theatre

Theatre as empowerment methodology for IVET

Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013
Leonardo da Vinci
Transfer Of Innovation

theatre

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Summary

Introduction

The THEATRE PROJECT

This handbook is the final outcome of a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation project called THEATRE (Theatre as empowerment methodology for IVET).

The project aims to transfer a good practice that Centro Studi Opera Don Calabria (Italian applicant partner) has been implementing for many years to deal with drop-outs and ESLs in its IVET courses. The good practice is based on the use of theatrical activities dedicated to students attending vocational training courses. The experience is realised by the theatrical workshop "Cosquillas" made up of professional educators, pedagogues and experts in the art field also characterised by many years of experience in the field of social disadvantage[1].

The project, was financed within the Lifelong Learning programme, started in October 2013 and lasted 2 years. It has been realised thanks to the cooperation of a European partnership made up of 6 organisations:
• Centro Studi Opera Don Calabria, Ferrara Italy;
• Centro Ricerche Documentazione e Studi, Ferrara Italy;
• Bogazici University, Istanbul Turkey;
• Grodzki Theatre Association, Bielsko Biala Poland;
• Evangelishe Akademie Bad Boll, Bad Boll Germany;
• The Cedar Foundation, Belfast United Kingdom.

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1. Massimiliano Piva (Actor and art director) and Alessia Veronese (pegagogist) are the core representatives of the "Cosquillas theatre" as they created and have been implementing the methodology since several years. (https://www.facebook.com/TeatroCosquillas?fref=ts)

To enable the transfer of the good practice, the project identified a number of different Work packages and activities:

A) Research and comparison
At the beginning of the project, each partner compiled a research report contextualising the experience of the Countries involved in the project. The reports highlighting:

• a background overview on IVET (national legislation, main public and private bodies and organisations dealing with iVET, school drop-out figures and rates, main reasons and factors of drop out).

• Existing approaches and strategies to tackle the drop-out phenomenon (Existence of support and educational guidance services, examples of good practices available in partners' country/territory aimed at reducing the drop-out phenomenon, also those based on artistic activities and on ICT or multimedia.

• Possible areas of theatrical approach implementation, to favour the transfer of innovation.

On the basis of the national research reports, a comparative report was compiled. The comparison was useful to find out common indicators and guidelines and to share good practices among partners. It also helped to improve the Italian good practice, through EU cooperation.

B) Definition of the innovative and alternative learning approach
This second work package was dedicated to the operational planning of the transfer of the good practice in the different Countries. Each partner involved a range of stakeholders to discuss and plan their possible implementation of the Theatrical approach. As partners have different operational fields and expertise and act on different networks, each identified the most suitable stakeholders to cooperate with in their respective countries. On the basis of this networking and cooperation, 5 implementation plans were realised specifying possible beneficiaries, methodologies, timing and organisations involved.

Information detailed in the 5 implementation plans was then utilized to draft a shared implementation plan for the project. This identified the main common indicators and suggestions, with an EU added value, on how to transfer the good practice based on theatre as empowerment methodology for IVET.

C) Training to operators
This third work package aimed at spreading the contents and the methodologies

of the good practice and developing an approach to implement the methodology in each local context. The involvement of trainers and operators also supported the assessment of participants. At the end of the training sessions, a first evaluation of the methodology, based on trainers' and operators' feedback was realised.

Training to operators happened through:

• a EU start-up workshop in Germany, where different operators coming from each partner country directly tried, performed and discussed the methodology.

• 20 hours of operator training was delivered in each partner country. Depending on the partner, different kind of professionals took part in the training, both internal and external to the partner organisations. A total number of 85 operators took part in the training.

D) Pilot Experiences

All partners, directly or supporting other organizations, applied the Cosquillas methodology in their territories. Several schools, IVET centers and other organisations supporting the personal and vocational development of students at risk of dropout have experienced the methodology and obtained good results.

More than 200 students were involved in Italy, Germany, Turkey, Northern Ireland and Poland to test the Cosquillas steps with the project's staff and operators involved in training for trainers. The students were from 15 to 30 years old and usually attend IVET schools and centers or participate in special programmes aimed at vocational and personal development.

On the basis of pilot experiences results and outcomes, partners realised reports on testing describing main outcomes on students and strong and weak points of the testing phase. On the basis of this second assessment, the good practice was reviewed and a final validated version produced. This final version is included in the present handbook.

E) Dissemination and exploitation activities

Throughout the project's lifetime, partners kept in contact with stakeholders, operators and trainers to enable the transfer of the good practice, assess the results and outcomes and plan future implementation of the theatrical approach, even after the end of the project.

How this handbook has been created

According to the results and outcomes of each of the activities implemented during the project's lifetime and, through the ongoing benchmarking and comparative approach, the initial version of the good practice has been improved. This has been supported thanks to the contribution of partners and the involvement of direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Three main reviews of the good practice have been completed since the beginning of the project: the first on the basis of the comparative research, the second after the first assessment based on the involvement of trainers and operators and, the third after the completion of the pilot experiences.

The final version of the good practice, contained in this handbook, takes into account partners' and stakeholders' contributions from different countries and also some indicators and approaches described in the shared implementation plan.

Thus this validate version of the good practice:
• is a common guide for developing the transfer of the good practice;
• is a shared tool for planning the piloting of the transfer;
• provides general statements and indications for an effective transfer.

What is this handbook for?

The main aim of this handbook is to describe the final version of the good practice and provide operational guidance and suggestions on how to transfer the good practice within different IVET systems or IVET related systems.

The handbook is designed to be a flexible and scalable tool, useful to organisations that wish to test the methodology in their own territories.

Therefore, the handbook is a comprehensive guide that defines, scopes and outlines possible activities, potential participants and supporting interventions that can be used to help transfer the good practice.

All individuals and organisations interested in the good practice can utilise the handbook as a general reference guide to transfer the good practice in their territories. It contains the main topics the good practice relies on to support the implementation in each territory giving a reference and shared framework.

Attached to the handbook a CD ROM contains all main ICT tools and documents that are useful to better understand and apply the THEATRICAL APPROACH to avoid drop out in IVET.

Background

EUROPE 2020 – the objectives and challenges in the field of Education and Vocational Training

Europe 2020 is the ten-year strategy of the European Union for economic growth. It aims not only to overcome the crisis which is still plaguing the economies of many member states, but also wants to fill gaps in the current growth model and create the conditions for a different type of economic development: more intelligent, sustainable and inclusive. In order to reach this goal the European Union has set itself five objectives to be achieved by the end of the decade. They refer to employment, research and innovation, social inclusion and poverty reduction, climate, energy and education.

Better access to education and training (especially vocational training) from the beginning of studies, it is definitely one of the factor that reduces phenomena like absenteeism and lack of motivation and allows students to look for a second chance. School dropout can't be circumscribed considering that in Europe every year about six million young people (14% of the school population) drop out exposing themselves to a greater risk of unemployment and also poverty and marginalization.

The phenomenon affects mainly young people aged between 18 and 24 who have just a "lower" secondary education qualification (O-level equivalent). Besides penalizing individuals early school leaving hampers economic growth and competitiveness. In fact, modern and technologically advanced economies need skilled labor, and school leavers are more likely to depend on social benefits thereby burdening the state coffers.

The EU's plan for tackling early school leaving aims to reduce the average drop-out rate to below 10% by 2020. It urges member countries to devise policies that cover the whole education cycle-removing the triggers of early school leaving, nipping emerging problems in the bud and giving a second

chance to young people who come to regret their decision. The plan focuses on three areas:

Prevention
Equal access to high-quality early childhood education should be improved. Measures should be introduced that ensure all children can take part in the classroom, such as language support for children of immigrants.

Intervention
Warning signs such as truancy or poor performance should be met with tutoring or mentoring support, and cooperation with parents should be stepped up.

Compensation
Students who drop out should be given the chance to gain the qualifications they miss out on at a later stage. "Second chance" schools should provide smaller classes as well as more personalised and flexible teaching methods in comparison with mainstream schools.

Reducing the school dropout rate is one of the five objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs.

EU countries report different percentages and trends regarding the ESLs and the phenomenon happens differently depending on the specific characteristic of each country (education and training systems, economic and employment situation, culture, social opportunities, etc). As a consequence, each State addresses the problem in different ways. There is, however, a growing and common awareness across EU: the need to address early school leaving in a more comprehensive manner, in the knowledge that it's a very complex matter where many factor play and interact simultaneously.

The strategies mainly implemented by the different Member states try to tackle the ESL and drop out implementing measures aimed at prevention, intervention and compensation that could be summarised as follows:
• reduce early tracking;
• reduce grade retention;
• address specific needs of children with a migrant background;
• improve the evidence-base for identify young people at risk;
• improve vocational education and training systems through guidance system

improvement, facilitated transition to labour market, strengthening the perme-ability between general and vocational education, increase the access to VET especially for students struggling in general education.

In most cases actions and programmes adopted to tackle ESL and the drop out phenomenon depends on national or regional/local policies or legislative measures implementing targeted interventions (general or specific, long last-ing or short-time programmes). Often these actions and programmes aim at reduce or prevent drop out from school by providing additional learning and educational support (and, in some cases, the creation of dedicated special classes for youngsters at risk), improve or speed up the access to labour market, strengthen (or introduce) mentoring and guidance support towards the world of work or specific training pathways to help successful transition from one level of education to another.

Thus, the initial vocational and training system usually becomes the natural "collector" of those students experiencing problematic educational pathways or at risk of early school leaving. Considering that the percentage of ESL is still above the European goal of 10%, it can be said that this approach is not always well operating, especially on specific factors influencing drop out, for example those concerning psychological and personal areas. Therefore, students at risk, even when addressed to vocational learning, are still at risk because the factors influencing their behaviour towards education are still present and can even get worse.

Actions and programmes supported by legislative or policies measures are useful to address the background factors influencing drop out, but their effective-ness decline when considering individual problems and situations, especially at psychological and personal level.

IVET centres and schools shall thus be equipped by flexible tools and method-ologies to address the specific situations they have to face daily to prevent and avoid drop out and ESL.

The good practice described in this publication is an effective approach for preventing ESL within the IVET system; it can be adopted and implemented in several contexts and with different typologies of users.

The THEATRE project good practice

General overview

A good practice is a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means and that is used as a benchmark.

Starting from this definition, the THEATRE project aims at transferring the learning approach based on Theatre successfully implemented in the VET centre Centro Studi Opera Don Calabria to reduce the risk of drop out among young students.

The methodology of "**learning through theatre and playful activity**" is a real teaching methodology, that comes from humanistic-affective approach and translates it in educational and teaching techniques based on games and recreational approaches. Within the humanistic-affective approach, the central role is taken by the emotional and relational aspects of the students, the characteristics of the individual's personality and attention the individual sphere.

The focus is on all the factors that may affect the learning ability of the individual.

On this basis, Centro Studi Opera Don Calabria has been providing theatrical activities for many years, dedicated to students attending initial vocational training courses. The experience is realised by theatrical Association "Cosquillas"[2] made up of professional educators, pedagogues

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2. https://www.facebook.com/TeatroCosquillas

and experts in the art field operating since many years in the field of social disadvantage.

Theatrical workshops may also be linked to other vocational areas such as; digital and multi-media. In this way students are supported to advance their knowledge and skills in the digital domain, while developing a greater self-awareness and improve skills and competences through the creation of audio-visual documentary. The "core" of the asset can be defined as an inter-disciplinary integration between alternative forms of learning, educational activity developed through the work in theatre and a 360-degree use of new media.

The methodology should be presented to students as something different from typical educational and vocational courses. When delivered in vocational and educational contexts, it should not focus on the "institutional" features of a "classic learning environment"; e.g. tables and chairs should be removed, new spaces should be created, etc. Learners should understand that they are the main actors and everyone should play his/her role.

Discipline should be guaranteed even if the overall climate results in a playful and free space for everyone to express their feelings.

The methodology is firstly useful to create the individual, group and environ-mental conditions necessary to let the student be self-confident and motivated for personal growth and study. Once students/participants have developed their understanding of Theatre additional contents and vocational topics can be associated to the methodology.

The model is based on two guidelines.

1) The ethical value of pedagogical approach based on aspects such as:
• *the centrality of the student;*
• *the student considered as an Individual;*
• *the attention to individual gender, ethnic, religious differences;*
• *the constant search to give meaning to learning and to the learning activities;*
• *sharing and collaboration in learning and doing;*
• *the ability to choose and find out proper solutions.*

2) The quality of learning based on aspects such as:
• *providing a flexible, personalized setting, constantly negotiated with students;*

- *enabling students to become leading, responsible and cooperative actors, in charge of their own education;*
- *allowing the acquisition and development of the key and transversal skills;*
- *developing awareness in learning, encourage learning to learn.*

Potential target group

ESL and drop out affect young students for several reasons and include different kind of situations and behaviours ranging from poor school performance, demonstration of hostility, relational and behavioral difficulties.

"Drop out" refers to all those different situations ranging from irregular attendance, to non-fulfilment of compulsory education and includes phenomena such as release from obligation without achieving the qualification or poor results, repetitions and failures that lead to interruptions and delays of the course of studies thus increasing the chance of dropping out or withdrawal from the educational and training system. The phenomenon is, therefore, very complex and varied, even among territories and countries.

School discomfort and drop out are often ascribed to young people's life experience and their lack of motivation, poor concentration and self-esteem. Actually, many intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a role in school failure.

More than others, the good practice based on theatrical approach wants to address the factors that may affect early school leaving in IVET related to:

a) The education and training system	
Educational and training methods	Sometimes alienation and drop out from the education and training pathway are affected by flattened teaching and standardised educational models and difficulties in planning individualised curricula that bring the differences out and take into account the input skill levels of each student.
Relationship with teachers	As far as this variable is concerned, there are two main causes to be considered. The first is exogenous and it concerns inadequacy and shortage of school facilities, delays in appointing teachers, teachers rotation, the lack of functionality of school integration, as well as to the discriminatory behavior of some teachers towards disadvantaged classes. The second is endogenous and is due to the difficulties in personal relationship that may arise in the relationship between students and teachers and the latter ones and families.

Relationship in the class group	Individualism and competition may stress rivalry and tension within the class group. Moreover, the fear of being judged and, therefore, turned down and teased by classmates, may result in some adolescent divesting in schooling.

B) Individual factors

Personal domain Fall into this area the most frequent characteristics that mainly affect the risk of drop out, i.e. those variables that help to define the profile of those at risk of dropping out.	• *gender:* drop out seems generally to affect more males. • *age:* the most massive dropout rates usually happen at the initial stages of the different school cycles, although the drop out phenomenon occurs also throughout the years of the different cycles. • *irregular education:* schooling paths marked by repeated failures and interruptions are a necessary, but not sufficient condition to explain drop out (do not lend themselves to explain school dropout). It becomes relevant when associated with cultural inadequacy, family problems, deprivation. • *post-drop out outcomes:* a considerable number of young people go back to the training system (vocational training courses, evening classes, apprenticeship, training contracts); in other cases they enter in the labour market, often in low-skilled jobs or jobs on the verge of legality. • *disability, specific learning disorders:* it is a category of students that needs particular attention, in order to prevent high dropout rates, starting from the implementation of "strong "vocational training pathways alternative to school. • *migration background:* young immigrants are at higher risk of drop out compared to students with Italian citizenship. This figure is linked to socio-economic factors, family situation, but also to other factors, above all language and culture.
Psychological and emotional domain Problems related to psychological, social distress and adolescent discomfort that together with other triggers, often do not allow students to follow their study path, to learn effectively, making the most of their cognitive, affective and relational abilities	• the onset of puberty produces a shift on students towards non-school goals, reducing time and energy for traditional learning. • the development of the hypothetical-deductive thinking lead young people towards intellectual autonomy and the desire to express their own opinions, which sometimes lead to open conflict with teachers, not always ready to accept divergent points of view. • the pubescent stage carry the need of a confrontation/clash with the adults' rules (teachers included) • many young people have not acquired a good method of study (strategic difficulty, due to misconceptions resulting in wrong study habits, poor control of the metacognitive processes), and, therefore, they find themselves unprepared when faced with the more demanding requests of high school. • poor time management and daily/weekly planning of tasks lead to the incapacity to complete school (school work).

Because of its flexible methodology and the importance the approach gives to individual characteristics, the good practice could be addressed to different kind of young people at risk of drop out from IVET or that have already dropped out:

• young students attending IVET curricula and learning paths but experiencing difficulties and problems in achieving the learning and educational goals;

• young students that have to choose their further learning pathways but have experienced difficulties in actual or former education levels;

• young people attending special programmes in IVET (where present) specifically addressed to those who have or would have too many difficulties in following mainstream education/training;

• young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) in general;

• disabled young people, experiencing difficulties in acquiring educational mainstream or vocational attainments, attending special vocational and training programmes and in need of further support and guidance;

• students or young people with a migrant background (even including Roma) with different kind of problems in accessing and performing mainstream education or vocational pathways.

The theatrical methodology could be implemented with mixed groups of young people, experiencing different disadvantages, thanks to its simultaneous attention to the individual and group sphere of action.

How to identify and involve students at risk of drop out in IVET

Identification

The most powerful indicators of whether a student will complete his/her IVET pathway include **course performance** and **attendance** during the first phases of the IVET pathway. Further indicators could refer to skills and capabilities concerning **life and key competences** among students and young people in general.

