

ENTRE

Your inspiration on coaching in VET Entrepreneurship Education

TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS IN VET ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAMS

TRAINER INSTRUCTIONS



PREFACE

Welcome to the Trainer Instructions of the C-Entre training programme.

The document was developed within the framework of the C-ENTRE project (project number: 2024-2-HU01-KA220-VET-000294403), implemented under the Erasmus+ Programme Cooperation Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training (KA220-VET).

The project aims to support VET educators in developing coaching-oriented approaches to entrepreneurship education. Through training materials, practical exercises, and case studies, the project promotes teaching methods that empower learners to develop entrepreneurial thinking, experiment with ideas, and reflect on their learning processes.

The resources included in this publication are designed to support educators in applying experiential learning, structured reflection, and coaching methods in entrepreneurship-related courses. They provide practical tools and examples that can be adapted to different educational contexts.

The materials were developed collaboratively by the project partners based on their expertise in entrepreneurship education, coaching methodologies, and vocational education and training.

This handbook has been developed as a practical companion to the trainee workbook and serves as a structured guide for trainers who implement the C-Entre methodology in vocational education and training (VET) contexts. While the workbook supports participants in their learning journey, this handbook provides the pedagogical background, facilitation guidance, theoretical foundations, and practical tips necessary to deliver the training effectively and confidently.

For further information contact us via the project website c-entre.eu.

Funded by the European Union. The information and views set out herein are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union or the Tempus Public Foundation. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Co-funded by
the European Union

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

0 - Reading guide 4
0.1 - Clarifying key terminology 4
0.2 - The learning logic of the program 4
0.3 - Prerequisites and trainer preparation 5

Unit 1 - Empowering 7
1.1 - Objective 7
1.2 - Theory Background 8
1.3 - Exercises & Assignments 11

Unit 2 - Mindset 23
2.1 – Objective 23
2.2 - Theory Background 23
2.3 - Practical Examples 27
2.4 - Exercises & Assignments 31

Unit 3 - Structuring 37
3.1 - Objective 37
3.2 - Theory Background 38
3.3 - Exercises & Assignments 41

Unit 4 - Goal Setting 48
4.1 - Objective 48
4.2 - Theory Background 48
4.3 - Practical Examples 51
4.4 - Exercises & Assignments 53

Unit 5 - Experiencing 57
5.1 - Objective 57
5.2 - Theory Background 57
5.3 - Exercises & Assignments 59

Unit 6 - Guiding students 63
6.1 - Objective 63
6.2 - Theory Background 63
6.3 - Exercises & Assignments 65

Final thoughts 70

Credits and copyright 71

INTRODUCTION

Introduction on the trainer instructions.

This programme consists of 6 units, each providing a part of the training for educators in VET entrepreneur programmes. Although we encourage trainers to follow a specific order, one can also choose to use a specific unit as an isolated item when applicable. The total amount of training hours is outlined below:

Units	Learning hours	Timeframe
Unit 1 – Empowering	3 hours	135 minutes
Unit 2 – Mindset	3 hours	135 minutes
Unit 3 – Structuring	3 hours	135 minutes
Unit 4 – Goal Setting	3 hours	135 minutes
Unit 5 – Experiencing	3 hours	135 minutes
Unit 6 – Coaching	3 hours	135 minutes
Total	**18** hours	**810 minutes**

The programme can be divided into separate days (for instance: each week one unit), but also a dedicated block (all units during an intense three-day-period).

0 - READING GUIDE

This document is designed to support you, the trainer in delivering the C-ENTRE training programme effectively, confidently, and with a clear understanding of its pedagogical logic. While the Workbook is written for participants, this handbook speaks directly to you and provides deeper explanations, facilitation guidance, and theoretical background.

It is not intended to be read only once from beginning to end. Instead, it should function as:

- ✓ A preparation guide before delivering a unit.
- ✓ A reference during training planning.
- ✓ A reflection tool after implementation.

You may revisit specific sections depending on your needs.

0.1 - CLARIFYING KEY TERMINOLOGY

To avoid confusion, the following terms are used consistently throughout the Instructions:

Trainer
Refers to you, the facilitator of the C-ENTRE training programme.

Trainee
Refers to the participant of the C-ENTRE training. In most cases, this will be a VET lecturer, teacher, or educator.

Student
Refers to the learners of the trainee (i.e., VET students in their own educational context).

Keeping this distinction clear is important, as the training operates on two levels:

- ✓ You work with trainees.
- ✓ Trainees will later apply the methods with their own students.

0.2 - THE LEARNING LOGIC OF THE PROGRAM

The C-ENTRE training is structured according to an adapted version of *Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle*, which includes:



1. Concrete Experience
2. Reflective Observation
3. Abstract Conceptualization
4. Active Experimentation

Each unit follows this sequence intentionally. As a trainer, your role is not to "teach content" in a linear way, but to guide trainees through this learning cycle.

0.2.1. RECOMMENDED STARTING POINT: THE KOLB TEST

Before delivering the training, we recommend that trainees, and optionally trainers, complete the online Kolb Learning Style Test available at:

c-entre.eu/kolb

This helps participants:

- ✓ Reflect on their preferred learning style.
- ✓ Understand differences in group dynamics.
- ✓ Become more aware of how they approach learning and teaching.

As a trainer, understanding your own learning style can also help you balance facilitation methods and avoid overusing your natural preference.

As a trainer, make sure that before the unit works start, discuss the Kolb's learning cycle and modell, in order to provide sufficient background.

0.2.2. HOW EACH UNIT IS STRUCTURED

Each unit in this Instructions contains:

- ✓ Theoretical background
- ✓ Detailed facilitation guidance
- ✓ Activity descriptions with trainer tips
- ✓ Reflection prompts
- ✓ Expected learning outcomes

The Workbook provides instructions for trainees.

This Trainer Instructions explains:

- ✓ Why the activity is designed this way
- ✓ What to observe
- ✓ How to intervene
- ✓ How to adapt the activity if necessary

0.3 - PREREQUISITES AND TRAINER PREPARATION

Although the programme is structured and guided, certain units require specific preparation or experience.

General Prerequisites for Trainers

- ✓ Basic facilitation skills
- ✓ Experience working with adult learners
- ✓ Willingness to apply coaching-oriented communication
- ✓ Openness to reflective and experiential methods

You are not required to be an entrepreneurship expert. The focus is on process facilitation, not technical business consultancy.

Unit-Specific Prerequisites

Unit 1 – Empowering

- No specific prior knowledge required.
- However, familiarity with group facilitation and feedback practices is helpful.

Unit 2 – Mindset

- No strict prerequisites.
- Understanding of entrepreneurial mindset concepts is beneficial.

Unit 3 – Structuring

- Basic familiarity with entrepreneurial tools such as the Business Model Canvas or Value Proposition Canvas is recommended. Trainers should review the Structuring Toolbox before delivery.

