



Vocis@hand

Coaching
the Inner Self
Elements of
good practice



VOCIS
VOCATIONAL TRAINING
OF THE INNER SELF

In memoriam Hubertus Voss-Uhlenbrock

Imprint & Disclaimer

Edited by Fondation Caritas Luxembourg on behalf of the VOCIS consortium.



Caritasverband
für das Dekanat
Borken e.V.



caritas
L U X E M B O U R G



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A close-up photograph of a person's feet wearing bright red sneakers, stepping onto a dark, textured concrete ledge. The person is wearing black leggings. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a blueish tint.

A journey
of 1000 miles
begins with
a footstep.

Lao-tse

Introduction & Acknowledgements

DANIELLE SCHRONEN (LEADING PARTNER)

It has been for a while that Caritas Luxembourg observes the growing professional constraints out there in the social sector and more prominently among its own departments i.e. the implementation of new pedagogical concepts in the non formal education (with the need for professionals to adapt to a new understanding of the educational role) or the very young professionals facing disturbing refugees' experiences in settings where psychological support is not the norm for the refugees and even less for the staff.

That's why Caritas Luxembourg was eager to take the lead and participate in a project aiming at giving individuals and groups strategies to better cope with their often difficult daily professional life when our former German project partner Caritasverband für das Dekanat Borken e.V. came up with the idea for VOCIS – Vocational Training of the Inner Self.

In cooperation with other European partners – Antares from Italy, Ballymun Job Centre from Ireland and the University of Zadar from Croatia – we were able to build a strong project within the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.



Key Information

Name: Vocational Training of the Inner Self

Acronym: VOCIS

Period: 15/12/2015 to 14/01/2018

Duration: 25 months

Partners: 5 organisations from 5 countries

Budget: 166.902,00 EUR

EU programme: Erasmus+, Key Action 2 Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training

About VOCIS

VOCIS aims at developing competences and skills for self-regulation of professionals or students by implementing coaching and self-instructional methodologies in order to acquire strategies for coping with growing professional constraints and to increase efficiency at work. VOCIS thus contributes to relevant vocational education, adding to the capacity for sustainable adaptability of European organisations.

Professional activities today require updating knowledge on a regular basis, following rapid innovation cycles to meet the needs and expectations of customers or users, attaining higher productivity and, more and more, switching to a completely new job as digitalisation has made the former job redundant. This environment can lead to strong negative consequences for individuals as well as for organisations. Individuals react in the form of stress followed by decreased performance and motivation to absenteeism or even burnout and depression.

In the social sector, the fact that professionals face people in need, a further source of stress stems from the fact that they do not have the resources to help everyone. Work is characterized on one hand by the great responsibility and the high commitment of the professionals to their clientele. On the other, the deep insights into difficult living conditions or destinies of people, the sight of misery, neglected children, addiction, poverty or serious mental and physical disorders are a daily challenge for the inner balance of professionals of the social sector¹. ▶ *Chapter 1*

Yet, the extent to which professionals succeed in managing requirements depends not only on the distinctiveness of their skills but also significantly of the actual level of support

¹ Cf. Poulsen (2010)

from their organisation. Therefore, VOCIS not only analysed which approaches could turn into opportunities to develop skills for self-regulation but VOCIS also proposed tools that may induce high added value in organizational settings.

The VOCIS project has developed a set of high quality instruments for the Vocational Education and Training of self-regulation skills to be used by VET teachers and trainers, coaches, professionals in both continuous and initial vocational education and training. Some of them allow self-instruction and are useful for individual use without having to gain first the support of organisations. They enhance the ability of employees, students, trainers/teachers and coaches to develop flexible and sustainable self-regulation, self-organization and self-guidance, leading to higher motivation and volition and better coping with frustration.

More specifically, this set of educational instruments will be highlighted in the present publication. VOCIS@hand gives an overview of the VOCIS materials in English. The materials themselves are available in the national languages of the project's consortium (English, French, German, Italian and Croatian) on the project's website vocis.org, intending a sustainable promotion of the contents. The materials are conceived for a flexible and relevant use of the materials and to address learning objectives on an individual level (virtual classroom) as well as on an organisational level in coaching and training contexts (peer coaching). ▶ *Chapter 2*

Finally, the experience of VOCIS is traced showing good results but also scientific limits, not unusual for such a short project. Therefore further research areas and new perspectives for development are opened, promoting the dissemination of the VOCIS tools to new target groups. Maybe some of our readers feel motivated to join VOCIS in this adventure ahead! ▶ *Chapter 3*

Thank you!

Many thanks to all partners for developing such useful and user-friendly material with its unique collection of exercises, to Ms Mulombe from Anefore for her advice throughout the different stages of the project, to Marco Da Silva and Marijan Renić who led the partners through the maze of application and gave a good start to the project, to the numerous participants who were not afraid to test our material and give feedback for improvement, to our internal and external reviewers Manuel Achten (Ministry of Education, Luxembourg), Ina Reic Ercegovic (University of Split, Croatia), Stephan Rietmann (Caritas Borken, Germany) for their precious comments and supporting feedback for VOCIS@hand.

This project has been highly instructive with regards to the self-regulation competencies for myself and has been more than once offering opportunities for practice, which made me think of the poem by Antonio Machado “...Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar...” (Travelers, there is no path, paths are made by walking.). Even for well planned projects, their implementation remains an adventure often outside people’s comfortzone. Therefore, I appreciated a lot to have a continuous back up from Stephan Rietmann.

Thank you!

Know yourself.

Don't accept your

dog's admiration

as conclusive

evidence that you

are wonderful.

Ask Ann Lander, Chicago Sun-Times



Train your attention for things that are important for your life

e.g. objectives, positive feelings, intentions, and so on. Take five coffee beans into your left pocket and whenever the observed experience occurs, take one bean and put it into your right pocket. At the end of the day examine how many beans you find in your left and in your right pocket.

Exercise from the VOCIS collection



Chapter 1

Meeting the Inner Self

Why coach the Inner Self?

STEPHAN RIETMANN

Coaching is used by people mostly when problems of external or internal cooperation occur². The loss of cooperation skills or possibilities, conflicts in confidential personal relationships or problems with superiors and colleagues at the workplace are examples of external cooperation problems. Internal cooperation problems refer to the way a person is dealing with him- or herself. Self-control is therefore a central dimension in coaching processes. To set clear goals, to keep up with efforts or to deal with frustration, difficult emotions and problems require a successful cooperation with oneself. Functions of self-control are basic and integrative life competences, which are an essential prerequisite for satisfactory relationships and success in school and working life. Effective counselling, coaching and therapy support and develop conditions that allow clients to master their concerns, problems and development tasks by themselves. Thus, coaching fundamentally contributes to the improvement of self-control. Let's take a closer look to contextual changes that explain the boom of coaching and other social techniques.

The working world in Western societies has undergone an intensive structural change, which is mainly determined by developments such as globalisation and digitization with the resulting flexibilisation of working and economic life. The effect on people, teams and organisations is massive, in particular acceleration and changes in the time structures³ have an increasing impact. The problematic consequences include the increase of overburden, mental stress, burnout and depression.

2 Gilligan (2008) **3** Rosa (2012)

In general, burnout can be understood as an imbalance between mental exertion due to high responsibility, labour intensity, time pressure and contradictory requirements on the one hand and recognition on the other. Thus, the problem is not primarily excessive work, but a question of circumstances under which this work is executed. Work stress due to gratification crises is reported in Germany for 9.3% of the employees⁴, so that about every tenth employee makes this experience daily. This results in high individual, social, organisational and societal health-care costs.

For years, a persistently high number of cases of incapacity for work due to mental disorders have been observed in the health and social services, but the figures are particularly low for banks and insurance companies⁵. As typical sources of stress are named

- Multitasking,
- High deadline and performance pressure,
- Monotony,
- Disturbances and interruptions,
- Very fast working tempo and
- Recurring confrontation with new tasks.

The top of the list is occupied by time and performance pressure (40%), long working hours and commuting distances (35%), followed only then by physical constraints like noise, heat, etc.⁶ The incidences of mental illness and the rates of incapacity for work have more or less doubled in the past 20 years.⁷

4 DAK (2012) **5** DAK (2012) **6** RKI (2011)

7 Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales (2011); BAUA (2012)

It's not stress that kills us, it's our reaction to it. HANS SELYE

The outlook for the future of the world of work and life and the projected changes suggest a further trend. Complexity, unpredictability and ambiguity of different spheres of life are clearly increasing. In this context fits the survey of the German federation of trade unions⁸ pointing out, in its index "Gute Arbeit" (good work), the fact that 36% of all employees do not believe that they can hold their jobs up to the age of retirement – leading to increasingly negative effects.

The impairment in the working atmosphere holds a leading position among stress factors that have the greatest impact on health.⁹ But work-related impairment and mental stress are also reported by 12% of all professional staff. Academics occupy a top position (17.6%), which they share with managerial and executive staff (16.9%) as reported by the German Federal Statistical Office.¹⁰ The experience of increasing compaction and intensification of work is a wide-ranging, broad phenomenon reported by 63% of all employees. Depending on the source, 40% or 52% report permanent time pressure and agitation.¹¹ On the European level, the 6th European Working Conditions Survey pictures intensive work as quite prevalent in Europe: 37% of workers in the EU report working to tight deadlines while 34% report working at high speed 'around three-quarters of the time'.¹²

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has dedicated the World Day for Safety and Health at Work in 2016 to the issue of workplace stress and reports that not only psychological problems but also other major categories of diseases

8 DGB (2010) **9** RKI (2011) **10** Statistisches Bundesamt (2012)

11 DAK (2012); DGB (2010) **12** Eurofound (2016), p. 49

like cardiovascular problems or musculoskeletal disorders may be connected to work-related stress. ILO reports other findings from European studies:

- The 4th European Working Conditions Survey (2007) revealed that an estimated 40 million people in the EU were affected by work-related stress.
- According to the European Risk Observatory Report published in 2009, work-related stress represented in Europe between 50 and 60 percent of all lost working days.¹³

In Luxembourg, one third of the workforce complains about symptoms of stress in 2016 - by 2015, this proportion was only 30%. One respondent out of six considers that the problems related to his or her job influence even private life. Particularly alarming is the fact that nearly one in seven employees lost all pleasure of working.¹⁴

This significant development is not followed by strategies to deal with these problems. “In Germany, mental stress is still smiled at, treated ironically and trivialized”.¹⁵ ILO cites the First European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER) conducted by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA): their findings from 2009 show that even though work-related stress was reported among the key OSH concerns for European enterprises, only about half of the establishments surveyed reported that they inform their workers about psychosocial risks and their effects on health and safety; and less than a third reported having procedures in place to deal with work-related stress.¹⁶

13 International Labour Organization (2016), p. 6-8 **14** Chambre des Salariés (2016), p. 46
15 Bauer (2015), p. 66 **16** International Labour Organization (2016), p. 6-8

Meanwhile, the phenomena outlined here for the working world also apply to the education and training system in which, for example, the “Turboabitur” (fast high school graduation certificate) may be acquired after 8 years instead of 9 in Germany. The increased expectations of self-responsibility, self-optimisation and performance are already the defining experiences for small children, young people and whole families. Systemic interactions between work, relationships, family and leisure allow far reaching consequences of these macrosystemic changes to be expected.

Where external requirements diminish in influence, individual self-regulation is becoming increasingly important: through the elimination, as well as the fragility of normative institutions and external requirements, the regulation of everyday life is becoming more and more a personal task of the individual. This has led to significant gains in individual freedom and design possibilities, but also to a considerable increase in self-responsibility. Efficiency, health, quality of life, satisfaction and, last but not least, successful relationships are determined by a good self-regulation.

In the context outlined here, the VOCIS Project is intended to provide a preventive contribution for target groups of the social and health sector, and as a next step, children, adolescents and parents shall also be provided with self-instructing opportunities to strengthen their self-regulation. In the next section we take a look to eight dimensions of self-regulation, which can be measured and trained individually.