The identification of possible risk factors is therefore, the responsibility of **teachers and trainers, or other relevant operators that support with young people (**rehabilitation officers, for example, in case of disabled young people, social officers in case of young people with social problems, PES officers in case of young unemployed people, etc).

A part from the analysis of course performance and attendance indicators, also specific tests and profiles of key and life competences could be used and implemented to define a more precise picture of warning signals.

In order to address these features, it is necessary that the forecasting and evaluation system adopted:

• takes into account the many aspects of the students' behaviour and does not establish hierarchies, avoiding an excessive rationalisation that reduce complexity and multiplicity;

• takes into account the characteristics and the personal experiences of each individual, recognising the life experience; the history and context where each student comes from;

• gives room for the student's point of view, to his/her account of the educational experience where he/she is involved;

• is based on indicators that are functional and useful to the educational and pedagogical work;

• that is universally recognised and transferable to different contexts.

There are several tools and methods for evaluating and identifying factors influencing the possibilities of drop out (e.g *Observation Questionnaire IPDA, Child Behaviour Checklist – CBCL Questionnaire, SDQ Questionnaire – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, TMA test-Evaluation multidimensional of self-esteem, etc)* recognized at international level that could be managed by the different actors involved in the educational process: trainers/teachers, families and the students themselves.

Concerning the specific good practice and in a view of monitoring and assessing results, the **ICF classification (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health)** seems to fit all requirement listed above and may be easily applied in relation to the good practice of Theatre workshop (see part concerning evaluation process).

Identification of students at risk of drop out may be realised taking into account the following areas:

Attendance	• Number of absenses • Daily attendance rates
Course performance	• Failed course benchmarks • Grade point avarage benchmarks • On-track indicators *(eg. credits earned, participation in testing and examinations, etc)*
Key and life skills	• Key competences: *Communication in the mother tongue and in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship,cultural awareness and expression* • Like skills: *Self-awareness, Management of emotions, Management of the stress, Critical sense, Decision making, Problem solving, Be flexible in every kind of situations (Creativity), Communication skill, Empathy, Interactive skill*

Involvement

Once identified a range of students at risk of ESL (or that have already dropped out), thanks to the fundamental support of teachers, trainers and educational coordinators and managers, strategies and activities favouring the involvement of young people in the theatrical good practice shall be defined and implemented.

According to the specific training and vocational background, the involvement of students/young people could be:

Compulsory
The participation in the theatrical workshop could be compulsory for students/young people wanting to acquire a qualification, a certification of competences or a vocational diploma or to reach the final examinations.

In this case, the implementation of the good practice shall:
• be integrated with and part of other vocational and educational contents and lessons;
• foresee the acquisition of specific skills and competences at the end of the sessions;
• foresee an assessment of skills and competences, to be realized in cooperation between the mainstream trainers/teachers and the operators carrying out the theatrical workshop;
• assign educational/vocational credits.

An entire class group or only a part of it could be involved in theatrical workshops as integral part of the curricula.

Students shall attend the workshop to acquire skills, competences and knowledge useful to complete the vocational and educational course (I.e. key competences but also vocational skills).

Example
Students usually attend special programmes because of their difficulties in following mainstream education. Generally, special programmes provide learners with the basic skills helping them to find a work or secure a place on a training programme in the formal IVET system. Many of these disadvantaged young people come from failures in the lower secondary school and are at higher risks of dropping-out. Mainstream educational methodologies may produce discouraging effect on this target while the introduction of alternative learning methodologies to support and improve the acquisition of skills and competences usually produce more effective results. Thus, the theatrical workshop could be one of the non-mainstream methodology to be used to let the learners acquire basic and key skills and competences, together with other courses fostering the acquisition of skills and knowledge through practical activities, work experiences, laboratories, etc.

Voluntary

When the participation of young learners to the theatrical workshop is free, students can participate or not, according to their willingness and expectation.

In this case, the good practice could be connected with IVET courses:

• as an extra-curricular activity;

• as a choice among optional activities that are part of the curricula.

In both cases, but especially in the first one, the trainers, operators and teachers should commit themselves not only to encouraging students in participating but also to avoiding the early leaving of participants before the process ends.

Especially in the case of extra-curricular activities that often take place outside of the compulsory school time, the involvement strategies and activities should be continuous and focused on both individual and groups' needs and characteristics.

As the good practice is devoted to re-motivate students at risk of drop out or young NEET, their involvement could be difficult, because of their lack of motivation, self-esteem, interest in educational activities.

Trainers and operators should respond to: "*What motivates students to join extracurricular activities and to maintain their participation?*".

Therefore the answers and subsequent actions to be implemented could be different.

Examples

• *Develop the workshops of performing art starting with students' individual needs and interests (movies, use of particular technologies, music, dance, sport, comics, etc).*

• *Plan a performance open to the public of peers or taking place in an important city site at the end of the workshops.*

• *Encourage peer interaction, extracurricular participation provides previously marginalised students with access to a more "elite" stratum of the student population and exposes the students to peers who have better attitudes toward school speak at school assemblies or have a stand in the hall/ lunch area at break times, provide a phone information service and have regular updates about upcoming events, spread information on social networks and other ICT tools mainly used by young people.*

• *Organise pre-laboratory meetings to illustrate the contents and characteristics of the theatrical workshop, also trying to build positive student-adult relationships.*

• *Guarantee, in case of active and ongoing engagement, positive effects on curricular activities, even in term of examinations and/or marks.*

• *Associate the activities carried out in the theatrical workshop with the acquisition of vocational competences (such as those in the field of digital and ICT field-see below).*

Theatre as empowerment methodology

for students at risks of drop out

Leaving school early or being habitually absent from school due to truancy can be detrimental to social and personal development as well as affecting vocational development and attainment. Leaving school early may prevent the development of specific skills that will allow a person to "function within certain environments".

In school, students not only receive academic tuition but also important social skills such as, how to work and function within a group environment and how to behave within pre-existing social and institutional boundaries. The educational environment also exposes students to different ethnicities, personalities and to different points of view. Therefore, there is a risk that a person who leaves school early will be deficient of the skills needed to participate in society to their full potential. Early school leaving can also lead to an increased chance of teenage pregnancy, criminal activity and psychological issues such as depression and anxiety.

Alternative learning programmes, especially arts-based programmes, can be critical players in a community's efforts to prevent school dropout. Infact, they allow the most frequent factors of school leaving to be addressed, while at the same time, allowing participants to acquire key and life competences that mainstream training pathways are not able to transfer for young students at risk of drop out or already dropped out. Performing arts and theatrical activities in particular allow:

• recruitment and retention of target populations with multiple risk factors;

• long-term skill development that engages youth behaviorally, emotionally, and academically rather than a drop-in culture;

• an emphasis on the critical ingredient of real-world applications through performance;

• a strategic community-level plan for dropout prevention;

• and programme content reframed toward competencies that underpin better school performance and pro-social behavior such as; communication, initiative, problem solving, motivation, and self-efficacy.

"Learning through Theatre", the project intends to transfer a teaching method that in itself is based on a humanistic-affective approach that implements learning techniques based on game and art.

Within the process prime importance is given to students' emotion and relationships and to their individual sphere of reference. The focus is on what may affect individual learning ability: the need, as much as possible, for individualised pathways to explore student's potential, the involvement of each student in the class group, and to get rid of those factors that cause anxiety and discomfort.

The good practice intends to act on those factors linked to individual and psychological sphere, building motivation and individual self-awareness and reducing other possible exogenous obstacles (socio-economic context, social class, etc) that affect the risk of distress and dropout from the training system.

Thanks to their involvement in performing arts and theatrical activities vocational providers are able to win back to education and re-motivate to study students attending initial vocational training courses, young people attending the first cycle of study (secondary school level) for whom it has been deemed to implement actions of recovery and re-motivation and also those not in education and training (NEET). Furthermore these alternative learning methodologies could be implemented with people with disabilities and migrant young people with poor language skills.

It is obvious that traditional educational methods are of limited effectiveness and use. Active methods work better, enabling action and one's own verification of the results. Vocational training requires practice; learning is largely based here on specific information. The elements of action, such as different activities, evaluation of one's performance and concentration on tasks, are all included in the theatrical methods. There is also an additional advantage of role-playing. Theatre workshops allow participants to become a different person on stage and go through different experiences than in everyday life situations.

On the other hand, one may also look at oneself from a different perspective, see another dimension of one's own problems, and discover one's capabilities and latent power. Artistic activities proved to be an effective means of motivating people to learn and a useful way to shape and develop their knowledge.

Workshops focused on creating a performance motivated participants to gain specific knowledge to perform the task. Educational workshops, which used active learning methods, provide this opportunity.

Theatre and theatrical activities produce sometimes surprising and unexpected results. Teachers, trainers and professionals need to use this medium more because the artificial world of the classroom can be transformed into a quasi-real language situation and provides an endless amount of opportunities for student's personal growth.

Theatre and theatrical approaches are methods to reveal aspects of the human condition. Through the games, the students begin to realise the importance of shared space, time, attention, information and ideas. The performing activities spark spontaneity and minimise self-consciousness which often inhibits learning. The games are also good for developing concentration and trust in the classroom. While the students are having fun, they are developing skills of coordination, imitation while focusing on the task at hand. The improvisation enables the students to flex their emotional, mental as well as physical muscles in a safe and controlled setting.

The Cosquillas methodology

The Cosquillas workshop

Centro Studi Opera Don Calabria – Città del Ragazzo has been collaborating for many years with the Association "Cosquillas Theatre". The experience of drama workshop began at the end of the 90s within a broader educational project dealing with social integration of a group of children with congenital disability.

That positive experience lead to legal and formal constitution of the Association (2004) called "Cosquillas" that, over the years, allowed a group of people with different professional backgrounds (educators, pedagogues, experts in theater and art directors) to create a theatre workshop and begin to collaborate with different organisations in the area and in the provinces of Ferrara and Modena. The Association realised several experiences involving people with congenital and acquired disability and mental distress, as well as educational workshops both in primary schools, concerning parental relationship, in high and vocational schools supporting the students at risk of early leaving and suffering from adolescent distress.

Since 2010, the "Cosquillas Theatre" Association has started to cooperate with different educational and vocational institutions, including the University, for training operators and educators in the field of theatrical and educational methodologies.

The "Cosquillas" approach moves in parallel on two tracks: theatrical and educational. This means that the theatre workshops, use performing art and drama to pursue educational, training and social goals.

"Cosquillas theatre" intends education to be a tool for personal growth,

before a development tool, or employability tool. This is because, training, cannot be separated from the fusion of two fundamental elements, motivation and technique. The success of a person is linked to the meeting of these two factors. It is not enough to be strongly motivated if you do not have appropriate technical means, on the other hand master a technique is not enough if you are not consciously working on your motivation. Personal training is a process that continues throughout life. It requires adaptability, flexibility and continuous updating of knowledge.

Main goals

The "Cosquillas theatre" uses drama activity as a tool for **personal growth fostering the acquisition of educational aims, especially in term of key and life skills**. Personal training lasts throughout life and requires adaptability, flexibility and continuous updating of knowledge. Each person working in a theatre group is responsible for his/her growth but also for the growth of the group itself.

A relevant part of the activities performed by "Cosquillas Theatre" promotes the leading role of adolescents in the creation, implementation and evaluation of paths of self-help, stimulating a significant improvement in well-being across the student's community. The proposed model of intervention aims at improving the school relationship, motivating young people to study and providing methodological support to let them reach self-awareness and self-sufficiency.

What makes the good practice different from a "simple" theatre workshop is that it includes within its process, anti-dropout activities such as welcoming, fostering study, workshops and extracurricular activities, alternative learning methods. Activities are addressed to those young people who experience difficulties, discomfort and are at risk of dropping out and can be adapted to different contexts and kind of learning. The fact that the workshop can also be carried out within a vocational training setting is an additional distinctive feature of the methodology.

The good practice aims at fostering school satisfaction of the participants and, in particular, it affects the following socio-cognitive and educational areas.

• **Learning:** considered as self-assessment of school performance and the perception of individual improvement with respect to them.

• **Interpersonal relationships**

– *With the classmates:* the methodology acts on the perception of isolation/inclusion that each student lives in terms of closeness and direct relationship and on the ability to create and develop positive and non-conflicting attitudes with the other members of the class group.

– *With the teachers:* the methodology affects the perception and the image of the teacher as a significant adult, a point of reference for the student so to set up a relationship that goes beyond the teaching itself to take on a leadership role and a reference point for being and acting.

– *Out of mainstream framework:* the methodology wants to foster positive interpersonal relationships in an extracurricular context (even if within the school curriculum), it promotes interaction between two "worlds" (school and extracurricular). This condition contributes to enhance a positive attitude and to increase the willingness to widen the network of relationships thus improving the conditions, for each learner, to develop own training and life project.

• **Purpose of taking part in educational and training pathways:** the theatrical methodology encourages participation because it is aimed at removing obstacles, making the discomfort that may affect the risk of dropping out to come to light. The methodology allows participants to understand and find out the factors that more than others motivate learning. These are drawn by taking into consideration the experiences and the results of the participants. The following are highlighted:

• the importance given to the narrative, therapeutic tool, useful for taking care of people;

• the preference for humanistic psychological approaches, aimed at exploring motivation and the inner-self, looking more at the present than at the past;

• the importance given to the analysis and the involvement in the process of change of the systems where people find themselves in, starting from the family;

• the importance given to expression, theatre and art, also with regard to teaching;

• the importance given to the concepts of autonomy, self-assertion and self-esteem in the educational process;

• the emphasis on group as a further possibility and at the same time, aim of the educational action put into place.

The theatre workshop carried out using the "Cosquillas" methodology within a vocational training path fosters motivational support, orientation, tutoring and the prevention of dropout, as it is aimed to recover basic skills and guarantee attendance in at-risk students.

Participating in theatrical workshop activities should therefore enable the learners to acquire key competences thanks to methods consistent with the teaching contents that are part of the school curriculum and the individual needs.

Thus, the methodology is useful to create the personal, group and environmental condition to let students afford and be motivated and successful in studying and working.

By creating trusting and stimulating environment within educational and vocational context, the methodology helps students to believe they can succeed and that vocational learning is useful for their personal and vocational improvement.

The methodology

The "Cosquillas" methodology foresees a series of steps that are illustrated below. The methodology is extremely flexible and the different stages could be adapted, enhanced and re-designed according to the needs and characteristics of participants.

The methodology relies on two main parallel tracks:
- **The individual**
- **The group**

The activities shall focus on the acquisition of key competencies by beneficiaries, with special emphasis on social skills. Thus, often the objectives pursued during our theatre workshops result from two assumptions. One of them is the specific competence which the theatrical operators want to develop, and the other is their commitment to revealing the issues and problems specific to the group requiring intervention. This creates a natural dynamic for the workshops.

Problems or difficulties which manifest themselves in the group are connected to specific individuals, hence the need for individualised interactions. Only then one can resolve the difficulties. The activities conducted take into account that while working with a group one has to work with each of the participants. The

ways of addressing specific individuals, determining their tasks and roles as well as evaluation and guidance must be individualised[3].

How to create the group and maintain it
The educational work starts mostly searching for alternative channels that may help to express discomfort in different ways which are better suited to the context.

As directors/educators leading the workshop, theatrical operators (being them trainers, art directors, psychologists, educators) are the first to take part in "the game" trying to deal with all the defence mechanisms participants may adopt. The respect of the individual, of his/her character and fears is achieved by accepting their limits and then be able to go further and build alternative routes.

Operators should highlight the strengths and accept the difficulties as "gifts" and opportunities to work with.

On this basis, thanks to the long term observation of several groups of teenagers involved in the various experiences and the most common needs that may emerge at the beginning of the laboratory are:

1. Containment: operators should set rules from the beginning that must be respected by all participants. It is important to make learners understand that their behaviour reflect on the group, so that each person is responsible for him/herself but also for the whole group. The rules shall be clear and limited in numbers and associated with specific consequences. *Example: punctuality (if a member of the group arrives late, activities cannot start and the group shall wait for the late classmate, after 3 late arrivals, the person must leave the group).* In this way, responsibility is shared and each participant is committed to respect their peers).

2. Stable and consistent landmarks: in term of operators and settings. From the beginning of the workshop, reference points should be clearly presented to learners. Operators and trainers that manage the workshops should open and close the sessions. This requires a strong cooperation among trainers and theatrical operators in terms of goals, methodologies and approaches. At the same time, also settings are important reference points: a specific room or premises might be identified and used for all the sessions.

3. The same approach is used by Grodzki Theatre Association, partner of the THEATRE project. See national Polish report.

3. Adequate time for adaptation to new contexts: operators should give time to each participant to adapt, as activities require strong involvement at individual and group level. Adaptation may be necessary for individuals to support the creation of a team. Activities may be interrupted and repeated according to the results that the operators want to achieve and according to the different learners' needs and the group dynamics.

4. Creating an inclusive environment: to meet the diverse range of learner needs, some additional or integrated interventions may be need. In such instances; psychologists, cultural mediators, disability operators may be involved in the process and cooperate with theatrical operators and trainers.

5. Ability to relate in a context of free expression: operators should create the conditions to let participants get used to freely expressing themselves. This should be achieved through the development of mutual confidence between operators and participants, meaning participants do not feel judged by the operators or their peers.