Unit 4 – Goal Setting

- Basic understanding of SMART goals or similar goal-setting frameworks is helpful.

Unit 5 – Experiencing

- Comfort with experiential learning methods and managing dynamic group activities is important.

Unit 6 – Guiding students

- This unit assumes at least basic knowledge and some experience in coaching or coaching-style communication.

Trainers should:

- ✓ Be comfortable using open-ended questions.
- ✓ Understand active listening principles.
- ✓ Be able to manage one-to-one or small group coaching conversations.

If you have limited coaching experience, we recommend reviewing introductory coaching materials before delivering this unit.

UNIT 1 - EMPOWERING

Creating an emotionally safe and inclusive learning environment is the foundation of any effective entrepreneurial education process. Before students can take risks, express creativity, or embrace uncertainty, core elements of entrepreneurship, they must feel supported, respected, and empowered.

That's why this training begins with a focus on empowerment, not as an academic concept, but as a practice embedded in the way educators listen, communicate, and relate to learners. By cultivating trust, promoting self-regulation, and facilitating constructive feedback, educators can build the conditions in which entrepreneurial thinking and personal growth can truly flourish.

1.1 - OBJECTIVE

1.1.1. BACKGROUND

Empowering learners is a critical first step in entrepreneurship education. Before students can explore, innovate, or take initiative, they must feel safe, emotionally and psychologically. In learning environments that prioritize empathy, mutual respect, and open communication, learners are more likely to take risks, reflect on their actions, and engage meaningfully. Educators, therefore, play a crucial role not only in delivering content but in creating the emotional conditions that support entrepreneurial growth.

1.1.2. OBJECTIVES

This unit aims to develop educators' ability to:

- ✓ Create emotionally safe, inclusive, and respectful learning spaces.
- ✓ Promote self-regulation and emotional awareness among learners.
- ✓ Foster a classroom culture that encourages openness, trust, and mutual support.
- ✓ Give and receive feedback in ways that strengthen empathy and confidence.

1.1.3. KNOWLEDGE

By the end of the unit, participants will know:

- ✓ The role of emotional safety and psychological trust in learning environments.
- ✓ Key models and strategies for giving and receiving feedback.
- ✓ Concepts of self-regulation and motivational strategies relevant to learner autonomy.

1.1.4. SKILLS

By the end of the unit, participants will be able to:

- ✓ Facilitate open dialogue and active participation in a group setting.
- ✓ Apply structured techniques for giving constructive feedback.
- ✓ Encourage self-reflection, peer empathy, and emotional awareness in learners.

1.1.5. ATTITUDES

By the end of the unit, participants are expected to:

- ✓ Demonstrate tolerance, patience, and curiosity toward learner differences.
- ✓ Use empathetic, non-judgmental, and respectful communication.
- ✓ Adopt an inclusive approach that supports psychological safety and trust in diverse learning contexts.

1.2 - THEORY BACKGROUND

Empowerment is a foundational condition for effective entrepreneurial learning. Before learners can explore ideas, take initiative, experiment, or deal with uncertainty, they must feel emotionally safe, respected, and taken seriously. In entrepreneurship education, especially in VET contexts, learning is not only cognitive but also emotional and social. Fear of failure, fear of judgment, or lack of trust can significantly limit learning outcomes.

1.2.1. EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN LEARNING

Psychological safety refers to a shared belief that a learning environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. In psychologically safe environments, learners feel able to ask questions, admit mistakes, express doubts, and share unfinished ideas without fear of embarrassment or punishment. Research by **Amy Edmondson** shows that such environments strongly support learning, innovation, and collaboration.

In entrepreneurial education, this is particularly important because:

- learners are often asked to step outside their comfort zone,
- outcomes are uncertain,
- and mistakes are an essential part of the learning process.

Key coaching takeaway: Without psychological safety, learners tend to play safe, copy expected answers, or disengage. Empowerment therefore starts not with tools or content, but with **how educators create and hold space** for learning.

1.2.2. THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR: FROM INSTRUCTOR TO FACILITATOR

Empowerment requires a shift in the educator's role. Rather than being the main source of knowledge or control, the educator becomes a facilitator of learning processes. This does not mean the educator is passive. On the contrary, facilitation requires strong awareness, intentional communication, and emotional intelligence.

Empowering educators:

- listen actively and without judgment,
- ask open and curiosity-driven questions,
- acknowledge emotions without trying to "fix" them immediately,

- create clear structures while allowing autonomy within them.

Key coaching takeaway: This approach aligns closely with coaching principles, where the goal is not to provide answers, but to help learners develop self-awareness, responsibility, and confidence.

1.2.3. FEEDBACK AS A TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT

Feedback plays a central role in empowerment. Poorly delivered feedback can undermine confidence and safety, while constructive feedback can strengthen learning and trust.

Effective feedback cultures share several characteristics:

- feedback is specific and behaviour-focused, not personal,
- it is given with the intention to support growth,
- learners are encouraged to ask for and reflect on feedback,
- feedback flows in multiple directions (teacher ↔ learner, peer ↔ peer).

Key coaching takeaway: Empowerment is not only about giving feedback but also about **building feedback literacy,** helping learners understand how to receive, interpret, and use feedback constructively.

1.2.4. SELF-REGULATION AND LEARNER AUTONOMY

Self-regulation refers to the ability of learners to manage their emotions, motivation, behaviour, and learning strategies. In entrepreneurial learning, self-regulation is essential because learners are often required to work independently, deal with ambiguity, and persist through setbacks.

Educators can support self-regulation by:

- making learning goals explicit,
- encouraging reflection on emotions and learning processes,
- normalizing struggle and uncertainty,
- providing choices and shared decision-making opportunities.

Key coaching takeaway: Empowerment grows when learners experience that they have **agency,** that their actions, decisions, and reflections matter.

1.2.5. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND REFLECTION

All unit follow an experiential learning approach inspired by **David Kolb**, where learning emerges through a cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. Emotional experiences, such as discomfort, confusion, or success, are not side effects but core learning material.

Reflection allows learners to:

- make sense of their experiences,
- connect emotions to actions,
- develop awareness of group dynamics and communication patterns.

Key coaching takeaway: Empowerment is strengthened when learners see that their experiences are valid and useful sources of learning.

1.2.6. EMPOWERMENT AS A CONTINUOUS PRACTICE

Empowerment is not a one-time intervention but an ongoing practice. Group agreements, communication norms, and learning charters are living tools that help maintain psychological safety over time. They provide structure without control and clarity without rigidity.

In entrepreneurship education, empowered learners are more likely to:

- take initiative,
- engage deeply,
- collaborate effectively,
- and develop confidence in their ability to learn and adapt.

