

Mystic

PEDAGOGY APPROACH

Designing a Flexible and Accessible Youth Worker Training Program for Marginalized Young People: Pedagogic Principles from Key Findings.

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Table 6: Implications of the research for pedagogic design

5. Pedagogy Approach

This final section draws together the results of the state-of-the-art review to develop the MYSTIC pedagogic approach. It begins by setting out the overall pedagogic approach and design principles. This is followed by a presentation of the pedagogic approach in more detail.

5.1 Overall approach and design principles

5.1.1 Applying the research findings to designing the pedagogic approach

The key findings of the state-of-the-art review reported on above in Section 3 have specific implications for the pedagogic design of the MYSTIC Foundation Course. They highlight:

- The main barriers and challenges to acquiring and using Community Animation and Community Leadership skills in real-life situations
- The training needs of Community Animators and Community Leaders
- The particular educational and pedagogic needs of youth workers and young people with fewer opportunities
- The support services likely to be required in delivering the course.

The key findings are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Implications of the research for pedagogic design

Community Animators	Community Leaders
<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workload Lack of flexibility Developing positive and productive relationships with marginalised young people Understanding and working with structural factors that create barriers for and with young people The knowledge and skills deficit in youth work A lack of resources to develop and undertake work with young people that has positive benefits and outcomes 	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systemic structural factors leading to marginalisation Behavioural issues Negative perceptions and perspectives on life Forming social relationships
<p>Competence needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intra/interpersonal skills Conflict and relationship management Supporting young peoples' development Contextual awareness and understanding Operational and management skills 	<p>Competence needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intra/interpersonal skills Conflict and relationship management skills Management/operational skills Community-based skills Contextual skills

Community Animators	Community Leaders
<p>Success factors</p> <p>Embedding theory and abstract ideas in real youth work practice</p> <p>Supporting mutual collaboration with young people</p> <p>Understanding links between grassroots youth work in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and positive outcomes for young people</p> <p>Intercultural competences and mentoring skills</p> <p>Engage young people in outdoor, nature-based activities</p> <p>Apply skills and practices in Digital Media, Storytelling, Drama and Music</p>	<p>Success factors</p> <p>Relevant to young people and meets their needs</p> <p>Understands the lived experience of young people and the challenges they face</p> <p>Involve young people as ‘co-creators’</p> <p>Provide real and practical opportunities for young people to increase their life-chances</p> <p>Enable young people to make a real difference in their communities</p> <p>Safe and supportive environment in which young people who don’t trust the system can explore new things and become the ‘learning children’ they couldn’t be in dysfunctional environments</p> <p>Challenging young people to find who they are and what their talents are</p> <p>Technical and operational elements aligned with the context in which they are delivered</p>
<p>Pedagogic needs</p> <p>Hybrid environments delivering ‘blended’ training (on-line and face to face)</p> <p>Flexible training enabling adaptation and personalisation</p> <p>Case-based and practice-based</p> <p>Collaborative learning and interactivity</p> <p>Support services – technical, developmental, pastoral, organisational</p>	<p>Pedagogic needs</p> <p>Personalised learning</p> <p>Practical, activity-based learning by doing</p> <p>Mentoring and coaching</p> <p>Digital tools</p> <p>Flexible content</p> <p>Co-produced content</p> <p>Support services – technical, developmental, pastoral</p>

The pedagogic design principles that stem from these key findings are as follows:

- Youth worker workload pressures imply the need for a training programme that provides a comprehensive spread of training areas whilst minimising the time trainees are required to put into participating in the programme
- Equally, the ‘chaotic’ lifestyle of marginalised young people requires the training programme to be flexible and adaptable
- Youth workers and young people also face financial constraints on training – these include the ‘opportunity costs’ of participating in training. Training should therefore be without personal cost to participants and should use free, open-source tools and applications as much as possible
- Uneven access to digital infrastructure and tools for both youth professionals and young people suggests the training programme should capitalise on existing and routinely used devices and tools whilst providing access to more innovative systems and tools where possible
- Marginalised young people often have a negative previous experience of formal education and find it difficult to flourish in a conventional teaching environment. This supports the need for a flexible learning environment in MYSTIC that reduces barriers between ‘teacher and student’, increases the range of learning modalities and spaces to work in and and increases both teacher-student and student-student interactivity.