6. Finding "The door open", have the chance to go and then come back to experience and manage moods: even when defining the rules for participation, operators should have in mind the obstacles and uneasy feelings that young people at risk of drop out feel within mainstream educational systems. Therefore, operators should allow participants to try activities, encourage mutual help and offer second chance to those who leave and then return.

7. Support through hard times: young people attending the workshop are usually characterised with difficult living and personal conditions. The activities carried out during the theatrical workshop, let fragilies and weaknesses but also personal capabilities and desires become exposed to the group. This may create additional difficulties to arise, therefore, operators and trainers should take into account this issues and adapt the activities as a consequence, while providing individual support.

8. Reading and understanding individual behaviour of those and others: interpersonal relationships play a fundamental role in the theatrical methodology. Some of the activities rely on the improvement and fostering of relational skills. Operators and trainers should carefully observe behaviours of each learner but also how this behaviour reflects on others and intervene if necessary.

9. Find out key for interpreting real needs: different people have different ways of expressing their needs, and this is especially true for young people at risk of drop out or, who have dropped out. Operators should be aware of this, be able to identify latent needs and address them at both individual and group

level. This approach is possible through an on-going cooperation with the teachers/trainers of the study curricula, with families, friends and professionals.

10. Non-judging environment; as stated before, the creation of a non-judgmental environment is fundamental. This condition should be created among learners but also between learners and operators. When, for example, some learners make fun or joke about someone in the group, the theatrical techniques could be used to put them in the same situation, or they could be asked to reflect on motivation of their behaviours.

11. Unifying rules: the rules stated at the beginning of the sessions and the implicit ones that arise from the group's relationships should be valid for all participants and even for operators and trainers. Specific cases should be discussed and shared with the group itself and the same approach should be adopted during all of the sessions.

12. Hone one's capabilities (especially the hidden ones): the theatrical activities provide participants with the opportunity to develop an awareness of their own feelings and an ability to manage their feelings, skills and capabilities that are often hidden to the students themselves and to others. The creation of a trusting and open environment is fundamental to support and foster the recognition and improvement of the strong points of each individual, these should then be integrated in the development of activities.

13. Find out additional ways for introducing participation: sometimes some students need more time than others to get involved in activities and cooperate with the rest of group. To prevent their non-participation, some students may be involved in activities that are related to the theatrical sessions. One of the most effective ways to manage this is encourage these individuals to get involved with the project through the use of ICT and multimedia material. Perhaps by filming and recording the theatrical activities of peers (see part concerning ICT and multimedia of this report). Other activities could be the ones related to creating scripts, scenery, costumes, music and songs to support the theatrical activities and also the final performance).

Improvisation approach
The "Cosquillas" methodology grounds its activities on improvisation.

Improvisation is a form of live theatre in which the plot, characters and dialogue of a game, scene or story are made up in the moment. Often improvisers will take a suggestion from the audience, or draw on some other source of inspiration to get started. Improvisation is unique in producing outputs as

there will never be another show exactly like it ever done again. Improvisation is different every time.

Improvisation body techniques are thus more suitable to articulate proposals dealing with young people at risk of drop out, with little awareness of their communication capabilities and poor language skills.

Improvisation through the body, gesture, music, offers the possibility to create situations allowing an ongoing experience with the potential of body and sensations, poorly explored in everyday life.

This approach is achieved through recreational and psycho-motor proposals that engage different channels and allow an experiment of "physical experience" in order to explore the dimension of imagination, while creating the potential for expressive communication.

Improvisation is an ideal pedagogical strategy for teaching, learning and meeting the needs of diverse learners, it is both an inherent structure and flexible. Moreover improvisation requires very simple settings: no props, scenery, costumes, or lighting are required. The players create everything that is needed from their own imagination. Thanks to improvisation approach participants became protagonists, actors, writers and thinks by using their body, voice, and mind through the shared experiences on stage.

Improvisation is also useful in teaching students **how to work together** as a team and foster an environment where risk taking is valued: important qualities for a differentiated instruction based classroom. Improvisation activities also foster and encourage **literacy, creation, analysis, and interpretation of text skills** development in all kinds of participants.

Thanks to improvisation, operators/trainers can promote **interaction** among participants in a different way from the one they experience in everyday life and traditional educational system. As a result the learning activities are created through a partnership between the teacher and the students. Students have a voice in their learning and are encouraged to be active participants in the sessions. Unlike the traditional classroom, participants have to be prime actors and outcomes result from the **active collaboration** inspired by a common quest for learning. **Responsibility** placed on the students is greater than in a more traditional teaching paradigm. An active approach such as improvisation is rooted in **cooperation with peers** as they make sense of a situation and present it to the rest of the class.

Improvisation is **vocally, physically, and personally demanding** and it requires students to make numerous kinds of presentations. Students are consistently

analyzing and thinking on their feet. Improvisation is a source of **deepening self-awareness** in students as they find ways to express their ideas, opinions, and feelings through the physical action of improvisation. Also students' critical thinking is fostered and developed together with imaginative and emotional growth as students that have to creatively solve problems through improvisation activities. Students grow intellectually and emotionally as they speculate, reason, and predict while experiencing and participating in improvisation activities. Improvisation can increase student confidence and competence in problem solving through active and engaging exercises.

The involvement and participation in improvisation improves students:

content knowledge   discipline

collaboration   practice

social interaction   critical thinking skills

analytical thinking skills

intuitive thinking skills

creative thinking skills[4]

The methodology is firstly useful to create the individual, group and environmental conditions necessary to let the student be self-confident and motivated on personal growth and especially motivated to study. Only in a second time, additional contents and vocational topics could be associated to the methodology.

According to this general framework concerning improvisation, the main activities of the "Cosquillas" methodology are presented below.

Steps and activities
The main steps that contribute to develop the "Cosquillas" methodology start from the theatrical activities as an experience of feelings, sensations, taught and self-recognised. At a later stage educational and vocational knowledge is integrated in the techniques. Educational contents are strictly related and integrated with the compulsory skills and knowledge the students shall acquire in their curricula.

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4. From The Second City Guide to Improv in the Classroom: Using Improvisation to Teach Skills and Boost Learning, of Katherine S. McKnight, Mary Scruggs.

The graphic below represents the main steps of the methodology.

The circle	The pictures	The mirror	The look	The greeting
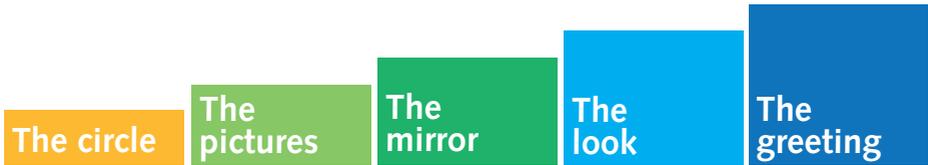
The steps are experienced as a process with each subsequent step relying on the completion of the step before, as each step assumes an increasing acquisition of self-awareness and consciousness of oneself and others. There is no specific time-frame set for the various steps and each of them can be repeated over time or resumed after a period of time. It's not compulsory to complete all the steps in the methodology, but it is important to start with "the circle" and gradually progress your way through the steps until the group has achieved their goals.

The methodology focuses on improvisation and learners' needs thus one step may take longer than another to complete. This will depend on the participants' characteristics and needs, the characteristics acquired by the class and the feedback received by operators and trainers. As experience has demonstrated, to have an effective integration between the theatrical techniques and the IVET courses, the steps should be distributed over time to allow participants to connect their results with vocational and educational attainment. Although, if appropriate intensive workshops such as; 2 days intensive sessions performing all steps, can have positive effects on students. In the latter case, the focus will be primarily on developing transversal and life skills and personal development, as two days does not provide sufficient time to focus on coordination of other curricular training or vocational subjects.

The first steps (especially the circle) can often present the greatest challenge to participants as new techniques are being proposed that can challenge their behaviours. By repeating the first steps over time, gradual improvement will happen.

The circle

Main aims:
• building group cohesion and encouraging people to share information;
• help students and teachers learn names, project voices, and express themselves;

Getting to know everyone in the group by passing a ball or similar soft object

• generating new communication parameters and rules among the class;
• create a trusty environment.

Circle Ice Breakers help students and teachers to learn names, project voices, and express themselves. This activity provides an entertaining experience, it is quite simple and elementary but help students in exploring the space through psycho-motor awareness; awareness of their own shyness thanks to the use of personal dynamics designed to hide them or make them emerge within the groups.

This drama game is great for new groups or for introducing people to working as a group.

There are many variations of these activities, but the first and foremost step is to form a circle so that all of the participants can clearly see one another. The reported version is the one used in "Cosquillas" methodology. Specific adaptations can be inserted according to students' reactions to this "game".

How to play it

Start in a circle, students and operators sitting on chairs equally spaced.
Teacher/facilitator names themselves and then throw a ball to an other participant that name him/herself.
After the ball goes round once send it round in another direction.
Let the exercise run for a while until you feel everyone has begun to pick up a few different names.
You may need to remind people to say there name and the name of the person they throwing to.

How to manage it

As the Circle is the first step, the first time it is implemented opponent behaviours could happen, such as skepticism, discomfort, bad habits, jokes, etc. This is absolutely normal, both considering the average age of students and their mistrusting experiences with school and educational environments. The repetition of this step, during time, is useful to obtain positive results on individuals and on the group itself.
This game support the creation of the group and it is a first phase of self-management through new acquaintances.

A part from names, you can introduce further elements such as glances, nicknames or individual characteristics. In this way, an increasing connection among the members of the new group (including operators) is achieved. Further elements could be suggested at the beginning of each round, allowing an increasing participation and arising of new questions. For example, teacher/facilitator models/starts by stepping forward and saying their name with an action. Then steps back and ask the students to follow the example, and then to pass it on to the next student.

At the end of each round specific questions are asked about what happened, allowing the students not to feel embarrassed about the banality of their possible answers, immediately highlighting the good observation skills of those who are ready to expose themselves.

The added value consists in creating a serene mood among the group so that each participant could feel free of express and share with others his/herself and its private and personal capabilities, and not the "mask" that wear everyday.

Foster the use of different communication means apart from words also body gestures, glances, movements (verbal and non-verbal communication) in order to let each participant participate with own communication style.

Participants: Small Groups, Whole Group
Expertise: All
Skills: Character, Confidence, Improvisation

The pictures
Participants make still images with their bodies

Main aims:
• start a physical exploration of space, body, emotions and concepts;
• stimulate non-verbal communication of inner feelings, desirers, capabilities;
• share feeling with other and trust them;
• stimulating motor, cognitive and relational skills.

These activities can be used to quickly establish a scene that involves a larger number of characters. Because there is no movement, "the picture" is easier to manage than a whole-group improvisation – yet can easily lead into extended drama activities. It can be used to explore participants' characteristics, stories, and feelings and share them with the other member of the group. Still images

require individuals or groups to invent body-shapes or postures, rather than freeze existing action.

The theatrical approach is based, at this stage, on body language in order to make participants experience their physicality in a social background. Participants have to decide what they want to show to the class thanks to their body thus, the feedback of the group are fundamental to let inner feelings and skills get out, though a positive communication mean.

Positive and negative emotions are conveyed through theatrical actions, even thanks to the cooperation and presence of the other members of the group.

The peers become fundamental to express individual needs and feelings and create a positive and protected image of the self.

How to play it

Start in pairs.

Explain that they are going to create a still-image, which is like the image when someone has pressed pause on a DVD. The image has no sound or movement. It is a snap-shot. Ask one group to do an example for the class.

At the beginning the teachers/directors/educators take the role of one of the two. The work starts with a teacher and then a student and a chair in the middle.

Helped by the music, the first person of the couple goes to the center, where the chair serves as a backdrop and help feeling less naked in front of classmates. When he/she reaches a position that involves the whole body (including sight), he/she "freezes" becoming like a statue.

The second mate enters in the scene and completes the picture.

A few seconds of stop and it all ends with a clap of the group.

After that, the same couple swap role.

The whole process is repeated for each couple.

When all pairs have performed their roles, a still image is created with the whole group: one after another each participant takes part in the same "pictures", until all are at the center. At this point there is a general thanks where each person is a story, every story a scene, shared all at the same time, at the same level and with the same shared space.

How to manage it

This is a technique frequently used in drama. It is the perfect way to begin drama work as it is an easy and non-threatening exercise for groups with little or no previous drama experience. Still-image work requires and helps to develop

team-working skills. It is a very controlled form of expression which creates pictures that can be interpreted by the class – a picture is worth a thousand words!

It is also a very good way to represent potentially difficult concepts – such as fights, and abstract ideas like freedom or sadness, etc.

Use music and the chairs to create a more protective environment.

The exercise has also a great technical value with regards to the creation of theatrical scenes.

Results can arise since the first meeting.

The participation of operators/trainers in directly implementing the activities is fundamental to create a trusty environment and to create stronger relationship with students.

Promote participation and cooperation among the group in order to avoid competitiveness dynamics.

Foster protagonism to let each participant express his/her potentialities with no fear of being mocked up.

Create a calm and relaxed environment to let learners feel comfortable in sharing part of their selves with other.

This stage can take more than one lesson.

Participants: Couples first, Whole Group at the end
Expertise: All
Skills: Character, Confidence, Improvisation, Memory, Body perception, Communication skills

The mirror

Participants create non communicative relation with their peer and learn to get in touch with them

Main aims:
• focus and understanding of the give and take of creativity and action on stage;
• foster self-awareness;
• stimulate non-verbal communication of inner feelings, desirers, capabilities;
• share feeling with other and trust them;
• stimulating motor, cognitive and relational skills.

This third step of the "Cosquillas" methodology is important even because it comes as a result of the goals obtained during the first two steps. All the elements arisen and lived in

the previous steps are implemented in the "mirror" game. It is classic fun activity adjusted for educational purposes.

Thanks to this exercise, participants get in touch with other thanks to different non-verbal communication, as the game requires attention, empathy and control of the self to follow the "other". This exercise shall lead to a mutual understanding of characteristics, potentials and ability of others and, consequently, let the participants understand how to respect their peers and their selves.

In order to realize this exercise participants should be able to get out of their selves and enter in the physical / emotional world of another person.

This phase is the most dynamic of first three steps of the methodology. Starting from this stage, there is a change in the methodology that allows the group to enjoy the "theatrical" beauty and harmony. The "mirror" activity only works if participants are able to move in unison with the others, thus creating a mutual link of physical and emotional needs.

How to play it

Choose music to follow through the exercise.

Everyone gets a partner (if there is an odd number, someone can go twice).

Partners stand in two chairs, facing each other, about a meter apart in the center.

The rest of the class sit around as spectators as since the "circle" game this allow participants to face with an audience.

One is the leader, the other, the "mirror".

The leader begins to make simple gestures or slow movements.

The "mirror" duplicates the leader's movements exactly – just as a mirror would.

The goal is to follow the partner's movement not imitate them, so the leader must move carefully so that the "mirror" won't fall behind.

If they are doing a good job, we cannot tell who the leader is and who the "mirror" is.

The audience can be kept engaged by watching for when the reflection is exact and when it is not.

Encourage them to use smooth, continuous movements. Abrupt movements almost always catch the "mirror" lagging.

Encourage them to maintain eye contact rather than look at their partner's hands.

At the command sound established at the beginning, there will be a swap of roles.

The work can be done in groups, with different levels of difficult: let the leader use the whole body, not just from the waist up, levels and depth. (A step closer,

a step further back), the mirrors can move around the space still mirroring each other's action.

Variations can lead to first "theatrical" scenes, almost dances.

How to manage it

Some students have trouble with the right-left shift. If the leader raises his right hand, the "mirror" should raise his left, just as the figure in a real mirror would. Challenge the players to focus on the process. Initially there will be giggles. Encourage the leader not to try to 'trick' his partner – on the contrary, the leader works very hard not to trick the mirror. It is the leader's responsibility to perform movements that the "mirror" can follow.

Once all players are concentrating on mirroring, have them switch leaders a few times by calling out "change". At first, every time they switch leaders they will start over, but they should reach the point where they can switch leaders in mid-stream, without interrupting the smooth flow of movement.

After the leadership has been exchanged a few times, switch groups so that the audience can do the exercise and the first mirror group observes.

Even in so simple a game, the role of operator/trainer is important. Operator states the rules, gives advice, and monitors the process. Playing mirror with new players, operator makes each step clear, and does not tell the end before the beginning.

When first phase of the "mirror" game has run, operator tells participants to trade roles and continue, and watches as they do, reminding them if necessary about eye-contact and slow motion.

If necessary the operator should foster a discussion afterwards and moderate it. Here again her/his approach is not only facilitative, but carefully structured. For after every game, the first impulse of the players is to babble at random about the experience, yet a more orderly readout and analysis is always more useful. In general, it pays to rehash a game phase by phase, with the gamekeeper deciding when to proceed to the next phase.

Because operators is familiar with the game and has been watching closely, he/she may have seen much that the players have missed, and may be bursting with insights – but it's usually best for her/him to help the players draw each other out, sometimes prodding them with leading questions, and to talk about what they have missed only at the end of each phase's discussion, and only if the dynamic then permits this.