**The greatest weapon against stress
is our ability to choose one thought
over another.** WILLIAM JAMES

The 8 Dimensions of Self-regulation: Cooperate well with yourself

STEPHAN RIETMANN

In a predominantly psychologically oriented research, different aspects of self-regulation, purposeful for this project, have been investigated. The diversity of the sources includes specialist books and studies of personality and socio-psychological fundamental research, psychotherapeutic guiding concepts, neurobiological foundations of development and change, and other areas of research. For VOCIS, influential foundations from personality- and motivational-psychological approaches stem from Kuhl¹⁷ as well as Scheffer¹⁸. The work of Roth & Ryba¹⁹ on the neurobiological basis of human change and the work of Carol Dweck²⁰ in relation to the importance of static and dynamic self-images have given indications to the possibilities and limits of human change. Other useful sources are Joachim Bauer's work on self-regulation²¹ and his study²² on changes in the working world, the work of Baumeister & Tierney²³ on willpower, the foundations of LeDoux²⁴ regarding the importance and development of emotions and the work on the relevance of mindfulness of Neff²⁵ as well as Zimmermann, Spitz & Schmidt²⁶ and finally the work of Walsh²⁷ on the importance of life style.

This research resulted in eight theoretical constructs for the objectives of VOCIS that describe different aspects of self-regulation. These self-regulating functions include emotional, motivational, cognitive and volitional aspects and are relevant for the understanding of self-regulation and individual development processes. These dimensions are briefly outlined hereafter.

17 Kuhl (2001 & 2010) **18** Scheffer (2005) **19** Roth & Ryba (2016)
20 Dweck (2006) **21** Bauer (2013) **22** Bauer (2015) **23** Baumeister & Tierney (2011)
24 LeDoux (1996) **25** Neff (2003) **26** Zimmermann, Spitz & Schmidt (2015)
27 Walsh (2011)

The 8 Dimensions of Self-regulation

- ▶ **Self-perception:** relating to how well a person succeeds in sensing and recognizing his or her own needs, preferences and intentions, and to test them against external expectations. This includes access to one's own somatic markers and self-observation.
- ▶ **Goal orientation:** this dimension describes how effective, clear, realistic, timely, measurable and operationalised the goals are that a person pursues.
- ▶ **Willpower** involves how effectively a person converts the goals, intentions and plans that he or she has set to result-oriented and concrete action. In addition, this dimension pictures how a person can concentrate on a task, imagining success and achievement, and appropriately divide his or her time between speed and correctness.
- ▶ **Affect regulation** describes how a person succeeds in promoting and maintaining adaptive affects and emotions for the aims pursued, and to be able to flexibly switch between negative and positive affects. It also includes how a person can cope with contradictory requirements, frustrations and internal conflicts in the pursuit of goals, and control impulses that are not goal-relevant. What is also conveyed is how a person can cope with failure, learn from mistakes and motivate him- or herself, even if he or she has no desire to do so anymore.

-
- ▶ **Self-reinforcement** is a dimension that describes how a person succeeds in encouraging himself, in reminding himself of tasks, in creating positive inner dialogues, strengthening him- or herself and ending disturbing thoughts.
 - ▶ **Self-integration** refers to how congruent the goals and actions of individuals are with their own essential needs, values and long-term life plans and goals. It is about how authentically, internally free and autonomous a person feels about what he or she is doing.
 - ▶ **Self-development** is a dimension of self-regulation, which reveals how important a person values self-research, his or her own development, change and self-knowledge. As such, it is a matter of how open, curious and reflective individuals are in their own thinking, experience and behaviour, and to what extent they can take a bird's eye perspective of themselves.
 - ▶ **Self-compassion** means how acceptable, understanding and non-judgmental a person is against his own shortcomings and mistakes. Furthermore, this dimension describes how a person can manage wise self-care, deal with malaise, and live an attitude of mindfulness.

Who should train?

STEPHAN RIETMANN

Training one's own self-regulation is a goal that usually brings high individual benefit in terms of life-quality, better close relations with family and friends and higher success at work. In the following section you will find four examples for persons, who decided to improve their self-regulation skills.

► Jason

Jason is a key account manager, who works successfully and with impact in his team. He has a high achievement motive and a tendency to behave impulsively when stressed. He is 42 years of age, married and has two children. He came to coaching where the coach suggested a questionnaire to get information about his self-regulative skills. This instrument suggested him to develop his affect regulation and proposed different exercises. He regularly makes use of self-hypnotical interventions and appears to react more calmly, relaxed and appropriately in tough situations.

► Linda

Linda is a 35-year-old mother of twins. She tends to avoid tasks and sometimes even procrastinates. Her neighbour is a teacher at the local primary school, which makes use of a questionnaire for the team members that measures different self-regulative functions. The neighbour suggests to her to make use of this instrument and brings it along to her. The questionnaire made clear, that she would benefit from setting her goals more clearly and by strengthening her willpower after making a decision to work on a task. She decided to train and improve her willpower by regularly doing mental toughness exercises from the VOCIS toolkit.

▶ Gary

Gary is a 52-year-old psychologist in a children's hospital. Trained in cognitive behavioral therapy, he works effectively and efficiently with the children, their parents, doctors, nurses and other collaboratives. When confronted with pain, hurt and sorrow of his little clients, he sometimes feels helpless and a little bit tired of his job. His supervisor suggested to him to take the VOCIS diagnostic toolkit, which showed, that Gary's self-regulative skills are almost excellent. It also pointed out, that one single dimension, his self-empathy, could benefit from further development. The VOCIS toolkit gave him a variant choice of three exercises. With the help of these self-instruction instruments, he started to take a daily look onto his self-empathy, aiming at improving it.

▶ Patricia

Patricia is a 25-year-old teacher in a primary school and has just finished her education. She is interested in her further development and takes part in group coaching, provided by her university and where the VOCIS diagnostic toolkit is used for an initial check up. The results of her questionnaire suggest, that she should take a closer look at her self-observation skills in order to make use of somatic markers, that her body delivers in her daily life, for instance while teaching. The trainer of the group suggested that Patricia should work with the Bodyscan in order to develop a better feeling for her physical needs, the tension of her muscles and her state of relaxation.

The Development of Self-regulation: How to train?

STEPHAN RIETMANN

A central component of the project is the development of a toolkit, which includes offers in the form of exercises and training possibilities for one or several functions of self-regulation. These offers are aimed to specifically train each function described above. For each of the functions, three effective exercises are presented. For the dimension of the affect regulation, it is important, for example, to bring about a rapid and effective self-calming and relaxation in response to a stressful event and thus to influence the emotional, cognitive and somatic experiences. With some exercises, it is possible to influence and develop simultaneously several functions. Thus, for example, respiratory exercises can have a beneficial effect on the affective regulation and, at the same time, improve self-perception.

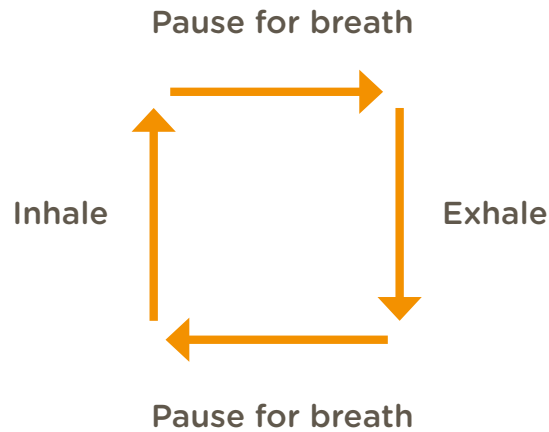
In a simple exercise, the reader can test this for himself²⁸. If you count in a situation of stress at the rhythm 4-4-4-4 as follows:

Inhalation (count up to 4) ▶ Pause for breath (count up to 4) ▶
Exhale (count up to 4) ▶ Pause for breath (count up to 4).

This often leads to the calming of feelings, thoughts and a relaxation on the physical level. This can be intensified, if as a next step in breathing and counting, you imagine that you would draw a square:

Inhale (stitch up) ▶ Pause for breath (upper line) ▶
Exhale (stroke down) ▶ Pause for breath (bottom line).

28 Daitch (2007)



The exercises differ in terms of time required from one minute up to 60 minutes, as well as in terms of the level of ambition, from simple and easy to put into practice to more sophisticated strategies and techniques where daily practice over a longer period of time is beneficial or even necessary. The methods have been identified in a search in standard works of the consulting, coaching, training and therapy practice. The guiding concepts have their origins in systemic and hypnotherapeutic schools²⁹, humanistic psychology³⁰ and the behaviour-oriented relaxation practice³¹. In addition, aspects of the Zurich resource manual³² and different approaches to mindfulness meditation³³ have found their entry onto the training list.

29 Alman & Lambrou (2010); Alman (2014); Daitch (2007); Liggett (2000); Uneståhl (2011a and 2011b) **30** Kopp (2015) **31** Berking (2015) **32** Storch & Krause (2014) **33** Hanson (2013); Kabat-Zinn (1998); Germer (2009); Krech (2002)

Who should coach and how to coach?

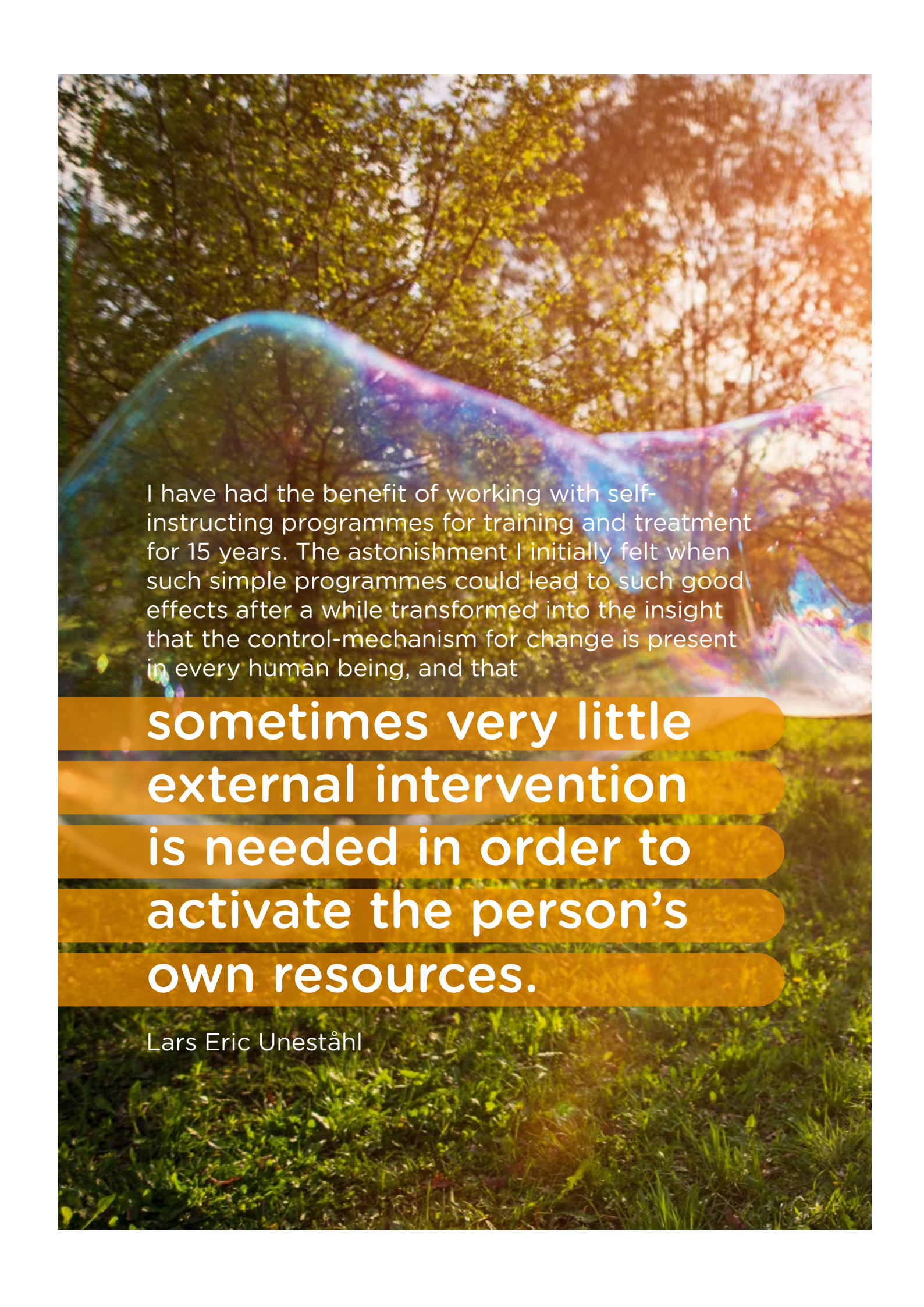
STEPHAN RIETMANN

VOCIS is a self-instructing programme which may benefit from a professional introduction or support, when it is needed. A professional academic education of the coach indeed is helpful. The VOCIS team consists of psychologists, pedagogists, sociologists, social workers, organisational and management experts. Some of them have further qualifications in human resource management, coaching, different schools of psychotherapy and other social techniques. In this section we outline some principles that are central to the developmental idea of VOCIS.

