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Reinforcing Entrepreneurship in  
Adults through Communication Technologies



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## Executive Summary

The main priority of the REACT project ([www.reactproject.online](http://www.reactproject.online)) addresses Social Inclusion and Enhancing access to training and qualifications for all, giving in this way the opportunity to low skilled adults to reinforce the entrepreneurship entrepreneurial skill that is useful to increase their quality of life, including the research of a job and their re-inclusion in society. Nonetheless, as adult training centres need some new educational tools in order to grant this target group the benefits they need to be better integrated in the society and in their work placement, the REACT project intends to enhance the participation in the society of low skilled adults by providing them with innovative tools and useful methods, such as peer education and gaming, able to reinforce entrepreneurship seen as a competence that embraces all the spheres in a lifelong learning perspective.

Skills, a term used to indicate what an individual can do, understand and know, are a path to prosperity and employability. In a global and fast changing economy, it is the skills which determine the ability to drive innovation and competitiveness. Not only are skills key for investments, but they also contribute to the righteous virtuous cycle of growth and job creation. The new Skills Agenda for Europe is one of the most significant work programs at the European Commission. The real significance of entrepreneurship goes well beyond starting or running a company, and entrepreneurs are being represented as people with ideas who grasp opportunities to generate well-being or value in society. Within the 'A new Skills Agenda for Europe', the European Commission has launched a revision of key competences, and special interest will be being given to the promotion of entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mindsets, including the encouragement of concrete real entrepreneurial experiences. In the literature there is no doubt that entrepreneurship can be learned. There are entrepreneurial attitudes that are particularly important for entrepreneurship and should be developed in both learning and assessment. To increase the learner's autonomy a switch from pedagogy to andragogy and heutagogy should be necessary. While in pedagogy learning tasks are defined by the teacher, in andragogy control is shared and the learner retains a degree of self-determination.

The capabilities approach is based on the notion of functioning. This entails a range of activities (e.g. to go to school, to ride a bicycle) and states (e.g. being safe, being educated) that make up people's life. Capabilities refer to substantive freedoms people enjoy leading the kind of life they have reason to value. Freedom has intrinsic value: human beings value freedom and the possibility to choose in itself. Situations, needs, aspirations and goals of people are diverse. Education is regarded as a crucial element for capabilities expansion: it allows people to discover existence of different possibilities and opportunities and this knowledge about (previously unknown) choices and freedoms is the first step to achieving them. Through education and training people acquire valuable functionings that allow them to obtain jobs that lead to more freedom. An entrepreneurship education is a way to develop entrepreneurship-related capabilities that result in a growth of individual and societal wellbeing. Individuals can become the entrepreneurs of their own career without necessarily starting a business. This allows them to have and see much more impact of their work not only on profits, but also on their multidimensional wellbeing.



Peer Education is the process whereby trained and motivated peers develop organized learning activities with their fellow peers. These activities occur over a particular period of time and aim at developing more competencies in their life. In comparison with Peer Education, Peer Mentoring can be defined as a form of unstructured and unconditional support, based on a set of improvised activities, and mainly focused on the support provided by a mentor/peer through a longstanding positive and confidential relationship with a mentee. Through Peer Education, individuals who face difficult situations that put them furthest from the labour market, who experience difficulties in learning and/or employment or who lack appropriate personal skills, will have the active support of peers. The aim of peer educators is not to deliver a set of pre-established sessions, but to devise sessions that are based upon the participants' individual needs. In order to implement Peer Education in adult education organisations, peer educators should help their peers with social, educational, emotional and/or vocational concerns.

Gamification is the use of videogames elements in non-game educational contexts, whereas gaming is more broadly a playful approach to learning (the project aiming to prove that non-formal ways of teaching are more efficient with the adults involved in the project). Serious Games are an emerging paradigm in Technology Enhanced Learning and can be defined as computer-based learning simulations that engage players in realistic activities designed to increase knowledge, improve skills and enable positive learning outcomes. Despite having an entertainment component, these simulations are designed to promote learning, primarily by leveraging a narrative or story centred in an entrepreneurial setting. As a pedagogic approach, games align well with the socio-constructivist educational paradigm. They are experiential and engage players in interaction, problem-solving, choices and narratives. Within the gaming context, repetitive practice through well-designed serious games could help prepare players for future entrepreneurial acts. Games place learners in interactive virtual environments that can be immersive and the consequential serious play that follows allows learners to test out decisions and build entrepreneurial preparedness in a safe and risk-free environment. Games have strong problem-solving aspects and the outcomes feedback loops within these problem-solving situations do encourage forms of reflective learning.