As she/he watched the process of the game, so she/he watches the process of

discussion. The role of the operator and gamekeeper gives the power to draw out people who don't volunteer their experience. Operator does so not from any abstract ideology that everyone must talk, but because everyone shared equally in the game's experience, and interesting and unique perspectives are as likely to be found among the quiet ones as among those who volunteer readily – indeed, in many games, more likely.

As with almost all of games of the methodology, what there is to discuss about Mirror depends as much on the context in which it is played, as on what happens during the game itself.

Mirror is an intense laboratory of primordial, pre-verbal interaction. Its themes are leading and following, cooperation and competition, initiation and response, and something deeper; and participants may enter into many kinds of specialized investigation.

This activity can take more than one lesson and can be repeated, if necessary.

Participants: Couples
Expertise: All
Skills: Character, Confidence, Improvisation, Memory, Concentration, Body perception, Non-verbal communication skills, Problem solving

The look

A participant stands in turn in front of the group, staring each other to go over shyness, fear and discomfort

Main aims:
• identity construction;
• foster self-awareness;
• improve self-confidence;
• share feeling with others and trust them;
• create positive group relationships.

The forth activity of the "Cosquillas" methodology is very touching for participants. Communication is not verbal even in this case.

During the "Look" phase each participant is alone on stage, differently from the previous steps.

As the results of the previous activities, participants are asked to use the growing self-confidence they have acquired to get over the fear of being judged and face others expressing themselves. This is a florid passage to create a sense of freedom and

lightness, thus creating a great group intimacy, with the first requests of protection and mutual responsibility among participants.

How to play it

Choose music to follow through the exercise.

One participant, alone, stand in still in front of others sitting together.

The participant shall gaze across the group, stopping about 30 second per group member.

Once the first person looked at all group members, there will be a swap of roles.

How to manage it

Music is an important element, the choice shall be in line with the group dynamics develop so far and leave room to concentration.

If participants do not feel comfortable in realizing this activity, use the excuse that they have to, because it is required and necessary for the theatrical workshop and to perform in front of an audience, in this way they will become used to deal with uncomfortable and distress feelings that daily life does not allow.

If some of the participants create stressing situations, invite them to take the place of the classmate.

As with almost all of games of the methodology, what there is to discuss about "Look" depends as much on the context in which it is played, as on what happens during the game itself.

"Look" is a very intense experience for participants, thus it is important that the previous activities have reached the foreseen goals for all members of the group, before being realized.

This activity can take more than one lesson and can be repeated, if necessary.

Participants: Each participant alone, in turn, in front of the group
Expertise: All
Skills: Character, Confidence, Concentration, Body perception, Non-verbal communication skills, Self-confidence

The greeting

Main aims:
• identity construction;
• improve self-confidence;
• communication skills;

<div style="background:blue">
Each participant in turn presents his/herself in front of the group thanks to gestures and movements
</div>

• share feeling with others and trust them;
• take confidence with the theatrical scene.

This is the last game of the "Cosquillas" methodology before starting specific theatrical and drama creation and arrangement. During this phase all the personal and social skills fostered in the previous activities are implemented in a single "exercise". Participants discovered their feeling and capabilities, improved self-confidence and developed social relationships with peers and operators/educators thanks to the previous stage. During the "greeting" step they show and implement what have discovered about themselves and what they actually "are".

This activity requires a great concentration on identity as it leads to the first and true sharing of personal details to others.

This phase is also important for the creation of the script.

How to play it

Choose one or more songs to follow through the exercise.

One participant, alone, stand in still in front of others sitting together, as spectators

The participant shall walk to reach a specific point in front of his/her classmates (as he/she is walking on an imaginary stage).

Once in front of his/her classmates, the participant shall represent him/herself through little movements (nota bene, not mime movements).

The movements produced shall represent the emotions the participants feel in that specific moment, this is why movements may change over time.

The activity, for each participant, does not have a specific duration, it ends when the participant decides it, when he/she considers his/her messages concluded.

Once the first participant has concluded, another one take his/her place.

How to manage it

Music is an important element, the choice shall be in line with the group dynamics and the participants' desirers develop so far and, at the same time, leave room to concentration.

Clearly explain to participants that they have to express the feeling they are experiencing in those moments, though gestures and movements and not though mime.

Also explain that each of them can take as much time as needed to express and only they can say "stop" to their performance.

Movements and gesture produced by each participant may thus vary during the exercise, according to the feelings experienced.

If participants do not feel comfortable in realizing this activity, use the excuse that they have to, because it is required and necessary for the theatrical workshop and to perform in front of an audience, in this way they will become used to deal with uncomfortable and distress feelings that daily life does not allow.

If some of the participants create stressing situation, invite them to take the place of the classmate.

As with almost all of games of the methodology, what there is to discuss about the "greeting" depends as much on the context in which it is played, as on what happens during the game itself.

"The greeting" is a very intense experience for participants, thus it is important that the previous activities have reached the foreseen goals for all members of the group, before being realized.

This activity can take more than one lesson and can be repeated, if necessary and it can be very useful to start developing a script with participants.

Participants: Each participant alone, in turn, in front of the group
Expertise: All
Skills: Character, Confidence, Concentration, Body perception, Non-verbal communication skills, Self-confidence

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Additional topics to implement the 5 activities of the "Cosquillas" methodology
Running the session
Activities do not have a specific duration: no one can tell exactly how long to run a session. Operators/trainers/educators have to find the approach that best suits both the individual and the group, and each approach is shaped by many factors, including age, familiarity with group and experience. It also depends on the characteristics of the participants, their needs and the group dynamics. Some indications could be:

• first get the group's attention. Allowing a few minutes at the beginning of each session make it easier. Maintaining each participant's attention throughout the session is critical, particularly when explaining the rules of each activity and/

or while other classmates realize the activities. Possibilities include using simple command words (Listen! Watch! Stop!), sounds (beating a tambourine), or a silent but clearly understood gesture (raising a hand above the head, for example).

• Always begin the first session with the name game. Go slowly and explain everything as clear as possible, do not take for granted anything, back up verbal explanation with visual and/or gestural reinforcement. Try to include a practice run for each activity so that participants understand what is required. Operators/trainers/educators shall place themselves among the group so that they can easily assist other players if necessary.

• Try to be flexible. Do not stick rigidly to the rules of the game and the programmes of activities. If the rules are proving too difficult, simply them. Operators may end up with a session if it does not work well and try again next time.

• As the operators are the gamekeepers, it is up to them to assess how each game is working. They must decide when it's time for the next activity. It is usually obvious when the group needs and can afford a change.

• Be sensitive to the needs of each individual of the group. Some individuals need more persuading then others. Try to be aware of and recognised those participants who might feel left out and those who need extra attention. In addition, take care not to overshadow the other players.

• If possible, schedule the further session soon after the concluded one, so that memories and feelings of the session are still fresh.

• Try not to over-plan. This possibility is usually caused by anxiety about "drying up", that is not having enough activities to keep the session going, do not be afraid of bore participants as activities requires time to reach the goals and they could also be stressing for participants.

• Often a game needs to be repeated in several sessions before some participants are able to internalize it. In some cases, participants do not really enjoy the game until they clearly understand the rules and have internalized them.

• Within a group, while performing a game, almost inevitably one or more participants may begin to "cheat". Often an operator's initial reaction is to intervene and inhibit them by telling to stop. The "cheater" has understood the rules and now is able to play around with them. However, if the "cheater" appears to be exploiting their peers, rather than saying "stop", change the rules in order to bring everyone to the same level again.

Closure of session
As a session nears its end, it is important for participants to come down from

whatever "high" they may be on. This phase also provides the opportunity to bring the group together again and discuss, for example about what happened. Also relaxation exercise could be useful. This also allows further time for participants to think about and interiorize the sessions' outcomes[5].

The influence of music in theatrical activity
The activities described above require a constant presence of music and a good sound system.

It is a fundamental element for guaranteeing a shielded environment for participants, that even when facing the "audience" alone they can somehow feel protected by the music.

Music should be used during the development of the 5 steps, the only element used for protection: no sets, no costumes should be used, as they may act as masks for students. The music allows participants to perform the activities without hiding behind something physical.

Music also supports and encourages movements and feelings to get out and express. Music can suggests movements, gestures, feelings but also the contrary: feelings, gestures and movements can give different meaning to music.

Peer support
The introduction of elements of peer education could be very effective in motivating and stimulating participants in attending and actively participating in the theatrical workshop. This process encourages an active role of the adolescents, who become the aware protagonists of their own learning and allows mutual control, whereas the classic educational relationship is asymmetric, and the power tends to be all placed on one side. Peer education has, in fact, the objective to transfer information with regard to the positive effect of the sessions by students that have already participated to the Cosquillas methodology.

What to do next or during to the implementation of the 5 steps
of the "Cosquillas" methodology
Once participants have acquired a renewed and improved self-confidence and skills and capabilities have been disclosed thanks to the 5 steps described above,

5. Drama Games: drama and group activities for leaders working with people of all ages and abilities, 2nd edition, MENCAP 1981.

verbal communication comes into the pathway and leads to the arrangement of further activities, and the development of a script for a final performance.

Operators may choose when introducing these further and complementary activities during the pathway. In any case, the introduction of additional activities should only happen when participants have acquired higher transversal skills and motivation and trust the group, their peers and the operators. This could be obtained performing the all 5 steps or after a deeper and deeper repetition of the first 2 steps, for example. It depends on how the implementation of the good practice has been planned.

Further and integrated activities described below are only examples, different ones could be introduced and planned according to specific matters or arguments arose during classes and/or connected to curricula.

According to the shared reflection on the outcomes and results obtained by the group and the individuals at the end of each step and/or at the end of the 5 activities, operators/educators stimulate the integration of contents and vocational skills students have to acquire during their vocational courses, both in terms of key and vocational competences. All these elements merge into a script that will be performed at the end of the pathway.

Results and topics arisen by the integration of the steps and further activities could also be considered the better way to integrate curricular subjects and topics in connection with the Theatrical sessions.

Below some further activities are described, as a natural development and integration of the Cosquillas methodology.

Creative group writing

This activity really makes writing in class fun. It's good practice for writing creative stories using narrative tenses and can define the narrative framework of a theatrical script.

This exercise has different interesting sides:

• the teamwork characterised by different group dynamics (roles acquired by each participant, conflicts between different components of the group, uneasiness due to lack of experience in writing, difficulties in convey ideas, needs of coming to light among the group, need of communication, fear in comparing with peers).

• Gradual consciousness raising (as the group is step-by-step restricted).

• Individual expression and autonomous choices (as, at the end, each individual is free to tell what he/she wants and his/her feelings).

How to play it

Operators choose a statement in line with the issues that sound interesting for the group.

The class group is divided into two smaller groups. Each of the two smaller groups should continue the sentence with another sentence that makes sense. The two groups are divided into four groups (even of two persons each) and each of the four groups should go on with the "story" adding another sentence. Groups are divided into other smaller groups, until each participant is alone and can end the story as he/she likes.

At the end operators/trainers show the framework of the stories that have been developed, explaining that a single story may have different developments and can be the starting point of several different stories.

How to manage it

First statement: operator may choose different kind of sentences and arguments. It is important to create a link with the previous experiences students have in the 5 activities, in term of feelings and expectations arisen.

Error correction: If operators would like to correct some of the students writing errors take note of the most common errors and write their sentences (or change the sentence so that the student can't be identified) on the board for the students to correct. Alternatively, operator could make a worksheet for the next class to correct these errors.

The different stories produced thanks to this exercise of creative group writing may be the framework of the script to be developed and performed by the participants at the end of the path.

Participants: Groups become smaller and smaller and individuals at the end
Expertise: All
Skills: Character, Confidence, Concentration, Verbal communication skills, Writing skills, Creativity, Problem solving, Collaboration and participation, Act autonomously and responsibly. According to the specific issue chosen for the initial statement also other skills can be fostered in the field of maths, history, geography, etc.

Questions to adults

When group cohesion is strong amazing things can be achieved in the classroom. Not to go down the psychology route too far, it's worth considering the impact

of connecting the group to each other, having them commit to the shared experience and goals and supportive collaborations.

This exercise is useful to stimulate empathy among the classmates, share experiences and foster the interpretation of an argument/problem from different points of view, in an environment of mutual respect and confidence. In this way, participants are lead out of their "own world" to enter in those of others.

The outcomes of this exercise can become the framework for a script, to be developed and shared among participants.

How to play it

Each participant writes on a white sheet a question he/she would like to ask to one of his/her reference adult (mother, father, teacher, friend, etc).

Questions shall be anonymous and other participants shall not understand who asked the questions.

All questions are inserted in a box.

Each participant picks a question up from the box.

Each participant reads the question to other classmates and each classmate shall answer to the question, even the one that wrote it, that shall remain anonymous.

In turn, each participant reads the question he/she has picked up from the box and other answers.

How to manage it

Operators shall implement this exercise only when mutual respect and confidence are acquired among the class group.

When explaining the exercise's rules, operators should clearly state that the questions are anonymous.

Let the participants be free to answer to the different questions without a fixed duration.

The different questions and answers produces thanks to this exercise may be the framework of the script to be developed and performed by the participants at the end of the path.

At the end of the exercise, impressions and feelings that have arisen are gathered by operators to fix contents and needs.

Participants: Each participant alone and in turn
Expertise: All

Skills: Character, Confidence, Concentration, Verbal communication skills, Lateral thinking, Problem solving, Collaboration and participation, Act autonomously and responsibly

Final performance

As said while describing the 5 learning steps and the possible further ones of the "Cosquillas" methodology and even if other drama games and approaches are implemented, the construction and the realisation of a final performance is part of the teaching methods.

Where possible and according to the learning objectives the methodology wants to acquire, the provision of a final performance is a fundamental part of the learning process. Activities and their impact on participants acquire meanings also because a final performance is foreseen.

The purpose and the terms of its arrangement and implementation give direction and rhythm to the sessions. It is also important to determine the nature of the performance activities are aiming to. It depends on the direction and nature of the changes in participants which we want to be achieved through the implemented activities.

Through actions that make a difference not only in aesthetic terms, but also and primarily in educational ones, a performance can be created starting from and showing the problems and the results face by the group. Its formation, the work during activities, the way one acts and the staging of ideas usually reveal issues underlying the problems.

The participants should be actively involved in creating the performance; they indicate difficulties and describe them. This is a part of verbalisation which has a substantial cognitive value in itself. Thanks to the articulation of their position, troubles, difficulties, it is possible to reflect on them. It gives light to entangled relationships and choices. If one's problem is well defined, one can find a way out it or discover a number of ways out. In this form of work, a thorough knowledge of the group is required. Getting to know group members has to be sincere and revealing and for that to happen it is necessary to create a positive relationship between the participants and the participants and the operators.

Having students perform a short drama script that they've developed combines a number of production skills through working in groups. For example:
• writing skills – writing up the script;
• pronunciation – working on stress and intonation when acting;

• focus on specific terminology depending on subject – including target vocabulary taken from previous lessons;

• negotiation skills with other students – working together to choose a romantic film, choosing appropriate language for lines;

• improving confidence – acting in front of others.

How to implement it

This activity could spread over several weeks and lead to a staged perform-ance of some or all of the pieces created. Ideally students should have access to computer software to draft and revise their scripts, but in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and initial drafts, pen and paper is fine.

In terms of length, script shall not be too long as students shall focus on the plot structure and the feelings and the capabilities they want to express and share with the audience more than get carried away with dialogue. The key to good drama is the amount of information conveyed to the audience in any exchange (sometimes this can be done without words). This provides the dramatic tension which makes the audience watch attentively.

Initial ideas

The basic theme or idea for a script may develop from ongoing work, espe-cially starting from feelings, emotions, images and sensations participants has experienced during the activities. Also the stories developed through the exercises of creative group writing and/or the "questions" to adults could be good starting points. Also brainstorming with students are useful methods to develop initial ideas for a play. Just start with simple concepts and statements (example: X wants to have a party for friends, with no adults to interfere, X has been threatened by an older student, and ordered to bring in some money tomorrow or "there will be trouble", X has been caught with a packet of cigarettes in her/his pocket, etc). In pairs or in small groups, students can decide on an idea they would like to use to create a short play. Outcomes are discussed and shared with the rest of the classmates and with operators and a shared decision is realized.

Developing the plot

When the students have decided on a basic idea for a script they need to answer the following questions to develop the plot:

• When does the play take place? – now or in the future?

- How many scenes will there be? Over what period of time?
- Does one scene take place later than another?
- Do scenes occur in a non-chronological sequence? Perhaps one scene is a flashback.
- Where is the play set? How can you show this?
- How do the audience know where each scene takes place?
- Who are the main characters? Perhaps you might have one main character with other characters played by one other person.
- Will any other characters be necessary/useful to the plot?
- What kind of audience am I writing this play for? How will the play hold their interest?

Within the plot, students shall have a fundamental role. The play could thus include individual or group activities based on personal interests of students (e.g. a student good at making rap, could write down alone or together with others and sing his/her song during the final performance; a student good in playing the guitar could be involved for creating the music of the final play, etc).

Connection with ICT and digital skills and competences

The theatrical methodology is useful, as described above to let students get used with their needs, feelings and attributes, but also to acquire key, life skills and develop different vocational skills.

The methodology seems particularly suitable to develop vocational contents in the specific area of ICT and multimedia, because of its aesthetic and expressive characteristics.

