PARTICIPATE Research and Model

Summary Report

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PARTICIPATE Research and Emerging Model

1. Executive Summary

The overall objective of the PARTICIPATE project was to promote participatory methods in adult education and, more specifically the project will build a model for participatory design of learning outcomes.

When evaluating outcomes from an adult education programme, group project or training course, there are clearly many potential layers and levels of analysis. However, regardless of the layer or level chosen, all major indicators used to measure learning outcomes for the student can be seen as "out of reach". The articulation of specific learning outcomes generally is carried out by the teacher, group facilitator or an academic staff member.

The PARTICIPATE project has examined a more participatory model, whereby the adult learner is included in this process of setting their own outcomes and indicators. Instead of being initially presented with a final set of specific learning outcomes within an already agreed assessment framework, the group of learners are offered the opportunity to participate in determining how their course or group work will be measured and evaluated.

This report outlines how the PARTICIPATE project partners carried out research within up to 100 courses, groups and projects, whereby learners were supported to examine how sets of indicators can be put in place in a meaningful manner. The research participants, through survey and focus groups, presented their experiences of involvement in programmes that had made use of participatory techniques.

The results from the consultation and research brought to light a key insight that has in turn informed the PARTICPATE model: the participatory design of learning outcomes in relation to course or group assessment must begin with a participatory approach to the design of the course or group work itself, as well as within its implementation. Without such a holistic approach to using participatory learning approaches, the learning experience and its outcomes cannot be considered fully participatory and can remain "out of reach". Through this report, the key principles informing the model and the elements constituting the model are based on this core understanding.

Indeed, where learners are found to have been encouraged, supported and facilitated to develop a set of indicators that they have agreed with the facilitator or teacher, this tends to represent the culmination of a fully integrated approach, where the learner voice has been included in the design of the course or group and furthermore within the practical implementation of the sessional work. The research highlights that adult learners who have had their voice included in this manner (through phases of design-implementation-outcomes assessment) experience the course or programme more positively. Inclusion in the design of the course or group evaluation can only be considered sustainable if the learner has input to the other elements of their course experience i.e. its design and implementation.

When this three step participatory approach is put in place, it can offer rewarding and meaningful approaches to the engagement of harder to reach groups when the learner is allowed to present their own version of "success".

2. Introduction

This summary report examines key insights from both learners and providers of these learning opportunities/ activities for adults. This includes a wide range of settings, including education and training service providers working in formal and informal settings, NGOs involved in community learning initiatives as well as public and private organisations working with adults in second chance education settings. The participants were asked to review their experience as a learner, teacher, trainer, facilitator, mediator or community worker. Whether involved in the survey or a focus group, the participants were invited to consider a specific course or group in which they were involved.

The aim of the survey was to allow such trainers and educationalists to document examples of participatory approaches, tools or instruments that have been effective in allowing the participant to have an input into their learning pathway. The data collected through this questionnaire creates the basis for this report and its trans-national reflection on good practices and new ideas. A set of follow up focus groups was carried out in each of the five countries to further interrogate the data and explore how this learning can inform the development of a model of participatory learning pathways.

In examining the range of learning opportunities, the survey and focus group look to the experiences of how the learner was included in any of the following elements:

1. The design of the course or group
2. The learning methods involved in course delivery/ group
3. The assessment approach and instruments

The survey questionnaire was used in Germany, Spain, Greece, Ireland and Romania. Focus groups also took place as a follow up to the data gathering and analysis. Some 59 people completed the questionnaire and a further 38 participated in focus groups.

This report presents the results of this consultation exercise. Where relevant, there are examples provided to illustrate the extent to which respondents experienced training as participants at the centre of the planning and assessment phases. The final section presents an emerging model of participant-led engagement within planning and assessment of training. The Freirean principles that are central to this framework are contextualised.

Appendices to the report offers examples as to how learning outcomes can be explored by a facilitator or teacher interested in applying the model within their own context. Potential learning outcomes are also outlined to assist in the application of the PARTICPATE model.

3. Background to Survey and Focus Group Respondents

Survey and focus group participants were selected from diverse organisations involved in the provision of lifelong learning including traditional providers of formal education such as Universities, open access online universities and teacher training colleges. NGOs working with young adults, educators providing trainings in companies in and vocational training settings were represented. Some other organisations participated including cultural centres such as theatres and units within universities such as counselling centres.