The central idea of this programme is the observation – and conviction – that self-instructing programmes for training and treatment lead to good effects and are highly beneficial for persons as well as groups. The control-mechanism for change and wellbeing is present in every human being. Our preventive approach suggests exercises for individual use that need mainly internal intervention in order to activate the person's own resources.

VOCIS certainly is a preventive approach. When a therapeutic setting is needed, we suggest consulting medical or therapeutical help. Our individual coaching approach which underpins all interactions follows humanistic psychology as Person-centred Counselling and systemic therapy guidelines. These approaches are based on the idea that given the proper conditions, all individuals can gain a stronger and healthier sense of self and self-belief. This includes core or 'active' conditions in all interactions within the individual coaching.

- ▶ **Congruence** – be completely genuine with self and others.
- ▶ **Unconditional positive regard** – must be non-judgemental and valuing of self and others.
- ▶ **Empathy** – strive to understand self and others. This means in practice: active listening, offering support, positive body language, asking open questions.
- ▶ **Every instruction is self-instruction.** “Get out of the way, when the client is on his way” is one of the central ideas of Ericksonian Hypnosis.



I have had the benefit of working with self-instructing programmes for training and treatment for 15 years. The astonishment I initially felt when such simple programmes could lead to such good effects after a while transformed into the insight that the control-mechanism for change is present in every human being, and that

**sometimes very little
external intervention
is needed in order to
activate the person's
own resources.**

Lars Eric Uneståhl

A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a dark vest over a light-colored sweater and blue jeans, stands in a grassy field. She is blowing a large, multi-colored bubble that stretches across the frame. The background features trees and a bright sunset sky with a rainbow visible on the ground. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

Chapter 2

The 3 steps of coaching the Inner Self

How to explore the VOCIS material?

DANIELLE SCHRONEN

The tools developed by the VOCIS consortium are all linked to each other – even if, at first sight, they appear as stand-alone – offering input for different situations: individuals or groups, with or without trainer or coach, theoretical input or practical work. All tools contribute in a different way to the development of the Inner Self. Therefore, each person individually has to choose for him/herself or together with a coach what fits best in a given situation. Nevertheless, starting with the diagnostic toolkit is always recommended.

If you are a coach or trainer, we invite you to have a look at the various materials to be found in VOCIS@hand or the tools on our website (vocis.org) for individual and other types of coaching, especially the methodological guidelines and the case studies.

You find in this chapter a presentation that shows how the different materials and tools can bring their share of development in the three steps of coaching the Inner Self (as developed by Daliborka Luketić and Zvezdan Penezić). This perspective is to give coachees and coaches yet another key for constructing a tailormade developmental path.

What can you expect?

- 🕒 Find tools to develop your Inner Self and reduce stress in your professional and private life.
- 🕒 Explore materials and training modules for coaching or teaching activities.
- 🕒 Get hints about how to start and successfully run a peer coaching process.
- 🕒 Learn about training of the Inner Self in initial and continuous vocational education and training.
- 🕒 Network with experts to exchange ideas and experience.

The three steps of coaching the Inner Self are about the development of an individual's motivation, the development of his or her self-concept and finally personal development.

The process starts with reflecting on one's motivation to get oneself active in the process of development of self-regulation. The second step helps you to get to know yourself, to see clearly your strengths and weaknesses and to gain a better understanding of yourself. The third step encourages deepening the personal development in order to improve self-regulation with pinpoint precision in areas important to you and thus to make the most out of VOCIS. The next pages show what each material has to offer for the three steps.



The 3 Steps of Coaching the Inner Self

Motivational Development	Development of the Self-Concept	Personal Development
Activate Yourself	Know Yourself	Optimize Yourself
Diagnostic toolkit	Diagnostic toolkit	Diagnostic toolkit
Individual Coaching	Individual Coaching	Individual Coaching
Peer Coaching	Peer Coaching	Peer Coaching
Continuous Training	Continuous Training	Continuous Training
Initial Training	Initial Training	Initial Training

People say that
motivation doesn't
last. Well, neither does
bathing. That's why we
recommend it daily.

Zig Ziglar



Motivational Development

Activate yourself with the help of the Diagnostic Toolkit and Individual Coaching

STEPHAN RIETMANN

The VOCIS diagnostic toolkit aims to increase the competencies and skills of individuals in order for them to better cope with individual challenges, professional constraints and to achieve a higher level of self-efficacy at work. The model aims at measuring individual degrees of self-regulation skills and gives detailed information about three subfunctions and the necessity of improving competencies:

🔄 Goal Setting 🔄 Willpower 🔄 Self-Reinforcement

Why?

Measuring self-regulation subfunctions and individual feedback can be a great source of information for motivational development. The VOCIS diagnostic toolkit has been developed to allow individuals to motivate themselves around their specific subfunctions, with a particular focus on the individual competencies to take professional roles in a responsible way as well as professional obligations and goals. Using a confidential setting of measurement can provide protection as well as inspiration for the individual regarding their own motivational development. The system gives the individual specific suggestions to train the fields of development.

Who?

Any person in a professional work setting can utilize the diagnostic toolkit for motivational development. It only needs access to the internet and the VOCIS homepage. The individualized and confidential setting of the VOCIS platform creates a safe and protected space that avoids the individual feeling exposed regarding their own – perceived or measured – weaknesses and developmental tasks.

- When?** Utilizing the diagnostic toolkit is a good starting point for the whole developmental process of self-regulation, especially the motivational development. Individuals can observe their own strengths and weaknesses as well as developmental opportunities and challenges. It can also be great throughout the journey of motivational development as individuals can rely on their results before the self-instructional training, to renew their motivation and measure their own developmental progress at the end of the training.
- What?** The system gives feedback to individual performance in the self-assessments and specific suggestions to train fields of development. The individuals can reflect on what they may want to train and strengthen, or it may clarify why problems occur, which may require more work on figuring out how to start their journey of motivational development. The individuals can then use the diagnostic toolkit to guide them further on where their need for improvement may lie.
- How?** The exercises are described in a user friendly scheme. The user finds information about the way to train the specific functions and gets further guidance, e.g. if the exercise can be applied in self-instruction or if a coach or trainer would be better. There are some basic steps that an individual should keep in mind.



- ▶ Keep to the required 5-10 minutes of daily or regular training.
- ▶ Endeavour to be fully honest and open with yourself, your needs and your goals.
- ▶ Be open to measure steps of development and receive feedback from the toolkit.
- ▶ Be respectful of yourself.
- ▶ Adhere to the VOCIS attitude in all interactions.
- ▶ Endeavour to practice new self-regulating skills and application of same.

Following all of these steps will allow the individual to reflect on the experiences of mindfulness, self-care and inner growth. This will certainly create space for inspiration for their journey of motivational development.

Activate yourself through Peer Coaching

RUTH BAKER

VOCIS peer coaching aims to increase the competencies and skills of its group in order for them to better cope with professional constraints and to achieve a higher level of self-efficacy at work. The model aims at enabling teams and individuals to consider alternative actions. More specifically, VOCIS peer coaching aims to promote competences in the areas of self-regulative functions and subfunctions e.g.

- 🔗 Goal Setting
- 🔗 Self-Care
- 🔗 Self-Compassion
- 🔗 Problem Solving

Why? Peer encouragement can be a great source of support for motivational development. The VOCIS peer coaching model has been developed to allow individuals to motivate themselves around their self-care, with a particular focus on their professional obligations and goals. Using a group setting of peer coaching can provide inspiration for the individual regarding their own motivational development as they are witness to experiences of their colleagues and this can be thought-provoking for them.

Who? Anyone in a professional work setting can utilize the peer coaching model as a tool for motivational development. It is suggested that groups who come together have similar professional responsibilities and status in order to maximise the learning from the situation. This also creates as safe an environment as possible, avoiding the individual feeling exposed regarding their own development in front of a more senior staff member for example.

When? Peer coaching can be a good starting point for motivational development. Individuals can observe their colleagues and the discussions they are highlighting, giving them inspiration for their own activation. It can also be great throughout the

journey of motivational development as individuals can rely on their peers to renew their motivation if they feel they are slipping in their progress.

What? There are three roles within the VOCIS peer coaching model: Group member, presenter, moderator. The role of group member is the one most suited to motivational development. The individuals can listen and contribute to their peer's issue and use this as inspiration for their own activation. The individual can reflect on what they may want to bring to the group, or it indeed may clarify for them that they require more work on figuring out how to start their journey of motivational development. The individual can then use the diagnostic toolkit to guide them further on where their need for improvement may lie.

How? A group member should keep in mind some basic steps.

KEEP
IN
MIND

Role of the Group Member

- ▶ Prepare for the peer coaching session by 'loosely' reflecting on the problem you would like to discuss before coming to the group.
- ▶ Keep to the required 5-10 minute allocation for disclosure.
- ▶ Endeavour to be fully honest and open in your disclosure.
- ▶ Be open to hearing constructive feedback.
- ▶ Adhere to the agreed group rules.
- ▶ Be respectful of the moderator and presenter.
- ▶ Be mindful that you do not overly detract from the presenter's topic.
- ▶ Adhere to the VOCIS attitude in all interactions.
- ▶ Endeavour to practice new self-regulating skills and application of same.

Following all of these steps will allow the individuals to reflect on the experiences of their peers and create space for inspiration for their journey of motivational development.

Activate yourself through Continuous Training

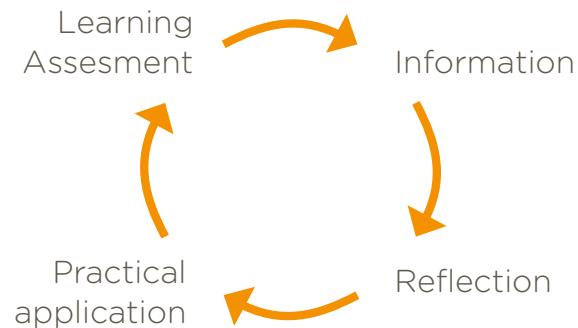
DELIA ZINGARELLI

The VOCIS continuous vocational education and training (CVET) programme aims to offer a methodological and pedagogical framework for continuous vocational education and training of the Inner Self. This training programme is composed of different modules and includes methods and contents especially relevant for professionals in management and/or middle-management, teaching and training positions. More specifically, VOCIS CVET aims to promote competencies to

- Understand the VOCIS coach model at its core,
- Understand the opportunities offered by the role of the coach,
- Get an overview of the methodologies involved in coaching,
- Know the tools proposed by and in the VOCIS project,
- Experiment tools in the protected environment of the formative setting of the modules,
- Treasure all aspects of reflection, experimentation and evaluation of the course's experience through peer-to-peer comparisons.

Why? Acting as a coach is a key competence nowadays for people working with people in any sector of activities. It is essential that they become aware of the importance of the learning circle.

The learning circle



This cycle can start from activating themselves in a motivational development that can allow to restart learning continuously, to preserve motivation and to foster self-motivation. The different dimensions concerning motivational development can help people to learn more about themselves and their capacity to activate for change.

Who? Anyone in a professional work setting can utilize the VOCIS CVET programme as a tool for motivational development: mainly professionals in management and/or middle-management, teaching and training positions, such as:

- 🕒 (middle-)managers,
- 🕒 Teachers,
- 🕒 Work group coordinators,
- 🕒 Trainers,
- 🕒 Adult and young adult group facilitators in charge of improvement of individual and organizational performance.

When? The VOCIS CVET programme can be a good starting point for motivational development for people who wish to improve their coaching competences. They can begin the learning path in any phase of their career, starting from motivational development dimensions.

What? Three dimensions are specifically concerned with motivational development in the VOCIS self-regulation model: goal orientation (the extent to which the goals pursued by a person are S.M.A.R.T.: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely), willpower (the extent to which a person can effectively convert pre-planned objectives, intentions and plans into concrete, result-oriented action) and self-reinforcement (the extent to which individuals are able to encourage themselves, to remind themselves about certain tasks, to conduct 'constructive' inner dialogues, to reinforce themselves and to suppress disturbing thoughts).

How? The VOCIS CVET programme pays attention to the motivational development proposing some specific steps.

