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# IO5. RE-ENTER Interactive workshop and experience guidelines



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## 1. Introduction

The RE-ENTER guides are designed to develop targeted guides, manuals, recommendations and supporting material to support the wider take-up and roll-out of the project. The guides aim to contribute to overcoming the barriers to older entrepreneur development and address how to use the RE-ENTER programme and approach to do so.

The following guides will be developed at different stakeholders:

- RE-ENTER Interactive workshop and experience guidelines: Aimed at entrepreneurial development organisations and organisations providing entrepreneurial training, this guide gives them the knowledge and insight on the implementation of interactive workshops and experience to underpin the entrepreneurial development of older unemployed and workers. The personalised approach and interaction with the target group needs to be adapted to their characteristics and circumstances, belonging to a specific (and on many occasions demotivated or disillusioned group) the workshops need to be highly customised.
- RE-ENTER Learner's Guide is developed in order to support the learners, and aims to advise on how to use and take maximum advantage of the RE-ENTER e-learning platform. It includes an FAQ area where learners can find support and get answers on questions, or raise new questions.
- RE-ENTER Guide on (on-line) mentoring and coaching for older unemployed and workers - guide aimed on the one hand to existing entrepreneurs that are interested in becoming a mentor/coach and on the other to those older entrepreneurs interested in becoming a mentee or receive coaching. The guide explains them what mentoring and coaching is, what it implies and the specifics of online activities in the field. It provides the rights and obligations and describes the deontological code that runs the activity. The final part of the guide is dedicated to those stakeholders that are interested in promoting such an activity for the specific target of the project. The guide indicates how to do it in an adequate and cost-effective manner.
- RE-ENTER Guide on (on-line) cooperation - guide which focuses on the principles and the good practices related to entrepreneurial cooperation. It addresses issues related to the identification of relevant business partners; how to negotiate cooperation agreements but also on issues such as joint development of products and services and the options for cooperation which can be used. The guide will have examples and practices. It includes a chapter aimed at business support organisation on how to support and encourage this type of cooperation. Specifics of cooperating on-line are also addressed.
- RE-ENTER Policy brief - guide aimed at policy makers, based upon the research done in the project, in which the lessons learned are extracted and translated into concrete ideas and steps for development of policies and public support programmes for older unemployed and workers, interested in becoming an entrepreneur, and running a growing business. It pays attention to issues on how to motivate and engage them and how public employment services can play a role in this.

The present document is thus part of a wider set of guidelines within RE-ENTER.

## 2. For Whom

RE-ENTER Interactive workshop and experience guidelines presented in this document are aimed at entrepreneurial development organisations and organisations providing entrepreneurial training: business incubators and accelerators, training/ support units of business associations, VET and adult education companies, centres and schools.

The guidelines intend to provide support in planning, structuring and delivering interactive workshops for potential entrepreneurs, especially those that are currently unemployed or at risk of unemployment and belong to the age group 45+.

## 3. Introduction to RE-ENTER

### 1.1. Why RE-ENTER?

According to Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, to bring Europe back to growth and higher levels of employment, Europe needs more entrepreneurs. It confirms once more that one of the most important factors for success of a start-up is the entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and will of its founder or entrepreneurial team. RE-ENTER addresses the needs of older entrepreneurs (over 45) for improved entrepreneurial skills and support, in different phases of entrepreneurial venture - from developing business idea and plan, to establishing a company and during its first steps in the market, and taking full advantage of intergenerational learning through interaction with young entrepreneurs. “Older workers have a wealth of skills and experience, e.g. 400,000 unemployed over 45 have on average around 25 years of experience each, we are missing out on 10 million years of experience.” These wealth of skills and experience that are not only beneficial to the economy but will help teach the next generation of workers.

The over-45 entrepreneurs have good knowledge on their sector and relevant expertise in their line of work, they lack the specific skills and knowledge on starting and running a successful and sustainable business, so they need more exposure to entrepreneurship, they have the skills and experience to make a success of their new enterprise and, more importantly, this in combination with their maturity can reduce the risk of failure.