The aim of the research was to include a broad set of learning and facilitation experiences that took account of a range of factors including:

- Types of courses
- Settings
- Target groups
- Size of group
- Whether course was officially accredited
- Funding

The participants were invited to select one training course as a reference and provide basic information about it. The selected courses covered a broad range of topics related to professional and academic development, special education, language learning and topics relevant for social work like soft skills, crisis intervention and child protection.

The target groups of the selected courses included diverse groups, including teachers, professionals, other educators, as well as university students, social workers, members of the Traveller community and migrants.

The group or class size again varied between 8-20 participants in some cases and in some of the larger lectures, there may have been up to 50 participants. Other micro training groups had much fewer numbers in some cases 4 participants or less. Two outliers were an individual teaching course with only one learner at a time and an open access online course which reached 4000 learners.

The selected courses under review in the survey were delivered in face-to-face settings for over 50% of cases, within online of virtual e-learning environments at 25% and a blended learning approach being taken in 20%. The setting of the learning environment was formal in half of the courses with the remainder non-formal learning, informal learning or a mix.

In each country, accreditation levels differed within the selected courses, with more courses receiving certificates in Greece and Germany. Similarly with cost, less than 25% of the surveyed courses in Germany involved a fee. In the other countries this figure was over 50%.

4. **The design of the course or group**

This broad range of courses selected within the survey research exercises and the follow up focus groups allows for a wide set of insights to be drawn. These discussions aimed to develop an understanding as to how training and education courses could be best structured to include the voice of the participant. The first step was to examine examples of practices encouraging and valorising participant input into course or group design.

The course promoters, group facilitators and trainers were asked for examples about the design and set up of their activities. Within the survey, participants indicated that they had experienced the following practices.

Table 1: Participatory practices in Course/Programme/Group design

Practices to encourage participation within Course/ Programme/ Group design	Number of Participants
The course or group design was flexible enough to take participant feedback into account	30
Participants were involved in identifying their own learning needs	25
Participants were included in ongoing discussions regarding the course or group structure	23
Induction process allowed for review of course or group structure and content	21
Participants were supported to develop an individual learning plan or contract	8

Within the selected courses, the majority of participants were provided with the means of influencing a certain amount of the design of the course. The largest number indicated that there was a flexibility built into the course to allow for their feedback to be taken on board. Participants were also encouraged to consider their learning needs, although not always to the extent that they would develop individual learning plans.

Participants pointed to other means by which they felt engaged and included:

- Some learners were allowed to prepare one of the training sessions and present it in the class (oral test with role play, questions and answers, group discussion)
- The use of brainstorming at the beginning of the course was used as a technique to better involve the participants

The kick off session was discussed in the focus groups and many of the facilitators made use of a questionnaire to examine both training needs and expectations from the course. These tools allowed participants to set priorities, while linking their training objectives to the training content and programme structure. Participants felt that the more involvement that was promoted at this initial planning stage, the more they felt included in their learning pathway.

"At the beginning of the collaboration, the topics to be worked on and potential weaknesses are discussed. The answers are then incorporated into the design of the course to make the best use of the time. This discussion was regularly revisited to ensure that the current course design was in line with the learning outcomes" (German respondent)

In an example from Romania, trainers indicated several strategies, including:

A quantitative research that addressed the training needs of the target group in the thematic areas relevant for a specific course; at this stage, it is important to carefully select the sample of training need analysis participants, in particular in the case of large target groups; it is important also to design and apply specific data collection tools (i.e. questionnaires, individual and group interviews grids), to allow an accurate and comprehensive documentation of key themes for the analysis.

A qualitative research aimed at offering more detailed information on specific issues, as well as exploring views, expectations and "resistance" areas; the principles of cooperation and triangulation of information were indicated as being important, as well as to combine various methodological approaches, both quantitative and qualitative.

One of the Irish trainers placed a strong value on building the relationship with the group members or course participants from the outset so that the target group members would be empowered and supported to feel involved in their learning activities. In her experience, when this effort was not made at the earliest stages, the potential for drop out was increased. This implied that the trainer needs to be very flexible in how the planning work could be carried out. This might involve different strategies, including storytelling and dialogue sessions outside of the classroom or formal learning spaces.