- First of all, it proposes to fill in the diagnostic questionnaire and to identify areas in self-regulation that can be improved.
- Then, regarding the motivational development area, it offers the definition and concept of the three dimensions concerning it, as defined above.
- It examines more profoundly one of the key dimensions (i.e. self-reinforcement).
- Finally, it offers the opportunity to acquire support for coaching and to experiment with a tool.

The participants are invited to examine the collection of exercises "Developing self-regulation skills (IO3 Individual Coaching)" and choose two exercises concerning the selected motivational development dimension (for example self-reinforcement) they would like to introduce in a coaching process.

They are then invited to explain their choice and to do the exercises, guided by key questions proposed by the trainer and to write down their personal answers in the table.

Finally, they can reflect (in the group or individually) on how these exercises can be useful to them as coaches.

Activate yourself through Initial Training

ZVJEZDAN PENEZIĆ AND DALIBORKA LUKETIĆ

The VOCIS initial training is designed to provide professional support in the development, improvement and building of students' competences and skills in the field of self-regulation and self-regulation in the learning process. Starting from the general and specific educational needs of the student population, to whom this programme is intended, we consider that the area of self-regulation, in light of recent research, is particularly relevant in the context of academic achievement and success, as well as for further strengthening of personal and professional capacity in the context of lifelong learning. In addition to developing and supporting the awareness of the importance of self-regulation for good functioning and the realization of personal and professional well-being, the goal of this programme is to provide support to students. That support intends to be more systematic in the domain-specific area: self-regulation in the learning process. We estimate that many of the topics and areas of self-regulation that this programme encompasses will have a greater impact if specifically targeted towards the education needs of students and wider populations.

The general learning outcomes of the module for strengthening the self-regulation skills of students are:

- 🕒 Understanding self-regulation as the foundation for personal and professional well-being;
- 🕒 Understanding the relevance of the process of self-regulation in the academic context;
- 🕒 Gain self-knowledge which is an important factor contributing to the ability of an individual for self-direction;
- 🕒 Recognize stress sources in different contextual situations.

Why? This module is precisely trying to compensate for the lack of structure and dynamics of higher education and to help students to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, develop a better image of themselves, develop target

orientation, develop meta cognitive strategies and abilities, and so on.

When? The teaching module is a functional curriculum structured around a larger thematic or problematic entity. As described, it can stand alone as an add-on to regular courses or it could be delivered as independent module as a whole. It can be applied to all groups of students on all three levels of higher education: undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate study programmes.

What? The aim of the first thematic module is to encourage students to reflect on and enhance the area of their own motivation. The second module is designed to help students to learn about themselves, ie. to discover their strengths and weaknesses. The aim of the third module is moving towards encouraging further personal development and in some ways optimizing the areas of regulation of emotions, comparison with others and personal development.



1. Module: **Activate Yourself - Motivational Development**

	Module Themes	Short description	Duration
1.1.	What motivates me?	Theoretical basis of different types of motivation	2 hours
1.2.	I want to learn, but...	Group discussion on learning and learning challenges	1,5 hours
1.3.	Procrastination and strategies to its prevention	Procrastination and overcoming procrastination	2 hours
1.4.	I don't want to procrastinate	Group discussion on overcoming procrastination	1,5 hours

This module will help participants to:

- develop a broad and in-depth understanding of the fields of learning, motivation, and self-regulation;
- identify how obstacles grab attention and skew choices;
- interpret, organize, and utilize research findings in the area of self-regulation and motivation;
- discuss and evaluate major self-regulation and motivational processes, factors that influence the working of these processes, and the implications of knowledge of these processes for educators.

In this first module, titled “Activate Yourself”, the focus of teachers and students was oriented on issues of motivation and development of effective strategies to strengthen internal motivation. Through a series of activities and teaching strategies, students’ awareness of the importance of motivation for the action of an individual was sought. In addition to presenting the theoretical and empirical insights into the theory of motivation, we tried to collect and analyze the experiences of the participants related to their own motivation, how to awaken and develop their own strategies of strengthening self-regulation.

How? The realization of the anticipated teaching modules was carried out by means of curriculum-orientated teaching methods. Student-oriented teaching assumes the foundation of teaching methods and techniques on interactive and experiential learning settings. During the implementation of the thematic units, we chose the exercises, which were prepared within the VOCIS project, to stimulate the development of self-regulation. Depending on the chosen exercise (thematic unit), the students worked independently or they were working in pairs or small groups. After each of the exercises, a short interactive lecture followed with elements of problem teaching, case study, discussion, simulation of life experiences, and so on.

A close-up photograph of a wooden nesting doll, resembling a traditional Russian matryoshka, placed inside a green ceramic bowl. The doll is orange with a white face, black eyes, and a yellow tuft of hair. It has red and blue polka dots on its body. The bowl is green with a white floral pattern. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

**You must know
yourself.**

Inscription of the Apollon Temple in Delphi

Development of the Self-concept

Know yourself with the help of the Diagnostic Toolkit and Individual Coaching

STEPHAN RIETMANN

When being motivated for individual development and change, the second step of VOCIS leads to the development of the self-concept. In this paper we describe the different aspects of measuring and training ones self-concept – the diagnostic toolkit in fact delivers information about all eight subfunctions in one step. The diagnostic toolkit aims to increase the competencies and skills of individuals in order for them to better cope with individual challenges, professional constraints and to achieve a higher level of self-efficacy at work – focussing on aspects of the individual self-concept. The model aims at measuring individual degrees of self-regulation skills and gives detailed information about two subfunctions and the necessity of improving competencies:

🔄 Self-perception 🔄 Self-integration

Why? Measuring self-regulation subfunctions and individual feedback usually is a useful source of information for a better knowledge of oneself. In this aspect the VOCIS diagnostic toolkit has been developed to allow individuals to get feedback about themselves around their specific performance in self-perception and self-integration. These dimensions give a particular focus on the individual competencies to develop a self-concept that is stable, sustainable and flexible. Using the confidential setting of measurement on the VOCIS platform usually provides protection as well as inspiration for the individual regarding their own development in central aspects of their self-concept. The system gives the individual specific suggestions to train the fields of development due to self-perception and self-integration.

- Who?** Any person in a professional work setting can utilize the diagnostic toolkit to gain insight into competencies, strengths and weaknesses of their self-concept. It only needs access to the internet and the VOCIS homepage (vocis.org). The individualized and confidential setting of the VOCIS platform creates a safe and protected space that avoids the individual feeling exposed regarding their own – perceived or measured – weaknesses and developmental tasks.
- When?** Utilizing the diagnostic toolkit is a good starting point for the whole developmental process of self-regulation. Having started with the motivational development the individual gets a second information within the diagnostic toolkit. It informs about the development of the self-concept. Individuals can observe their own strengths and weaknesses as well as developmental opportunities and challenges.
- What?** The VOCIS system automatically gives feedback to individual performance in the self-assessments and specific suggestions to train fields of development. The individuals can reflect on what they may want to train and strengthen, or it may clarify why problems occur and which may require more work on figuring out how to start their journey of the self-concept's development. The individuals can then use the diagnostic toolkit to guide them further on where their need for improvement may lie.
- How?** The exercises for self-instructional training of self-perception and self-integration are described in a user-friendly scheme. VOCIS suggests three exercises for training each subfunction. The user finds information about the way to train the specific functions and gets further guidance, e.g. if the exercise can be applied in self-instruction or if a coach, trainer or partner would be more beneficial for the process.



There are some basic steps that an individual should keep in mind:

- ▶ Keep to the required 5-10 minutes of daily or regular training.
- ▶ Endeavour to be fully honest and open with yourself, your needs and your goals.
- ▶ Be open to measure steps of development and receive feedback from the toolkit.
- ▶ Be respectful of yourself.
- ▶ Adhere to the VOCIS attitude in all interactions.
- ▶ Endeavour to practice new self-regulating skills and application of same.

Following all of these steps will provide the individual with a secure ground to reflect on the experiences of self-acceptance, mindfulness, a state of self-care and invitation for inner growth. These attitudes will certainly create space for inspiration for their journey of inner development and more insight into oneself.

Know yourself through Peer Coaching

RUTH BAKER

VOCIS Peer Coaching aims to increase the competencies and skills of its group in order for them to better cope with professional constraints and to achieve a higher level of self-efficacy at work. The model aims at enabling teams and individuals to consider alternative actions.

More specifically, VOCIS Peer Coaching aims to promote competency in the areas of self-regulative functions and subfunctions e.g.

- 🔗 Goal Setting
- 🔗 Self-care
- 🔗 Self-compassion
- 🔗 Problem Solving

Why? As explained in the motivational development section of this paper, VOCIS Peer Coaching is a useful way to reflect on individual issues in a group setting. Development of the self-concept and getting to know yourself can lead to important insights which prevent professional and personal burn out. Being aware of one's strengths, limitations and coping mechanisms are results of these insights. Using the VOCIS Peer Coaching model allows individuals to explore this concept of getting to know yourself as one of its core aims is to encourage people to be completely genuine with themselves and others.

Who? Anyone in a professional work setting can utilize the peer coaching model as a tool for motivational development. It is suggested that groups who come together have similar professional responsibilities and status in order to maximise the learning from the situation. This also create as safe an environment as possible, avoiding the individual feeling exposed regarding their own development in front of a more senior staff member for example.

When? VOCIS Peer Coaching can be a useful tool for individuals who have identified areas where they want to work on getting to know themselves better. The peer coaching model allows

individuals to look for feedback and insight from other group members and this can allow for a deeper understanding and development of the self-concept.

What? There are three roles within the VOCIS Peer Coaching Model; Group Member, Presenter, Moderator. The role of Presenter is most suited to the development of self-concept and getting to know yourself. The presenter has the opportunity to discuss with the group a topic which pertains to them specifically and they would benefit from feedback and insights on. These insights from the group can provide additional details about the individual and aid in the development of self-concept. It allows the individual to focus on their own experiences and what they know about themselves so far. It can also be interesting for the individual to expand their understanding of themselves by hearing the reflections of other group members. This allows for a very rounded approach to the development of self-concept.

How? There are some basic tips that a presenter should keep in mind.



Role of the Presenter

- ▶ Prepare for their session by 'loosely' reflecting on their situation before coming to the group.
- ▶ Keep to the required 5-10 minute allocation for disclosure.
- ▶ Endeavour to be fully honest and open in their disclosure.
- ▶ Be open to hearing constructive feedback.
- ▶ Adhere to the agreed group contract.
- ▶ Be respectful of the group members and moderator.
- ▶ Adhere to the VOCIS approach in all interactions.
- ▶ Endeavour to practice new self regulating skills and application of same.

These tips can allow individuals to gain the most from their role as a presenter and aid them in their journey of development of the self-concept.

Know yourself through Continuous Training

DELIA ZINGARELLI

Offering a methodological and pedagogical framework for continuous vocational education and training (CVET) of the Inner Self, the VOCIS CVET Programme proposes to professionals in management and/or middle-management, teachers and trainers to develop a better knowledge of their selves as a starting point to increase their own competences.

Why? The VOCIS approach to self-regulation focuses on the centrality of a reflective and self-reflective paradigm and on the importance of biographical and autobiographical practices. In fact, it is important to become aware that nowadays post-industrial values of individuality, intellectualization, progressive feminization of personal and social or organizational growth are shifting the focus from the importance of rational approaches to the importance of continuous dialogue and synthesis of reason and emotion. Feminization, introspection, emphasis on the emotional and creative potential of the individual person place the individual in the center and attribute value to reflexive and self-reflective methodologies.

The learning cycle can also start from better knowing oneself (development of a self-concept) what can allow to preserve motivation and self-motivation.

Who? As for motivational development, anyone in a professional work setting can utilize the VOCIS CVET coaching model as a tool for developing the self-concept: mainly professionals in management and/or middle-management, teachers and trainers or people acting as facilitator.

When? The development of the self-concept through the CVET Programme can be strongly useful during adult life and career life for people who wish to improve their coaching competences.

What? Two dimensions are specifically concerned with the development of the self-concept in the VOCIS approach to self-regulation: self-perception and self-integration. Self-perception describes the extent to which an individual is able to feel, to recognize and to confront external expectations along with their own needs, preferences and intentions. It includes the extent to which individuals have access to their own somatic markers and the quality of their self-observation. Self-integration takes a view onto the extent to which a person's goals and actions are congruent with their own needs, values and long-term life plans; the extent to which a person feels authentic, inwardly free and autonomous in what he or she is doing.

