

Learning About Professional Interaction Through Personal Experience

Final task: The objective is to learn to understand the basics of professional interaction and think about how to approach different types of interaction situations in a professional way.

To reach the goal the students should share their thoughts and experiences about the subject and comment in a constructive way on the thoughts of other students. They should also be able to contribute information from source materials to the discussion.

Objectives

- To share one's thoughts and experiences openly with other students
- To encourage and motivate other students during the learning process
- To use source materials to support one's own reflection
- Assume responsibility on one's own work in a small group to reach a common goal
- To evaluate the learning process

Framework of Learning to learn descriptors

Time Management

Organization of the information

Motivation and self-esteem

Team work

Descriptors:

Team work

6.- I am able to share my knowledge and experiences with the team

9.- I am able to participate actively in the team

16.- I am able to express my opinion to the team even if it is different

Areas of knowledge within Adult Education

Core skills

Communication and social skills

Science – Technology

Objectives

- To understand the challenges in situations of professional interaction
- To reflect on and analyse one's own skills of interaction
- To be aware of the points of view of a customer and a professional in different interaction situations
- Learning to find solution-oriented models of action

Evaluation

The teacher follows and supports the group discussions in the online learning environment. If needed (s)he has the opportunity to clarify the instructions or learning objectives, if the group has trouble understanding what to do. (S)he can also give suggestions on how to use source materials more effectively and help guide the conversation in a more professional direction by asking questions, for example.

The teacher can motivate and encourage the more passive members of the group to share their ideas, if the whole group does not participate in completing the task. Since the messages sent in the online learning environment are documented on the server, it's easier for the teacher and the learners to evaluate their learning outcomes after finishing the task. This makes reaching goals and evaluating learning outcomes more visible for everyone involved in the process.

Professional interaction as a subject of learning is very far-reaching and there's rarely one correct solution on how to handle it. Because of this, it's also an interesting and challenging subject of online discussion. It gives all the participants the opportunity to contribute and reflect on personal experiences and add information gathered through everyday learning in the learning process. Sharing one's thoughts and commenting on the reflections of others in the safe environment of a small group often increases the motivation to learn. A task like this also makes it possible for different kinds of learners to learn together in a more meaningful way.

Preparation

Timing	Materials	Activity to be done	Where
The task is completed during a two-week period, each student is responsible for his/her participation in the online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - descriptions of interaction situations contributed by the students - source materials about the subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students devise the descriptions of interaction situations on their own - online discussions in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in class and at home - in an online learning environment



discussions

learning
environment in
groups of 4-5
students**Process**

0. The teacher asks the learners to write a description of an interaction situation that they have for some reason found challenging, frustrating, felt like they have failed in etc.

1. The students are divided into groups in a random fashion for the online discussions; each group has their own discussion board in the online leaning environment.

2. The teacher selects the descriptions that fit the task best as far as learning objectives are concerned and edits the texts to be presented in an electronic form. The teacher feeds the descriptions in the learning environment on the discussion boards of each group. Each group has one situation to reflect on. The teacher tries to make sure that each group is assigned a description that wasn't written by any of the group members.

3. The students agree on the schedule of the online discussions together so that they will be able to complete the task on time.

4. The students are supposed to reflect and discuss the situation of interaction together and try to find different kinds of solutions or possibilities to complete the interaction situation in a successful way. The students should express their opinions in a courageous way and share possible experiences of similar situations and comment constructively on the thoughts of others. The students are encouraged to find points of view and information from literature on professional interaction. The students have been given a list of source materials in advance.

5. When the students have reached a common agreement in the online discussion and have come up with a professionally fitting solution or course of action, the groups have the possibility to read each others descriptions and suggested solutions for solving them.

6. The teacher comments and motivates the online discussions if needed and, after they have finished the task, gives each group feedback on their ideas on how to solve the situation of professional interaction.

Guidelines about learning styles

For the development of the task, the following learning styles will be considered:

The task makes it possible to use different kinds of learning styles during the learning process. On the other hand the task also enables students to practice using learning styles that are not so familiar to them.

- **Visual:** Visual learners will find it easy to visualize the issues involved in this type of task when they can read practical examples and experiences about the subject matter. They can also express their thoughts in visual form to others and help other learners look at the issue from another perspective. Because messages are saved on the discussion board, visual learners can always go back to previous messages and comment on them when they have had enough time to reflect and 'paint' their ideas.
- **Auditory:** Auditory learners can read and familiarize themselves with the thoughts of others at their own pace in a task like this, which suits them well because reading is usually not their strongest point. On the other hand online discussions do not require the use of such formal language as written texts or written communication in general which may make it easier for them to understand what they read. Practical examples and personal experiences presented in written form may also help auditory learners to learn more easily.
- **Read / write:** Participating in online discussions supports particularly well the learning of those who prefer the read/write learning style. Learners can search for support for their own ideas in the source materials and share these and their own ideas with others in the online discussions. Because ideas are not documented online in real time, the learners have the possibility to formulate their reflections in their own desired way. They can also read other learners' ideas and reflect on them in peace, because all messages sent will be saved in the online learning environment, so it's also easier to go back to them later on as the discussion progresses.
- **Kinesthetic:** Kinesthetic learners can participate in the online discussions and read source materials when it suits them best. It's not necessary to 'complete' the online discussion right away but they can read other learners' ideas and reflect on these, for example when jogging, and only contribute their own thoughts after that for others to read and comment on. Learners are free to participate in the online discussions whenever it suits them best; there are no limits of time or space which suits kinesthetic learners particularly well.