Moreover, the use of new technologies and multimedia seems to be mostly effective in engaging young people and let them acquire knowledge and skills, in the vocational field of ICT and multimedia and life skills.

Learning with new technologies, in addition to acquiring professional skills, allow to take advantage of the culture of the "digital natives" characterised by participation, sharing, collaborative problem solving, spreading of findings and feelings and new ways of representation. Moreover, it allows the development of a new pathway that together with the theatrical workshops, foster the personal growth of each individual, through the group activities.

Sometimes students may need more time than others to be involved in the activities and cooperate with the rest of group. To ensure these individuals are still involved they can be encouraged to use ICT and multi-media skills to film and record the group's theatrical activities that way remaining part of the group and involved in activities.

ICT offers different training opportunities such as; acting in given situations, practicing metacognition, shifting from a concrete and manual level to an abstract one. Therefore, incorporating ICT and multimedia the goals into the theatrical workshop in the development of different cognitive styles can awaken the interests and motivation of at-risk students.

Thanks to ICT, students experience and improve their communications skills, using cooperative working, testing their ability in listening and trying to find a synthesis with their classmates, with the trainers, operators and third-party stakeholders.

Thus, the THEATRE project aims to create a mutual link between the theatrical methodology and the activity of vocational training by making use of new multimedia, to create an interdisciplinary integration within alternative learning methods.

In this way there is the potential for two teaching areas to come together in an integrated pathway to enhance the cognitive, personal and relational growth of each student, triggering a virtuous circle that enriches the group.

Learning through new technologies

The interface between the school environment and the young people's interests can be linked through new technologies.

A teaching approach using new technologies can effectively help to raise young people's learning levels. It is possible to make use of high-tech equipment (camcorders, digital cameras, etc) to build or consolidate a range of skills relevant to the curricular content e.g. mathematical, languages, scientific-technological, socio-historical alongside life skills.

The approach used must compliment the young people's attitudes towards new technologies.

Trainers and operators can:

• formally deconstruct ways of using high-tech tools in order to focus on their effective use;

• satisfy the formal approach of "try-out and error" to give pre-established guidelines;

• foster the acquisition of life skills and competencies relevant to curricular content (mathematical, languages, scientific-technological, socio-historical) and also vocational contents.

The teaching strategies should increase young people's interest and foster the acquisition of competencies and skills, otherwise rejected by students at risk of drop out.

The aim is to put digital technologies at the heart of education in ways that are appropriate for the young people to make use of digital media, so that very

young people may understand that through ICT it is possible to acquire competencies and knowledge of other curricular subjects.

With the flexible and adaptive approach of the "digital natives" it is possible for this generation to use technological tools in order to acquire what the previous generations acquired sitting at a desk and using paper and pencil.

Moreover, the creation of digital tools could be fostered thanks to the possibility offered by the network to publish, spread, and open up to a larger public. The possibilities to share and make production visible to others is also an important added value that shall be exploited by VET providers and will use the most common communication channels used by the younger generation.

In this way, young people also learn how to make positive use of new technologies.

In the perspective of a "networked culture", the stage is only one of the possible "theatres" of the implementation of what has been achieved in the project. The scene can extend (spatially and temporally) in multiple environments and multimedia contexts, developing a teaching strategy that takes into account the communicative mode typical of the digital natives, and from which in many cases the education and training system keeps its distance.

Target group

The activities concerning ICT can be realized by only involving a specific part of the class and not the entire class group. It depends on the group and individual dynamics. Theatrical operators, ICT trainer and curricular trainers have to cooperate in defining the most effective and suitable solution in identifying the students attending the ICT laboratory during the theatrical one.

Students can be involved in small groups, individually or in pairs, according to their desires or capabilities.

Thus, possible participants of the ICT/Multimedia part of the laboratory could be:

a) all students involved in the theatrical laboratory, spacing out the two laboratories;

b) some of the students interested in ICT but also participating in the theatrical laboratories;

c) some students that, not feeling comfortable in participating in the theatrical

activities, could be involved thanks to ICT (and then they will also join the theatrical activities);

d) students of other vocational training courses, interested in the matter or attending courses of graphic design or informatics, at risk of drop out (the activities could also be useful to motivate them into the subject).

In the case students participating in the ICT laboratory are not known to the group, including them in the first step (the circle) would be a good way to connect them to the rest of the group. As they are going to film and take pictures of others, a secure environment shall be created.

Integration with the good practice of the theatre workshop

Sound and image, communication and audiovisual narrative are investigated by students while developing technological skills (scientific-technological area of knowledge) working on the technological performance of images, creating sound and music outputs through editing software and image processing.

The first step to take is to "computerize" the theatrical experience students are directly living or have lived.

Students learn how to professionally use cameras or digital camcorders and, at the same time, they manage the "visual" part of communication: through images they learn how to show and express feelings.

Working on the images means students will acquire a series of technical skills (scientific and technological axis) ranging from formats sizing, to the knowledge of the chromatic use of colors (shade, saturation, balancing, etc), and the use of specific software for editing and digital picture retouching.

For each stage of the implementation of theatrical laboratory, students, supported by the trainer, may realize images and videos using digital technologies.

Starting from these "raw materials" (already geared for particular purposes), each user is given a personalized path for the acquisition of skills and knowledge aimed at the re-elaboration of the images to develop multimedia products.

Working on images is a powerful and actual tool to communicate with other people. The possibility to publish achievements on the web, may be the opportunity to reflect about the values that an improper use of the net can distort friendship.

In Nicomachea Ethics Aristotle said that "*the will of friendship rises quickly, but not the friendship itself*": through the internet, friendship sparks off quickly,

just the time of a request and acceptance and it flows through the mechanism of friends of friends. But it is important to teach young people that they should stop and think about what the term friendship really means in light of the experience of self-reflection set during the theatrical experience.

The project's target group best represents the digital generation, people who get on well with digital devices of various kinds, where, perhaps, the computer, is the least of their interests, if not for the fact that it allows them to keep in touch with their peers.

Nowadays, it is more natural for young people to use a smart-phone or tablet, to access social networks or to take pictures or shooting videos in a superficial way.

The association between the theatrical experience and the acquisition of ICT and multimedia skills is also useful to:

• go deeper in technical-scientific skills that new technologies are based on, but also to acquire humanistic skills, thanks to the "language" of photography, film, audiovisual media in general;

• give free space to students' expressiveness and creativity;

• make students understand that history is not the one written down in textbooks but it is also built through a selection and storage of images, or videos, as the narrative path of the theatrical action can continue to exist, through the memories linked to a visual identity.

Students have the opportunity to leave testimony of their personal history and be aware of their life experience within the theatrical and ICT paths.

The ability to record the theatrical activity involves a period to get familiar with technology, even intuitively, at first, or by dividing the group, if large, in two. While one follows the theatrical workshop the other is engaged in the multimedia workshop and vice versa.

The idea is also that to begin using devices that students know well, such as smartphone, then move to more complex devices as, for example, a camcorder, leaving students free to frame, shoot or film following their own inspiration and sensitivity.

Through the analysis of the ICT and multimedia outcomes it will be possible to start developing the basis of a photographic or film language and provide them with growing technical skills (references to mathematics, physics or chemistry follow up).

ICT trainers can start with small groups of learners by carrying out portraits, in black and white or in colour of their peer while performing the exercises.

Then gradually, backdrops or lighting setting will be added and then move on to photographic or video shooting of particular moments of theatrical expressiveness in a scenic contest and backstage.

A quite long phase will be that of processing the digital outcomes.

The inclusion of concepts related to the acquisition of skills in the technical-scientific area can be facilitated by software such as Adobe Photoshop or InDesign where the use of measurement systems, units of measure conversion, calculation of percentage, proportions, area, geometry, mathematical calculation will be the background to the processing of the material produced.

With the software Apple GarageBand, a sort of recording studio, it will be possible to process sounds or music to be matched to the different digital media.

Digital and multimedia outputs realized by students may be uploaded and shared on the THEATRE project website and even through social networks or blogs. Students shall be involved in the choice of the digital products to be published on the internet because publishing means to show oneself and get involved not only within the group, but externally, toward the surrounding environment.

Steps

Develop awareness
– The importance of languages (verbal, gestural, photographic, film)
– The importance of "history" (to narrate oneself through images, visual chronology)
– The importance of deepening (not limiting oneself to the most simple and intuitive functions of devices but to know in depth their potential)

Develop contents
– Use of smartphones
– Use of cameras
– Using camcorder
– Analysis, choice and storage of media outcomes

Processing contents
– Digital photo retouching of the images

– Designing a multimedia presentation
– Making a video editing
– Develop contents for a blog

Giving back contents
– Publishing the images and videos produced on the website of the project "Theatre"
– Production of an informative video on the methodology of the theatre workshop
– Implementation of a theatrical event open to the public
– Making an interactive DVD with all the materials produced

Additional use of ICT and multimedia connected to THEATRE laboratory

An additional and slightly different way to use ICT and multimedia within the theatrical laboratory may be based on the use of social media. Social media is particularly popular amongst young people, and sometimes use them superficially and/or for wrong purposes.

Operators and trainers could involve students in using the different social media to express thoughts and results of the theatrical laboratory, create texts, etc. Social media could also be used to create group relationship (for example creating and using common chats to talk about the theatrical activities and, generally, keep the groups and relationship vital and positive).

The direct participation of the ICT or other operators is useful to monitor the correct use of social media and also to strengthen the relationship with students.

Integration between the professionals involved (theatre experts and ICT teacher)

The integration between the professionals is built through preliminary meetings in which the teachers, the theatre experts and the ICT teacher discuss about the methods, timing and how to interact together.

The ICT teacher takes part in the first meetings of the theatrical workshop, in order to be recognized as part of the group itself.

The co-presence of the ICT teacher as part of the group during educational

theatre workshop is not constant. So theatrical operators schedule when the ICT teacher will be present during the theatre workshop and when in the multimedia workshop will process the contents and deepen the technical-scientific skills.

The dialogue between the theatre professionals and the ICT teacher shall go on throughout the project.

Theatrical operators and the ICT trainer shall decide together when to carry out shooting and the general outline of products, even if they share the aim to give space to students with their personality and timing to suggest the contents.

Except from the vocational skills to be learnt, according to the directives of the partner country, it is suggested, with regard to the validation of the skills acquired, to adopt an alternative methodology, so as to exclude any reference to "traditional school", that was at the root of the initial dropout of the target group (see paragraph "Identification" and chapter "Evaluation of results").

How to connect THEATRE laboratory

with the acquisition of educational and vocational knowledge and skills

The theatrical approach aims to promote, firstly, the leading role of adolescents in the construction, implementation and evaluation of self-help paths, fostering a significant improvement in their well-being in the community. This, in turn, paves the way for further improvements in many sectors of their lives, including their ability to acquire VET contents and their motivation, even within their further lifelong learning strategies.

Thus the methodology is firstly useful to let students acquire and improve:
• Life skills
• Key competences

Once the methodology is established, there could also be introduced the acquisition of vocational knowledge, skills and competences. Established means from the point of view of students but also on the point of view of operators and VET institution applying it.

Life skills

The theatre workshop carried out using the "Cosquillas" methodology within IVET fosters motivational support, guidance, tutoring and the prevention of dropout, as it is aimed to recover basic skills and guarantee attendance and motivation in at-risk students.

The theatrical activities developed through the Cosquillas methodology enable learners to acquire key life skills and competences thanks to an alternative learning methodology, particularly effective for those students that cannot afford mainstream and "classical" learning methodologies, because

of personal, cultural problems, school failures, physical, psychological or be-havioral difficulties.

The most common life and personal skills, the good practice is supposed to empower are described in the table below:

LIFE SKILL How the good practice improves the life skill	
Stress management

Creativity | The "Cosquillas" methodology allows to:
• know, identify and manage the steps of a given task in relatively complex situations with creativity;
• define the best action strategies, on the base of knowledge of one's characteristics and comparison with others;
• commit oneself to reach a target, both individually and group;
• actively take part in a complex process (from the first exercises aimed at fostering the knowledge of oneself and others, to writing a script and put it on stage);
• make use of the knowledge learnt during the course to develop a shared project. |
| Effective relationship

Effective communication | The "Cosquillas" methodology allows to:
• learn contents linked to the areas of competence (languages, math-ematical, scientific-technological, …) starting from a typically theatri-cal activity and a work on oneself;
• be able to catch and interpret feelings and meanings at first only through body language and miming and then more and more with words;
• develop concepts, feelings and issues through verbal and non-verbal communication catching the characteristic of one's communicative style and of the other;
• transform and use educational contents and personal experiences through the language of theatre, making use of different communica-tive channels;
• understand explicit and implicit meanings of the messages of different kind of texts on factual and abstract topics learnt formally and informal-ly, available in a variety of contexts with tools and different languages;
• produce various kinds of texts on factual and abstract topics using with formal correctness and consistency, different languages and the subject knowledge acquired demonstrating originality and autonomy. |
| Self-consciousness

Empathy | The "Cosquillas" methodology allows to:
• understand and accept one's limitations and potential in a constructive way;
• work within a group, establishing relationship of reciprocal trust;
• establish a positive and collaborative relationship with trainers and peers;
• promote participatory and collaborative ways of working so to annul the dynamics of competitiveness;
• participate in joint activities;
• respecting the different roles, giving one's contribution and asking for discussion and dialogue. |

Emotional management	The "Cosquillas" methodology allows to: • recognize and apply appropriate behaviour with regard to the different social contexts where one operates, thanks to the relationships with the trainers and peers that develop throughout the activity; • have ability in relation to the activities and the rules of the group and therefore of the social group where one is involved; • respect the rules of the different social contexts in which one operates; • relate to the rules in a conscious and subconscious and purposeful way in the respect of individual and collective rights.
Problem solving *Take proper decisions*	The "Cosquillas" methodology allows to: • solve efficiently some difficult situations using the information gathered and the tools available, both personal and linked to environment; • tackle difficult situations using in a creative way, information, procedures and tools and also suggesting alternative solutions; • develop a thought process that through the development of individual and group activities help to link the contents of training and learning ability; • apply to different contexts, the contents and knowledge learnt in different settings and activities.

The theatrical workshop activities can therefore be considered an enabling methodology to support learners in acquiring life skills for personal development thanks to methods consistent with the teaching contents that are part of the school curriculum and the individual needs.

According to the second innovative point concerning the implementation of the good practice within the IVET system, some curricular skills and competences could be acquired thanks to the "Cosquillas" methodology within an IVET course or vocational programme.

Key competences

According to the Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning [Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006], key competences for lifelong learning are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Thus they are particularly necessary for personal fulfillment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment. Key competences are essential in a knowledge society and guarantee more flexibility in the labour force, allowing it to adapt more quickly to constant changes in an increasingly interconnected world. They are also a major factor in innovation, productivity

and competitiveness, and they contribute to the motivation and satisfaction of workers and the quality of work.

Key competences should be acquired by young people at the end of their compulsory education and training, equipping them for adult life, particularly for working life, whilst forming a basis for further learning.

The acquisition of key competences is even more crucial for students at risk of drop out, with low school performances and for those who have to choose their further vocational and training path. The development of key competence through alternative learning methodology is particularly effective, because of its character of practical learning, alternative learning environments and importance of each single individual.

The table below shows the main key competences and how the good practice, in its renewed version (Cosquillas methodology and ICT laboratory), contributes to their improvement by involving students at risk of drop out.

Key competence *Description*	How the good practive fosters the key competences
Communication in the mother tongue *Ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts.*	The renewed good practice allows to: • be able to catch and interpret feelings and meanings at first only through body language and mimic and then more and more with words; • develop concepts, feelings and issues through verbal communication catching the characteristic of one's communicative style and of the other; • produce various kinds of texts on factual and abstract topics using with formal correctness and consistency of language and the subject knowledge acquired demonstrating originality and autonomy.
Communication in foreign languages *Involve, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing.*	The renewed good practice allows to: • understand explicit and implicit meanings of the messages of different kind of texts on factual and abstract topics learnt formally and informally, available in a variety of contexts with tools and different languages; • create multicultural workgroup that can communicate at the beginning only with non-verbal communication and then, over time, using different languages; • share experience and knowledge between different cultures.

Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen.

The renewed good practice, especially in the part concerning the ICT laboratory, allows to:
• recognize the role of technology in everyday life and social economy;
• be able to understand the interactions between living needs and technological processes;
• conceptual structures of technological knowledge;
• phases of a technological process (sequence of operations: from '"idea" to' "product");
• design a solution path structured in stages;
• solving techniques to a problem using fractions, proportions, percentages, geometric formulas.

Digital competence

Involve the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT).

The renewed good practice, especially in the part concerning the ICT laboratory, allows to:
• understand the main operational principles and the structure of the main physical devices and software;
• use the basic functions of most common software to produce text and multimedia communications, computing and display data, drawing, catalogue information, search for information and communicate on the network;
• general structure and operations common to the different application packages (Type menu, editing operations, creation and storage of documents, etc);
• working with the basic specifications of some of the common software applications.

Learning to learn

Related to learning, the ability to pursue and organise one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities.

The renewed good practice allows to:
• develop, according to different themes, the ability to deepen given concept and situations;
• implement, thanks to both individual and group work, specific tasks in a given period of time;
• make links among different fields that foster learning and the deepening of different topics;
• develop a lateral thinking that through writing a script facilitate the connections with the contents of training and learning ability.