Core analysis of the current education programs have been made and conclusions are:

- Two different type of efforts concerning entrepreneurship education can be identified, one as a entrepreneurship education targeting participants of HE studies, second effort can be identified as an entrepreneurship training targeting potential and practicing entrepreneurs,
- Many entrepreneurial support and training programmes exist, however their main focus is on younger entrepreneurs with higher education levels,
- Training programmes on the topic embedded in existing VET cycles and HE studies only address their students not people who are at work or unemployed
- There is bias towards start-ups and technology-intensive entrepreneurs in most programmes
- There is a complete absence of educational material RE-ENTER will provide, innovative training program customized to needs of target group.

RE-ENTER - “Returning to the Labour Market through Entrepreneurship” – is an Erasmus+ project (2017-1-HR01-KA204-035423) that aims to understand of the motivation of, and the skills most needed by the potential and new entrepreneurs of over 45 particularly in partner countries, and provide an answer through a Entrepreneurial Development programme fully catered for their specific needs and which offers support for development of entrepreneurial mindset, knowledge and skills, and will deliver it in a playful and effective way.

### 1.2. What is offered?

RE-ENTER has designed and developed a new Entrepreneurial Development Programme, based upon a sound needs analysis and the elaboration of Entrepreneurial Development Practices for unemployed and workers of over 45. The programme is embedded in an innovative and inspiring learning environment through ICT which includes creativity exercises, diversity management and other tools; providing direct and virtual networking opportunities to starting entrepreneurs. Motivational aspects are addressed, with the aim customising the programme for the different motivations of the target group.

### 1.3. On what is this approach based?

The 'RE-ENTER – *Entrepreneurship is a mindset*' training course is a flexi-time course and is delivered through e-learning as a training delivery method. The course duration is approximately 8,5 hours (only modules, without additional materials). The course consists of 6 modules. All modules are structured in the same way. They start with a short introduction on the topic of the module including the objective and expected learning outcomes. Then the main part: the module content supported by practical examples. Every module is also accompanied with extra materials, those being:

- Case studies - Examples within the module topics, that are about companies who faced certain problems and ways they have solved it.
- Self-assessment quiz - After each module, the learner can take a quiz with 10 multiple choice questions, where they can test their gained module knowledge.
- Book recommendation from RE-ENTER Book Club - Partners of the project have created a Book Club with recommendations of books that would be a valuable addition to the learners who want to deepen their knowledge on particular subjects.
- Assignments within the Log Book - Since the online course is meant to offer foremost practical knowledge to the learner, they are given a chance to already think about their future business venture through various assignments, that will help them to set up a business.

## 4. RE-ENTER Interactive workshops and experiences

### 1.4. Interactive learning

Interactive learning is a pedagogical technique that engages students by letting them actively participate in the learning process, interacting with each other and with the learning subject. Their job is not to passively absorb the course material but to be an active part of the lesson.



Photo by [Evangeline Shaw](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Active, interactive learning makes it impossible to sleep during the “class”. Encouraging talk, teamwork and problem solving, teachers can make learning fun, practical and effective.

With or without a form of technology, interactive learning helps participants strengthen problem solving and critical thinking skills.

Any event that is called a workshop should be interactive by definition, as Scott Berkun says “A cooking workshop means students cook things. A writing workshop means students write things. If most of your “workshop” is people not actually making anything, you should perhaps call it a class, a lecture, or a mistake.” (<https://scottberkun.com/2013/run-a-good-workshop/>)

Planning a workshop takes some time, but it has benefits for teachers as well:

- It takes stress off the teacher as they don't have to be in the spotlight all the time,
- It makes training more effective - students participate more and learn more,
- As everybody gets involved in interaction, there are less distractions and potential behavioural problems are avoided,
- When students enjoy the learning, the teacher has more fun too!

### 1.5. How do adult learners like to learn?

Aiming to design an attractive and effective learning experience for adult learners, it is useful to have in mind what aspects of learning activities are important for this age group:

- They value the real-life application of their new skills and want to apply them immediately
- They want to have a systematic feedback on their learning process
- Discussing work, sharing experiences and problems and hearing how others deal with similar situations is very informative to them
- Coffee breaks during training activities are important moments where such information is exchanged
- The structure of the learning has to be clear to the participants
- Learners 45+ prefer a bite-sized learning format
- There has to be a good balance between theory and practice
- Time has to be reserved to take initiatives and formulate suggestions and questions, to exercise and rehearse to make oneself familiar with new information
- Smaller groups (5-10 persons) are more attractive because there are more opportunities to be actively involved in the learning sessions and to ask questions
- Showing interest in the participants' learning needs and recognizing what they have learned by creating the opportunities to implement and practise what they have learned
- Willingness to listen and openness to ideas, suggestions and questions of the (older) workers
- Acceptance of mistakes: an atmosphere where nobody is perfect and mistakes can happen, only practice makes perfect