Not all participants were interested in the idea of examining learning outcomes at the planning phase. From the Greek perspective, one of the participants expected to be fully involved in designing learning outcomes, while the rest liked the idea of being involved for different reasons, such as tailoring the course; contributing to the design of a course with multiple paths that can address different learning needs; gathering new knowledge from the process; contributing to the whole experience of the other participants. One participant said that involvement in the design is a totally new concept and she likes the idea of getting involved and now she expects to get more involved.

"To make the most informed decision regarding taking a course, or in any case to be able at least to make my learning expectations known to the educator/trainer" (Greek respondent)

The impact of the pandemic was discussed by participants in both survey and focus groups. The challenge was to ensure that learning objectives could be pursued while the sessions were migrating online. The course and group organisers were faced with other challenges of trying to keep as many participants as possible present at the sessions. Flexibility was key and if the programme needed to be shortened, this was agreed at the planning phase. Maintaining a level of interactivity was initially challenging, but as facilitators and trainer became more used to the software options, the levels of engagement increased. A trainer in Ireland who worked with Traveller women indicated that he spent more time than usual on the relationship building phase of the programme in order to ensure that participants were confident with their online work. Without this extra work, there would have been a larger drop out rate.

As part of the consultation, learners and facilitators were asked to look at the specific results from a more participatory approach to planning the course of group.

Across each country, there was a general positive feedback from their learners about the opportunity to get involved into the design of the course. This support led to an increase in learner's motivation, higher levels of engagement in the course and its content (e.g. through asking questions). A German learner pointed to increased appreciation "what is being taught as it is directly relevant to their needs". Being involved in the design of the class also helped learners to better understand their expected learning goals, as well as assessment criteria.

Facilitators pointed to the impact of greater learner involvement at the initial phase as assisting in assessing the progress of their learners and receiving feedback about how easy it was for learners to understand the content or identifying where problems lie. Participants were also able to choose the most appropriate learning goals as they could understand the course content and how it linked to outcomes.

Learners were empowered "to make use of the voice more" and such feedback assisted in an iterative approach to course design. Again, German participants helped to shape their course by providing feedback on a desire "for more practical exercises or examples and less theory as well as requests for specific content." Facilitators and trainers reported changes in overall course design on the basis of learner input in order to make sure it would improve participants learning goals. Variations of this approach were also cited, whereby the general course structure was maintained, but participants were allowed greater input into the choice of specific learning content according to their learning needs. In Spain and Ireland, the experience of learner involvement in gauging learning outcomes often happened in an informal manner, where participants were asked about hopes from the course in the initial phase. Participants in these instances felt that these discussions helped to inform the direction of the course programme and they had been listened to. However, there was no specific evidence as to how these informal discussions' had impacted on eventual assessments.

In each country, the importance of active communication was noted as a key element of a more participatory approach. The use of media (e.g. WhatsApp and GoogleDocs) was named as relevant tool for participant involvement in the course design. Furthermore, adopting a flexible approach that would allow participants become more involved was named as critical. Given the experience of the pandemic, this was even more important to ensure retention of participants.

Focus group participants pointed to the importance of a high degree of transparency about how educators deal with given input and choices of learners:

> "I want to know that my suggestions will actually be considered and that group decisions will be followed by the teacher and that if that's not possible whyever that they will try to explain why not" … I would want to see the thought process of the instructor for the design that is used in the end." (German focus group participant)

Greek participants summarised key elements for a participatory approach to planning:

- Learners to have some prior experience attending many different courses
- trainers to have motivation and experience of the subject
- trainers to know the target group of the training course (participants) and
- learners to have undertaken a preliminary needs analysis for the course

- supervision from an experienced trainer
- knowledge of the goals of the course

In Romania, the importance of co-operation between the different trainers within a programme was named as an important factor in implementing an effective needs analysis using two steps:

i)   a comprehensive survey of the beneficiaries opinions and

ii)   a clear analysis of the main data collected, documenting the course design.

Based on the phase in which the consultation is conducted, the course curriculum could be reviewed/adjusted (i.e. some new skills to be targeted, with new thematic approaches) or it could be fully developed (i.e. designing the course content and assessment approach). Trainers indicated that a participatory approach is always a priority, even if it entails higher costs. It acts as a tool and a direct way to put the learning activities on track from the beginning. The involvement of the learners in the design process becomes an effective way to connect trainers and learners, build relationships and as a result helps to identify possible risks/challenges. Furthermore, a participatory approach to course design assists the facilitators and trainers to better understand views, expectations and motivation levels of the participants.

