
**Reaching, teaching and keeping our learners:
Methods and approaches to reach and increase retention of
disadvantaged learners**

Course 64

1. – 7. November 2020

The main focus will be how to reach at risk and/or disadvantaged learners participating at any level or type of education or training. This will be done through different co operative learning methods. In reaching and teaching these learners we are better able to 'keep them' – increasing retention.

Target group:

The target group is schools, colleges and any kind of educational organisations which have strategies or core aims of improving learners key competencies including: cooperation and communication skills, initiative, critical and creative thinking and citizenship. Additionally to prevent early school leaving and embedding key competencies within the subject curricula.

Participants could be teachers, senior managers, head teachers and other staff responsible for teaching and learning at all levels of education from secondary, further and higher education in both academic and vocational areas.

Preparation:

Participants will be expected to read the program and material sent to them before the course commences and to submit a short introduction to the education system in their home country. This will be circulated to all participants.

Aims:

The participants will discuss different school systems in Europe, systems of non-compulsory education and reasons for drop-out or non participation of students at risk of early school leaving. The reasons for limited access of disadvantaged groups to education will be discussed and different ways of reaching the target groups and associated teaching methods will be discussed and presented. The teaching methods during the course will mirror those introduced and proven as effective in reaching diverse groups of students, increasing positive student to student interaction creating a trusting and safe learning environment. The participants will be sensitized to different reasons for absence or drop out for at risk groups (e.g. migrants) in non-compulsory education and will be introduced to tools to identify students at risk of dropping out.

Methodology: The course methods will be varied: theoretical contributions, discussions, practical exercises in small groups and presentations. The emphasis will be on practical and active cooperative learning structures and participants will have the opportunity to try different ideas. This, rather than theoretical input will be the main focus. The methods introduced will be used actively during the course. ***All participants should be able to discuss and present in English language as simultaneous translation will not be possible.***

Outcomes: After the course the participants will have ideas and ways to involve diverse groups of students in their own courses. At the end of the course each participant will have developed a detailed program where it is clear how they intend to reach the disadvantaged target groups, how they will encourage the group to participate in their course and how they plan to organize their teaching and assessment in order to ensure equal access for all learners to the learning process and increase retention.

Follow up: On return to their home locations participants will try out the different approaches with their learners and share their experience and material with other participants through e-mail and on an internet platform. The main trainer will also give feedback and counselling if required.

DAY TO DAY PROGRAM (FROM NOVEMBER 1. – 7. 2020)

Day one: 1st

- Meeting in Reykjavik for bus to Borgarnes. Group dinner in Borgarnes. Initial opportunity to get to know other participants and gain practical information on the program

Day two: 2nd

- Introduction and getting to know each other
- Discussion about how certain school systems can be more selective than others and how this influences the official drop-out rates.
- Which students are we talking about? Who belongs to a disadvantaged group in this context? Who is at risk?
- Cooperative learning task about key competences

Day three: 3th

- How does the class climate and student to student interaction influence retention?
- How to create a safe and relaxed learning atmosphere in a diverse group of students. Work on constructing the feeling of safety and trust within a group through various activities.
- Student to Teacher interaction.
- Do we really have "school for all"? Focus on what we as teachers and course organizers can influence in order to keep our students at our schools/courses. Making them want to stay.

Day four: 4th

- The teaching methods. Cooperative learning as a useful method to ensure inclusive learning and to ensure equal access for everyone to the learning process?
- Cooperative learning – Learning about cooperative learning through a cooperative learning task.
- How does Cooperative learning influence retention? A Scottish example.

Day five: 5th

- Examples of different simple cooperative learning methods.
- Creating tasks in your own subject, using simple cooperative learning tasks
- Interdisciplinary Jigsaw+ tasks

Day six: 6th

- Assessment *for* learning. How can assessment increase retention?
- Group work. Development on a dissemination program for their colleagues when they get back.

Day seven: 7th

- Presentation and feedback on the dissemination program.
- Discussion and evaluation of the training program. Information and discussion about further cooperation on the Internet where the participants continue sharing their experiences using the methods they have been trying out.

Day eight: 8th

Departure

Other information:

Accommodation & Subsistence: **750 Euro** per person (hotels and all meals for all course days 7 nights altogether) Six nights in Hotel Borgarnes, full board = 630, one night in Reykjavik (if you have a flight on the 8. November) depending on your choice, ca. 120 Euro.

Course fee: **560 Euro** for each participant



Bus from Reykjavík to Borgarnes and back: **60 Euros** (additionally participants have to pay about 40 Euros for the Fly-bus from Keflavík airport to Reykjavík)

Travel costs are not included in the course fee.

The course will take place in Hotel Borgarnes, where the participants will have full board all course days and stay in single rooms with private bathroom. *All participants have to agree to stay in this hotel for the duration of the course (we have a special contract with the hotel)*

At the end of the course the participants will have a certificate of attendance including description of participant's contribution and time input.

For all further information please contact Guðrún: Gudrun@ici.is