

TEACHING NOTE

written by Employment Services
Unit, City of Tampere, Ene Härkönen

High Quality Guidance?

Balancing Your Work

and the Need to Update

Your Own Skills

Competence: Update Own Skills and Knowledge

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Keywords

professionalizing career guidance practitioners, competence, lifelong guidance, information handling skills, Learning Shop Neukölln, case study, training and teaching material

Summary

Improving your professional skills is the ideal way to increase your job security in an uncertain employment market. Qualifications are a great way to show commitment to your own personal development and to improve the way you do your job. Often, it is challenging to find the time to commit to a short term course and almost impossible to commit to a longer period of study.

Liisa, a guidance practitioner, has got a place for a two days course in Helsinki. She received just 10 days notice. Her calendar for those days was already fully booked. However, she is very interested in participating in it.

Competence: Update Own Skills and Knowledge

Guidance practitioners meet different kinds of clients every day. Each client has a different need. How to guarantee high quality guidance for every client?

This case study reflects to wide variety of issues related to guidance practitioners' daily work, e.g. knowledge and professional skills, attitudes, interacting with colleagues, self-evaluation and changing economic environment.

Teaching Objectives

The aim of the study is:

- › To engage guidance practitioners in a discussion about the value of updating their own professional skills and knowledge.
 - › To make guidance practitioners discuss whether updating their own skills could improve the way they do their job.
 - › To make guidance practitioners discuss the possibility of making the regular updating of skills part of their job profile.
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Target Group

Guidance Practitioners

Assignment Questions

- › Why does this situation create conflict?
- › Why it is important to update your own skills and knowledge?
- › What should Liisa do?
- › What are the alternative solutions for Liisa?

Teaching Methodology: SWOT-analysis

SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of a project or business venture. A SWOT analysis can be carried out for a product, place, industry or person. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving that objective. Originated by Albert S Humphrey in the 1960s, SWOT Analysis is as useful now as it was then.

Strengths: characteristics of the business or project that give it an advantage over others

Weaknesses: characteristics that place the team at a disadvantage relative to others

Opportunities: elements that the project could exploit to its advantage

Threats: elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business or project

Identification of SWOTs is important because they can inform later steps in planning to achieve the objective.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Teaching Plan

1. Ask the practitioners to read the case (10-15 minutes)
 - › Group 3 collect components into Threats Box
 - › Group 4 collect components into Opportunities Box
2. Try to put the reader in Liisa's shoes!
3. Ask the participants to reflect on the case individually (5 minutes?)
4. Start discussing the case within a group
 - › Encourage them to ask questions of each other (8–10 persons? 10 minutes?)
5. Break the participants into 4 groups. Start making a SWOT analysis from Liisa's point of view concerning the participation in the PPA course (10–15 minutes?)
 - › Group 1 collect components into Strengths Box
 - › Group 2 collect components into Weaknesses Box
6. Start collecting the components onto one flip chart.
 - › Each group can present their components (including explanations) and write the results into their box within the SWOT table (20 minutes?).
7. Make the decision within the group: what should Liisa do? (15-20 minutes?)
 - › If the group decides that Liisa will participate in the PPA course, please make the plan of how her calendar could be rescheduled.
 - › If the group decides that Liisa will not participate in the PPA course, please explain the decision.

8. Summary remarks (5 minutes?)

- › Did you learn from the experience?
 - › Did you benefit from the classroom experience?
 - › Was the case story enjoyable? Realistic?
Interesting to read?
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Summarising and Conclusion

A short presentation on the benefits of guidance practitioners updating their own skills and knowledge (15–20 minutes?)

- › The positive outcomes for the practitioners?
(5 minutes)
- › The positive outcome for the organisation?
(5 minutes)
- › The positive outcomes for the clients?
(5 minutes)

Depending on the group, reading the case and developing of solutions will take 90 minutes (minimum) or 120 minutes (maximum).

Testing Experience

Ballymun Job Centre, Ireland, May 2013:

The case study was a very real situation that is often experienced by Guidance Practitioners and was very useful in highlighting the importance to the practitioners of updating their skills and knowledge. The breaking into groups received good feedback from the participants and created a high level of interaction and discussion which in turn made for a great overall learning experience.

THE GUIDE

PROJECT

GUIDE was realized by MetropolisNet and its network. This network is made up of organisations working in metropolitan areas to promote social inclusion, employment and urban development.

MetropolisNet EEIG

www.metropolisnet.eu

MetropolisNet EEIG

MetropolisNet EEIG

Kronenstraße 6

10117 Berlin

PH 0049 - (0) 30 - 28409 - 223

FAX 0049 - (0) 30 - 28409 - 210

Managing Director

Dr. Reiner Aster

reiner.aster@metropolisnet.eu

Contact Person

Jasmin Zouizi

jasmin.zouizi@metropolisnet.eu

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