

Garden Press Release Article for Didactic Experts and interested parties

Education and learning partners from Germany, Austria, Iceland, Spain, Latvia and the UK have brought together years of knowledge and expertise in order to work together on the large-scale project titled GARDEN – “Garden your educational life – a new learning environment and opportunity to access education and improve employability for young disadvantaged adults in Europe” - which will have an impact on both adult education and VET provision in the partner countries and beyond. This innovative educational tool offers a novel learning environment for young disadvantaged adults living across Europe aimed at improving their chances of accessing education and increasing employability chances thereafter.

The metaphoric value of the GARDEN project concept and the didactic approach lie in the idea that the ability to learn in, and from, nature is a valuable experience involving life-long learning and promoting society open to new experiences which is able to learn and to listen. Thus, participants turn to nature for lessons in improving their basic skills necessary for all types of employment such as reading, writing and numeracy skills, improving foreign language and IT skills. Social and communicative skills, personal and organisational skills are also worked diligently on thereby improving employability chances of participants. The project materials are the *Garden Didactic Manual*, the *Garden Toolbox* and the *Garden Platform* (www.garden-platform.eu), all serving as innovative learning facilitation materials assisting the teachers working with low motivated or qualified young adults showing basic skills’ deficit.

It is clear that there are fewer challenges when planning the class which is to take place in a traditional indoor setting. The planning process becomes more complex when such preparation is for a class that is to take place outdoors. Therefore, creativity of the teacher is an important aspect which comes into play when organising such anew learning process. Still, there is no particular restriction in terms of which subjects or skills can be taught in this way. The concept itself is seen as increasing the learner’s achievements, motivation and understanding more than when knowledge is imparted in a more traditional setting. Cooperation between the teacher, administration and parents is very important since it improves the learner’s study success, whilst assessment methods need to be adapted to the target group, the situation and to the competences which are being assessed. Although they are of both formative and summative nature, attention should be given to the fact

that whichever assessment method is decided upon, it should on the one hand be non-noticeable in order to prevent anxiety and rejection whilst, on the other hand, it should aim at promoting motivation of the participants to evaluate themselves.

For more details please consult our website www.garden-project.eu or contact us.

Project title: Garden your educational life – a new learning environment and opportunity to access education and improve employability for young disadvantaged adults in Europe

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