Key coaching takeaway: For educators, empowerment starts with intentional facilitation and continues through everyday interactions, language choices, and responses to uncertainty.

1.2.7. REFERENCE

Edmondson, A. (2018). *The fearless organisation: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth*. Wiley.

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research, 77*(1), 81–112. https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall.

Rogers, C. R. (1969). *Freedom to learn*. Charles E. Merrill.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*(1), 54–67. https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020

Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory Into Practice, 41*(2), 64–70. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2

1.3 - EXERCISES & ASSIGNMENTS

Below, you can find all activities for this unit. Please note: the indicated timeframes are general indications. So consider, based on your personal training, to adjust the activity according to your needs.

	ACTIVITY	TIME-FRAME	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Concrete Experience	**Thrown into the Deep End**
	
	Purpose for the trainer
	This opening activity intentionally places participants into an unstructured collaborative situation. The aim is not to produce a "perfect" set of rules, but to surface emotional reactions, group dynamics, and implicit assumptions about collaboration, feedback, and safety. As a trainer, your role is to resist over-facilitating and allow mild discomfort to emerge. This discomfort becomes the learning material for the rest of the unit.
	Important note! This unit is a confrontative and possibly uncomfortable for participants. It is advised to spend some time before you start the activities with check in and explain that the next activities are designed this way by purpose. Your trainees are professionals, who might be able to handle this situation, but it is very important to manage the expectations and make it sure that they understand the unusual format.
	
	Trainer preparation
	• Prepare flipcharts or ensure digital collaboration tools are ready.
	• Arrange participants into fixed groups that will remain stable throughout the training.
	• Set a clear but minimal task instruction; avoid explaining how to collaborate.
	
	Facilitation steps
	1. Assign groups and clearly state that this will be their base group for the training.
	2. Present the task and strict time limit (10 minutes). It's a sprint!
	3. Step back. Observe silently:
	  ○ Who takes initiative?
	  ○ Who withdraws?
	  ○ How are decisions made?
		30 min	**Trainer tips**
			• Do not correct "bad" rules.
			• Avoid summarizing too much, reflection comes later.
			• If tension arises, note it mentally but don't intervene unless safety is at risk.
			
			The time limit has a purpose, it provides the feeling of urgency, discomfort and unpreparedness. Trainers can give more time for the activities, but do not stretch the available timeframe too much, keep the sprint-like urgency!
			
			If trainees (or a group) become „too frustrated", explain the purpose of the activity and engage them to move forward and continue. Emphasise that the activity is to learn, not to performe perfectly already at the start of the training.
			
			If the training infrastructure and the trainees' skills allow it, the trainer can facilitate, suggest to work with online tools. In this case, the trainer can prepare a shared collaborative platform or can offer the teams the possibility to work with digital tools. In this case the working methodology might vary, that makes the facilitation more difficult, but the teams can chose their own way.

	4. During the feedback exchange phase, ensure **direct but respectful communication**. 5. Keep the plenary exchange short and energetic. **What to observe** • Emotional reactions (frustration, relief, confidence). • Differences between "control-oriented" vs. "trust-based" rules. • How feedback is framed (judgment vs. curiosity).		

2. Reflective Observation	**Oops! That Went Well...** **Purpose for the trainer** This activity helps participants reframe discomfort as learning. Humor is used intentionally to lower defensiveness and build group cohesion. The reflection focuses on unexpected positives, reinforcing psychological safety and resilience — core elements of empowerment and entrepreneurship. **Facilitation steps** 1. Invite groups to revisit the previous activity emotionally, not analytically. Groups should discuss Activity 1 with answering the following question: **"What went unexpectedly well, even if it didn't feel great in the moment?"** 2. After everyone shared their opinion groups turn one small mistake, awkward moment, or challenge from the previous activity into **a funny headline** or news report title. 3. Ask groups to present their headline and a very short explanation of it. • Emphasize that awkwardness, mistakes, and confusion are valuable. • Encourage creativity and exaggeration in the "headline" creation. • Keep presentations light and fast-paced. **What to observe** • Willingness to laugh at oneself. • Shift from blame to shared ownership. • Emotional relief compared to Activity 1.	30 minutes	**Trainer tips** • Model vulnerability by sharing a humorous observation if needed. • If a group struggles, offer a playful example—but don't rescue them too quickly.

4. Abstract Conceptualization	**Why Safe Space Matters** **Purpose for the trainer** This activity connects lived experience to theory. Participants now have emotional data; your role is to anchor it in concepts such as psychological safety, feedback culture, and self-regulation—without turning the session into a lecture. **Trainer preparation** • Curate or assign different sources per group. • Ensure diversity of topics across groups. **Facilitation steps** 1. Assign materials and clarify the concept/mind-mapping task. (Text 1 – Text 4 in the appendix of this unit) • Groups spend some time reviewing the material as a group. • Trainees take notes or highlight key points. • On a flipchart or large paper, they work together to create a concept map or mindmap that connects the main ideas, key terms, and practical takeaways from the material. • Each group will present their concept map (3 minutes) to the other participants. 2. Encourage groups to link theory explicitly to their earlier experience. 3. Support visual thinking (diagrams, arrows, keywords). 4. Time presentations strictly (3 minutes per group). **What to observe** • Ability to translate theory into practice. • Depth of connections made to previous activities. • Language shift (from opinion to concept-based reflection).	50 minutes	**Trainer tips** • Ask clarifying questions instead of adding explanations. • Encourage practical implications, not academic summaries. Article about The Psychological Safety Framework: https://psychsafety.com/psychological-safety-framework/ Article about the importance of listening, trust and letting go of control in coaching: https://psychsafety.com/coaching-and-psychological-safety-listening-trust-and-letting-go-of-control/ 7-minute video that explains what psychological safety is: https://youtu.be/GZgmoxOgfig?si=_zq-i1TBLmM891tC Mini-course to identify key elements of psychological safety and why it's crucial: https://youtu.be/zZYal2MomI4?si=7P2shFifa59vQ6cX Practical guide on how to create positive and effective feedback culture: https://feedbackfruits.com/blog/how-to-create-a-positive-effective-feedback-culture Article about the practical principles of improve students' learning via positive feedback culture: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322813936_Creating_a_Positive_Feedback_Culture_Eight_Practical_Principles_to_Improve_Students'_Learning

			Article that discusses the benefits and strategies of effective feedback in education: https://edustaff.org/blog/6-strategies-for-effective-feedback-in-education/

4. Active Experimentation	**Restart and let's build our learning culture – together** **Purpose for the trainer** This activity helps turn ideas into clear agreements. The group works together to create shared learning rules that show what empowerment looks like in practice. As a trainer, your role is to make sure everyone is included, quieter participants are given space to speak, and communication stays supportive and respectful. **Facilitation steps** 1. Bring the group into a circle or shared space. Facilitate a short introduction round, asking 1 or 2 questions from everyone. For example the name of the participant and the best summer holiday experience, or favourite movie. This helps everyone to calm down and open up. 2. Trainees' task is to create the rule-set together. As a group, they co-create a set of group agreements or a "learning charter" that will guide how they (you) work and communicate together for the rest of the training. This may include: • Communication norms (e.g. active listening, feedback, turn-taking) • Group responsibilities • Conflict or tension handling • How feedback is given and received • Support and inclusion of quieter voices • Emotional and psychological safety practices Invite suggestions one by one—avoid open shouting. Reflect language back neutrally ("What I hear is…"). Encourage consensus rather than majority voting. Finalize and visibly display the charter.	30 minutes	**Trainer tips** • Revisit this charter during later units when tension arises. • Treat it as adjustable, not fixed.