How? The VOCIS CVET Programme pays attention to the development of the self-concept proposing some specific steps as for the previous area.

- It offers the definition and concept of the two dimensions concerning the area.
- It examines more profoundly one of the key dimensions (for example, self-perception).
- It offers the opportunity to get support for coaching and to experiment with a tool.

Participants are invited to examine the “Developing self-regulation skills (IO3 Individual Coaching), Collection of exercises” and choose 2 exercises concerning the selected motivational development dimension (Self-perception) they would like to introduce in a coaching process.

Then they are invited to explain their choice and to do the exercise, guided by key questions proposed by the trainer and to write down their personal answers in the table.

Finally, they can reflect (in the group or individually) how this exercise can be useful to them as coaches.

Know yourself through Initial Training

ZVJEZDAN PENEZIĆ AND DALIBORKA LUKETIĆ

The VOCIS Initial Training is designed to provide professional support in the development, improvement and building students' competences and skills in the field of self-regulation and self-regulation of learning. Starting from the general and specific educational needs of the student population to whom this programme is intended, we consider that the area of self-regulation, in view of recent research, is particularly relevant in the context of academic achievement and success and further strengthening of personal and professional capacity in the context of lifelong learning. In addition to developing and supporting the awareness of the importance of self-regulation for quality functioning and the realization of personal and professional well-being, the goal of this programme is to provide more systematic support to students in the domain-specific area: self-regulation of learning. We estimate that many topics and areas of self-regulation that this programme encompasses will have a greater impact if specifically targeted towards the educating needs of student and wider populations.

The general learning outcomes of the module for strengthening the self-regulation skills of students are:

- Understanding self-regulation as the foundation for personal and professional well-being;
- Understanding the relevance of the process of self-regulation in the academic context;
- Gain self-knowledge which is an important factor contributing to the ability of an individual for self-direction;
- Recognize stress sources in different contextual situations.

Why? This module is precisely trying to compensate for the lack of structure and dynamics of higher education and to help students to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses,

build a better image of themselves, develop target orientation, develop meta cognitive strategies and abilities, and so on.

When? The teaching module is a functional curriculum structured around a larger thematic or problematic entity. As described, it can stand alone as an add-on to regular courses or it can be delivered as independent module as a whole. It can be applied to all groups of students on all three levels of higher education: undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate study programmes.

What? The aim of the second module is to better understand what motivates us to build a self-concept and self-esteem, positive discipline strategies and social and emotional development. Topics include approaches to guiding behavior, managing the goals and entrepreneurship activities, rules and limits, problem behaviors appreciating oneself and others, promoting success with appropriate materials and activities, interacting through analysis and recognizing the importance of the participants' goals.



2. Module: Know Yourself - Development of the Self-concept

	Module Themes	Short description	Duration
2.1.	What does it mean to be an enterprising person?	SWOT analysis, skills for a good leader, assessment of leadership skills	2 hours
2.2.	What is the Self? How does the Self function?	Who am I? Attributes	3 hours
2.3.	Importance of the self-concept	Importance of self-confidence, self-esteem	2 hours
2.4.	Am I a goal-oriented person?	Wish list, SMART goals, blue print for success	3 hours

This module will help participants to:

- discuss and evaluate the impact of instructional and parenting practices on self-regulation and motivation;
- discuss the social factors involved in the development of self-regulation;
- acquire the ability to effectively use selected techniques and strategies for performing in various circumstances;
- discuss and evaluate theory and research on factors that influence the impact of goals on self-regulation and self-efficacy.

How?

The realization of the anticipated teaching modules was carried out by means of curriculum-orientated teaching methods. Student-oriented teaching assumes the foundation of teaching methods and techniques in interactive and experiential learning settings. In the implementation of the thematic units, we chose the exercises, which were prepared within the VOCIS project, to stimulate the development of self-regulation. Depending on the chosen exercise (thematic unit), the students worked independently, working in pairs or small groups. After each of the exercises, a short interactive lecture followed with elements of problem teaching, case study, discussion, simulation of life experiences, and so on. Following these exercises, participants will understand key concepts in self-regulation and appreciate the complexity of the processes involved. They will also have honed skills that should be valuable to their in-work or educational contexts (designed a questionnaire) and applied what they have learned to their own life (undertaken self-change and context-change interventions to achieve their goals).

When your only
tool is a hammer,
every problem looks
like a nail.

Paul Watzlawick

A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a blue and white striped t-shirt, is shown in profile, looking towards the left. He is in a meeting room, looking at a whiteboard. The whiteboard has several yellow and blue sticky notes attached to it. In the background, another man is visible, also looking at the whiteboard. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor office or meeting space.

Life isn't about
finding yourself.
Life is about
creating yourself.

George Bernard Shaw

Personal Development

Optimize yourself with the help of the Diagnostic Toolkit and Individual Coaching

STEPHAN RIETMANN

When being motivated for individual development and change, the second step of VOCIS focussed on the development of the self-concept. The third step of personal development is to optimize yourself. As described above the diagnostic toolkit and the suggested individual coaching aim to increase the competencies and skills of individuals in order for them to better cope with individual challenges, professional constraints and to achieve a higher level of self-efficacy at work. The model aims at measuring individual degrees of self-regulation skills and gives detailed information about eight subfunctions and the necessity of improving competencies. Optimizing yourself takes place by taking impact on:

🔄 Affect Regulation 🔄 Self-integration 🔄 Self-compassion

Why? The central idea of the VOCIS tools is that measuring self-regulation subfunctions and individual feedback usually is a useful source of information for a better knowledge of oneself. The VOCIS diagnostic toolkit gives individuals feedback about themselves around their specific performance in affect regulation, self-development and self-compassion. These dimensions give a particular focus on the individual competencies to optimize central self-regulative subfunctions that are related to one's health and well-being. Using the confidential setting of measurement on the VOCIS platform usually provides protection as well as inspiration for the individual regarding their own development in central aspects of personal development and growth. The system gives individually specific suggestions to train the fields of development related to self-perception and self-integration.

Each of the subfunctions can be trained by self-instruction and VOCIS suggests three exercises – easy to integrate into professional routines and for daily training.

- Who?** The diagnostic toolkit can be utilized by any person in a professional work setting. The results deliver insight into competencies, strengths and weaknesses and the individual gains insight into relevant fields of improvement as well as helpful exercises to strengthen the competencies. It only needs access to the internet and the VOCIS homepage to find a protected space that avoids the individual feeling exposed regarding their own – perceived or measured – weaknesses and developmental tasks.
- When?** The VOCIS diagnostic toolkit is a good starting point for the whole developmental process of self-regulation. It can also be utilized during a training process and at its end. Having started with the motivational development first, then going on with the development of the self-concept, the individual gets a third source of information within the diagnostic toolkit. It informs about starting points for personal development.
- What?** After answering the 22 questions of the VOCIS Diagnostic Toolkit the system automatically gives feedback regarding individual performance in the self-assessments. The system furthermore gives individualized suggestions to train fields of development found by the toolkit. The individuals can reflect on what they may want to train and strengthen, or it may clarify why problems occur and which may require more work on figuring out how to start their journey of personal development and inner growth.
- How?** The exercises – three are suggested by VOCIS for each sub-function – for the self-instructional training of affect regulation, self-development and self-compassion are described in a user-friendly scheme. The user has the choice to pick one exercise or to intensify the training and make use of two or all of them. The user receives detailed information about the

way to train the subfunctions and gets help by the system, e.g. if the exercise can be applied in self-instruction or if a coach, trainer or partner would be more helpful or create deeper impact for the process of personal development. There are some basic steps for the whole training process and for all eight subfunctions that an individual should keep in mind:



- ▶ Keep to the required 5-10 minutes of daily or regular training.
- ▶ Endeavour to be fully honest and open with yourself, your needs and your goals.
- ▶ Be open to measure steps of development and receive feedback from the toolkit.
- ▶ Be respectful of yourself.
- ▶ Adhere to the VOCIS attitude in all interactions.
- ▶ Endeavour to practice new self-regulating skills and application of same.

Following all of these steps is already a part of individual change and development of a better inner cooperation. The VOCIS system works confidentially and therefore will provide the individual with a secure ground to reflect on the experiences of self-acceptance, mindfulness, a state of self-care and these functions as an invitation for inner growth.

Optimize yourself through Peer Coaching

RUTH BAKER

VOCIS Peer Coaching aims to increase the competencies and skills of its group in order for them to better cope with professional constraints and to achieve a higher level of self-efficacy at work. The model aims at enabling teams and individuals to consider alternative actions. More specifically, VOCIS Peer Coaching aims to promote competency in the areas of self-regulative functions and subfunctions e.g.

- 🔄 Goal Setting
- 🔄 Self-care
- 🔄 Self-compassion
- 🔄 Problem Solving

Why? Personal Development is at the heart of the VOCIS project and in turn, VOCIS Peer Coaching. The focus of the VOCIS project to reduce professional burnout and increase self-care and regulation skills amongst individuals is one which is echoed throughout the Peer Coaching model. While the tool is a group activity it aims to provide support for the individual regarding issues of self-regulation. This setting allows for a unique, supportive approach to personal development where the individual has the help and insight of colleagues to optimize their own self-care skills in a professional setting.

Who? Anyone in a professional work setting can utilize the Peer Coaching model as a tool for motivational development. It is suggested that groups who come together have similar professional responsibilities and status in order to maximise the learning from the situation. This also creates as safe an environment as possible, avoiding the individual feeling exposed regarding their own development in front of a more senior staff member for example.

When? The VOCIS Peer Coaching model can be used at any stage of a personal development journey. The varying roles within the VOCIS Peer Coaching setting - moderator, group member or

presenter – all allow for growth and development. The focus on self-regulation skills and an increasing coping capacity means themes of conversation within the group can help individuals at any stage of personal development.

What? The VOCIS Peer Coaching model can be used as a stand-alone tool for self-development through the feedback from, and participation in a group who focus on relevant topics together. It is also strengthened by the use of the VOCIS diagnostic toolkit which provides practical step by step exercises to boost the learning and personal development through topics identified in the group. As outlined in the VOCIS Peer Coaching document it is strongly recommended that everyone uses the Diagnostic Toolkit in conjunction with the group sessions. This will allow extra learning and increased personal development for the individual as they can supplement their group work with individual capacity building.

How? The very simple process of VOCIS Peer Coaching should be followed in order to facilitate personal development.



- ▶ **STEP 1** Introduction of the problem and what the person wants to clarify or gain insights about,
- ▶ **STEP 2** Questions to the person who brings in the problem or the case,
- ▶ **STEP 3** Coaching, finding hypotheses, deepening (without bringing in solutions),
- ▶ **STEP 4** Development of solutions,
- ▶ **STEP 5** Lessons learned and feedback.

Each role in the VOCIS Peer Coaching model implies learning and potential for personal development for the individual – so each session has potential for individuals to optimize themselves.

Optimize yourself through Continuous Training

DELIA ZINGARELLI

The final goal of the VOCIS continuous vocational education and training (CVET) Programme is the improvement of the competencies that can be specifically relevant for management and middle-management, trainers or teachers preparing their role of coach.

Why? As highlighted above, acting as a coach is a key competence nowadays for people working with people in any sector of activities. In any improvement project there is a critical point where it becomes important to combine the analysis – in our case resulting from the diagnostic tool – the motivation and the self-concept dimensions, and the project as the projection of the future solution, in our case a personal development path.

Since coaching is a way to visualize change in our own private-professional-social life, the VOCIS approach is based on the idea that given the proper conditions, all individuals can gain a stronger and healthier sense of their self and self-belief implementing coaching for self-regulation. The VOCIS approach puts the individual in the centre of the process, where the client brings constructions of problems into the coaching.

In the CVET programme, the dimensions concerning personal development can help people to improve their self-regulation achieving a better coping with increasing professional constraints and a higher efficiency at work.

Who? As for motivational development and the development of the self-concept, anyone in a professional work setting can utilize the VOCIS CVET programme as a tool for personal development: mainly professionals in (middle-)management

(paying attention not to confuse individual coaching with organizational development!), but also in teaching and training positions as specified above.

When? The CVET programme can be a very good tool for personal development for people who wish to improve their coaching competences. Personal development dimensions can be addressed and developed in any phase of adult and career life, but previously, it is important to pay attention to the motivation and self-concept areas and related dimensions in order to plan a personal path based on strong self-knowledge and self-reflection.