- Such an environment would need to support a ‘scaffolded’ pedagogy – for both youth work professionals and young people – that enables adaptation to learning profiles, circumstances and ‘styles’
- The evidence supports the development of a holistic and multi-disciplinary training programme combining technical skills, social skills, interpersonal skills and skills specifically oriented to the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people
- There needs to be scope in the training programme on supporting youth work professionals to help marginalised young people prepare for integration with the labour market or acquire entrepreneurial skills
- The training needs to keep pace with ongoing developments – in digital technology, young peoples’ lifeworlds and the broader context of work and society
- The programme should support Community Animators and Leaders to provide learning content involving the use of digital tools that reflect young peoples’ lifestyles and lived experience, their aspirations and their experiences of education
- The training programme should put particular emphasis on equipping Community Animators and Leaders with the skills to deliver flexible learning and development programmes, so as to support co-creation, interactivity, creativity and problem-solving
- Although the MYSTIC approach is predicated on self-directed training delivered on-line, there is strong evidence that this needs to be supported as far as possible with face-to-face training
- Support services need to be embedded in the MYSTIC training programme pedagogy. On the one hand, participants need to be provided with training to enable them to support disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in overcoming things like lack of trust in the system, low self-esteem and lack of motivation, as well as to acquire skills to deal with conflict. On the other, participants need themselves to be supported in their learning through support services delivered through the MYSTIC training programme that cover IT support, organisational support, networking with external stakeholders, peer support and mentoring.

5.1.2 MYSTIC pedagogic model

Figure 7 applies these design principles to develop a pedagogic model to deliver the MYSTIC Foundation Course.

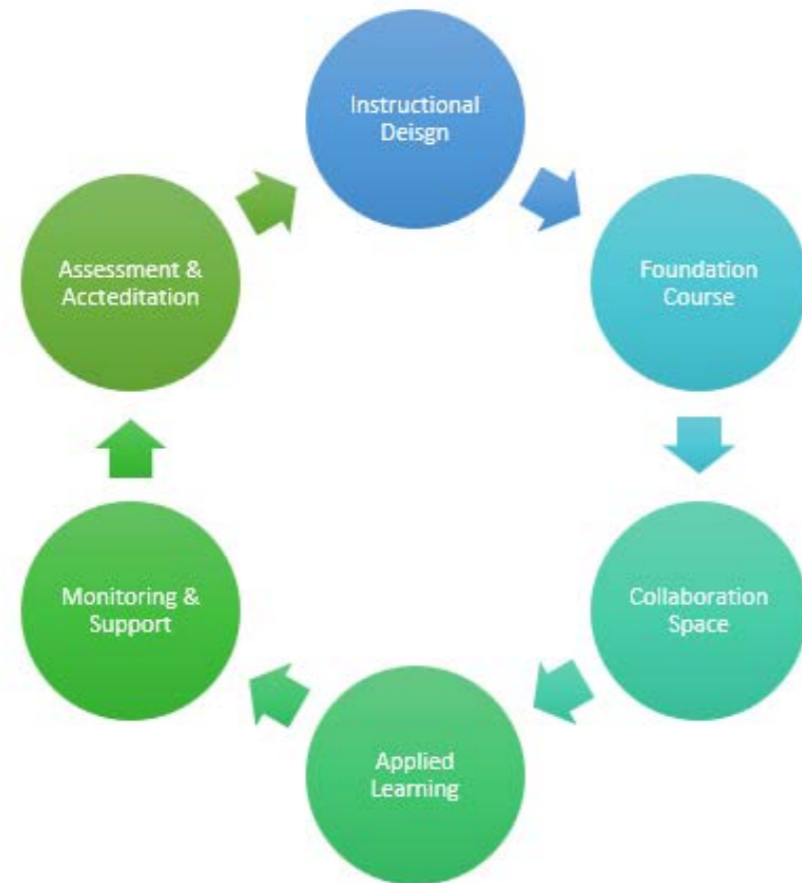


Figure 7: MYSTIC Pedagogic Model

As Figure 7 shows, the MYSTIC pedagogic model incorporates six elements.

1. **Instructional design.** The starting point is the over-arching pedagogic approach adopted by MYSTIC, translated into instructional design principles. The main objective of the pedagogic approach is to support youth workers, volunteers and young people to acquire the Community Animator and Community Leader competences and practices they need to work with vulnerable young people. At the core of the approach is a blended learning methodology that combines self-directed on-line learning with face-to-face interactive workshops, peer collaboration and learning-by-doing. It includes a 'scaffolded learning' method to enable course participants to learn at their own pace, according to their 'zone of proximal development'. Experiential learning tools are embedded into the instructional design, based on group work, peer exchange of experiences and know-how, case studies analysis and problem-solving, review and reflection.

2. **MYSTIC Foundation course.** This is the core modular on-line course comprised of modules that link to the competence domains in the MYSTIC competence framework, i.e. A: Contextual competences, B: Core A&L competences, C: Operational competences. The course material and delivery combines three types of material: micro-learning content; interactive games and podcasts. The micro-learning is primarily based on short video clips, supported where appropriate with text files, presentations (ppt), website links, open courseware, videoconference and on-line webinars. Some of these are 'core' (mandatory) modules and others elective (optional). Participants will work with a mentor to customise their learning programme based on the results of their initial competence assessment.