5. **The learning methods involved in course delivery/ group**

Participants in the survey were asked to describe the extent to which they were given the opportunity to have an input into the delivery of the course or group.

Table 2: Participatory practices in Course/Programme/Group delivery

Practices to encourage participation within Course/ Programme/ Group delivery	Number of Participants
Active learning methods were included such as group projects, role-playing games and workshops	33
The course or group delivery was flexible enough to take participant feedback into account	28
Participants could make use of discussion forums	16
Reflective learning methods were included such as learning journals/ passports	12
Participants were involved in the selection of learning methods	10

The most common form of engagement was through active learning methods. For most participants, feedback was gathered on a regular basis and there was a flexibility built into the course of group work that allowed for shifts or changes in course delivery approaches. Discussion forums were employed by facilitators to allow for feedback loops. Less common was the direct involvement of the learners and participants in the structuring of the coursework through input into learning methods. Again, less common was use of learning journals or other self-reflection tools.

Examples were given by learners in each country as to how course delivery was managed. Active learning methods varied from setting to setting, with examples including a focus on group work, role play, simulation, creative sessions, storytelling and project based learning. Participants in some countries had access to e-learning platforms where they could form groups and engage in self-directed learning.

As with the planning phase of a course or programme, participants placed a strong value on the importance of open, transparent and interactive communication between participants and their trainers or facilitators.

Where possible, opportunities for discussion were valued. This could be linked to group work or one to one discussions on set topics or on the learning content, the learning needs or the quality of the course. Role plays encouraged a creative means of engagement between participants. Such role plays could be extended to promote the learners to teachers. For some German learners, an online forum during and after the training was available so that participants could exchange ideas. This allowed for collaborative approaches to emerge and built a closer relationship between the groups.

Such group work was also valued in Irish learning settings, where groups were supported to develop their own research interests and co-design research projects. During these peer led exercises,

participants felt empowered and indicated that "they felt important and listened to." In Spain, group work was also promoted within courses and programmes. Participants were encouraged to contribute equally to all parts of such joint projects to encourage cooperative working.

The importance of reflection as groups and as individual learners was encouraged. In some instances in Ireland, these reflection exercises took place informally through break-out sessions or as a follow up to a specific class or group session. Within this flexible approach, the trainer or facilitator was able to review progress by collecting feedback and make changes based on learner input.

Some German students were given the opportunity to review assessment criteria as the course progressed and monitor the extent to which the learning outcomes were being met on an iterative basis rather at a summative point when the course had ended.

In Romania, courses were regarded as teacher/trainer centred in the implementation phase, with a limited understanding of the facilitation role within learning activities and the priority needed to create genuine learning communities. Trainers highlighted the priority of organising courses with a high level of interactivity, with a focus on learning methods assuring a high level of interaction between participants (group projects, role-playing games and workshops). However, this did not always extend to an emphasis on an active role of trainees in providing constant feedback (learning journals, learning passports).

In Spain, this was an important issue as well. It was thought that education in general was too formal and overly focused on the repetitive memorising and testing of knowledge. Despite repeated calls for change and new legislation, change was very slow. Now the online lecturing being provided through the pandemic was merely seen to be using technology to replicate an outdated pedagogy. Similarly in Germany, some participants highlighted a level of fatigue linked to the use of online tools as emerged during the pandemic. This fatigue was connected to the sense that the new online tools were not necessarily being used to promote a more participatory approach. Facilitators also recognised the potentially disempowering nature of a blanket online approach to all learning. Many learners did not fully engage, joining classes with cameras turned off.

The combination of these factors had led to many challenges for Irish trainers and facilitators. They indicated that they felt that they were sometimes "involved in a stand-off" where their students were disengaged and they as facilitators were at a loss as to how to use the online space in a more participatory manner. Many suggested that there was a motivation low point during the pandemic period for both sides of the learning space.

