

# Peers for Inclusion

OPEN LEARNING PLATFORM

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## **Training KIT**

For Facilitators, Trainers  
and Educators

## About this Training Kit

This kit is designed to accompany the ***Peers for Inclusion Open Learning Platform***, developed through the omnium project. The kit is designed around the European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO) educational approach, using educational concepts based on peer-to-peer learning.

The kit is designed for trainers, youth workers, and educators and it is a good base on integrating the online resources with face-to-face activities dedicated to work, interact and educate various groups of young participants facing different forms of disabilities. Nevertheless the philosophy of the whole learning process is based on the inclusion of young people with disabilities in regular activities and learning processes rather than creating activities specially designed for them.

The learning process is divided in five key steps that assure an in-depth experience both for the learner and facilitator of the process. This process is based on EPTO Educational approach and it consists on the following steps: building the foundation, examining prejudice and stereotype, confronting prejudice and taking social action. This T-Kit will be structured using this approach, and adapting online activities on this pedagogical flow.

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## **Basics of non-formal education**

According to **the Council of Europe**, non-formal education refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational curriculum. Non-formal education is what happens in places such as youth organisations, sports clubs and drama and community groups where young people meet, for example, to undertake projects together, play games, discuss, go camping, or make music and drama. Non-formal education achievements are usually difficult to certify, even if their social recognition is increasing.

### **Key characteristics of NFE**

Non-formal education may take different shapes and forms. There are some common characteristics, however:

- NFE is a planned learning process with educational objectives.
- NFE activities are based on the needs of learners. NFE activities are open to the input of learners to the learning process and encourage making links to real life.
- NFE is based on the voluntary participation of learners (in other words, NFE is not a compulsory activity).

## About this Training Kit

NFE is inclusive and accessible, in other words every young person can take part and organisers actively seek ways to include persons that may experience exclusion or marginalisation.

NFE methodologies are varied, participatory and learner-centred, they include a mix of individual and group learning and encourage people to learn from each other.

NFE it is all about learning life skills and preparing for active citizenship.

NFE is holistic, which means engaging learners' emotions, minds, and bodies.

NFE activities may be run by professional educators/trainers and/or volunteers.

NFE is based on active participation (doing, experiencing). A central part of the learning process is self-reflection. Exercises in NFE are of an experiential nature (for example, simulations and role-plays) and input will always be interactive (a product of the facilitator and participants; they contribute with their experiences and knowledge).

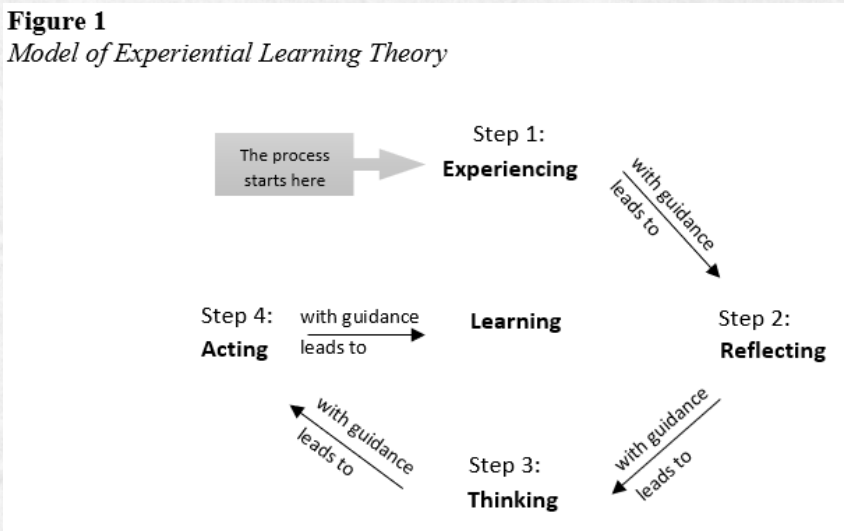
## Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) emphasizes the importance of experience and its role in the learning process (Kolb, 1984). Moreover, it uses experience to describe its vital difference from cognitive learning theory, which focuses on cognition and behavioral learning theory. These theories “ignore[s] the possible role of subjective experience in the learning process” (Cherry, 2019), while, as Kolb (1984) attests, “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”

### Model of ELT

The model of ELT (see Figure 1) shows the process and sequence of experiential learning with its concepts, constructs, and proposition. These components are briefly explained below.