Social and civic competences

Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation

The renewed good practice allows to:
• Recognize the time and space dimensions through the observation of events and data collection;
• Get familiar to the main factors social, economic characterizing the contemporary world, including in relation to different cultures thanks to both the 5 steps activities and additional ones;
• Identify the different institutional models of social organization and the main relations between person-family-society-state;
• Adopt responsible behaviour in everyday life to protecting and respecting other persons;
• Analyse problems related to integration and protection of human rights and the promotion of equal opportunities.

Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship

Ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

The renewed good practice allows to:
• establish a positive and collaborative relationship with trainers and peers;
• promote a participatory and collaborative ways of working so to annul the dynamics of competitiveness;
• participate in joint activities;
• develop a thought process that through the development of individual and group activities help to link the contents of training and learning ability;
• apply to different contexts contents and knowledge learnt in different contexts and activities;
• increase knowledge of skills and competences valuable for the labour market.

Cultural awareness and expression

Involve appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

The renewed good practice allows to
• develop different means for express feelings and ideas;
• thanks to improvisation drama, support the free expression of the self;
• support the use of art, photograph, movie, sound, music and drama in vocational contexts;
• understand the products of audio-visual communication;
• develop multimedia (text, images, sounds, etc), even with digital technologies;
• empower basics for reading/listening to an artwork (painting, architecture, sculpture, photography, film, music…) and main forms of artistic expression.

Vocational skills and competences

In order to properly perform the good practice within a vocational training path for students at risk of drop out, operators and trainers shall thus define at the beginning of the activities – which competences and skills are going to be achieved (fully or partially) through the theatrical and ICT laboratories. This can be reached having in mind:

• the characteristics and needs of the learners involved;
• the range of competences and skills the good practice may improve and foster in students;
• the skills and competences foreseen by the curricula.

According to the comparison of these three elements, all operators involved in the learning process (trainers, teachers, coordinators, education managers, theatrical instructors, ICT trainer) shall identify a specific set of skills and competences that will be provided by the participation of learners to the theatrical methodology. The clear and early identification of skills and competences is useful to:

• favour integration between the theatrical activities and the vocational and

educational pathway in term of time management and achievement of curricular intermediate and final results;

• define roles of theatrical instructors within the IVET programme and the most effective cooperation with curricular trainers and teachers;

• identify proper monitoring and evaluation criteria at both individual and curricular level to assess personal development and the acquisition of compulsory vocational knowledge and competences.

Below an **example** on how to integrate theatrical workshop with the acquisition of educational and vocational contents

EXAMPLE TO INTEGRATE THEATRICAL WORKSHOP AND CURRICULAR SUBJECTS based on alternative learning methods

Main topic:
At the beginning of the school year, a topic is chosen. The topic will be based on which theatrical laboratory will be developed and the most relevant school subjects selected.
Example main topic selected:
• the journey

How is the main topic selected?
The choice of topic ("thread") of the project is carried out at the beginning of the school year in a meeting where teachers and operators of the theater workshop discuss together the school curriculum and students' characteristics. Based on these two macro-factors, they choose a topic that can be used both in the laboratory and, at the same time, can have a connection with different school subjects.
In the example of the journey:
• the journey may be conceived both physically and metaphorically (the passage from adolescence to adulthood);
• the journey can be linked to subjects such as history, geography, social sciences, technology, etc.

The choice of a topic is functional in the project as:
• it allows, through a topic seemingly far from the experience and the students' daily lives, starting a theatrical and personal pathway without requiring an immediate emotional involvement;
• by means of the processing concept through the theatrical laboratory, it enables the introduction of topics of interest to students and to involve them directly in process;
• it allows to link together different school subjects and also connect them with the experiences and interests of the students.

Starting from the educational and vocational attainment students are expected to reach at the end of school year, it allows students to become more involved in the educational process using different ways of approaching school subjects.
Often, on the basis of the interests or preferences of the students, other topics may emerge. Topics that often emerge from the comparison with the students are, for example: drugs and bullying.

Methodology
Starting from the theatrical activities based on the Cosquillas methodology (aimed at grasping and interpreting feelings and meanings firstly with body language and facial expression, and, then, gradually more and more with words), educational contents are gradually introduced.

• Firstly the operators involved apply the Cosquillas methodology with the aim of supporting students in acquiring self-confidence and get used to non-verbal communication. As time goes on, words will be used more frequently, letting them speak.
• Secondly, the methodology focuses on stage performance, even if the passage should not be noticed by students in order to avoid refusal or fears.
• Once students become conscious they are involved in a drama activity, curricular subjects may be gradually introduced.

The various curricular subjects are afforded independently by trainers and teachers during lessons, to be widened and made subjective through the laboratory activities. The contents covered are an integral part of the annual teaching plan, and therefore may become subject of evaluation during the final examination.
Periodically, the teachers and operators of the theater workshop meet and update each other on developments in their respective classes, so that the content covered in one class is taken back into the laboratory and vice versa.

Timing
The timing may be different depending on various factors (type of student, course of study, available funding, ways of working with the teaching staff).
Timing could be, for example:
• 1 time per week for 3 hours;
• 4 mornings a week for 4 hours;
• 1 time per week for 4 hours.
The different intensity also depends on the group size.
The lower or higher frequency leads to higher or lower contribution of drama workshop to acquire curricular subjects.

Methodological/didactic pathway
Below some methodological and didactic steps based on the topic "the journey" are listed as examples.

1 / The circle

The aim is the creation of a group with new parameters and new rules, space exploration and the consequent psycho-motor awareness, awareness of their shyness with use of personal dynamics to hide them or make them emerge.

2 / Watching movies / listening to a song

Eg. In the case of topic "journey", the students may watch films such as "The Motorcycle Diary"
(another film for example: "Ninos Du Brasil")

The activity, starting from watching the movie, introduces some issues that will be subsequently developed through the laboratory techniques with educational purposes.
Watching a movie (as well as listening to a song) is used to attract the attention of students and starting "from away" to a location that will get closer to the experience of the students.
The choice of film is carried out in relation to the thread and the topic chosen and shall be identified with the collaboration of teachers.

3 / Choosing a character

The operators managing the theatrical workshop ask each student to choose a character of the movie that has particularly impressed them and they are asked to outline its main visible and inferable features.

4 / Implementing the step "The pictures" based on movies' imagines

The 2nd step of the Cosquillas Methodology is accomplished by asking the students to refer to images, feelings and scenes that have affected them personally by watching the movie. Aim: understanding and processing of the image.

5 / Reading newspaper articles

The theater operators select and read together with the students newspaper articles related to the movie subject. In the case of the film "The Motorcycle Diaries" particular attention could be directed to the social conditions in Latin America compared with that of illegal immigrants in Italy.
The goal is to link the themes of the movie to students' reality and actual lives.
Also students may be asked to find and share with others newspapers articles related to the movie.

6 / Bodywork – emotional representation

A feeling perceived as emotionally important for students is firstly expressed by words and then through non-verbal communication. This exercise can happen only when a structured and trusting relationship between theatrical operators and students.
This activity allows the processing and management of impressive feelings that students often express in a negative way, as anger and aggressiveness.

7 / Free associations

Starting from a single common word, students associate many other words / images that are linked to each other according to the experience and personal knowledge. Results will be very different to one another. Aim of this task is to create group dynamics focused on mutual listening.

8 / Creation and description of own theatrical character

Each student has to conceive and describe their own character, on the basis of the elaboration on the topic by watching the movie, by verbal and non-verbal activities realised. To outline their own character, students have to arrange: ID card, description of walk of life, social, cultural, geographical and historical background.

9 / Scenic representation of the character

Each student, starting from the character created, describes it to the group contextualizing his/her characteristics (eg. describing the historical background, geographical and social environment in which the character moves in Latin America or Africa).

10 / Songs in foreign languages (eg. Latin American and/or African songs)

Operators can introduce other types of expression, such as music, that support the various stage performances and allow the group to investigate some issues and introduce others.

11 / Poetry of M. L. King: "Always be the best of who you are"

Operators can introduce other types of expression, such as poetry, that support the various stage performances and allow the group to investigate some issues and introduce others.

12 / Deepening some aspects concerning Latin America and African Countries

Operators provides geographical hints (major cities, population, capital, morphological and geographical and problems pertaining to them); historical-cultural features (study of indigenous cultures, some historical-colonisation, slavery-social problems related to the mixing of races and cultures).

13 / Geographical re production of Latin America and Africa maps

Free hand re production, position of main geographical features.

14 / Arrangement of a brief drama performance

A brief drama performance is created, thanks to the active cooperation of students, based on all activities developed during the pathway, based on verbal and non-verbal communication and aimed at educational purposes. Acting also helps students in developing memory through both speech and body language.

15 / Creation of "pictures"

Each student becomes the leading actor and others support by participating.

For each student a "picture" is created. Each picture has a leading actor and others support him/her completing the picture. This exercise is useful to enhance the leading role of each student in a positive way, assuming that each adolescent needs to feel the protagonist, but also to have a supporting role, even when they are not the center of attention.

16 / Strengthening of the verbal communication skills at individual and group level / Strengthening of expressive ways at individuals and group level (both through writing and graphic)

Thanks to an ongoing dialogue between non-verbal communication and verbal communication, participants are able to manage their emotions, accept them and express them with awareness.

The use of writing and drawing helps amplifying soft skills related to the communication aspect.

Developing the process within a group helps students to increase their team group and relational skills.

Didactic contents that may be developed through the process
• *Mother tongue language: analyze various kinds of documents, writing texts and interpretation of text.*
• *History: the socio-economic situation of the Latin countries of Africa during time.*
•*Music: research and execution of music for and during the performance, exploring different types of traditional and modern music (e.g. Latin American and African music).*
• *Art: arrangement of the script for the performance and study the artwork of artists from South America and Africa.*
• *Technology: use of Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) to prepare texts and other supporting documents for both theatrical activities and connected curricular ones; study of energy sources in Latin America and Africa and their social and environmental implications.*
• *Foreign languages: study of texts, sentences and poetry in foreign languages to act them during the performance, study poems / ballads and some tales of traditional Latin American Spanish.*
• *Religion: religion in Latin America and Africa.*
• *Geography: The countries of Latin America and Africa.*
• *Science: infectious diseases (eg. leprosy),their biomedical characteristics and geographical spread; the immune and endocrine system; drugs. Plate tectonics and the resulting geographical structure of Latin America and Africa.*

Other relevant vocational skills and competences

Theatrical workshops may also be linked to other vocational areas, such as a digital web camera, sound and movie actions that are not only designed to provide advanced knowledge in the digital domain but also to develop a self-awareness and improve skills and competences through the creation of audio-visual documentary. The "core" of the asset can be defined as an interdisciplinary integration between alternative forms of learning, educational activity developed through drama and a 360-degree use of new media.

Below the main key and transversal skills that may be acquired thanks to the ICT/Multimedia laboratory, integrated to the "Cosquillas methodology", are briefly reported.

Key and transversal skills

Be aware of the role the technological processes play in the changing environment, considered as a system.
Recognize the role of technology in everyday life and social economy.

Be able to understand the interactions between living needs and technological processes.

Ability to explain the operational principle and the structure of the main physical devices and software.

Use the basic functions of most common software to produce text and multimedia communications, computing and display data, drawing, catalogue information, search for information and communicate on the network.

Understanding the meaning of logical-operating numbers belonging to different number systems. Use the different notations and know how to convert from one to the other (from fractions to decimals, fractions apparent to integers, fractions to percentages) form.

Design a solution path structured in stages.

Understand the products of audio-visual communication.

Develop multimedia (text, images, sounds, etc), even with digital technologies

The table below shows the main vocational skills that could be acquired thanks to the ICT/Multimedia laboratory, integrated to the "Cosquillas methodology". The degree of detail and the choice among the reported skills and competences, vary according to the characteristics and needs of learners.

Vocational skills and competences

Understanding the characteristics and communicative aims of the graphic product (commercial, informative, educational, etc).

Identify the most appropriate design solution of the graphic product, the communication objectives, the target audience, the technical characteristics of the media used for dissemination to the public.

Define how to integrate the different types of visual communication (static images, text, videos, etc).

Use the main application software for the development of graphic design.

Use of main computer applications for page layout and word processing (in the main operating systems).

Management of main IT applications; processing and image processing, digital photos and video (in the main operating systems).

Understanding the process of the creation of a product graph: phases, activities, technologies.

Recognize the most suitable sources, methods and technological tools and materials for the acquisition of images and graphics (photographs, drawings, graphics, etc).

Adopt applications useful to edit and compose images through operations colouring, photo retouching and photomontage.

Evaluation and exploitation of results

The quality of a service and an activity addressed to people can be assessed in terms of efficiency while the cultural and subjective elements can be assessed in terms of effectiveness. The efficiency is evaluated considering the capacity of the service to achieve the results with a given amount of resources, while the evaluation of effectiveness is based on the adequacy of the service in relation to the needs. The quality of an intervention is based on both objective elements (structures, economic and human resources, equipment, technology, etc) and subjective ones (culture of the organizers, operators, motivation to act, fulfilment hoped for and perceived from those to whom the intervention is addressed and those who have implemented it).

Thinking about the good practice of the theatre workshop, concerning efficiency, it is able to provide services useful to the recipients without having access to substantial funding resources. With regard to effectiveness, the outcomes are considered in qualitative terms based on operators' and teachers' opinion both during and at the of the experience (increase of self-esteem, improvement of interpersonal relationships, higher capacity of concentration, etc) and on the training outcomes achieved by the participants at the end of the theatre workshop (e.g. passing rate at state exams, being within the education system, contraction of absenteeism, etc).

The assessment of the service shall be based on shared indicators and analysis tools able to monitor and assess in a reliable way the effectiveness of the actions implemented, both by the operators who implement the workshop and the curricular teachers/trainers. The more widespread evaluation procedures test on the rate of satisfaction about the service carried out at the end of the activities or at the end of school year, or tests on school well-being, administered to

verify if and how the actions implemented have led to an improvement in the subjective perception of students.

Evaluation process to support theatre workshop

In order to implement effective measures to prevent and contrast dropout it appears necessary to arrange, to support workshop activity, an evaluation system that can be shared and repeated over time.

The assessment of results shall be developed on the basis of specific indicators and methodology useful to verify the impact of the pathway and activities implemented starting from the needs of each individual involved, strictly related to specific problems and characteristics of each one and so to highlight the potential and skills. Also past experiences and forecast future outcomes, both at educational level and subjective level, shall be taken into account.

In order to define an assessment method and, therefore, specific indicators to highlight the effectiveness of the activities, it is fundamental to keep in mind some essential concepts.

Specifically, the theatre workshop aims to promote motivation and inclusion, supplies a useful teaching strategy addressed to those students who experience learning difficulties or those who reject school because of cultural and emotional problems. It encourages autonomy in personal planning, goes beyond the class group and creates a learning environment able to respond to the needs of problematic students. It enhances the skills of each student into a cooperative pathway and makes room for activities of teaching/learning aimed at supporting inclusion.

The evaluation about the effectiveness of this kind of activity must therefore take into account that the workshop is set up as a learning setting where knowledge and skills, cognitive, social, emotional, affective, aspects are effectively integrated. The workshop activities, as well as the ones developed in the good practice, are focused on both to the development of the individual student and the group class, therefore the process of evaluation must take into account this twofold dimension, in particular from the relational point of view.

The theatrical activities foster the development of a learning style based on global thinking, sensory, verbal, impulsive that interacts significantly with the personal experiences of individuals who are encouraged towards self-assessment processes and increased level of self-esteem and motivation to learning.

Essentially, the aim is to stimulate and make the participants to acquire skills that are usually referred to as life skills and cross-cultural competences.

The establishment of indicators and methods to assess the effectiveness of the intervention should therefore be coherent with:

• *the specific purpose of the activities,* aimed at the acquisition/discovery from the students involved of that range of cognitive, emotional and relationship skills that can enable them to active stakeholders of their own life and training path and deal with the demands and challenges of daily life, reducing the risk of dropout.

• *The learning mode,* the workshop path involves different steps whose aim is to gradually bring students at the discovery, acceptance and use of their own personal characteristics (the circle game, the pictures, etc). The teaching workshop then interact with the school curriculum and is connected to it through the acquisition of key citizenship competences that every student-citizen must acquire in order to build a training and life path. The methodology of the theatrical workshop thus fosters knowledge as the outcome of a learning methods and the acquisition of always more complex competences, it is therefore enhanced the creative potential of each one, according to a logic of ongoing training to achieve skills of the "decision-like" type that allow individuals to take control of their life choices, school and extracurricular ones. The assessment of the effectiveness of a path requires the preparation of indicators able to respond to the requirements of life skills and key competences. It also requires an approach different from the one used to assess the learning within a standard training path.

• *The characteristics of the individual and the group,* the workshop path is addressed to young people at risk of dropping out or that have dropped out from the education and training pathway. Each participant has its own personal life experience and that affects and is affected in a different way within the group dynamics. The effectiveness of the action must therefore be assessed both from the point of view of the individual and the group and must be outlined starting from the initial conditions of each participant at the beginning of the path. Only if we know the needs and the initial problems, it would be possible to find out if there is room for improvement.