The good practices have been reviewed with a form that has been designed according to research on the fields of education and entrepreneurship. An educational theory of curriculum is needed for entrepreneurial education and this intellectual output takes the theory of constructive alignment as the starting point to understand the training course in entrepreneurial education. The learning outcomes, the teaching and learning activities (including teaching methods) and the assessment practices are foundational to understand the good practices from the educational point of view. From the entrepreneurship entrepreneurial point of view, the elements that help understand a good practice are the following: the type of education and the approach to entrepreneurship are the elements that help understand a good practice. By combining these two dimensions, education and entrepreneurship, the aim is to determine which educational practices works best for which type of entrepreneurship entrepreneurial education. Eventually, the EntreComp and DigiComp frameworks are used as summarizing parameters, but also as a reference de facto for any initiative aiming to foster entrepreneurial or digital capacity of the European citizens.

The finding of the analysis is that the good practices on entrepreneurship entrepreneurial education gathered by the partners of the REACT project align well either with an about, a for, or a through approach to entrepreneurship. This means that the goal is different, respectively: developing an understanding of



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entrepreneurship and the role of entrepreneurs in society (about), preparing individuals to become entrepreneurs and to start a business (for), becoming more entrepreneurial in life. These approaches focus on diverse components of competence: knowledge for the 'about' approaches, skills for the 'for' approaches, and attitudes for the 'through' approaches. Many of the best practices deal with 'for' approach to entrepreneurship; they entail the development of a business plan as final output and make use of the mentoring as main teaching method, thus providing formative assessment, but also developing an autonomous learner able to start his or her enterprise at the end of the training. However, many good practices are delivered with mixed approaches, these can be about and for, or about, for and through, thus taking a holistic perspective on entrepreneurship as competence, and developing the learner's autonomy and ability to make choices according to a capability approach. The good practices on enterprise education take a 'through' approach with the goal of developing the learners' attitudes toward enterprise and being enterprising in a lifelong learning perspective. Gaming is often used within 'for' approaches to entrepreneurship, the goal being starting a venture or managing an existing company. Gaming is often associated with in-class teaching methods and - for example tutoring and group work. Concerning peer education, this is often used for enterprise education with a 'through' approach, thus aiming to develop in the learner enterprising attitudes connected to enterprise, citizenship, employability.

The analysis of the best practices suggests that the teaching methods are best matched together. Moreover, the learning outcomes outlined within the EntreComp Framework match as well with the capability approach: "taking the initiative", "mobilising resources", "creativity", just to mention but a few, and can be considered part of a capability set which is turned into functionings through the conversion factors. Furthermore, being entrepreneurial involves the possibility of "spotting opportunities", "valuing ideas" and this is feasible only if the context enables the subject to do so: opportunities are to grasp only if they are existing, so that ideas can be valued only if they are likely to be turned into courses of action.

All in all, Entrepreneurial education with a Capability Approach means to activate the personal agency in a capability-enhancing environment. A Capability Approach provides the theoretical framework with which to analyse the entrepreneurship competence, since it allows to look beyond mere performance towards a reflection on the contextual factors that allow or deny the expression of the entrepreneurship entrepreneurial competence. When the individual has gained more awareness on local and general factors - these can be political, social or related to citizenship) - , s/he can fully and appropriately express his or her entrepreneurship competence in the context. The awareness of these factors allows the individual to make thought choices according to his or her values and the environmental factors that encourage or constrain his or her entrepreneurial action. In so doing so, the capability approach allows to better connect entrepreneurial competence to the individual's self-determination.

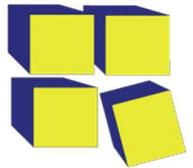


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