	3. Refer back to the aim of this unit and ask participants to reflect on their experiences.		

Text 1 – Psychological Safety as the Foundation for Learning and Empowerment

Psychological safety is a key condition for effective learning, collaboration, and innovation. It refers to a shared belief within a group that it is safe to take interpersonal risks, such as asking questions, admitting mistakes, sharing doubts, or offering new ideas (Edmondson, 2018). In educational contexts—especially entrepreneurship education—psychological safety is essential because learning often involves uncertainty, experimentation, and failure.

When learners do not feel psychologically safe, they tend to remain silent, avoid challenges, or focus on giving "correct" answers instead of exploring ideas. This limits both individual development and group learning. In contrast, psychologically safe environments encourage participation, reflection, and continuous improvement (Edmondson, 2018).

Psychological Safety Is Not Comfort or Lower Standards

A common misunderstanding is that psychological safety means avoiding discomfort, conflict, or critical feedback. In reality, psychologically safe environments can be demanding and challenging. What makes them different is that challenge is combined with respect and trust. Learners are encouraged to stretch themselves, but without fear of humiliation or punishment when things go wrong.

PsychSafety.com describes psychological safety as something that must be intentionally created and maintained, not assumed to exist automatically. It is influenced by everyday behaviors, communication patterns, and responses to mistakes (PsychSafety, n.d.-a).

A Practical Framework for Building Psychological Safety

The Psychological Safety Framework proposes a continuous cycle: **study, measure, build, maintain, and reflect** (PsychSafety, n.d.-a).

- **Study:** Educators first need a shared understanding of what psychological safety is and why it matters.
- **Measure:** Safety can be explored through observations, informal check-ins, or simple reflection questions.
- **Build:** Clear norms, inclusive facilitation, and respectful feedback practices help establish safety.
- **Maintain:** Safety must be reinforced, especially during stress, conflict, or deadlines.
- **Reflect:** Regular reflection helps groups notice what strengthens or weakens safety and adjust accordingly.

This cycle highlights that psychological safety is not a one-time intervention but an ongoing process.

The Educator's Role

Educators play a central role in shaping psychological safety. How they respond to questions, mistakes, or disagreement sends strong signals about what is acceptable. Calm, curious, and respectful responses encourage further participation, while dismissive or judgmental reactions quickly shut it down.
In entrepreneurship education, where risk-taking is a learning goal, psychological safety becomes a prerequisite for empowerment. Learners who feel safe are more likely to take initiative, experiment, and engage deeply in the learning process.

Text 2 – Coaching Behaviours That Create Psychological Safety

Coaching and psychological safety are closely connected. Coaching requires learners to think out loud, reflect on uncertainty, and explore unfinished ideas. These behaviors only occur when learners feel safe enough to expose their thinking (Garratt, n.d.).
At the same time, coaching behaviours actively contribute to building psychological safety. Rather than relying on authority or control, coaching emphasizes trust, curiosity, and shared responsibility.

Listening as a Core Safety Signal

One of the most powerful coaching behaviours is active listening. When educators listen attentively—without interrupting, correcting, or judging—they communicate that learners' perspectives matter. This sense of being heard increases engagement and willingness to participate (Garratt, n.d.).
Listening is not just a technique; it is a relational message. Learners quickly notice whether questions are asked to genuinely understand or simply to test knowledge.

The Role of Silence

Silence is often uncomfortable for educators, especially in group settings. However, coaching practice highlights silence as a valuable space for thinking. Allowing silence gives learners time to process, reflect, and formulate responses. Filling silence too quickly can unintentionally communicate that speed is valued over depth (Garratt, n.d.).

Curiosity Instead of Control

A coaching mindset replaces judgment with curiosity. Instead of evaluating responses as right or wrong, educators ask exploratory questions such as:

- *What makes you think that?*
- *What might be another way to approach this?*
- *What would you try next?*

Such questions reduce fear of failure and invite deeper reflection. This is particularly important in entrepreneurial learning, where multiple solutions are possible.

Letting Go of Control and Reducing Power Distance

Psychological safety increases when educators are willing to share control and admit that they do not have all the answers. Coaching assumes that learners are capable of generating insights themselves when supported appropriately (Garratt, n.d.).

By reducing power distance—inviting learners into decision-making, reflection, and problem-solving—educators create a learning environment based on partnership rather than hierarchy.

Implications for Empowering Learning Environments

In the Empowering unit, coaching behaviours should not only be explained but demonstrated. How educators listen, respond, and manage uncertainty becomes a live example of psychological safety in practice.

Text 3 – Creating a Positive and Effective Feedback Culture

Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning, but its impact depends heavily on how it is delivered and embedded in the learning environment. A positive feedback culture exists when feedback is frequent, constructive, and clearly linked to learning goals, rather than being limited to grades or final judgments (FeedbackFruits, n.d.).

Feedback Culture vs. Isolated Feedback

Isolated feedback moments—such as comments after assessment—rarely lead to meaningful learning. Feedback culture, in contrast, treats feedback as a continuous dialogue that supports learning throughout the process (FeedbackFruits, n.d.).

A strong feedback culture requires psychological safety. Learners must feel safe to expose unfinished work, ask for clarification, and act on feedback without fear of embarrassment.

Principles of an Effective Feedback Culture

Research summarized by FeedbackFruits highlights several principles that support effective feedback in education:

1. **Focus on higher-order learning:** Open-ended tasks create richer opportunities for feedback than simple recall activities.
2. **Clarity of expectations:** Learners must understand goals and criteria to make sense of feedback.
3. **Specific and actionable feedback:** Feedback should clearly indicate what can be improved and how.
4. **Timeliness:** Feedback is most effective when learners can still use it.
5. **Continuity:** Ongoing feedback supports learning better than one-off comments.

6. **Active learner involvement:** Self-assessment and peer feedback help learners internalize quality standards (FeedbackFruits, n.d.).