• *The interaction between the operators and the participants,* which differs from the standard approach teacher/student, that is because it happens in a workshop context and also because the operator does not "teach", but creates the condition so that students acquire their knowledge and skills in autonomy. For this reason operators' task is not that to introduce concepts but to foster

the best conditions allowing students to build them. The "role" of the student, therefore, is just as vital as the one of the operator/trainer.

Thereby, the evaluation process about the effectiveness of the activities must have the following characteristics:
　　• it must be *shared* because assessment is in itself a training objective;
　　• it must be *participated*, the higher the level of participation the more effective is learning, since the cognitive operations necessary for evaluating (analysis) are the same that produce learning;
　　• it must be *analytic*, that is, divide the indicators up, allowing the modelling of activities and content;
　　• it must be *formalized*, which means, arranging formal evaluation tools (observation-evaluation grids) that allow to put attention on all the fundamental aspects of the activities and/or of the outcomes evaluated.

In order to evaluate the acquisition of the competences at the end of the activities it become therefore fundamental to define indicators and an evaluation grid that enable to establish, given a specific initial condition, whether/and how the participants make use of their own capability and potential using the knowledge and the abilities acquired to express themselves, to make sense of their life experiences and to the ones designed for training purposes, solving in the best possible way obstacles or problems.
　　As stated before these features can be found within the ICF classification (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health), that may be applied in relation to the good practice of theatre workshop.
　　As we have seen, the profiles of the students at risk of dropping out are extremely varied and rich of nuances psychological, relational, motivational and identity, which are closely related to the context they belong to. In order to define the factors of discomfort and test how the develop in the course of time you must refer to the bio-psychosocial functioning of the individual as good functioning in different domains., as defined in 2001 by ICF framework that enables an analysis of the different casual interconnections. The ICF framework thus provides a powerful conceptual basis for building a grid of reference of the educational and learning functioning of the different subjects.
　　In the educational action, especially when we talk of young people at risk of dropping out, there is a risk to classify them within pre-determined categories.

Through the ICF instead we focus on indicators that can act as a reading grid of the development of the potential in the learning process, in this way (regardless of whether the person to whom it is addressed come from a migrant background, disability or social problems) you do not make the mistake of thinking that the needs of young people at risk of dropping out are different from those of their peers, but it highlights that they have special needs that should be taken into account in education and teaching.

The focus on the environment and causes of the problems rather than on the symptoms makes the ICF method an effective tool to support the process of assessment of what a person can do and/or for other purposes.

Very often it is thought, mistakenly, that ICF concerns only disabled people; but it affects everyone. Health and health-related states (as psychosocial well-being) may find their place in ICF, in other words ICF is a universal tool.

As stated above, the profiles of students at risk of dropping out are extremely varied and rich of psychological, relational, motivational and identity characteristics, which are closely related to the context they belong to. The bio-psychosocial model of ICF thus provides a powerful conceptual basis for building a grid of reference of the educational and learning functioning and possible risks of young people.

In the educational action, especially when we talk of young people at risk of dropping out, there is a risk to classify them within pre-determined categories. Through the ICF instead we focus on indicators that can act as a reading grid of the development of the potential in the learning process, in this way (regardless of whether the person to whom it is addressed come from a migrant background, disability or social problems) one can make the mistake of thinking that the needs of young people at risk of dropping out are different from those of their peers, but it highlights that they have special needs that should be taken into account in education and teaching.

Here underneath we outline a proposal of indicators to be used in carrying out the theatrical methodology taking into consideration some items of the checklist ICF-CY i.e., lists of indicators that draw the observation of the educator/trainer on some aspects of the student's functioning that is thought to be useful in order to build a "functioning profile ". The indicators have been taken from the checklist ICF, some of them have been put together to make it easier the lay out of the area of analysis[6].

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6. For complete check list see http://apps.who.int/classifications/icfbrowser/

Learning to learn
• **Carry out simple and complex tasks**
Prepare, start and organize time and space to accomplish a task; perform a task with more than one component, sequentially or simultaneously.
This indicator can be declined in three 3 options: carry out tasks; carry out tasks individually or in group.

• **Focusing attention**
Concentrate oneself on specific stimuli, e.g. getting rid of distracting elements.

• **Acquisition simple and complex skills**
Develop basic and complex competence to give life to integrated actions and activities coming from the acquisition of one or more skills.

Activities and participation

General tasks and demands

Learn and aplly knowledge

Planning
• **Carry out daily routine**
Perform simple or complex and coordinated actions for planning, managing and accomplish daily tasks or day-to-day tasks, as the time of budgeting and make plans for separate activities throughout the day.

• **Manage one's level of activity**
Implement actions and behaviour in order to make use of the resources available in terms of time and energy to perform procedures or day-to-day tasks.

Activities and participation

General tasks and demands

Communication
• **Communication-input**
Understand verbal and non-verbal messages, both in the literal and implicit meaning, as, for example, understanding if a statement asserts a fact or is an idiomatic expression.
This indicator can be declined in different options: verbal, non-verbal (gestures, signs, symbols, drawings,and pictures) and written.

• **Communication-output**
Create words, sentences and longer texts conveying messages with literal and implicit meaning, as, for example to explain a fact or tell a story; use gestures, symbols or drawings to express or convey ideas or facts; produce messages or texts through writing.
This indicator can be declined in different options: verbal, non-verbal (gestures, signs, symbols, drawings,and pictures) and written.

• **Conversation and use of device and communication techniques**
Undertake, carry out and complete an exchange of thoughts and ideas, but also opinions, or a debate by means of spoken, written or other forms of languages, in formal and informal contexts; use technological equipment, from the simplest to the most complex ones (telephone, fax, computer, etc) as a means of communication and communicate effectively through them.

Activities and participation

Collaborate and participate
• **Interpersonal interactions and relationships**
Carry out actions and activities that are necessary to develop basic and

complex interpersonal interactions (strangers, friends, relatives, family, etc) in a contextual and socially appropriate way.
This indicator can be declined in different options, here are the most relevant for our purpose:

Basic interactions and relationships:
– Respect and warmth in the relationships: show and respond to the consideration and esteem, in a contextual and socially appropriate way.
– Appreciation in the relationships: show and respond to satisfaction and gratitude, in a contextual and socially appropriate way.
– Tolerance in the relationships: show and respond to understanding and acceptance of the behavior, in a contextual and socially appropriate way.
– Criticism in the relationships: give and respond to implicit and explicit differences of opinions or disagreement, in a contextual and socially appropriate way.
– Physical contact in the relationships: have and respond to physical contact with others, in a contextual and socially appropriate way.

Relationships and complex interactions:
– Build and end relationships: start, carry on and end interpersonal interactions for a short or long period, in a contextual and socially appropriate way as, for example by introducing oneself, find and establish friendships and professional relationships, starting a relationship that then may become permanent, romantic or confidential.
– Regulate behavior within interpersonal interactions: regulate emotions and impulses, stimuli of verbal and physical aggression in the interpersonal interactions, in a contextual and socially appropriate way.
– Interact according to social rules: act independently in social interactions and conforming to the social conventions that define one's role position or other social status within interpersonal interactions.
– Keep distances. Be aware of and keep distance between oneself and others in a contextual and socially appropriate way.

These items may then be considered in relation to different types of interpersonal relationships. For example, some items related to this area of investigation concern family relationships, with strangers and the kind of loving and intimate relationships.

• **Attitudes**
They refer to this entry a set of items designed to define the attitudes as observable consequences of customs, practices, ideologies, values, norms, factual beliefs and religious beliefs. These attitudes affect the individual's behavior and the social life at all levels, interpersonal relationships and social participation. The values and beliefs are not codified separately from attitudes because it is assumed that they are the driving forces laying behind the attitudes.
This macro-indicator may be declined in several options, here the most relevant ones for our purpose:
– individual attitudes of family members;
– individual attitudes of the members of the enlarged family;
– individual attitudes of friends;

Activities and participation

Interpersonal interactions and relationships

Environmental factors

Attitudes

– individual attitudes of acquaintances, peers, colleagues, neighbors and members of the community;
– individual attitudes of strangers;
– individual attitudes of people in authority;
– individual attitudes of social-health workers;
– individual attitudes of health workers;
– cultural attitudes;
– social norms, practices and ideologies.

Act autonomously and responsibly
• Manage stress and psychological pressure
Making simple or complex and coordinated actions to manage and control the psychological pressures needed to carry out tasks that require psychological commitment or stress, distractions or crisis.
Activities and participation

• Manage responsibilities
Carrying out simple or complex and coordinated actions to manage one's activities, tasks and performances and evaluate the consequences in terms of duties.
General tasks and demands

Problem solving
• Problem solving
Finding solutions to questions or situations by identifying and analysing the problems, the options and the solutions by evaluating the potential effects of the solutions, carry out the chosen solution.
Activities and participation

Decision making
Make a choice between options, implement and evaluate its effects, such as deciding to undertake a task among the different tasks that must be carried out.
Learning and applying knowledge

Each item in the screening grid is evaluated with a **scale from 0 to 4**, where 0 means the student does not have any problems, while 4 means a severe condition, at the highest level. The same scale is used by ICF model as a universal method of classification of health states and functioning[7].

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7. In the definition of the qualifiers to be assigned to each item is not taken into account, in an experimental stage and considering the evaluation of the effectiveness limited to the good practice of the theatre workshop, to introduce the distinction between ability and performance, that is laid down by the ICF classification. The performance is the first component of Activities and Participation. It shows what a parson do in his/her own real, present context, that is to say what one's actually do in his/her real environment (home, school, work community, etc). The performance is strictly dependent on the environment and therefore may be different from the ability depending on how the environment affects it. The ability is, instead, the second qualifier of Activities and Participation. It indicates the highest probable level of functioning that a person can achieve in a given time; it shows what a person can do when the environment is not interfering nor facilitating. In other words the inner capacity is the ability of a person, regardless of the environment. Measuring the level of ability means to make a measurement as objective as possible in a standard environment, designed to neutralize the facilitating or hindering effects of the environment.

The scoring for each (or some) of the items mentioned, for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the theatre workshop may be carried out:

• for **each participant**;

• at the **beginning of the path**, but at a time where the operators who run the theatre workshop have already met and had the chance to deal with the participants (thus, after two or three meetings);

• at **the end of the path,** to analyse the possible space for improvement;

• **directly by the operators, teachers and trainers** (even in cooperation with the operators that carry out the theatrical activities). In this way, the score for each item will be supported by the knowledge of the personal and educational history of the individuals, both in the initial and final stage of the path. Similarly, the outcomes at the end of the path should be shared between theatrical operators and teachers/trainers of the school curriculum in order to organize targeted training activities that take into account the situation (and progress) made by the individual.

ICF, therefore, does not provide evaluation criteria on learning, it does not suggest what you do and how you foster it, it offers indicators for the observation of the functioning of the individual (disabled or not) that may help you to understand how to act on pedagogical and educational level, integrating and enriching other tools already in teachers' hands. For this reason it is particularly suitable for the need of monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of theatre workshop activity on the individual, as it uses an anthropological approach that makes the social, cultural and contextual environment a set of important factors for understanding the history of development of the student and his/her characteristics.

The identification of indicators within the method and ICF checklist must therefore:

• be coherent with the key competences, the acquisition of which is one of the main purposes of the good practice;

• facilitate the analysis of the students' needs by the operators and help them performing their tasks, according to the specific needs of the individual and the group;

• do not weigh down the path which in itself is flexible, malleable and strongly influenced by the participants, who are the protagonists;

• enable to identify the margins of improvement at the end of the path;

• be functional to the evaluating method used in training curriculum.

Thus, the list of ICF items may have multiple functions within the transfer of the good practice, according to THEATRE partners' implementation plans:

• *Descriptive function*

It helps trainers and teachers in translating into a quantitative dimension, the problems and difficulties that affect students at risk. Usually the identification of students at risk often relies on qualitative judgments or teachers' impressions.

• *Planning function*

It helps trainers and teachers and also the theatrical instructors in defining, according to the initial analysis of each student, intermediate and final objectives, milestones, activities and learning approaches both at individual and group level.

• *Assessment function*

It helps all trainers and operators involved (even the external one) in monitoring the effects and the progress at individual and group level. As the assessment is based on quantitative indicators, the outcomes could also be easily connected to the curricular and educational performance of each student.

Annex 1 provides an example of ICF check list for theatrical laboratory.

Other possible evaluation methodologies

As the use of ICF could be difficult to apply, especially if operators are not used to, different evaluation methodologies could be introduced, taking into account the topics stressed above. Two examples are described below

a. Interviews to participants at the end or during the implementation of the methodology

All participants may be asked for their:
• General impressions (open questions!)
• Which of the steps they liked most?
• Why?
• What did they learn personally during the 5 steps?
• In which step did they learn what exactly?
• What did the group as whole learn?

• How did the group climate change?
• What would the participant like to repeat?
• Why?

These interviews could be realized after each step, for example, or in different moments of the pathway. It is also a way to let them feel important and find out improvement in applying the methodology, thanks to their impressions and suggestions.

b. Self-assessment tests to beneficiaries
Another solution could be the provision of a final self-assessment, just after the end of activities and after some time since the conclusion, to verify the long-term effectiveness of the methodology and repeat it, if necessary. In this way, they can independently report on their distance travelled which involves them more in the process as experts in their own affairs while providing an additional mechanism of evaluation of the techniques.

The role
of education
and training operators

The good practice described in this guide combines elements of creative drama, improvisation, creative movement, and storytelling. The approach proposed aims to develop foundational skills needed in theatre arts that also have positive effects on literacy development, academic success and social interaction. The activities of the "Cosquillas" methodology can easily be integrated with content from other school subjects or content areas. The drama game or theatre game is a versatile teaching tool that reaches multiple learning styles, vocational areas, age groups, and levels of language and experience. To use theatrical methods one needs to learn them. This cannot be done using only textbooks or ready scenarios. The teacher himself/herself must learn methods and techniques of theatrical effects on his/her own body. It is true, in particular, in terms of psychodrama and socio-drama. Acquiring basic competences in this field (competence considerably lower than the competence of a therapists working with these methods) has to be done through participation in the activities of this nature. This situation is analogous to that of a skiing or sailing instructor. In both cases, they gain the skills needed to train others by themselves learning how to ski or sail.

Teachers' education is an important issue – by increasing their competences, we increase the quality of school work. It enables the development of positive aspects of school life and decreases its negative effects. Transfer of new experiences and new methods of teaching is a necessary means for implementing the changes and modernization of work at schools. It is a necessary condition without which no innovation will occur. Schools tend to stagnate in their present form, a form which usually not entirely responds to the needs of the current times. This brings with it a risk of reducing the effectiveness of their work.

Testing the methodology with trainers and operators

The first element to make the good practice work consists in having school managers, trainers, teachers and educational operators convinced that this methodology work. This meaning that operators involved should be convinced that:

• using theatre is an effective learning methodology;

• the theatrical methodology is not a further burden in the educational process but fits its purposes and, against the initial commitment it requires, it produces long lasting effects in learning and studying in students;

• developing life and transversal skills support young students in being motivated and acquire self-consciousness;

• the learner and its need are the most relevant factor in the education process, thus the second one shall be adapted to learner and not vice versa.

To support trainers, teachers and operators in applying the methodology, the most effective way is to test the Cosquillas' steps directly involving them[8].

The process could be the same as the one used for young learners and the purposes are:

• let them free from institutional roles and experience new ways of verbal and non-verbal communication;

• let them understand the effects the "5 steps" may have on their students, by directly experiencing them;

• test, even if from the point of view of students and within a concentrated amount of time, as the methodology works and what each step is useful for;

• rediscover the importance of relationship in the educational process;

• discover possible ways of using the methodology and its steps in the educational process;

• know that they can directly use the methodology, even if they are not drama expert.

Thus, before implementing the good practice with students, it is advisable to organize training sessions for trainers. The training sessions could be:

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8. This approach has been tested during the THEATRE project activities. Directly experiencing the Cosquillas methodology has been very effective on teachers and trainers in both understanding how it works and find out possible implementation in their classes and/or with their users.

• intensive workshops (e.g. 1-2 days);
• time distributed lessons or workshops (e.g. Once a week for 4 times).

In organizing and implementing the training for trainers it is important to[9]:
• give them the same rules for students (no mobile phones, being on time, respect the group, etc);
• foresee moments of sharing their impressions both concerning their feelings in realizing activities and possible effects on students;
• let them think on how to implement the methodology and its results into the educational process and programme.

Sometimes it may be difficult to involve adult people and professional in approaching theatrical laboratory, as it implies give themselves a challenge and go over the ordinary framework of their roles.
There is not a best way to get over their reluctance to participate, nevertheless some good methods could be:
• start with a face-to-face lesson where the Cosquillas methodology and its purposes are explained;
• share their teaching experiences, the problems their students face and try to find out together the factors that may influence their scarce motivation to learning. Then explain how the theatrical methodology could touch those factors and create positive effects;
• if some other trainers and teachers have already tested the methodology (on their selves or with their students), consider their examples both in presence (if possible) or describing their experience (also using photos or videos).

To let the trainers and teachers get more familiar to each other and with the THEATRE methodology, the 1st step "the circle" is a very useful icebreaker. Repeating it during the workshop with trainers and teachers makes the participants more and more comfortable with each other and with the methodology itself[10].

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9. These indications have been identified thanks to the WP3 "Training for operators" results.

10. In some case, you can also start with other typologies of icebreaking, for example to support trainers and teachers to analyse their roles and the way they can support their students in increasing their motivation to learning.