What? The three dimensions are specifically concerned with personal development in the VOCIS approach of self-regulation: self-development, self-compassion (also associated in one) and affect regulation. Self-development describes the extent to which self-exploration, personal development, change and self-knowledge is important to a person; the extent to which a person is open, curious and reflective regarding his or her own thinking, experience and behaviour; the extent to which individuals can take a bird's eye view of themselves. Self-compassion is the extent to which a person is accepting, understanding and non-judgemental towards his or her own shortcomings and mistakes; the extent to which a person is able to engage in productive self-care. Affect regulation means the extent to which a person is able to promote and to maintain adaptive affects and emotions as well as to flexibly switch between negative and positive emotions in order to pursue his or her goals. Furthermore, it includes a way of dealing with conflicting demands, frustrations and inner conflicts during goal pursuits as well as the ability to control impulses which are not goal relevant. Thus, it also reflects how individuals cope with failure, learn from mistakes and motivate themselves, even when desire has diminished.

How? The VOCIS CVET programme pays attention to personal development proposing some specific steps in the third learning module.

- It offers the definition and concept of the three dimensions concerning the area.
- It examines more profoundly one of the key dimensions (i.e. self-development).
- It offers the opportunity to get support for coaching and to experiment with a tool.

The participants are invited to examine the collection of exercises “Developing self-regulation skills (IO3 Individual Coaching)” and to choose between two and four exercises for self-development which they would like to introduce in a coaching process.

They are then asked to explain their choice.

After a reflection, they are also invited to source a partner and conduct a mutual interview (if in presence) or to write a short note (if online), guided by the key questions proposed in the exercise.

Finally, they can reflect and write down how this exercise can be useful in their working areas.

Optimize yourself through Initial Training

ZVJEZDAN PENEZIĆ AND DALIBORKA LUKETIĆ

The VOCIS Initial Training is designed to provide professional support in the development, improvement and building of students' competences and skills in the field of self-regulation and self-regulation in the learning process. Starting from the general and specific educational needs of the student population to whom this programme is intended, we consider that the area of self-regulation, in light of recent research, is particularly relevant in the context of academic achievement and success and further strengthening of personal and professional capacity in the context of lifelong learning. In addition to developing and supporting the awareness of the importance of self-regulation for quality functioning and the realization of personal and professional well-being, the goal of this programme is to provide support that is more systematic to students in the domain-specific area: self-regulation in the learning process. We estimate that many of the topics and areas of self-regulation that this programme encompasses will have a greater impact if specifically targeted towards the educational needs of students and wider populations.

The general learning outcomes of the module for strengthening the self-regulation skills of students are:

- 🕒 Understanding self-regulation as the foundation for personal and professional well-being;
- 🕒 Understanding the relevance of the process of self-regulation in the academic context;
- 🕒 Gaining self-knowledge which is an important factor contributing to the ability of an individual to self-direct;
- 🕒 Recognizing stress sources in different contextual situations.

Why? This module is precisely trying to compensate for the lack of structure and dynamics of higher education and to help students to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses,

build a better image of themselves, develop target-orientation, develop metacognitive strategies and abilities and so on.

When? The teaching module is a functional curriculum structured around a larger thematic or problematic entity. As described, it may be used segmentally as add-on to regular courses or it can be delivered all in one as an independent module. It can be applied to all groups of students on all three levels of higher education: undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate study programmes.

What? The third module is designed to meet the unique personal development needs of each participant and to increase participants' success in education, in their professional and personal life. The module is designed to help participants increase their self-awareness, set and pursue meaningful goals and develop positive personal qualities such as self-esteem, a positive attitude, better time management, self-regulation and self-motivation.



3. Module: **Optimize Yourself - Personal Development**


	Module Themes	Short description	Duration
3.1.	Leadership	Leadership power, leadership styles	2 hours
3.2.	Interpersonal Relations	Analysis of life position	2 hours
3.3.	Stress and Conflict Management	Causes of stress and conflict, managing stress and conflict	3 hours
3.4.	Time Management	Identify important time wasters, individual time management, techniques for better time management	3 hours
3.5.	Group Dynamics and Team Building	Interactions in the group, interaction with the team, how to build a good team	3 hours

This module will help participants to:

- 🕒 gain self-awareness and emotional awareness;
- 🕒 set specific, achievable short- and long-term goals;
- 🕒 learn strategies for coping with stress, anger and other negative emotions;
- 🕒 improve their self-image and self-esteem;
- 🕒 break negative thought patterns and learn positive new ones;
- 🕒 overcome fear of failure and fear of success;
- 🕒 manage their time effectively.

How?

The realization of the anticipated teaching modules was carried out by means of curriculum-orientated teaching methods. Student-oriented teaching assumes the foundation of teaching methods and techniques on interactive and experiential learning settings. In the implementation of the thematic units, we chose the exercises, which were prepared within the VOCIS project, to stimulate the development of self-regulation. Depending on the chosen exercise (thematic unit), the students worked independently, working in pairs or small groups. After each of the exercises, a short interactive lecture is followed by elements of problem teaching, case study, discussion, simulation of life experiences and so on. Following these exercises, participants will understand key concepts in self-regulation and appreciate the complexity of the processes involved. They will also have honed skills that should be valuable to them in work or educational contexts (for example, design a questionnaire) and applied what they have learned to their own life (undertaken self-change and context-change interventions to achieve their goals).

A person in a red jacket is sitting on the edge of a rocky cliff, looking out over a vast mountain range at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, and the mountains are silhouetted against the light. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

One way to get
the most out of life
is to look upon it
as an adventure.

William Feather



Chapter 3

The VOCIS experience

An Adventure ahead

PIETRO RAGNI

During the first meeting, the partners gave a strategic importance to the VOCIS Diagnostic Toolkit (IO2), so they decided, starting from the very good first draft, to improve it with the cooperation of all the partners and the scientific work of our Croatian and German partner, in order to get a final optimised version³⁴. Moreover it was decided that the development of VOCIS Individual Coaching (IO3) followed the assumption that specific exercises would be needed to train the different dimensions identified by IO2, as the two tools are closely interconnected, as the goal of both is to support the development of self-regulative skills.

For both tools the theoretical background was taken from different schools (e.g. social psychology, personality psychology, systemic therapy, hypnotherapy, mindfulness-training, Naikan). After challenging work performed by all the partners the final version of the Diagnostic Toolkit was approved and then, among a first list of over 50 exercises, 24 exercises (self-hypnosis exercises, breathing exercises, pause during the day, daily Naikan, letter to yourself, etc.) were selected in order to both comply with the toolkit results and to offer well established or even evaluated exercises and a variety of different approaches, complexities, durations and varying depth of impact.

Then started the partnership work to develop three other tools: Peer Coaching (IO4), Continuous Training (IO5) and Initial Training (IO6).

The wise man is permanently looking to improve himself. CONFUCIUS

34 Please find details about this in Sozialalmanach 2017: Penezić, Rietmann & Schronen (2017) **35** Transnational Meeting

In relation to IO4 – Peer Coaching, initial research and ideas for the model were presented by the Ballymun Job Centre (BJC) to the partners at the 2nd TNM³⁵ in Dublin. The presentation was used to gain feedback from partners on possible improvements for the model as it was then presented. BJC continued to develop the model in more detail with numerous stages of feedback from partners through email. As feedback was received the appropriate edits and changes were made to the model and guiding document. In May 2017 the project partners were happy that the model met all necessary criteria and the final document was dispersed for testing.

IO5 Continuous training and IO6 Initial training have been developed in 2017 by Antares (IO5) and the University of Zadar (IO6). Both have been presented at the 3rd TNM in Zadar in June 2017. At this stage IO6 had been already tested with students, while IO5 received feedback from partners to develop the final version to be tested in autumn.



Evaluation and Self-evaluation

Teachers' perspective	Students' perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Very challenging from the perspective of organizing the course and guiding the teaching process itself. ▶ Enables teachers to be more student-focused. ▶ The process made sense because teachers feel that they have helped students to realize the importance of knowing themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ It encourages reflection and personal self-evaluation. ▶ Exercises as a way of stress and anxiety reduction. ▶ It has personal and professional relevance. ▶ The whole idea is that self-regulation training is meaningful. ▶ The use of exercises sometimes can be frustrating.

Not even your worst enemy can damage you as much as an undisciplined mind.

BUDDHA

While measuring the situation of students before and after the training, no scientific relevant findings could be obtained. In fact, the project timeline was too short to talk about the results of the process that has merely started. So the mostly positive findings above are a good start and show a qualitative change. Meanwhile, only monitoring over a longer period can show the real scope of development of the students and document quantitatively the influence of self-regulation tools.

A transversal activity was performed starting from the first partnership meeting, under the coordination of the Italian partner: the Quality system (IO9). A Quality plan was implemented including several tools and the Project General Qualitative & Quantitative Indicators (PQQI) aimed both to monitor and evaluate the project process and its results. For each product foreseen in the project, quality activities (questionnaires, interviews, peer evaluation) were carried out during the realization of the product and a final consensus procedure took place in order to guarantee a homogeneous and high standard quality for all VOCIS products before they were submitted to the public.

At the end of the project, we are able to present all the foreseen products, already tested within the partnership stakeholders and beneficiaries, successfully submitted to the quality procedure and ready to be used (in some cases they were already used by people of the target group in the five countries involved in VOCIS).

VOCIS will not stop its activities at the end of the funded period. On one hand, each partner will continue to disseminate the products in their countries, the Coordinator will maintain the project webpages for two years³⁶; on the other hand, the partnership has already pinpointed at least four areas interesting for a further development of the product within the Erasmus+ environment: good practice exchange; adaptation to new targets: a) migrants & early school leavers; b) elder workers threatened of unemployment; c) children & young people – as presented hereafter in “Outlook & Opportunities – VOCIS & beyond”.

Other development will be carried out by the partners according to their activities and their knowledge: the possible application of some of the VOCIS tools to business coaching as a starting point before entering into the professional area was discussed; the possibility to suggest to the university students to use the diagnostic toolkit and the individual coaching material at the start of their academic study and to check yearly the improvement/deterioration of their Inner Self dimensions and the possibility to integrate VOCIS products in the manager training offer, coupling them with the transversal competences (leadership, communication, team building, etc.) was also addressed.

In conclusion VOCIS seems to be a deep mine: it was able to produce valuable tools now offered to the community, it was a great learning challenge for all the partners thanks to the exchange of experiences and the different approaches throughout the field, but we are not at the bottom, several lateral branches are in front of us (but also in front of all who will profit from the VOCIS products) and it will be our interest and our care to try to explore them.

36 If not taken over by a follow-up project

Diagnostic Toolkit

STEPHAN RIETMANN

The central idea of the Diagnostic Toolkit was to develop an instrument for self-assessment of self-regulation skills. The goals for this instrument were twofold: it should have a strong base on scientific standards of modern psychology and it should be easy and clear to handle for the user. These goals were achieved by a predominantly psychologically-oriented research to find out different aspects of self-regulation, relevant for self-assessment as well as for a self-instructional training. The diversity of the sources includes:

- specialist books and studies of personality and socio-psychological fundamental research,
- psychotherapeutic guiding concepts,
- neurobiological foundations of development and change,
- and other areas of research (e.g. mindfulness-based programmes, buddhist meditation, Naikan).