Feedback as an Empowerment Tool

When feedback is constructive and respectful, it strengthens learner confidence and self-regulation. Poorly delivered feedback, however, can damage motivation and trust. For this reason, feedback practices must be aligned with the goal of empowerment rather than control. In entrepreneurship education, feedback should support experimentation and iteration. Learners need to understand that feedback is not a verdict on their ability, but input for improvement.

Text 4 – Practical Feedback Strategies That Support Psychological Safety

Beyond feedback culture, educators need concrete strategies to deliver feedback in ways that feel safe and useful. Practical feedback skills help translate good intentions into everyday teaching behaviour (Edustaff, n.d.).

Key Principles of Effective Feedback

Effective feedback is:

- **Timely**, so learners can act on it
- **Specific**, focusing on observable behaviour
- **Goal-oriented**, linked to learning objectives
- **Respectful**, separating the person from the performance

These principles reduce defensiveness and increase the likelihood that feedback will be used.

Six Practical Feedback Strategies

Edustaff (n.d.) outlines several strategies educators can apply immediately:

1. **Use concrete examples** to clarify feedback and avoid vague judgments.
2. **Balance strengths and areas for improvement** to maintain motivation.
3. **Focus on behaviour, not personality**, to protect learner dignity.
4. **Use simple structures** (e.g., situation–behaviour–impact) to increase clarity.
5. **Invite self-reflection** before giving feedback, supporting learner ownership.
6. **Create opportunities to apply feedback**, such as revisions or second attempts.

Feedback, Safety, and Self-Regulation

These strategies support psychological safety by making feedback predictable, fair, and focused on learning rather than evaluation. They also strengthen self-regulation by encouraging learners to reflect on their own performance and plan next steps.
In empowering learning environments, feedback becomes a shared learning tool rather than a one-directional judgment.

References

PsychSafety. (n.d.). *Psychological safety framework*. https://psychsafety.com/psychological-safety-framework/
PsychSafety. (n.d.). *Coaching and psychological safety: Listening, trust, and letting go of control*. https://psychsafety.com/coaching-and-psychological-safety-listening-trust-and-letting-go-of-control/
FeedbackFruits. (n.d.). *How to create a positive & effective feedback culture*. https://feedbackfruits.com/blog/how-to-create-a-positive-effective-feedback-culture
Edustaff. (n.d.). *6 strategies for effective feedback in education*. https://edustaff.org/blog/6-strategies-for-effective-feedback-in-education/
Carless, D., & Boud, D. (2018). *Creating a positive feedback culture: Eight practical principles to improve students' learning*. *Higher Education Research & Development, 37*(7), 1315–1329. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2018.148505
YouTube. (n.d.). *What is psychological safety?* [Video]. https://youtu.be/GZgmoxOgfig
YouTube. (n.d.). *Psychological safety explained* [Video]. https://youtu.be/zZYal2MomI4

UNIT 2 - MINDSET

The **Mindset Unit** serves as the transformative core of the C-ENTRE program. It is designed to shift the VET educator's perspective from a traditional "transmitter of knowledge" to a "facilitator of growth." By exploring the **EntreComp** framework and the psychological foundations of the **Growth Mindset**, participants will learn that entrepreneurship is not just about business. This is a life competence. This unit uses experiential learning to help trainers embrace uncertainty and value creation as tools for student empowerment

2.1 – OBJECTIVE

The objective for this unit is to transition VET educators from a traditional teaching role to that of an entrepreneurial facilitator by mastering the core pillars of the entrepreneurial mindset.

2.1.1. KNOWLEDGE

Define entrepreneurship as a broad life competence for value creation, utilizing the **EntreComp Framework** to distinguish it from narrow business creation.

2.1.2. SKILLS

Apply **Effectuation logic** by empowering students to act based on their immediate "means" (who they are, what they know, and whom they know).

Facilitate a **Growth Mindset** by using pedagogical techniques that reframe failure as essential learning data.

2.1.3. ATTITUDES

Adopt the role of a **Facilitator-Coach**, shifting from providing knowledge to guiding the process through active listening and powerful questioning.

2.2 - THEORY BACKGROUND

The structural transformation of a VET educator into an entrepreneurial facilitator-coach hinges on a comprehensive re-engineering of how competence is defined, measured, and developed. In traditional vocational training, education focuses heavily on linear replication, standardized rubrics, and technical expertise. However, cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset requires a shift toward systemic behavioral flexibility, cognitive resilience, and adaptive value creation under high uncertainty.

To build a rigorous foundation for the activities in Unit 2 , this theory section grounds coaching practices directly within the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp). It explicitly maps how experiential training design triggers and activates specific EntreComp sub-competences, transforming abstract cognitive psychological principles into observable, practical actions in a VET scenario.

2.2.1 THE ENTRECOMP ARCHITECTURE AS AN EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTIC MAP

The European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp), developed by the European Commission, establishes that entrepreneurship is a transversal life competence applicable across all domains of personal, social, civic, and professional growth. It defines entrepreneurship broadly as the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, transforming them into value for others—whether that value is cultural, social, environmental, or commercial.

The framework is structured into three tightly interconnected competence areas, containing 15 distinct competences that are broken down into 60 conceptual threads and mapped across an 8-level progression model spanning 442 specific learning outcomes:

1. **Ideas and Opportunities:** Containing Spotting opportunities, Creativity, Vision, Valuing ideas, and Ethical and sustainable thinking.
2. **Resources:** Containing Self-awareness and self-efficacy, Motivation and perseverance, Mobilizing resources, Financial and economic literacy, and Mobilizing others.
3. **Into Action:** Containing Taking the initiative, Planning and management, Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk, Working with others, and Learning through experience.

For the VET educator using this guide, the EntreComp framework functions as an educational diagnostic map. Instead of grading the technical completeness of a student project or focusing on narrow business creation, the coach looks through the lens of these 15 competences to design learning experiences that purposefully challenge and measure specific entrepreneurial behaviors. It provides educators with a professional vocabulary to assess how a student navigates a problem, collaborates under pressure, and bounces back from adversity.

The framework's 8-level progression grid ranges from Foundation (Levels 1–2: Discover, Explore) and Intermediate (Levels 3–4: Experiment, Dare) to Advanced (Levels 5–6: Improve, Reinforce) and Expert (Levels 7–8: Expand, Transform). In a VET context, the coach moves a student from a basic Foundation level of merely recognizing needs up to Intermediate levels where they "Experiment" with value creation and "Dare" to take real-world responsibility for an ambiguous project.

2.2.2. THE FIVE CRITICAL INTERVENTIONS FOR THE VET COACH

While all 15 competences are highly integrated, Unit 2 isolates five specific EntreComp benchmarks that are vital for transitioning educators from "knowledge transmitters" to process facilitators.