### 1.6. Workshop design

There are three main parts in creating a good workshop:

1. Design
2. Implementation
3. Follow-up

In the design stage, the first question to ask is whether you really need a workshop. Workshops are great in teaching new skills as participants can safely practice, fail and receive immediate feedback. A workshop can help create a sense of community and common purpose. A workshop setting is conducive to teamwork, more intense discussion, consensus building, setting an action plan. On the other hand, a workshop is not necessary if the aim is just to present information, and may be not the best choice if there is no time or resources to plan and implement an interactive event.

If you have decided that a workshop is what you need, next step is to create an event that is relevant, productive and memorable.

**Start with the goal of the workshop.** Do you want to improve specific skills of the participants, to start a project, to facilitate collaborative work? You need a goal that helps to focus the discussion.

**Who will be the participants?** Why do they need to participate? How many should attend? It all depends on the goal of the workshop.

**Decide on timing and location** that is convenient for the participants and helps achieve your objectives. If it's not a full-day event, avoid organising it around 14:00 – 15:30 – the least productive time for most people.

**Draft the agenda.** As you know the purpose of the workshop, you may work backwards to structure a workshop that will help achieve its goals. What are the main points that you want to communicate and discuss? How much time will it take?

You have defined the learning needs and expected outcomes, and made sure the contents of the workshop is relevant to the participants. Now, what can you do to make the workshop more interactive and attractive?

There are a few things to consider:

- Learning environment
- Learning preferences and expectations
- Type, sequence, duration of activities

Consider how environment and room arrangement impacts the mood and level of participation. If possible, think of organising your session in a less traditional space. When people find themselves in a creative setting, they behave accordingly. For instance, lounge seating and smaller teams make people feel comfortable, more creative and more ready to participate and share.



Photo by [Austin Distel](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Accommodate different learning styles. Some are visual learners who prefer pictures and diagrams; others are physical learners who like to use their body and sense of touch to understand problems. In teamwork, individual work and presentations, allow to choose from a variety of approaches and tools, to find a way that matches their learning preferences. Create an environment where all the different learners are welcome.

Interactive education involves a variety of techniques. Depending on the length of the workshop, choose several activities and integrate them into the learning process. Some techniques do not require any equipment or teaching aids and still make the learning more engaging and effective:

- When a question with multiple answers is posed, the learners can be asked to choose an answer and vote, and then discuss it with their neighbor that voted for a different answer trying to persuade them to change their opinion. Then everybody is asked to vote for different options again, and it can be observed that the engagement waiting for the correct answer to be announced has increased. This process of peer discussion (made well known by Prof. Eric Mazur of Harvard) makes students commit to an answer, then discuss the reasoning behind it with their peers, at the same time getting emotionally invested in learning and improving retention.
- Alternatively, a complex question can be given without multiple answer options, then the students are asked to discuss in pairs or teams, and present their conclusions, thus



expected. Be flexible, monitor energy levels and adjust the workshop as it goes keeping the main objectives in mind.

### 1.8. Workshop follow-up

Even a great workshop will not have much impact if it has no follow-up. The ideas and conclusions of the workshop should always lead to some kind of progress. There must be a way to build on the momentum generated during the workshop.

Follow-up should be planned before the workshop, in the design stage. Have a clear idea where the workshop fits in a bigger picture. What goals will it help to achieve? What are you planning to do with the results of the workshop?