Learners and trainers suggested that a deep reflection into this experience is necessary through all our teaching and training centres to allow for a review of all experiences is required. Such a reflection will also allow for the discovery of positive examples. For instance, the research elicited a German case where continuous involvement of learners during such a course allowed participants who had not been actively interacting to develop ideas during the course implementation phase and in turn bring these new ideas into the course and support others to look differently at the course content. In this instance, the online space necessitated by the pandemic led to a more participatory approach.

6. **The assessment approach and instruments for measuring learning outcomes**

As the assessment phase became the focal point for the course or programme, the survey participants examined the extent to which they were encouraged to participate in this aspect of their learning pathway. Focus group members also reviewed this phase reflecting on the extent to which the sharing of ideas between participants was supported, and whether this led to greater activation and critical thinking at the point of assessment.

Table 3: Participatory practices in Course/Programme/Group assessment

Practices to encourage participation within Course/ Programme/ Group assessment	Number of Participants
The course or group assessment was flexible enough to take participant feedback into account	21
The evaluation of the course or group made use of self-assessment tools	14
Course or group providers provided ongoing feedback with regard to scoring of assessment instruments	14
The course or group had a greater focus on formative rather than summative approaches	11
Participants were involved in setting criteria for learning outcomes	7

It is clear that the assessment phase of the programme presents greater challenges in relation to participation levels from the learners. In many instances, feedback is gathered and certain self-evaluation tools may be used, but across the countries, it is clear that there is a smaller role for learners to be involved at a higher level in setting criteria for assessment of learning outcomes.

While this is understandable in more traditional learning spaces and within more hierarchical approaches, there is an appetite expressed within the research for a greater focus on this aspect of the learning pathway.

The most common practice was linked to evaluation questionnaires. These may have been completed within a group or as individuals and in blended learning spaces, these were completed virtually. In some instances, peer feedback was presented as the course reached its final phases, especially when group work was involved. In Ireland, an initial effort to adopt a 360 degree approach to evaluation was planned, but there were challenges in managing these steps while in an online setting. In Germany, there were examples whereby self- and peer-assessment sheets were administered and an aptitude interview was performed at the end, in which the trainer and participant jointly considered the learning outcomes In this example, the teacher had offered students the opportunity for inputs both during and after the course period.

Across all countries, participants highlighted experiences of completing evaluations in the end of courses or having provided feedback to trainers on course content, but few participants indicated experiences of being involved in the design of learning outcomes within this same learning activity.

Participants felt that they may not have been skilled enough to define learning outcomes, but many felt that their knowledge and experiences could provide a useful starting point in this learning outcome design process. Irish participants felt that these learning outcomes were either "hidden" in the course materials and not made explicit or else that they were "taken as a fait accompli" and not considered up for discussion with the learners. Many Irish trainers were in agreement and could consider that it might be a useful experience to allow for some engagement on this aspect of the course or programme, but "it could not be a blank canvas where the learner takes over."

While a range of self- assessment and peer assessment approaches were applied in all countries, these tended to use a standard set of learning outcomes and there was not always flexibility or even a transparency associated with how these outcomes were defined.

Trainers in Greece pointed to the importance of ongoing reflection on learning goals through the course or programme implementation, as this supports the learners to maintain a focus on the assessment phase. Ongoing interactions between participants and the trainers was more likely to allow the participants to influence the agenda for each session. The trainers also welcomed this level of engagement and were very often willing to change the plan, based on input given.

Baseline surveys that were reviewed at the end of the training were also used as tools to create space for review and reflection. Groups in Greece were also given the opportunity to carry out role plays where they would become evaluator and implement an evaluation within the group. Such exercises encouraged a positive engagement as the programme was reaching its end.

A common experience in Germany from such evaluation sessions was that new questions arose these final discussions and participants were walking away from the programme with such questions unanswered. Additional supports were offered and sources of information where this arose.

In Romania, similar limitations were observed when addressing the issue of practices allowing participants input into the course assessment. The "traditional" view is reflected by the low importance set in involving the trainees in defining criteria for learning outcomes, the limited use of self-assessment strategies and tools, as well as the insufficient flexibility in taking participants feedback into account. However, the majority of trainers surveyed indicated the importance of formative rather than summative approaches to assessment. It was clear from the data collected that the formative character of evaluation activities is mainly promoted, with individual feedback offered to each participant portfolio.

