” short lectures. TED website provides curated content including video-based lessons organized by age and subject, video series organized by topic, and blogs. Learners can sign up for a daily lesson plan that span all subjects and groups. Lessons are self-paced and pre-designed. Lessons are organized into categories - watch, think, dig deeper, discuss. From the site: To support the millions of students, parents and teachers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, TED-Ed is working with expert educators and TED speakers throughout the world to create and share high-quality, interactive, video-based lessons on a daily basis, for free. Teachers and students can enter their email to have a handful of engaging lesson plans organized by age group that span all subjects delivered to your inbox every day. Each newsletter will also include insights and tips collected from TED-Ed's global community of students, parents and teachers.

Enlarging the ESEC course with other material coming from exchanging experience, opinions, discussions of partners and participants...etc. will not only disseminate the content and ideas but especially will popularize the practical idea if the ESEC training course.

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