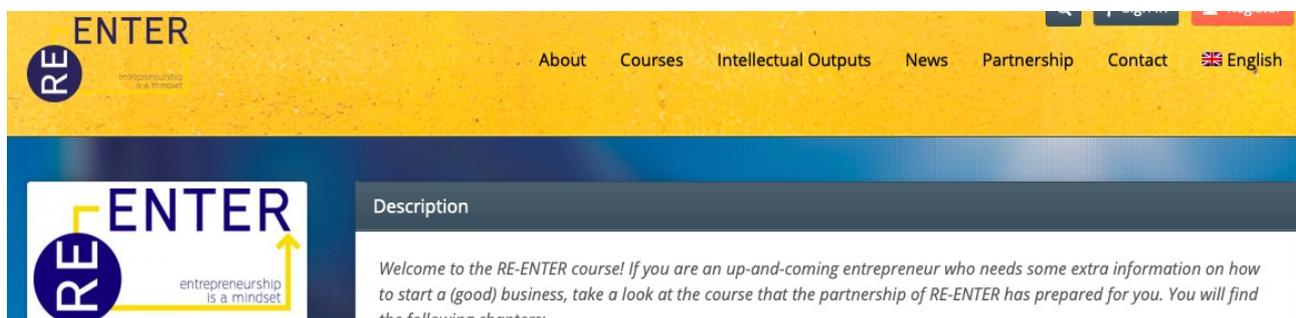
At the end of the workshop, you may ask the participants what they think should happen afterwards, to make them more committed to any further actions.

Allocate time to analyse the notes from the workshop and set yourself a deadline to contact the participants. If it's going to take longer, it may be useful to send a thank-you note and remind the main points of the discussion shortly after the event.

### 1.9. Integrating online learning and face-to-face interaction

Learning approach that integrates online learning and face-to-face interaction is commonly referred to as blended learning. Quite often, it is a preferred way of learning that allows to combine the benefits of a direct social interaction of a workshop or coaching session with the more independent and time-flexible online learning.

RE-ENTER has developed an online learning space with learning materials for potential entrepreneurs (45+) that is available at [www.reenter.eu](http://www.reenter.eu).



RE-ENTER learning programme and materials can be used in different ways:

- as an online Training Course,
- as a part of Training Course that includes e-learning as well as classroom-based learning (i.e. a blended learning).

The learning units are short but can be further divided into smaller parts that would take just a few minutes to read, and would be "served" as knowledge "snacks". The tutor(s) and learners can exploit these "snacks" as a basis for discussion and reflection.

If RE-ENTER Learning Space is used as a part of a blended learning course:

1. either Online Training Course will be supplemented with a face-to-face meeting,
2. or classroom-based training will be supplemented with e-learning using RE-ENTER online learning materials.

In the first case, the event will be organised in the beginning of the Course, in order to create a physical meeting and networking opportunity for the participants and tutor(s). Having an initial face-to-face introduction helps to set the expectations of the participants and put a face to the tutor and classmates. Having offline faces increases online accountability.

There may also be a networking event organised in the end of the course, to discuss the results and encourage cooperation.

In the second case, the emphasis will be placed on classroom-based learning, and:

- the workshop(s) will aim to engage the participants in active learning and sharing their experiences;
- the target group – adult learners – prefers short courses, thus the workshop can be organised as a multiple-days event, or as a set of 2-3 hour evening workshops, or a set of "business breakfast" meetings where separate learning units or smaller parts of them will be discussed.

When integrating online learning and workshops or coaching, it is important to explain and remind the participants why different types of learning are proposed, how they complement and enhance each other.

## 5. Concluding remarks

Creating a good workshop takes time, experience and resources, but it is a great way to engage the learners, teach new skills, encourage collaboration.

A workshop should always have a goal that fits into a bigger picture – company's strategy, implementation of a specific project, or skills development plan – and a follow-up that reinforces the results of the discussion and leads to further actions and progress.

Face-to-face workshops can be successfully integrated with online learning, creating blended learning experience, which is preferred by many learners. As in workshop design, the integration of different types of learning has to have a purpose and structure and contribute to achieving the overall goals.

Workshops are interactive by definition. They should start with a collaborative activity as soon as possible, set the working mood and keep the energy till the end. For better engagement and results, from the endless list of possible workshop activities, try to choose those that cater for different learning styles and preferences.

For further inspiration, check out the following resources:

**Ten Simple Rules for Running Interactive Workshops:**

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3937100>

**Facilitation Tips, Games and Energisers:** <http://workshops.350.org/facilitation/>

**101 Interactive Training Techniques:**

<http://www.slideshare.net/coloradostatelibrary/101-interactive-training-techniques>