In detail, VOCIS stands on the shoulders of giants as we see, when looking for all the influences the user finds when utilizing the diagnostic toolkit. Influential foundations from personality- and motivational-psychological approaches stem from Julius Kuhl³⁷ as well as David Scheffer, a German Motivation Psychologist³⁸. Further sources of information are Bauer's works on self-regulation³⁹ and his study⁴⁰ on changes in the working world. The understanding of the dimension of willpower was lead by the famous works of Baumeister & Tierney⁴¹ on willpower. The general and well known foundations of LeDoux⁴² regarding the importance and development of emotions were useful to understand affective and emotional aspects of self-regulation. The development of

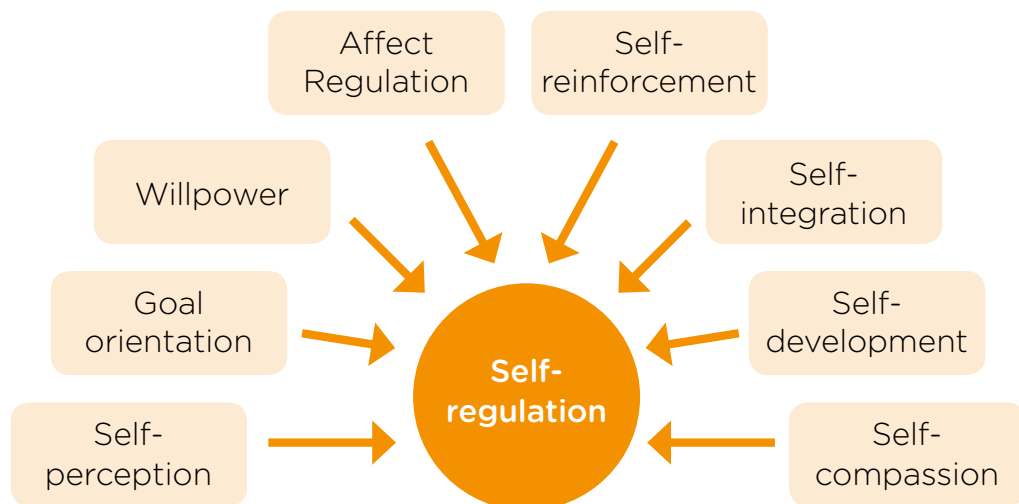
37 Kuhl (2001 & 2010) **38** Scheffer (2005) **39** Bauer (2013) **40** Bauer (2015)
41 Baumeister & Tierney (2011) **42** LeDoux (1996)

useful exercises for self-instruction was supported by the work on the relevance of mindfulness of Neff⁴³ as well as Zimmermann, Spitz & Schmidt⁴⁴. Finally the work of Walsh⁴⁵ on the importance of life style gave insight into the relevance of possible mutual effects between the eight dimensions of the VOCIS Diagnostic Toolkit.

The research task was done by a scientific practitioner who works in the field of psychology and as a psychotherapist and coach. This brought an integration of scientific and practical ways of approaching self-regulation. This task resulted in the development of eight theoretical constructs for the objectives of VOCIS that describe different aspects of self-regulation. These eight self-regulating functions include emotional, motivational, cognitive and volitional aspects and are relevant for the understanding of self-regulation and individual development processes:



The 8 Dimensions of Self-regulation



43 Neff (2003) 44 Zimmermann, Spitz & Schmidt (2015) 45 Walsh (2011)

Individual Coaching

STEPHAN RIETMANN

Getting information and feedback about strengths, weaknesses and fields of improvements needs a confidential space, a qualified and easy to use instrument and a concept to improve relevant subfunctions of self-regulation. Exercises should be attractive for the user, e.g.

- 🕒 The user should understand the process of application.
- 🕒 The exercises should create impact and well-being even after a short training.
- 🕒 The training should be easy to integrate into everyday routines.
- 🕒 It consumes little amounts of time in a day of duties.

The chosen exercises follow these principles. Furthermore they are evidence-based in different fields of human development, such as psychotherapy, business coaching, management-training, meditation, mindfulness-based trainings, self-hypnosis and relaxation.

The key strength of the collection of exercises for self-instructional individual training and personal growth are the proven quality and the variety:

- 🕒 Exercises address different aspects of the individual, e.g. the cognitive, emotional, volitional system.
- 🕒 Exercises focus either on one system (e.g. SWOT-analysis is a more cognitive tool) or multimodal and focus on different parts of an individual (e.g. the visual, auditive, kinaesthetic approach of self-hypnosis).
- 🕒 Exercises are starters or suitable for deeper learning.
- 🕒 The time needed varies between some minutes to an hour, from a single session to daily training for a long period of time.

This increases the probability, that the user finds a suitable exercise. VOCIS follows the idea, that a little step towards a better self-regulation in one subfunction may set an impulse for further changes: e.g.

- A better affect regulation reduces tension, creates a calmer atmosphere, enhances relaxation competencies and leads to better experiences in relations at work.
- A person who trains self-compassion also trains mindfulness and self-care. This leads to a life of well-being and health.
- Willpower is needed to achieve goals a person is committed to. This enhances success, strengthens self-esteem, may reduce social conflicts and leads to fulfilled relations.

Self-regulation is a system of subfunctions with mutual influence. While improving one function, the person benefits as a whole.

Change will lead into insight far more often than insight will lead into change.

MILTON H. ERICKSON

Peer coaching

RUTH BAKER

The VOCIS Peer Coaching Model has great potential to be used by a wide range of professional groups. There are some useful tips and steps that all groups should keep in mind when considering setting up their own peer coaching group. Some of these do's and don'ts are listed below:

KEEP
IN
MIND

- ▶ **Where will the group be held (on or off site)?** Some groups may prefer to work offsite as it gives a fresh space to discuss their difficulties. Others may have no issue with this and find the proximity of the group being held on site to be convenient. The group should decide what feels more appropriate to them as both can work in this context.
- ▶ **How the room should be set up?** The room should be quiet and inviting and away from other activities. Groups work best when chairs are arranged in circles where everyone feels a sense of equality with one another and the flow of communication is enhanced (Gladding, 1994).
- ▶ **How many people should be in the group?** Remember: as the number of people increases, so do the group dynamics! Research shows that a 'reflective group model' works best in a group of between 4 and 7 people.
- ▶ **What materials might be needed?** For example: Self-regulation exercises and interventions, pen and paper, flipchart and makers.
- ▶ **Have a clear agenda** and clarify with the group the purpose of the session. What it is for and equally, what it is not for!
- ▶ **Make sure everyone is clear about his/her roles** and responsibilities during the session, including confidentiality in the group.
- ▶ **Establish some contract** and ensure everyone commits to them.
- ▶ **Set a time** for the session in a quiet and comfortable

environment where people are likely to feel at ease about opening up and sharing.

- ▶ **Adopt a matching facilitation methodology**, and allow others to take the facilitation lead as they develop their skills. There are many different types of facilitation methodology, review this useful paper if you would like some guidance on the various forms available: www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/oqm-old/Facilitation.pdf.
- ▶ **Always record and share the decisions or actions** that are agreed in the session.

These steps are all quite practical and have proven very useful for the testing groups within the VOCIS project. The development of the VOCIS peer coaching model has led to evaluation of its strengths and any potential weaknesses. Initial research and ideas for the model were presented by the Ballymun Job Centre (BJC) to the VOCIS partners at the 2nd transnational meeting in Dublin on October 12th, 2016. The presentation was used to gain feedback from partners on possible improvements for the model as it was then presented. BJC continued to develop the model in more detail with numerous stages of feedback from partners through email. As feedback was received the appropriate edits and changes were made in the model and guiding document. In May 2017 the project partners were happy that the model met all necessary criteria and the final document was dispersed for testing. The requirement of the project application was to test this model with 100 participants, each partner agreeing to test this with 20 participants. The range of participants across the consortium has been varied. They have included: career guidance practitioners, office administrative and financial staff, lecturers, psychologists, therapists, social workers and coaches. This level of variation has created a very robust set of evaluations which will result in the final product being suited to as many groups as possible. Each participant was requested to fill out an evaluation of the tool. BJC compiled the evaluations that have been submitted and the following themes were identified:

- Overwhelmingly positive, only small changes needed to be made;
- Much of the feedback referred to the Diagnostic Toolkit and Website;
- More succinct explanation of self-regulation needed;
- More prompts on how to avoid a group getting off topic;
- Group needs to run a number of times to be truly useful.

These themes were presented to the project partners at the 3rd TNM in Zadar on June 16th, 2017. A discussion regarding these findings and the partners' own experience with the tool took place and it was agreed that BJC would incorporate these changes and any other themes that arise from further evaluations. The document will continue to be adapted as appropriate for groups in order to ensure the best quality product is released on the VOCIS website for users. Incorporating critiques and findings from the participant evaluations are important to this ongoing process.

The key strength of this tool, as identified throughout the development and evaluation phase, is its versatility. The peer coaching model can be used with a range of groups and while the model is very clear there is significant room for adjustment by different groups to suit their own needs with the tool. Those utilizing the tool can expect a guide which supports individual as well as group development. It allows for creative responses to individual problems through a group medium, and creates a strong bond and sense of support amongst colleagues. This in turn will have knock-on effects on staff motivation levels and self-regulation skills. It is a versatile tool that requires minimal resources in order to yield significant results.

Continuous Training

DELIA ZINGARELLI

The VOCIS CVET Programme offers coaches, trainers, teachers, HR specialists, (middle-)managers and professionals from the social sector, a scientific and concrete opportunity to gain knowledge and skills for the development of self-regulation competences. It cannot be thought of as a complete course for professional coaches (that should be much longer, complex and complete, of course) but as a methodological and pedagogical framework addressed to adults interested in continuous vocational education and training of the Inner Self.

The robust nature of the proposal has been validated during the pilot training by the VOCIS partners, which has suggested requirements for more efficiency of the training path. Some recommendations are very important as a sort of Do's & Don'ts list.

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- ▶ Entrust classroom modules to experienced teachers/facilitators who can adopt a rigorous but flexible methodology, confirming the theoretical approach of individual coaching in continuing education while respecting the learning needs of the group or individual emerging in the training process.
- ▶ Pay attention to time management during training sessions, to allow individuals and group to test individual and collective exercises and discuss them satisfactorily, without exceeding a length of time that may prove tiring or offputting for the programme participants.
- ▶ Focus on reflection, central in the VOCIS coaching model for self-regulation, to promote individuals' openness to self-critical analysis;
- ▶ on the other hand, such self-reflectiveness should be repeatedly confirmed and understood in a constructive, respectful and non-judgmental way, in order to avoid being turned into disappointment and causing discontent rather than activating internal resources for personal wellbeing.

- ▶ From the very beginning, stress to participants the awareness of the difference between coaching and other methodologies of support for individuals and organizations. Do not confuse it, for example, with individual psychotherapy or organizational development.
- ▶ The presence of an experienced trainer also allows to tailor individual pathways, to make clearer theoretical framework and terms of higher complexity, to select specific exercises for different groups of participants with dissimilar personal interests, work roles, and basic education. It is important to keep the concept clear but flexible and to feel responsible for the developmental process of workshop participants, not for following the rules of the training framework.
- ▶ After the training programme, it can be useful to give participants something to read and take away for the further process of self-instruction and organized learning on self-regulation, other than just the materials on the VOCIS website.
- ▶ At the end of the continuous training, highlight to participants future possibilities of training, being aware, at the same time, that they need strong inner motivation to go on.
- ▶ Anytime it is possible, train regular groups over a period of a few weeks to go on with internal self-regulation for individual and groups.

These recommendations can guarantee the highest effectiveness of the CVET programme, which was greatly appreciated by all participants in the pilot phase managed by the partnership and monitored by Antares.

The opportunities that it offers are mainly linked to the activation of personal resources through the path and tools of VOCIS, centred on facilitating self-development and the concept that “the individual is the authority and is responsible”. In the coaching perspective, the client is the expert for his/her problems and the systems in which these problems arise. The coach is the expert for the coaching process and methods. Client and coach cooperate on the same level – both as experts in a non-hierarchical way.

In fact, the proposed modules were seen as truly interesting by all participants, similar workshops being seldom organized for trainers or teachers, managers or coaches themselves. Pointing to a complete proposal, from conceptual definition and frameworks to the application aspects of the methods, means that tools can be transferred to practical work in professions, they are easy to apply while training can take place in self-organization. Its utility can be even greater if used in conjunction with peer coaching where peers could support each other very well.

The training path can be very useful for preventing professional overload and offers the opportunity to create a forum for discussion about wellness that could not otherwise exist in a professional setting, demonstrating a good starting point for individuals who have never used any self-regulation tools. The programme has a dual value to be taken in alternatives or together: it aims to increase self-regulation in individuals but also creates impact for the group as it allows to talk about real needs, common and different in the meantime: thus, it is very helpful for team development in new groups as well as in group of well-known colleagues.

In addition, the CVET programme demonstrated to be versatile, to be used on other target groups to include (pupils, teachers in schools). Further development of the tool and exercises can allow to transfer them to practical work with younger groups. The education related to self-regulation with younger pupils can be performed very effectively. Developing the exercises that could be used with children could be a new opportunity (see below "A new target: children in formal and non-formal education").

Some risks should also be mentioned because they can be appropriately managed, consistent with the initial recommendations. The main concern for participants is that some of the exercises have potential to highlighting upsetting scenarios and could be a trigger for some people if the topics are distressing. It may then create a paradox of discouraging

some, while others think about objectives too high and far from their role and real possibilities of development in the context they live or work in.

The challenge is the question, if a person goes on with self-organized training after participating in the workshop. There should be a solution to keep the participants going on with training but, if introduced in a company, it needs clear decision and strong commitment of the head of the organization, respecting individual commitment in the same time.