3. **Collaboration space.** This provides a collaborative learning space for programme participants and the MYSTIC training team to share comments, questions, feedback, upload content, using blog and other social media, the discussion forum and tools like Google forms.

4. **Applied Learning.** In this part of the programme, participants will be expected to i) carry out one Assignment, applying the learning from the programme to design a youth work activity, ii) peer review another participant's Assignment iii) take part in an off-line Action Learning workshop, delivered by the Programme team. This allows re-formulation of presenting learning issues and re-working into improved practice. The Action Learning Sets will include 'role-play simulations' addressing key issues and problems Community Animators and Leaders will face in engaging with particularly marginalised young people. This involves working with peers to reflect on their routine – and entrenched – practices, and using evidence-based examples of innovation – including case studies – to stimulate new ways of doing things.

5. **Monitoring and Support.** Each programme participant will be assigned a mentor from the project team, who will be responsible for monitoring the participant's progress providing on-line support as required, using e-mail, chat, and other appropriate communication media.

6. **Assessment and accreditation.** The monitoring and support process is linked to a continuous process of assessment and accreditation. At each milestone stage in the programme (completing a core module; completing an assignment) learning outcomes will be assessed using a combination of learner self-assessment and assessment carried out by the mentor, using 'situational knowledge-based' quizzes. Progression will be accredited through a 'micro-certification' system based on Mozilla badges - a set of proficiency badges representing the successful development of skills and competences via both the non-formal and formal learning pathways and through the use of the learning environment e.g. active engagement in online discussion forums. Final assessment and accreditation will be linked to relevant European accreditation initiatives, for example YouthPass and European Portfolio for Youth Workers and Youth Leaders accreditation.

5.2 Programme structure, content and delivery

The programme structure, content and delivery follows the pedagogic approach outlined above, in Section 5.1.2. Development of the MYSTIC training programme will cover the elements included in the pedagogic model, together with supporting documentation for participants and course design and delivery teams, i.e.:

- Programme Design and Delivery Handbook
- Programme Participant Handbook, including provisions for course signing on and support services offered
- MYSTIC Foundation Course – modularised online course covering the three MYSTIC competence domains, offered as a combination of mandatory and elective modules, comprised of micro-learning 'objects', podcasts, videos and interactive games
- Collaboration space structure and management systems and procedures
- Applied learning procedures and content – assignments, peer review, action learning workshops
- Mentoring and support services description, procedures and management
- Assessment and accreditation – quizzes, assessment protocols and accreditation procedure.

The online course delivery platform will be designed and developed in the early phase of work activity 2.3 – Foundation Course development. This work will focus on Open-Source technologies – for example Moodle - and will support access to the learning platform from different devices.

Each module of the Foundation programme will specify:

- The competence domain, area and competences covered
- General objectives
- Learning outcomes
- Module description
- Skills gained and what to do with them
- Activities carried out
- Assessment
- Accreditation

The modules provided in the programme need to cover the range of themes and subjects highlighted by the research, as described above in Section 3.1.2. The three main content elements of the Foundation course are micro-training, game-based learning and podcasting.

Micro-training is a training method that consists in delivering knowledge to the learners through short video resources (3-5 minutes duration), supported by supplementary material where appropriate (e.g. text, on-line links, PowerPoint). Each video resource aims to teach a single learning component. The learning can be put into practice by the users immediately in their day-to-day practice (just-in-time training). Micro-training is a particularly effective tool in the training of professionals who carry out activities in contact with people (professions in the sectors of social health and welfare, education, youth work and personal service activities).

Podcasting (production of training content in audio format) makes it possible to benefit from training resources also in mobility, and in multi-tasking mode. The use of micro-training and podcasting makes it possible to optimise training time, minimising the impact on the participant's work and social organisation and facilitating work-life balance, through quality content available 24 hours a day, both from desktop and mobile devices, also in response to the growing demand for mobile training.

Game-based learning is based on the concept of teaching through repetition, failure and the accomplishment of goals. Just as in video games the player starts off slowly and gains in skill until they're able to skilfully navigate the most difficult levels, game-based learning applies the same concept to teaching. Users navigate their way through the game toward a goal, choosing actions and experiencing the consequences of those actions. They actively learn and practice the right way to do things.

The role of game-based learning in the MYSTIC course will be linked to assessment. At the end of each module/training unit users will be redirected to the online game that will present classroom challenge scenarios that users will have to solve by applying the appropriate behaviour or response.

