

## The VALMOPRIS approach in an exemplary case study

### 0. How to motivate prison learners and how to make them aware of their self-development

*Education Classroom is an rehabilitative education provision within a prison environment focused on improving well-being and the development of life-skills and life chances.*

*One of the projects is the creation of a local prison magazine. A small group of 5-9 people meet 1-2 afternoons a week to produce this magazine. Their tasks include planning and content design, graphic design, the creation of content, doing interviews etc. The activity is accompanied by a qualified lecturer who supports the prisoners mainly in functional questions but is also responsible for the group work in general and helping with the editing process.*

*One aim of this activity is to provide the prisoners a sort of qualification in graphic design, journalism, layout and other related tasks. On the other hand, the creation of a magazine requires a high amount of team work, communication within the team, creativity, self-initiative etc.*

*The idea of the validation process is to provide evidence, that these prisoners do not only learn a lot about graphic design and interview techniques, but also develop their social competences, which can also be very crucial for their rehabilitation process and for their future chances in the labour market after their discharge.*

*For this purpose they decide for the LEVEL5 approach, because it can show progress in the personal development.*

*Mr. Gomez, the lecturer who trains the prison magazine group, decides to try out this validation approach. He thinks about the aspects that need to be considered in order to come up with a concept that benefits the prisoners, but also respects his own resources.*

*He starts by thinking about the competences that can be acquired in the prison magazine group and he makes a list which of those which are most relevant to the participants in his current group.*

*Also he thinks about how much time he can spend with his training participants to explain the approach to them, as well as support them in their reflection processes and assessment procedure. This includes working out at which occasion it is possible to meet them (in addition to their regular group meetings) or how to implement this reflection process within their regular group meetings.<sup>1</sup>*

*In the next training meeting Mr. Gomez introduces his plan to the participants by starting a discussion. He directs their attention to the question of how learning takes place, and that not only knowledge, but also skills and attitudes are relevant for learning and that becoming aware of their own performance through reflection enables one to notice that one has made some progress.*

*Mr. Gomez decides not to present the whole LEVEL5 methodology to the prisoners, since this might be too confusing for them. But he shows them a list of competences he has made in advance and asks his participants, which of those they feel to be important for their own future and if there are any they want to develop more. He also points out that the planned validation procedure is voluntary. It has nothing to do with comparing people and it is nothing*

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<sup>1</sup> This of course depends very much on the working conditions and it might be not that easy to create face-to face situations. This case study is only an example to give a clearer picture of how the validation process could happen...but for sure it will have to be adapted to the specific situation in prison.

about evaluation and judging people. It is mainly about personal development and individual learning.

Three participants from the magazine group are interested to participate in the validation process. Each of them selects at least one competence from the list. Since they were all interested in focusing on the competence "Teamwork", they all decide to choose teamwork and each of them can choose an additional competence.

For all of these competences Mr. Gomez has brought along the reference systems. The three learners come together in a small group, read the "teamwork" reference system together and think about which competence level they see themselves at, at present, and write down, why they think so. Mr. Gomez also asks them to go back to the beginning of their sentences and to think about their competence levels at this time.

Each group member informs the others where they rated themselves and why they think they are on this or that level. Then the others comment whether they find this reasoning convincing in regard to the descriptions in the reference system. Mr. Gomez goes around, listens and asks additional questions or supports in case of questions from the group.

At the end of the meeting, he asks the participants to check their reasoning again and to finalise it before collecting the documents.

#### ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO:

In his meeting with the magazine group, Mr. Gomez organises an activity: For each competence he chose (because he thinks their development might be useful for the prison learners) he creates a flipchart, including a short competence description. Each flipchart is pinned to the wall of the training room. The participants of the magazine-group now walk around and look at the competence descriptions. They are asked to rate themselves in a line from "one" (very low level) to "five" (very high level) – without knowing the reference system!

After that, they select 3 competences by answering the following questions:

- Which competences are important for my future
- Which competence I'd like to learn more about

In the next step the group receives the reference systems and now they can compare their first rating, with the level description in the reference system. In small groups or pairs of two they discuss their results and try to describe the reasons for their rating.

#### INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW:

Mr. Gomez and in the group decide to work on the validation process in an individual face-to-face-scenario.

Mr. Gomez shows the LEVEL5 reference system on teamwork to one young prisoner (Paul), who is new in this prison and they read through it together. Paul thinks of his current competence level and Mr. Gomez supports his reflection by asking specific questions. This way they identify what Paul knows, is able to do and which attitude he has towards teamwork. These items are indicators for his competence level and are then written down for the future certificate.