I. Coping with Uncertainty, Ambiguity, and Risk (Area: Into Action)

Traditional education rewards certainty and penalizes deviation. Entrepreneurial coaching demands the exact opposite: moving forward when data is incomplete,

outcomes are unpredictable, and rules are unwritten. The core threads of this competence require learners to make decisions when information available is partial or ambiguous, handle fast-moving situations promptly, and build structured ways of testing prototypes early to reduce the risk of critical failure. This is the primary competence for educators moving from "teaching about" business to "teaching through" entrepreneurial experiences.

The coach intentionally limits instructions during sprint exercises. When students show frustration, the facilitator reflects the anxiety back with open-ended questions rather than stepping in to "save" them or provide a clear path. This builds the behavioral stamina required to handle real-world business volatility and encourages a shift toward self-determined learning (heutagogy), where students figure out how to manage the "unknowns" in their projects.

II. Self-Awareness and Self-Efficacy (Area: Resources)

This competence forms the psychological core of Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset research. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute actions to produce specific achievements. A student with a fixed mindset views failure as a permanent critique of their talent. Conversely, a student with a growth mindset treats failure as temporary behavioral data that can be improved with practice.

The framework requires learners to look closely at their personal strengths and weaknesses, while maintaining a firm belief in their ability to influence the course of events despite uncertainty, setbacks, and temporary failures. The facilitator uses the "Power of Yet" technique during feedback loops. If a student says, "This model won't work," the coach reframes the phrase: "You haven't validated a profitable iteration yet". This detaches self-worth from immediate project results, fostering long-term cognitive resilience and a belief that they can develop through effort.

III. Mobilizing Resources (Area: Resources)

This competence directly underpins Saras Sarasvathy's theory of Effectuation and the "Bird-in-Hand" principle. Causal systems assume that a goal is fixed and requires gathering a highly specific, often expensive, array of external assets before action can start. Effectual systems turn this upside down: they start directly with immediate means—who you are, what you know, and whom you know—and ask what unique outcomes can be created using those assets.

The EntreComp benchmark requires learners to discover, gather, and manage the material, non-material, digital, and human assets needed to turn ideas into action, with an explicit focus on making the most out of highly limited resources. When students claim they lack the budget or tools to progress, the coach introduces constraint innovation exercises. This forces them to look closely at what they have and map out the hidden human and physical capital already in their building, such as a colleague's technical skill or discarded materials from a VET workshop, rather than waiting for external funding.

IV. Learning Through Experience (Area: Into Action)

Grounded in David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, this competence views action as the fundamental driver of conceptual development. In an entrepreneurial setting, mistakes are not errors to be avoided; they are necessary strategic benchmarks and essential data points in a learning loop.

The framework seeks to help students use any initiative for value creation as a learning opportunity, evaluating performance, and monitoring how they reflect on real-world feedback loops to dynamically pivot a value-creation concept. The facilitator structures high-frequency feedback loops. Following a fast-paced exercise like the constraint innovation sprint, the coach leads a detailed reflective observation session. This helps students systematically extract actionable insights from emotional, high-stress experiences, showing them how to use their feelings of frustration or breakthrough as core learning material.

V. Creativity and Spotting Opportunities (Area: Ideas and Opportunities)

Opportunities are rarely uncovered through passive observation. They are actively designed by combining existing ideas, analyzing user problems, and exploring alternative pathways under tight constraints. It requires moving past the first obvious thought to discover deep customer friction points.

The benchmark targets exploring and experimenting with innovative approaches, establishing new connections to bring together scattered elements, and combining knowledge and resources to achieve valuable effects. The coach uses time-pressured simulations and "Mystery Boxes" containing random items to disrupt conventional thinking patterns. By restricting time and materials, the facilitator pushes students past safe, unoriginal concepts, forcing them to apply design thinking methods to quickly spot alternative uses for the immediate resources at hand and transform a constraint into an innovative tool.

2.2.3. REFERENCES

- Bacigalupo, M., Kampylis, P., Punie, Y., & Van den Brande, G. (2016). *EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework*. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union.
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Random House.
- Hase, S., & Kenyon, C. (2000). *From Andragogy to Heutagogy*. Ulti-BASE In-Service.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall.
- Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001). Causation and Effectuation: Toward a Theoretical Shift in Entrepreneurship Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 243-263.

2.3 - PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

To provide complete, actionable guidance for the Mindset Unit, the following detailed operational simulations illustrate how to transition a VET educator's role from a traditional "content expert" to a process-driven "facilitator-coach". These examples utilize the four stages of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle to activate, observe, and measure specific EntreComp benchmarks under real-world vocational hub conditions.

2.3.1. THE "INVISIBLE RESOURCE" CHALLENGE (EFFECTUATION & MOBILIZING RESOURCES)

- **The VET Context:** Educators and vocational students frequently experience operational paralysis, believing they cannot progress on their project concepts due to a lack of initial budget, specialized workshop machinery, or dedicated workspace. This causal blocker prevents them from taking immediate action.
- **The Activity (Concrete Experience):** In a strict 15-minute window, startup teams are placed in an asset-constrained scenario where using the internet, AI tools, or planning financial budgets is completely forbidden. Teams are given a single task: run an immediate "asset scavenger hunt" within their immediate physical building to discover, verify, and document exactly five local resources that cost zero euros but can directly solve a student's project obstacle. Trainees must identify and categorize assets across different dimensions:
    - *Human Resources:* Mapping a colleague's hidden advanced proficiency in Excel or database management.
    - *Physical Resources:* Sourcing discarded timber, metals, or offcuts from a nearby VET construction workshop.
    - *Social Resources:* Leveraging a personal, direct contact with a local business alumnus or community partner.
- **Facilitator-Coach Role & Interventions:** The coach moves through the room to enforce the constraints. If a trainee claims, "We have checked our surroundings and we literally have nothing available in this room," the coach does not provide ideas. Instead, the coach uses structured questioning to shift their perspective from scarcity to abundance:

"Who is the specific individual in this facility that every single staff member goes to when a critical piece of technical equipment breaks down and the repair budget is zero?"

This prompt forces the trainee to recognize human capital as an active, mobilizeable asset.

- **EntreComp Activation:** This activity targets **Mobilizing Resources** (Area: Resources) and **Taking the Initiative** (Area: Into Action). It transitions the educator from causal thinking ("I need external capital to start Y") to an Intermediate level of effectuation ("I have assets A, B, and C immediately available; what value can I create right now?").