The Spanish respondents felt very little control or influence over their assessment tools and approaches. They highlighted an over reliance on formal tests of knowledge, with limited focus on practice.

7. Principles informing PARTICIPATE Model

The evidence presented above highlights that where a participatory approach is brought to bear on each phase of a programme (design, delivery and evaluation), this delivers a wide range of benefits to the learner experience at individual and group level, their empowerment and ability to meet learning outcomes.

Each of these three phases are considered necessarily interconnected and shaped accordingly in order that the learning pathway is participatory and the achievement of learning outcomes are brought into the reach of the learners.

From the perspective of the facilitator or trainer, there are important benefits linked to a more engaged and motivated set of participants, who better understand the course content, their learning goals and are willing to actively participate. These important factors in how a learning programme can be designed, delivered and evaluated are considered even more important given the experience of the pandemic during which large numbers of learners stepped away from course and programmes due to lack of motivation and engagement.

This section draws out a set of important principles are linked to the experience of learners and experts participating in the survey and range of focus groups in Ireland, Greece, Spain, Romania and Germany. These sets of guiding principles were linked to a Freirean approach that seeks to promote a local re-engagement with learning, addressing cultural and practical barriers and building a transformative approach where the learner is placed at the centre of the process.

The principles are grouped under three headings

1. Learning Environment and Focus
2. Barriers, Progression and Methodologies
3. Diversity, Role Models and Benefits

6.1 Include learners' voices

All learners should have a say in their learning. In particular disadvantaged groups need opportunities to empower themselves and thus have an active role in their learning environment.

Starting from regular consultation of learners (right through to the establishment of learners committees and advisory boards), there are many possibilities to include learners in the management and organisation of our teaching processes. Participatory learning spaces should be democratic and we should have a good understanding of learners' needs.

6.2 Meet the learners in their environment

Learning does not always have to take place in a classroom setting. The first step in reaching out to learners may be simply to get them out of the house. We can meet them in different spaces, such as local parks or community centres.

While new learning spaces can be challenging for trainers and facilitators, these might be very rewarding for the participants. Future learners can be introduced to a social environment, in which they feel comfortable and which prepares for new learning experiences. Establishing spaces where

participants can learn without fear or barriers is worth the effort. This is especially true for disadvantaged social groups.

6.3   Analyse and remove barriers

Barriers that keep people, especially disadvantaged groups, from participating in learning opportunities need to be examined in depth. Is accessibility an issue? Location, timing, setting, communication methods, cost, access to transport or childcare are key issues that should be examined.

6.4   Enable progression

Participatory learning should be seen as a continuous transitioning process and does not stop when a single course or programme has come to its end. Links, progression routes, guidance and signposting to informal, non-formal and formal learning opportunities as well as the labour market should be provided. Building connections with other types of learning spaces can help, such as visits to community meetings, workplaces, libraries and other community based organisations. Learners need to understand their learning outcomes and how new competences can be applied in different contexts.

6.5   Use innovative and empowering methodologies

Participatory learning practitioners need to adapt their methodologies to the diverse target groups they are working with, especially to those learners, which have particular learning needs.

The evidence above has looked at the experience of learners during the pandemic and while some learning experiences have been positive as online learning spaces became the norm. For many others, there was little consideration given to their specific needs and disengagement occurred as well as learning fatigue. There are many exciting and innovative tools available. The trainer and facilitator need to review these online approaches to ensure that they are promoting a positive and empowering participation pathway.

6.6   Use other learners as mentors

Mentors or learning ambassadors encourage people to engage in new participatory learning opportunities. Therefore it is essential to facilitate the work of positive role models in supporting harder to reach groups to participate. Especially socially disadvantaged adults will return to education and training because of support and positive learning examples. Additionally the mentors are learning themselves and gaining self-confidence too.

6.7   Increase diversity across connected learning spaces

Staff members, managers and facilitators from disadvantaged groups are essential in order to ensure the necessary diversity in participatory learning but also for being role models for potential learners. These learning pathways need to be inclusive, gender sensitive and diverse.

6.8   Focus on the benefits for the learners

Recognition of the importance and wider benefits of participatory learning is needed. The benefits go beyond the economic and employment-related, extending to social benefits, higher self-esteem, and

wellbeing. It is important to deliver a positive message, promoting the personal, social, environmental and intergenerational benefits of participatory learning. Demonstrate that adult learning is not confined to any particular group of people and form of learning.