**Figure 1**  
*Model of Experiential Learning Theory*



## **Experiential learning in online learning environments**

Advocates of experiential learning are often highly critical of online learning, because, they argue, it is impossible to embed online learning in real world examples. By its nature, online learning is not ‘real world.’ However, this is an oversimplification, and there are contexts in which online learning can be used very effectively to support or develop experiential learning, in all its variations:

- **blended or flipped learning:** although group sessions to start off the process, and to bring a problem or project to a conclusion, are usually done in a classroom or lab setting, students can increasingly conduct the research and information gathering by accessing resources online, by using online multimedia resources to create reports or presentations, and by collaborating online through group project work or through critique and evaluation of each other’s work
- **fully online:** increasingly, instructors are finding that experiential learning can be applied fully online, through a combination of synchronous tools such as a web conference, asynchronous tools such as discussion forums and/or social media for group work, and e-portfolios and multimedia for reporting.

Indeed, there are circumstances where it is impractical, too dangerous, or too expensive to use real world experiential learning. Online learning can be used to simulate real conditions and to reduce the time to master a skill. Flight simulators have long been used to train commercial pilots, enabling trainee pilots to spend less time mastering fundamentals on real aircraft. Commercial flight simulators are still extremely expensive to build and operate, but in recent years the costs of creating realistic simulations has dropped dramatically.



## Educational Approach of our ONLINE ACTIVITIES

EPTO, as a peer education program provider has implemented from a long period of time an educational approach meant to give sense of meaning and ownership to the learning experience.

The approach deconstructs the phases of learning in phases of understanding the topic at hand:

1. **Building the foundation** - activities designed with the primary purpose to create connection among learners, to create trust and genuine interest toward the learning process ahead. This phase is paramount for the process and is influencing all the other phases of the learning journey.
2. **Identity and Culture** - The learners are exploring firstly their own identity and cultures and subsequently their peers.
3. **Examining Stereotypes and Prejudice** - a set of activities meant to give a chance to analyse and discover open and covert stereotypes and prejudices inside their communities and social spheres.
4. **Confronting prejudice and Stereotype** - a set of tool and activities created for learners to

confront, critically think and act upon deconstructing prejudice and discrimination in general.

**5. Taking Social Action** - activities meant to put the learner in the situation of transferring their new competencies toward action - firstly within their own inner circles and subsequently toward larger groups of people.

## **About the Platform s Sections**

The online platform is created to provide a learning environment accesible to everyone that is interested in youth work, dissabilities and practical ways to involve young people with dissabilities in day to day learning activities non connected with school or formal education.

The main sections of the plaform are:

1. About
2. Information
3. Education
4. Awareness
5. Resources

Each section contains various activities that are accesibilies for most types of dissabilities. Each activity is connected with one step of the educational aproach. In order to benefit from this aproach, our suggestion is to follow the guidelines in the section bellow.

## Educational Approach in Online activities

### Building the Foundation

In this phase we recommend to go through all the activities proposed in the **Section About**, with a strong emphasis on the video and audio tutorials on how the platform can be used at its best capacity.

Also, the **news sub-section** would be a good starting point in getting yourself familiarised with the main ideas of the platform and activities.

### Identity and Culture

To explore this phase of the educational approach our recommendation is for the learner to go through activities proposed both in **Information** and **Education Section**. A good succession of activities for this part of the process would be: **the videos and audios with knowledge** about different disabilities with the connected **quizz**. In Education we suggest the following online activities that will complement the Identity and Culture Phase: **Confidence Building, Physical Accessibility, Accessibility of content, Risk of Expectations**

## **Educational Approach in Online activities**

### **Examining Stereotypes and Prejudice**

In this phase we recommend to take on online activities from the Education and Awareness Section. The activities proposed will shed some light on various stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices connected with persons with disabilities. The following structure for this part of the educational approach is suggested: Wrong Concept and Stereotypes and Asking and Offering Assistance.

### **Confronting prejudice and stereotypes and starting the social action**

This step of the educational approach is connected with activities found in Awareness and Resources sections.

We suggest that the learner go through the activities: **How to do simulations** and **Success Stories**.

On the same level the user/learner can access more insight from the section Resources.