2.3.2. THE "NOT YET" FEEDBACK SIMULATION (GROWTH MINDSET & SELF-EFFICACY)

- **The VET Context:** A student presents a project idea that they are highly enthusiastic about, but which is technically impossible to execute with current school infrastructure, or is based on deeply flawed, unvalidated assumptions.
- **The Activity (Active Experimentation through Roleplay):** Trainees are paired up for a detailed 15-minute behavioral roleplay simulation. One participant plays a discouraged, highly defensive VET student who is ready to give up on their idea, while the other takes on the role of the educator trying to guide them. The exercise is split into two distinct phases to show the contrast in outcomes:
    - *Phase A (The Fixed Track):* For 5 minutes, the educator responds using traditional authority, explaining exactly why the idea is impossible, listing the industry regulations it violates, and explaining why it will fail based on their 20 years of technical expertise.
    - *Phase B (The Growth Track):* The pairs switch scenarios. The educator is now completely banned from using evaluative or dismissive statements. They must maintain psychological safety by applying the "Power of Yet" framework to reframe the conversation.
- **Facilitator-Coach Role & Interventions:** The coach monitors the language choices in each pair. If an educator slips back into giving advice or pointing out flaws, the coach stops the simulation and prompts a change in wording:

"Rephrase that critique. Instead of telling them why it won't make money, use the 'Power of Yet' to reframe the problem as an unvalidated hypothesis."

The educator adapts their response:

"You haven't discovered a profitable iteration for this target audience yet. What is one small, low-risk experiment we can design this afternoon to test if they even experience this problem?"

- **EntreComp Activation:** This simulation targets **Self-Awareness and Self-Efficacy** alongside **Motivation and Perseverance** (Area: Resources). It teaches educators how to use structured feedback language that separates a student's personal identity from their project results, treating initial failure as clean, objective data in a continuous learning loop.

2.3.3. THE MYSTERY BOX CONSTRAINT SPRINT (COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY)

- **The VET Context:** To successfully coach students through the emotional stress of project updates and failures, educators must firsthand experience the exact same creative pressure, ambiguity, and lack of clear instructions.
- **The Activity (Concrete Experience & Reflective Observation):** Trainees work in their fixed startup teams. Each team is handed a physical "Mystery Box" containing a collection of random, low-cost items (e.g., an unparsed deck of

playing cards, a plastic bottle, rubber bands, paper clips). The initial instruction is minimal: *"You have exactly 10 minutes to build a functional prototype of an interactive learning tool for your VET classroom."*

- **The Unexpected Parameter Shift:** At exactly the 5-minute mark, the facilitator introduces an abrupt change without warning. The coach walks around the room and removes a core item from each table, or announces a sudden update: *"The target audience has changed; your tool must now be completely usable by an visually impaired student."*
- **Facilitator-Coach Role & Interventions:** The coach steps back and strictly observes the group dynamics without interfering. During the subsequent debriefing loop, the coach uses a "What, So What, Now What" reflection framework to target behavioral and somatic reactions rather than the final prototypes:

"What was your immediate physical and emotional reaction when I changed the rules mid-sprint? Did your team lose momentum by complaining about the unfairness of the constraint, or did you immediately evaluate your remaining items to pivot your idea?"

- **EntreComp Activation:** This sprint targets **Coping with Uncertainty, Ambiguity, and Risk** (Area: Into Action) and **Creativity** (Area: Ideas & Opportunities). It helps educators experience cognitive dissonance under pressure, allowing them to conceptualize how to manage their students' emotional responses when real-world project parameters shift.

2.3.4. MAPPING THE PROGRESSION WHEEL (LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE)

- **The VET Context:** Connecting fast-paced, chaotic classroom experiences to formal European framework standards is essential for building professional competence and implementing structured assessments.
- **The Activity (Abstract Conceptualization):** Immediately following the reflection on the Mystery Box sprint, groups are given a physical, blank EntreComp competence wheel template.
- **Facilitator-Coach Role & Interventions:** Trainees are directed to access framework documentation (such as entrecomp.eu). Their task is to map their specific behaviors during the sprint to the 15 EntreComp competences. The coach guides teams as they analyze their work:
    - If a team argues over a removed item, the coach helps them map that behavior to the threads of *Working with Others* or *Coping with Ambiguity*.
    - Trainees must identify their current level on the progression grid, determining if their response during the constraint sprint showed an *Intermediate* ability to "Experiment" or an *Advanced* ability to "Improve" systems under pressure.

EntreComp Activation: This exercise activates **Learning Through Experience** (Area: Into Action) and **Valuing Ideas** (Area: Ideas & Opportunities). It provides educators with the professional vocabulary and concrete benchmarks needed to evaluate entrepreneurial mindsets in their VET hubs, ensuring their assessments are grounded in recognized educational standards rather than subjective opinions.

2.4 - EXERCISES & ASSIGNMENTS

	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Concrete Experience	**The Bird-in-Hand Sprint** Teams are placed into a high-constraint, immediate execution environment to simulate entrepreneurial resourcefulness. **EntreComp Focus:** Mobilizing Resources, Creativity, Taking the Initiative Instructions: **Group Setup:** Organise trainees into their fixed training startup teams (3 to 5 participants per group). **The Challenge Prompt:** Provide each team with an identical, highly ambiguous brief: *"Your team has exactly 15 minutes to design and pitch a functional service or product that addresses a daily frustration within your educational institution. You are strictly forbidden from using external capital, online research, or planning future budgets."* **Material Distribution:** Pass out a small, restrictive kit of physical items (e.g., sticky notes, marker pens, and rubber bands). Alternatively, state that they must use items currently on their persons or within arms' reach. **The Countdown:** Start a highly visible timer. At the 7-minute mark, announce an sudden change in parameters: *"The target demographic has shifted; your solution must now serve users with limited mobility or vision."* **The Pitch Execution:** Exactly at the 15-minute mark, enforce an absolute stop to preparation. Every team must deliver a 1-minute oral pitch of their prototype concept directly to the room.	**30 minutes** (5 mins instructions, 15 mins execution, pitch)	**Goal**: Identify growth mindset triggers (frustration points) and document them in an oral pitch Map internal reactions to chaos and reframe setbacks as learning data. **Output**: A documented group list of growth mindset triggers. Trainer Implementation Tips: • Resist the "Rescue" Impulse: Trainees will likely show immediate frustration and ask for clarification regarding the evaluation criteria. Respond neutrally: "The instructions are complete; you must manage the parameters as a team." • Enforce Time Limits Strictly: Stop pitches exactly at the 60-second mark. This structural urgency simulates the fast pace and pressure experienced by real entrepreneurs. • Do Not Correct Faulty Rules: If a team designs an unrealistic or technically impossible concept, do not critique it. The objective is to evaluate how they use immediate resources under pressure, not to evaluate a finished business idea.