Through playing an active role in the learning pathway, from the design of the programme, the implementation of the content and approach, through to the assessment phase, the participant is fully empowered.

Taking place in an active learning environment, where barriers to progression are acknowledged and counteracted and where diversity is championed, the participatory learning experience offers an opportunity to trainers, facilitators and educationalists to fully engage their learners. Our evidence from the research indicates much stronger and more effective personal and group learning outcomes.

8. **PARTICIPATE Model for Promoting Participatory Approach to Learning Pathways and Outcomes**

The narratives and testimonies of our learners and students collected through this research exercise as well as the insights through the expert feedback from our selected facilitators, trainers and educationalists come together to demonstrate the social value and transformative impact associated with building participatory approaches in learning spaces. The report has highlighted examples as to how such approaches allow for the learner voice to develop, leading to improved learning outcomes right through from personal to community levels.

This final section seeks to extrapolate this approach into a model for promoting a three step participation learning pathway. The model links the three core features of the approach and seeks to place participation at the centre of each step. The 8 principles outlined above inform each step and the specifics of the approach and practices are outlined below.

Figure 1: Three step pathway for participatory learning outcomes
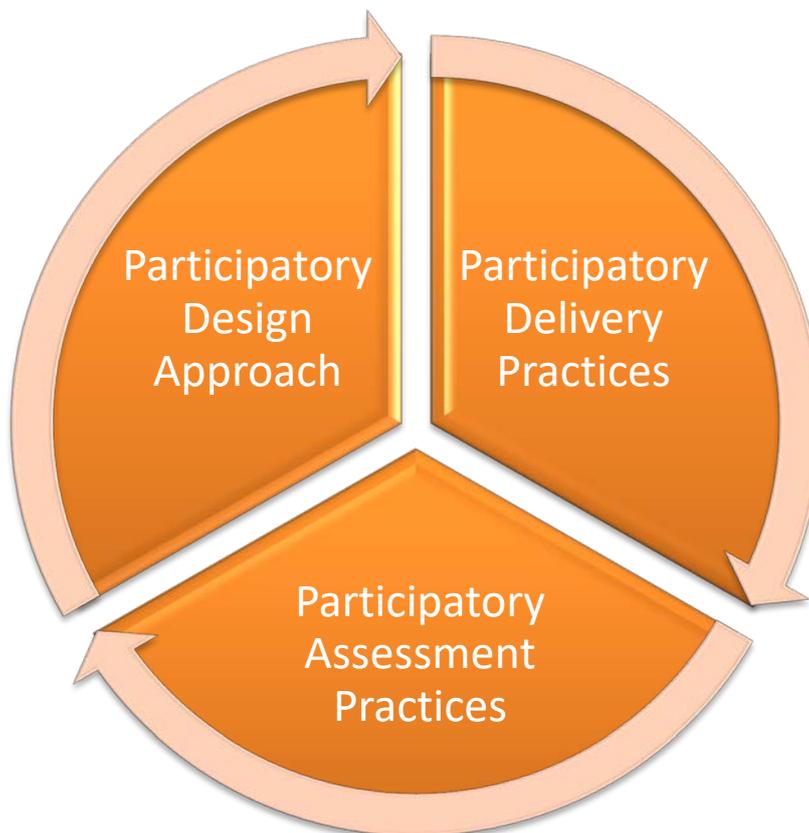
Step 1: Design approach

- Induction process allows for review of course or group structure and content
- Participants are involved in identifying their own learning needs
- Participants are supported to develop an individual learning plan or contract
- Participants are included in ongoing discussions regarding the course or group structure
- The course or group design is flexible enough to take participant feedback into account

Step 2: Implementation practices

- Participants are involved in the selection of learning methods
- Reflective learning methods are included such as learning journals/ passports
- Active learning methods are included such as group projects, role-playing games and workshops
- Participants can make use of discussion forums
- The learning activities create a space for choice (i.e. possibility to choose between different learning tasks)
- The course or group delivery is flexible enough to take participant feedback into account

Step 3: Assessment practices

- Participants are involved in setting criteria for learning outcomes
- The course or group has a greater focus on formative rather than summative approaches
- The evaluation of the course or group makes use of self-assessment tools
- Course or group providers provide ongoing feedback with regard to scoring of assessment instruments
- The course or group assessment is flexible enough to take participant feedback into account