On the opposite side, the attractiveness of the CVET programme itself might induce some people to offer themselves as coach of others by having simple tools available without proper specialist training: possible lack of awareness of participant and coaches about pathological processes that are behind some dysfunctional behaviour could lead to more serious imbalances in the client, or in himself.

To counteract these risks, and as pointed out during the pilot process, the CVET programme and the whole VOCIS material and tools highlight that the Inner Self approach is meant to be a solution-driven process where people are able to construct what they want different in their lives and how to make that happen. All people have useful strengths and resources that can be made visible: training and tools can just help them to do it.

I gained insight into a new perspective to develop myself and discovered the impact I can create for myself: this was astonishing in a way.

An approach where the non-therapist view creates the good feeling of normality.

A PARTICIPANT IN THE PILOT CVET TRAINING

Initial Training

DALIBORKA LUKETIĆ AND ZVJEZDAN PENEZIĆ

Within the VOCIS project, the task of the Higher Education Representatives was to develop, implement and evaluate the module for strengthening the self-regulation skills of students. This module does not have the meaning of a study programme that acquires higher education qualifications but is conceived as a practical framework that can be implemented in the regular teaching process of each course in which emphasis is placed on processes and approaches to learning and teaching. When it comes to self-regulation as a process, Carver and Scheier⁴⁶ offered a well-known conceptualization in the form of TOTE loops (“test-operate-test-exit”). When they want something, people first test their status in relation to their internal standards. If they find that there is a discrepancy between the desired and current state, action is initiated to diminish or eliminate that discrepancy. When it does, the process of self-regulation goes out and it is turned off. To initiate an action, a person must have internal psychological resources that will improve his or her condition or behavior. One of these resources, individually different, is a self-regulatory force, which is sometimes called the power of will.

Observations indicate that, in real life, people are vulnerable to the reduction of otherwise limited resources, which motivates them to retain some of the resources for some future situations in which self-control will help to accomplish some important goals. If, after a reduction of self-regulatory power, in a further action, people succeed in retaining a positive mood, self-regulating power could be regained. In experiments, self-regulating subjects were entertained with funny video clips, after which they found that they regained the power of controlled task execution and were similar to those who hadn't low self-regulating skills⁴⁷.

46 Carver & Scheier (1981, 1998) **47** Tice, Baumeister, Shmueli & Muraven (2007)

As in group learning, self-regulation and other complex forms of behavior take place in a social context in which individuals evaluate their goals. It was found that there are individual differences in these estimates. Some of their goals are assessed as exclusive, others perceive them as personal but important for others, while others estimate that they are sources of their goals in the social environment, or in others. The way of assessing the goals will also depend on the ways in which they are implemented or the strategies of self-regulation in their realization.

Some students' goals have been evaluated as their own ("This is my goal"), others as their partner's goals ("It's a partner's goal"), while still others have been estimated to be a joint goal ("It's our common goal"). Respondents who had their own and joint goals changed their unhealthy behavior in 80% and 75% of cases, and those who had such goals because of partner changed their unhealthy behavior in 46% of cases. In a study of Okun and Karoly⁴⁸, a set of GAPI⁴⁹ scales measured regulatory cognitions that included goal efficiency, self-efficacy, conflict, engagement, positive and negative emotions, communication, support and pressure. The authors have determined that the described types of targets have significant effects on all charts. Regulatory cognition estimates were significantly higher in their own and joint goals than in partner goals. In other words, the power of self-regulation and action outcomes depend not only on goals, but also on how these goals are set by ourselves.

48 Okun & Karoly (2007) **49** GAPI - The Goals and Processes Inventory

Teaching and learning processes in higher education represent a lasting challenge for teachers. Higher education is the place for meeting, confronting and exchanging between students and teachers in a direct way and through teaching materials. The features of a modern approach to the curriculum today begin to shift away from the traditional form of knowledge transfer to the creation of an optimal teaching environment. The teaching position, consequently and mutually determined the position of students, often transforming them into passive listeners and recipients of knowledge. The teacher's responsibility was reflected in proper teaching and not so much in the process of student learning, setting up and implementing the teaching goals, not so much focusing on the learning outcomes. On the other hand, the process of learning has often been considered as something that follows after teaching or, at the very least, takes a step backwards with respect to the teaching process. Thus, every professional responsibility of the teacher for the student learning process was lost. The quality of the teaching process is also based on student orientation paradigm, which directly contributes to strengthening their competence, self-efficacy, self-regulation of learning, intrinsic motivation, achievement of a better academic achievement and a sense of satisfaction.

**Who disagrees with himself,
could agree with the others?** ERASMUS



**Man is not free
if he is not the
owner of himself.**

Epictetus

Outlook & Opportunities - VOCIS & beyond

PIETRO RAGNI

The VOCIS project aims at increasing competences and skills for self-regulation for individuals. In order to do so, the project produced several tools targeted mainly to professionals and students in order to help them to cope with professional and life constraints and to VET teachers and trainers to suggest to them the opportunity to introduce this topic in both continuous and initial vocational education and training.

The next step the VOCIS partnership has in front of it is to disseminate and implement the valuable products realized during the project's life span and to understand if there are concrete opportunities for further research and development.

Good Practice Exchange

A first possibility for the VOCIS partnership is to plan a new strategic partnership project (Key Action 2) including new partners in different EU countries with the aim to disseminate the VOCIS products, to work together with new partners in order to optimize these products exchanging the good practices already existing in these countries. In that case, the target will be the same (professionals and students and VET teachers and trainers) and the work will be oriented mainly on the transfer of results and enrichment and contextualization of the tools.

A new target: migrants & early school leavers

An interesting area of development is related to the two most vulnerable groups of school students: the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (M/R) and the pupils with higher risk to become early school leavers (ESL). The first group is increasing day by day and has to face the great problem of inclusion in the new school context. In 2015, roughly 10% of the EU population were migrants (4.7 millions), 5% of whom were under 15 years of age (Eurostat, March 2017); in 2016, an average of 10.7% of young people (aged 18-24) in the EU-28 were early leavers from education and training (Eurostat, May 2017), and the goal for 2020 is to reduce in each country this number up to 10%. These numbers show how these two groups are strategic for the future of the EU and of each country. In that case, we will have a new target – school teachers and people working for the reception of M/R – and a new group of beneficiaries – migrants and pupils threatened to become ESL. The new project will be focused on the adaptation of the former tools to the new targets and the new beneficiaries and will take into account the opportunity to intersect the self-regulation with the competences balance, in order to support the choice of the school path and to strengthen the opportunity to be better involved in the school environment.

A new target: elder workers threatened of unemployment

Another strategic area for today's society is the group of elder unemployed workers and workers threatened by unemployment (more than 50 years). After the crisis of 2008-2010 a large number of workers were forced into this uncomfortable situation and because of their age, they seemed to be no longer attractive to the labour market. Of course the main problem was related (more than the economic constraints) to the competences and the knowledge; but the behavioral context played a significant role as well. The lack of transversal competences, weak self-esteem, the difficulty to adapt with the fast changing work environment are all important factors with regard to the risk of unemployment. This will be an area where VOCIS products may help to cope with major challenges. In that case, we will have a new target group (continuous training teachers and trainers) and a new group of beneficiaries (unemployed workers and workers threatened of unemployment) and the new project will be focused on the adaptation of the former tools to the new beneficiaries researching the needs of this group of elder workers and adapting the self-regulation tools with a link to the main soft competences, in order to strengthen the individual self-esteem and to improve the possibility of re-insertion in the working force.

**Chè perder tempo a chi più sa più spiace.
- As who more knows more wasting time
dislikes. DANTE**

A new target: children in formal and non-formal education

DANIELLE SCHRONEN

Last but not least, we would like to recommend as an important target group children from an early age on. Helping children to develop themselves as resilient individuals, able to cope with the societal environment ahead is a basic educational requirement. It is also clearly more efficient to build up the self-regulative capacities in children than to wait until first “problems” occur. The benefits of self-regulation trainings are not limited to adults as shows the Swedish school system which introduced integrated mental training already in the 1970s⁵⁰. This seems a far better option than waiting until people are in work and some opportunities for development have been lost in the meantime. Tranter and Kerr insist on the importance of self-regulation in educational settings: “For some children, schools might be the only place where there is consistent calm, and teachers might be the only adults who teach them the calming strategies that they will rely on for the rest of their lives.”⁵¹ As poverty is a significant source of stress for 26.9% of the children living in the EU⁵² and impacts their physical and social development already in the early years⁵³, self-regulation strategies could reveal themselves as major tools for prevention. A promising area for development! VOCIS for children would definitely support the efforts for a quality education adapted to the 21st century.

For the VOCIS materials, please go to vocis.org!

50 Uneståhl (n.d.) **51** Tranter & Kerr (2016) **52** In 2015, around 25 million children, or 26.9% of the population aged 0 to 17, in the European Union (EU) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. For the partner countries of VOCIS, the situation looks as follows: D 18.5%, L 23%, HR 29%, IRL 30.3%, I 33.5%. Eurostat (2016) **53** Holz (2008)



**Make the most
of yourself... for that
is all there is of you.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Authors

Ruth Baker - Ballymun Job Centre, Ireland

BA in Sociology and Social Policy, she is the EU Projects Officer in Ballymun Job Centre. She has previously worked as a Case Manager within the homeless sector, advocating for individuals and their families as well as assisting them to develop and complete a support plan to aid them to reach their full potential and overcome their current barriers. She has significant experience in community policy development, particularly in the Youth Mental Health Sector.

Dr Daliborka Luketić - University of Zadar, Croatia

Assistant professor and researcher at the Department of Pedagogy at the University of Zadar, she is involved in the B.A. and M.A. pedagogy study programme or the programme for acquisition of teaching competencies. Her scientific interest is focused on educational science, researching contemporary educational issues like enterprise and entrepreneurial education.

Prof Dr Zvezdan Penezić - University of Zadar, Croatia

Head of the Department of Psychology of the University of Zadar, he teaches general and personality psychology and has participated in numerous scientific projects conducted by his department. He is a member of the Croatian psychological association, the Croatian psychological chamber and the European Association for Personality Psychology.

Dr Pietro Ragni - Antares, Italy

He is a senior researcher at the National Research Council. As partner of Antares, Research Director and Head of the International Activities department, he specialized in human resources management and organizational development.

Involved in many EU funded projects, he is an expert for the assessment and the quality plan for complex projects and an Erasmus+ referee for Italian agencies.

Dr Stephan Rietmann - Caritasverband für das Dekanat Borken, Germany

Psychologist (clinical and occupational psychology) and Head of the Psychological Counseling Center of Caritas Borken, he is trained in brief therapy, family therapy, diagnostic of personality and clinical hypnosis. With academic activities at the University of Münster, he is an author of a number of specialist books. He shares his extended leadership experience as a coach for executives at Steinhübel Coaching.

Dr Danielle Schronen - Fondation Caritas Luxembourg

After studies in social and organizational sciences, she has been working as a study officer and project manager with different public and private organizations and is with Caritas Luxembourg since 2005. Involved in EU funded projects since 2002, she has a.o. contributed to the development of pedagogical concepts and different curricula for vocational education and training.

Dr Delia Zingarelli - Antares, Italy

Funding partner of Antares, she is a sociologist specialised in the labour market and organizational field with an experience of over twenty years as a researcher and trainer. Her main research area is change management in public and private companies. As a trainer, she covers a.o. working place organisation, project management and training for trainers. She's also an expert in equal opportunities.

When you own
your own breath,
nobody can steal
your peace.

Unknown

Coaching the Inner Self – Elements of good practice

Self-regulation is a precious competence in times of growing experiences of stress in both private and professional life. How can individuals start to build up their strategies to better cope with daily constraints? How can organisations strengthen their staff? How can teachers, trainers and coaches introduce the subject and help their respective audience to develop the different dimensions of self-regulation? This manual gives answers to these questions while presenting the theoretical background and an overview of the tools developed by the VOCIS consortium, making sure you have VOCIS@hand.

“The key strengths of the project activities (and the manual) are: (1) the recognition of the importance of self-regulation competencies for professionals and students in social and health sector; (2) the interdisciplinary foundation of key elements in the project; (3) the synergy between scientific and practical ways of dealing with self-regulation; (4) identifying dimensions of self-regulation that can be trained; and (5) developing effective tools for preventive activities for individuals, professionals and students.” Ina Reic Ercegovac (University of Split, Croatia)



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