After each assessment – the self-reflection and the interview – Mr. Gomez conducted with Paul, Mr. Gomez rates Paul's competence level for "teamwork" with the help of the reference system. The first rating happens after the first peer-evaluation in the group, the second rating is done after the second assessment 3 months later. After some weeks or months, Mr Gomez invites the participants again, to revisit the reference systems and to discuss their

*development in a second assessment round. Again they discuss their ratings in small groups and make notes of their arguments.*

*Mr. Gomez informs the group about the next steps in evidencing their developments. Since in prison there is no internet access Mr. Gomez collects the documentation and inserts the data into the LEVEL5 software himself.*

*When this is done, Mr. Gomez creates certificates in pdf. format and hands them over to the training participants*

### The competence description and reference system for the competence “Teamwork”

COGNITIVE/KNOWLEDGE				ACTIVITY			AFFECTIVE		
	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4
L	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Indicators	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Indicators	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Indicators
5	Know where else	Knows how to integrate own abilities into teamwork, knows how to help other people act successfully in teams and how to assign specific responsibilities to people keeping in mind their relevant skills.		Developing/ Constructing/ Transfer	Can develop own collaboration skills and support others in improving theirs. Can navigate effectively between different team roles.		Incorporated	Is motivated to inspire others to perform well in a team. Is willing to dedicate time to improving the team-working skills of individuals.	
4	Know when	Knows how to contribute to the teamwork constructively and when to adapt own behaviour in order to achieve the common goals effectively. Knows how to act appropriately in different teams.		Discovering/acting independently	Can try out and take over different roles in a team. Can identify and analyse team-working qualities and skills, and implement them.		Self-regulation	Is determined to contribute to good teamwork and to improve own team competences. Is willing to take new roles for the sake of team performance.	
3	Know how	Knows how to act in a team and how to take into account about different skills, qualities and limits of each member.		Deciding/ selecting	Can contribute to teamwork based on experience, reaching out to join or help create a team. Can identify his/her best role in the team.		Empathy/ Appreciation	Is willing to work collaboratively in a positive way. Is willing to dedicate time to teambuilding, so that colleagues appreciate the value of teamwork.	
2	Know why	Knows why teamwork is important to collaborate and to reach common goals.		Using, imitating	Can work in a team according to instructions and/or role models.		Perspective taking	Is interested to work in a team, valuing teamwork in general.	
1	Know-what	Knows that teamwork is a collaborative work process.		Perceiving	Can recognise situations in which teamwork is most appropriate.		Self oriented	Is open to join a team in order to improve the own personal situation.	

This is the completed rating template "Teamwork" for the young prisoner Paul:



Rating **Teamwork**\_ Paul

Institution: XXX  
 Participant: Paul  
 Date of birth: 27.10.1995

	Rate 1	Start December 2015	Rate 2	March 2016	Resume
cognitive	2	Has knowledge on teamwork mainly from sports activities and former activities at school and knows that teamwork can be very helpful to reach a common goal or to fulfil a certain task.	4	Knows his position and role in the team. Knows what to do to support team members in several tasks and how to divide tasks within the team.	Knows what to do to support team members in several tasks and how to divide tasks within the team.
active	2	He follows the instructions of the lecturer and other group members, who have been part of this group for a longer duration. Since he is new in the field, he is more restrained and waits for concrete orders, which he completes.	3	He contributes in the team according to his experiences. Is active and shows initiative to take over tasks in the team which correspond with his abilities.	Paul developed from a reserved and cautious team member, to a more self-confident and autonomously acting member of the prison magazine group. He acts in a way that it is constructive for the whole group.
affective	1	Even if Paul knew teamwork from former life situations, his main motivation to join the team was more focussed to his individual situation in prison. He wanted to learn something about editing and layouting, but it was not his main intention to be part of a collaborative acting team.	3	After three months in the magazine group, Paul has much more realised the importance and the benefit of being a team member. Is high motivated to be a constructive part of the team.	During his time as a part of the prison magazine group, Paul developed a very positive attitude towards teamwork and has the strong will be good performer in the group.

**Evaluation statement**

*During his first three months in the prison-magazine class, Paul showed a positive development in his teamworking competence. In his starting time he had basic knowledge about teamwork and due to former experiences working and acting in a team was not completely new for him. As the newest and also youngest team member, he behaved more cautious at the beginning, but his activity and self-initiative increased constantly. He found his position in the group and contributes now in a collaborative and constructive way. His positive attitude towards team work is also reinforced by the positive feedback and acceptance from the other team members, which motivates him to deliver a good team performance.*