Characteristics and skills of trainers and operators

Different operators and trainers shall be involved in the process, only in this way; the activities could be effective in avoiding or tackling drop out in IVET courses. The operators implementing the methodology may not necessarily be drama experts, teachers and trainers could directly implement the 5 steps with their students. Anyway the cooperation with other operators involved in the educational process is fundamental to effectively integrate it within the curricula and do not waste the results obtained on students.

The theatrical laboratory is useful to support students in being self-confident and develop transversal and life skills as first results but these achievements shall necessarily being integrated in the educational and training process to also improve their vocational skills and motivation to learn. This, of course, implies a special commitment (time and personal commitment) by all operators involved but cooperation and common objectives leads to positive and long lasting results on educational performances.

Let's summaries some of the main skills and competences operators shall have and develop[11].

The theatre instructor

The aim of professional work is to create a theatrical work of art – a performance. The whole process of its creation is supervised by a director. He usually has a finished script which is implemented relying on professional actors and other professionals. The person conducting theatre workshops aimed at building social skills through art therapy or the development of desirable personality traits is in a different situation. One can claim that it is more complicated. This is due to the nature of workshops. One wants them to achieve such objectives as non-artistic changes in competences, the acquisition of new skills and changes in the personality of the participants. Activities involving a theatrical performance are just tools, and not the goal itself. Therefore, the creative process is different than in professional theatre – there is more space for freedom, experimentation with theatrical means and for mistakes, games and playing. Finally, it is essential to inspire and support the group and observe changes in participants.

The person carrying out such tasks should possess theatrical, psychological

11. This part of the renewed good practice is taken from the National research of the polish partner Bielsko Artistic Association Grodtzky Theatre, www. leonardo-theatre.eu

and pedagogical competences. This is not about higher education diplomas – it's about skills. Undoubtedly diplomas do no harm, but competence can be acquired in the course of a career from practical activities which are less theory-based and require more sensitivity to others, caring about what you are doing and reflecting on the actions. Empathy, the ability to establish a dialogue, a delicacy in assessments, not being judgmental, openness, creativity, the ability to lead a group of people, a sophisticated aesthetic taste are all essential personality traits of a theatre instructor/trainer. This is important because obtaining them requires not only formal qualifications, but special commitment and work based on personality traits. Thanks to it, both a professional director and theatre instructor can be creative.

For teachers (if one assumes that they will run theatre classes at their schools) with expertise in the field of psychology and pedagogy, it is necessary to supplement the knowledge of theatre and theatrical skills. Finally, if someone has to use theatrical methods, they have to be somewhat competent. No one expects amateur theater groups to create aesthetically excellent works of art. However, the ideas about how to do theatre and how to prepare a performance must be original, consistent and fresh. Only then will one avoid boredom and discouragement of participants and the motivation to work will be established. Its effects will be of interest and move the audience, and give satisfaction to the actors after the show.

Among the skills of an instructor/trainer one should not omit visual art skills. This is due to the need to build theatrical activities predominantly on props, image, animation of object. In amateur theater and therapeutic theatre this approach is more fruitful and realistic than relying on a text. Its length determines the amount of issues to remember and usually discourages participants. The need to maintain faithfulness to the literary model paralyzes and raises fears of mistakes. Uttering the text in a lively way on the scene and building an image form based primarily on speech very often exceeds the capabilities of amateur actors.

The show should be an attempt to deal with the baggage of personal experiences of the actors. Working on the basis of these experiences leaves room for reflections, the introduction to the world of value and sending a significant message. This is accompanied by the need for such an organization of classes that they have become an adventure of discovering oneself and the world. Theatre allows one to experience real emotions on the created stage. The more of them, the more authentic and moving the performance. This is an enormous field of interaction and has to be well taken care of by the group leader. Very

difficult, traumatic and painful experiences can be revealed and they have to be dealt with. This situation indicates the need for further work in psychological competences, which are also necessary because of the group process. A group "acts, thinks, creates and feels" differently than any of its individual participants. Relationships which make it up will always have strong emotional bases. The creation of a group and directing its action and giving the group its own "face", creates both challenges and opportunities. It is a chance to build a new axiological space which will be accepted and lived in by participants.

Teachers/trainers

The teacher whose actions are supposed to lead to reducing the phenomenon of dropping out from IVET has to be a professional, with the desire and ability to help students with problems and the ability to identify the problems faced by individual students. Available tools and methods of testing difficulties are useful here (see ICF indicators as stated above). However, an indispensable element of his or her work is intuitive and pedagogical tact. In many classes one does not have time to focus on a single student, his or her condition and troubles. However, a diligent and open teacher can talk to the students after lessons. This generosity of heart or making too many sacrifices could lead to the phenomenon of burnout. A necessary condition for pedagogical success of (overcoming difficulties in education and upbringing) is a collaboration of all those involved in the educational process. Teachers, educators, psychologists, guidance counselors must be, first of all, willing to interact, share information and insights about pupils. Secondly, they must have developed and implemented a system of cooperation. In the context of educational innovation they need to be open and seek new forms of action. If we are talking about the theatrical approach as an example of innovative approaches to solving educational problems, they should be convinced of the potential inherent of theatre classes. Theatre enthusiasts here are almost indispensable. Applying the method of drama, psychodrama or sociodrama requires not only knowledge and skills, but it also associated with the conviction of their meaningfulness and effectiveness. Teachers have to believe in them – despite the introduction of elements of these methods in teacher education programs at some universities, they are not common practice. Their value is not grounded in formal education. Theatrical forms of education are introduced thanks to personal commitments of teachers who are convinced of their value and usefulness.

Vocational counselor

A vocational counselor should have time for individual interviews and individualized actions directed to the individual student. The reality is sometimes very different at schools. If he or she has the necessary time for it, they need to possess willingness to self-educate and acquire necessary materials and information, in addition to knowledge and pedagogical skills. This is due to the absence of a system of vocational guidance at Polish schools. The quality of his or her work is based primarily on personal commitment and creativity. Classes in vocational counseling are conducted mostly by school guidance counselors, school psychologists or teachers who have been given the task of conducting this type of activity. A vocational counselor can pursue the activities using elements of theatre (interviews, playing roles of an employer and an applicant for work or acting out situations related to specific occupations).

This form of cooperation is, however, only possible for a counselor who is ready to undertake a role of a participant of theatre classes – to play and experience the inner side of the group and the existing relationships. In short, such a person must accept this form of work. This is not an easy or simple matter. Not all people are ready to go on stage and enter into its reality. This requires not so much acting abilities, as courage in relation to oneself and the ability to resign from the automatic authority conferred by the role of counselor.

School guidance counselor

It is important to determine his or her competences in terms of tackling the problem of school drop-out using the theatrical approach. The first issue is the effectiveness of the first contact with a student – a multi-layer relationship makes it possible for a student to come back to a person significant for him/her, and for the guidance counselor to return to the student. The quality of this contact is an essential factor in the success of educational work. The definition of competencies necessary for success in this dimension is very difficult and risky. Who, in fact, is a good teacher or guidance counselor? The person who achieves success. The statement of why it has happened in a particular case is extremely complicated. One can, of course, point to a certain degree in education, preferably higher, or personality traits and competencies in communication and social matters which would determine positive effects of working with such a person. However, one would not be getting to the core of the problem. Why do people with the same educational degree and thus the same professional competences achieve different effects working at the same school? The answer

lies in the mystery of entering into relationships and acting for the benefit of a student. Activities of a guidance counselor are related to the area of art – the art of education and upbringing.. One should have in mind that they may be different from the standard organizational conditions of schools which significantly determine the work conditions of a guidance counselor. The commitment and belief that through one's work educational success is possible even in difficult cases are the necessary conditions for meaningful actions. The belief in the possibility of shaping a human being in truth, goodness and beauty are axiological foundations for the guidance counselor's work. As for theatre and the effectiveness of certain forms of theatre in social development and education, it is necessary to clearly perceive the potential of these forms. In other words, only guidance counselors who are convinced of the effectiveness of these types of methods will be helpful and cooperate successfully in their implementation.

So far we have described the competences of people involved in the process of reducing the negative social phenomenon of disrupted education. This was done with the assumption that the means of combating school dropping out will be widely understood as theatrical methods. However, the functioning of the theatrical team has to be defined according to the specific contexts where the good practice is implemented. It should certainly consist of teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, ICT trainer and theatre instructors or other persons conducting theatre workshops. This group should not only be present at the workshop or simply take part in them, but, most of all, share their thoughts and reflections. Making an assessment of the work, the progress of the participants and their development should be viewed from many sides. The ability to create a harmonious team largely determines how successful work with a group of pupils involved in theatrical activities will be. This applies not only to evaluating their progress. One needs to identify the group first, and outline the area of the required changes – changes, that is, in the axiological commitments and personalities of the participants. In fact, this applies to all forms of work and each group of students.

Networking activities

The implementation of the good practice based on a theatrical approach requires, or can be greatly facilitated, by the involvement of a number of stakeholders and further organisations as well, especially when it is applied to the IVET system and it concerns the acquisition of transversal and vocational skills. This involvement is strongly suggested in order to receive important support as well as to incentivise and maximise the effect of the approach itself.

The involved subjects can evaluate and guarantee the effective exploitation of the project outcomes into shared strategies based on networking. Such a network should possibly involve round tables and working groups amongst the different stakeholders and it may include:

• policy and decision makers operating in the field of social issues, education, training and employability;

• schools and VET centre managers;

• all trainers and operators involved in the educational process;

• families;

• social services and all operators involved in the individual growth of the young learners;

• organisations that may support partners in delivering professionals and skills to improve the learning methodologies (art and drama organisations or professionals, ICT professionals, psychologists, etc).

External people or entities, not belonging to the school/centre/institution which is directly implementing the good practice, whose involvement can support, improve, extend and/or contribute to the dissemination and implementation of the theatrical approach. For example:

• **Vocational training and IVET centres**
They offer (initial) vocational training and can support: 1) excluded young people to return to mainstream VET opportunities; 2) theatrical operators in linking vocational contents to their work and in defining and assessing outcomes of the alternative learning methodology.

• **Upper schools (especially vocational public schools)**
They can: create synergies with other VET centres and other operators to define a complete and proper training offer to users; transfer the good practice within mainstream vocational courses; share and compare alternative learning methodologies for students at risk of ESL; spread the good practice to students and teachers.

• **Associations of vocational and training centres and related coordinating bodies**
They can: create synergies among the associated VET centres' training offers; understand the approach used and define a complete and proper training offer to users; disseminate the good practice within other associated IVET centres; identify and link skills and contents provided through the renewed good practice to regional systems of qualification and regional laws.

• **Regional institutes for art**
They can: get to know the characteristics of alternative learning methodologies based on art and artistic performances within the regional territory; create territorial synergies to support the development and improvement of the art concept in all educational level; support the use of art within the VET system.

• **Public local services supporting disadvantaged people**
They can: create synergies with local operators to define shared pathways to support disadvantaged users (disabled, people living in precarious situations, etc); coordinate the intervention at local level amongst public social services, VET centres and social cooperatives; identify users and specific learning needs that could be satisfied by the theatrical activities.

• **Institutes offering training, rehabilitation and social interventions for disadvantaged people**
They can create synergies between their social interventions for disadvantaged youngsters without family connections, justice problems, immigration background and the IVET courses using alternative learning methodologies; define shared interventions amongst

different professionals involved with young users with different social, health and economic problems (and their families).

• Charity Organisations

They can support the planning and implementation process of the good practice.

• ICT companies

They can provide advice about the last developments in technology and multimedia and about the related practical integration into learning pathways.

• Associations dedicated to the integration of socially-vulnerable groups

They can find it as an attractive method for running activities which can facilitate non-verbal communication and the ability to ensure understanding; be interested in integrating basic theatrical methods and learn skills related to leading group sessions.

• Families and individuals in need of support

Besides benefitting from the good practice, after becoming aware of its effectiveness they can contribute to spread it amongst their acquaintances and in the local area; moreover, this can allow the establishment of lasting contact with children from difficult families as well as a change in the family's attitude towards education.

• Ministerial authorities for education

They can: provide funding and foster partnerships for IVET schools and other stakeholders; enable the dissemination of the good practice; create synergies with VET centres to define a complete training offer to users; support the transfer of the good practice.

• Local authorities in school administration

They can create synergies with VET centres and all kinds of schools to define training offer to users.

• Associations for crafts and industry

They can: create synergies with VET centres, companies and other stakeholders; cooperate in the transfer of the good practice within vocational courses.

• Associations of teachers

They can: create synergies among schools and VET centres' training offers within the local and/or regional territory; disseminate the good practice to VET centres and other types of schools.

EXAMPLE OF ICF CHECK LIST – FOR MONITORING AND EVALUTING STUDENTS' PROGRESS IN PARTICIPATING IN THE THEATRICAL WORKSHOP. One check list for each student. The check list should be filled in at the beginning and at the end of the laboratory.

CHECK-LIST
THEATRICAL WORKSHOP

PERSONAL INFORMATION

NAME_____

SURNAME_____

Gender

☐ Female   ☐ Male

DATE OF BIRTH __/__/__

AGE _____

OBSERVATION GRID
ENVIROMENT: CLASS GROUP

PERFORMANCE QUALIFIER

0 No difficulty means the person has no problem

1 Mild difficulty means a problem that is present less than 25%

2 Moderate difficulty means that a problem that is present less than 50% of the time

3 Severe difficulty means that a problem that is present more than 50% of the time

4 Complete difficulty means that a problem that is present more than 95% of the time

5%	25%	50%	95%

0
no difficulty

1
mild difficulty

2
morerate
difficulty

3
severe difficulty

4
complete difficulty
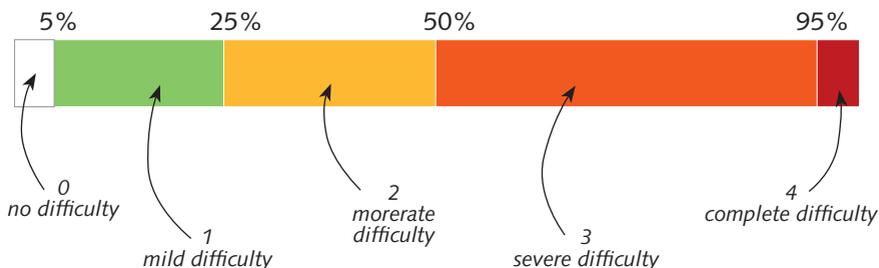
8 Not specified means there is insufficient information to specify the severity of the difficulty

	Beginning of Activity	End of Activity	Comments
d2503 Act in a predictable way *Manage the behavior and the expression of emotions following a pattern of actions in response to the constant demands or expectations.*			
d3150 Communication with receiving body gestures *Understanding the meaning conveyed by facial expressions, movements or signs of the hands, body postures.*			
d335 Producing non-verbal messages			
d330 Speak *Expose a fact or telling a story through verbal language.*			
d7100 Respect and cordiality in relations *Show and respond to care, sympathy, consideration and esteem, in a contextually and socially appropriate way.*			
d7101 Appreciation in relations *Show and respond to satisfaction and gratitude, in a contextually and socially appropriate way.*			
d7102 Tolerance in relations *Show and respond to understanding and acceptance of behavior.*			
d7103 Critics in relations *Provide and respond to differences of opinion or disagreements implicit or explicit, in a contextually and socially appropriate manner.*			
d7104 Social cues in relationships *Giving and reacting appropriately to signs and hints in social interactions.*			
d7105 Physical contact in relationships *Use and respond to physical contact with the other, in a way contextually and socially appropriate.*			

	Beginning of Activity	End of Activity	Comments
d7202 Adjust behaviors in relationships *Regulate emotions and impulses, verbal and physical aggression in interactions with others.*			
d7400 Get in touch with people in authority			
d7402 To relate to people of the same level			
d9202 Art and culture *Engage or appreciate art or cultural events like acting in a play, dance, sing, play.*			
PERSONAL ASPECT			
d2500 Accept the news *Managing behavior and expression of emotions by responding appropriately to objects or new situations.*			
b1266 Trust *Mental functions that produce a personal temperament confident, bold and assertive, as opposed to fearful, insecure and shy.*			
d3600 Use telecommunications tools *Telephone and emails.*			
Chapter 5 personal care			
d570 To look after one's health			
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS FACILITATOR *Indicate with + BARRIER – No indication*			
e320 Friends			
e360 Other operators *Trainers.*			
e330 Non-health operators *Tutors, counselors.*			
e1150 General products and technology for personal use in daily life *Tools, products and technologies used by people in daily activities, not adapted or specially made (prostheses, etc).*			

	Beginning of Activity	End of Activity	Comments
e1201 **Products and assistive technology for mobility and transport in indoor and outdoor environments** *Tools, technologies and products made specifically to help people in the movement inside or outside (such as use of the stick, car adapted).*			
e130 **Education products and technology** *Tools, products and technology used for the acquisition of knowledge or skills, including those specially made. (school).*			
e140 **Products and technology for culture, recreation and sport** *Tools, products and technology used for the management and execution of cultural and recreational activities and sports (theater).*			
e250 **Sound**			
e330 **People in positions of authority** *Coordinators, teachers.*			
e425 **Individual attitudes of acquaintances, colleagues and community members** *School mates.*			