APPENDIX 1: Applying the PARTICIPATE Model: Template for facilitator in working with learners

DEVELOPING INDICATORS TO SUPPORT PARTICIPATORY STEPS			
Teachers or facilitators should work with their learners to examine from the outset levels of understanding as to how their learning pathways can progress in a meaningful and engaged manner. The learner should be supported to design a learning objective, plan for its realisation and consider how it can be assessed. The facilitator or teacher can elaborate such a pathway with the learner so that learning plan, experiences and potential outcomes are agreed. The following example looks to how the learner and the facilitator can collaborate on a participatory learning plan, using the core elements and principles of the PARTICIPATE model.			
Brief development	Planning for Practice	Outcome development & evaluation	Comment
ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVE (PLANNING) Learners will: describe the outcome they want to achieve, and the resources available	ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVE (DELIVERY) Learners will: Outline a general plan to support the learning outcome, identifying appropriate steps and resources.	ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVE (ASSESSMENT) Learners will: Investigate a context to communicate potential outcomes. Evaluate these against attributes; select and develop an outcome in keeping with the identified attributes.	
FACILITATOR GUIDANCE To support learners to influence the design of their pathway, facilitators could: • provide the need or opportunity and develop the conceptual	FACILITATOR GUIDANCE To support learners to undertake planning for practice, facilitators could: • ensure that there is a brief against which planning to develop an outcome can occur	FACILITATOR GUIDANCE To support learners to undertake outcome development and evaluation, facilitators could: • ensure that there is a brief with attributes against which a developed	

statement in negotiation with the learners • provide a range of attributes for discussion • guide learners to identify the attributes an appropriate outcome should have.	• provide learners with a detailed plan of what they will be doing during their learning practice. This could be presented and explained as a design process the Facilitator has developed, with key stages that need to happen clearly identified within it • provide a range of appropriate resources for learners to select those suitable for their use. Facilitators should ensure all resources provided are appropriate for use and learners should only be responsible for selecting particular materials components, and/or software from these resources	outcome can be evaluated • establish an environment that encourages and supports learner innovation when generating design ideas • provide opportunities to develop drawing and modelling skills to communicate and explore design ideas. Emphasis should be on progressing 2D and 3D drawing skills and using manipulative media such as plasticine, wire, card etc. • provide opportunities to develop skills required to produce their outcome.	
INDICATORS Learners can: • communicate the outcome to be produced • identify attributes for an outcome	INDICATORS Learners can: • identify what they will do next • identify the particular materials, components and/or software they might use	INDICATORS Learners can: • describe potential outcomes, through drawing, models and/or verbally. • identify potential outcomes that are in keeping with the attributes, and selects one to produce • produce an outcome in keeping with identified attributes	

APPENDIX 2: Applying the PARTICIPATE Model: Sample Learner Outcomes

1. **Learners can determine the tools / methods used for assessment**
   (for example videos, e-portfolio writing, e-writing forum, structured dialogue, computer-based tests, game, blogging, quizzes, oral questioning, Kahoot! software, Classroom quiz, one-sentence summary, exit ticket, directed paraphrasing, 1-min paper, Muddiest Point)

2. **Learners can determine the periods and frequency of assessments** (for example: Course assessment after 4–5 weeks showed improved learning)

3. **Learners can determine the criteria and indicators for success** (students to aquire skills, can be part of the educational program, didactics)

4. **Learners determine scoring method** (learners can work with previous participants of the course to examine how the scoring system or approach was applied- where new ideas and learning is forthcoming, this can be brought into the current course or group work)

5. **Learners can determine who is participating in assessment the learning outcomes** (for example group of learners, or specific persons who are selected by the learner)

6. **Learners can determine the purpose of assessment** (similar to validation of prior learning)

7. **Learners can determine the subject of the assessment** (similar to presentation of thesis in universities)

8. **Learners can demand for visibility and transparency of assessment criteria**

9. **Learners can demonstrate their competence, changes achieved rather than passed or failed** (building on learners' strengths)

10. **Learners can determine the scope / range of learning achievements covered** (for example combination of informal learning + formal learning outcomes)

11. **Learners can determine if standardized or other assessment instruments are used**