2. Reflective Observation	**MINDFUL FRUSTRATION DEBRIEF** A structured team dialogue designed to extract the emotional and strategic data triggered during the opening sprint. **EntreComp Focus:** Learning Through Experience, Self-Awareness 1 **Peer Observation:** Before beginning the internal team review, have trainees spend 5 minutes inspecting the visual prototypes created by neighboring groups. 2 **Structured Team Dialogue:** Instruct teams to gather around a flipchart and complete a structured analysis based on Gibbs' or the "What? So What? Now What?" reflection frameworks. They must answer: • *What?* What precise physical and emotional behaviors occurred when the project guidelines were changed at the 7-minute mark? • *So What?* How did those internal emotional reactions affect your decision-making speed and collaboration style? • *Now What?* When your future VET students experience identical emotional blocks during open-ended tasks, how can you help them process that frustration? **3. Documenting Triggers:** Each group must write down their "Fixed Mindset Triggers" on a flipchart page and post it visibly on the room wall.	**30 minutes**	**Goal:** Map internal reactions to chaos and reframe setbacks as learning data. **Output:** A documented group list of growth mindset triggers. **Trainer Implementation Tips:** • **Focus on the Process, Not the Product:** When moving between groups, step in if teams spend time arguing over their prototype's commercial potential. Redirect them by asking: *"How did your body physically react when I took away your expected guidelines?"* • **Model Vulnerability:** If a group is quiet or struggling to share openly, tell a brief, lighthearted story about a time you experienced a professional change or mistake. This normalizes struggle and lowers defensiveness across the room.

3. Abstract Conceptualization	**THE ENTRECOMP AUDIT & ANNOTATION MATRIX** A silent, purely analytical framework mapping session where individual trainees map their behavioral data directly onto the European Framework. **EntreComp Focus:** Valuing Ideas, Learning Through Experience 1. Distribute a physical template of the EntreComp framework wheel and a blank 3-column analysis sheet to each individual trainee. 2. Direct trainees to open their mobile devices and access official framework definitions at entrecomp.eu. 3. Task: Trainees must silently audit their own specific actions during Activity 1 and cross-reference them with the conceptual threads of the framework. 4. On their matrix sheet, they individually write out: **Column A:** The exact behavioral event (e.g., *"I froze when the target audience changed"*); **Column B:** The precise EntreComp competence and thread matched (e.g., *"Coping with Uncertainty -> Thread 2"*); **Column C:** The estimated progression level shown (Foundation vs. Intermediate).	**30 minutes**	**Goal:** Transition an raw emotional experience into formal, standardized educational benchmarks through individual data analysis. **Output:** A completed, personal 3-column EntreComp Audit Matrix linking individual behaviors to official framework indicators. * **Enforce the Cone of Silence:** Do not allow trainees to talk, consult their peers, or run group presentations. This is an exercise in individual metacognition and internal framework alignment. * **Address Analytical Anxiety:** Trainees may complain that the 442 specific learning outcomes in EntreComp are too dense to parse alone. Remind them that they do not need to memorize the framework; they only need to locate the one thread that describes their exact reaction during the chaotic sprint.

4. Active Experimentation	**THE AMBIGUOUS CHALLENGE DESIGN** Trainees apply their insights to design a high-uncertainty learning activity for their own students. **EntreComp Focus:** Planning and Management, Taking the Initiative Instructions: 1 Solo **Blueprinting:** Trainees work individually to design a 15-minute challenge tailored for their specific VET classroom context. The challenge must feature *no predefined correct answer* and *limited instructions* to purposefully test an entrepreneurial mindset. 2 **The Design Criteria Checklist:** The written plan must explicitly outline: 1. The problem brief or restriction parameters. 2. The explicit values-driven goal for the student. 3. Three process-focused coaching prompts designed to replace traditional instructions (e.g., *"What is the absolute simplest way you can test this assumption using only what you have in front of you?"*). 3. **Peer Coaching (GROW Circles):** Trainees assemble into pairs or trios to pitch their challenge designs. The peer partner uses the GROW model to review the blueprint, ensuring the activity drives action rather than passive online research.	**45 minutes** (20 mins solo blueprinting, 15 mins peer testing, 10 mins wrap-up)	**Goal:** Master the conscious creation of low-stakes, high-uncertainty learning spaces. **Output:** A written, actionable 15-minute student challenge blueprint. **Trainer Implementation Tips:** • **Ban "Research Tasks":** Intervene immediately if a trainee designs a challenge that asks students to search Google or write a business plan. Push them toward real-world actions, such as interviewing a colleague or building a physical mock-up out of paper. • **Treat the Charter as a Living Tool:** Refer back to the group agreements co-created in Unit 1. If a participant gives overly soft or harsh feedback during peer coaching, remind them to align their comments with the group's established psychological safety standards.

REQUIRED PORTFOLIO ARTIFACTS (TRAINEE SUBMISSIONS)

To complete Unit 2 successfully, participants must document their work and submit the following three specific artifacts into their training folders:

1. The EntreComp Behavioral Map

- Task: A photographed or digital copy of the team's completed EntreComp mapping template.
- Requirement: The map must explicitly connect at least three real-world actions observed during the *Bird-in-Hand Sprint* to specific framework threads (e.g., how the team divided roles under pressure mapped to "Working with Others").

2. The Student Ambiguity Challenge Blueprint

- Task: A one-page instructional guide for a 15-minute classroom challenge designed during the *Active Experimentation* phase.
- Requirement: The document must outline the challenge problem, specify the constraint parameters (time, restricted materials), state the explicit value-creation goal, and detail three process-oriented coaching questions the educator will use to guide students through frustration.

3. Growth Language Reflection Journal

- Task: An individual reflection log tracking personal shifts in pedagogical language.
- Requirement: Trainees must reframe three common "fixed/causal" classroom responses (e.g., *"That business model will fail because you don't have a marketing budget"*) into "growth/effectual" coaching prompts utilizing the *Power of Yet* framework.

4. The Individual EntreComp Audit Matrix

- Task Format: A typed or scanned copy of the individual trainee's 3-column annotation matrix.
- Requirement: The document must contain an individual, self-directed assessment that isolates at least three distinct behavioral actions from the opening resource sprint. Each action must be explicitly cross-referenced with a corresponding thread ID and level descriptor from the official European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, demonstrating that the educator can recognize and measure mindset shifts objectively without relying on external collaborative feedback.

UNIT 3 - STRUCTURING

In the previous unit, you focused on how to develop and maintain the entrepreneurial mindset and attitude. Now you can let them to understand that the mindset, however, is essential, but in order to be a successful in entrepreneurship, some hard skills and structures are also needed. In this unit, we'll look at how to help students give structure to their ideas, turning them into something more concrete and realistic. You'll explore simple tools and methods that support opportunity recognition, feasibility thinking, and business modelling. Structuring isn't about limiting creativity, it's about giving it a shape that can lead to real action.

3.1 - OBJECTIVE

3.1.1. BACKGROUND

In entrepreneurial education, inspiration and creativity often come easily, systematic elaboration (structuring) does not. This unit focuses on the transformation of ideas into opportunities and opportunities into structured plans. Educators play a key role in helping students recognize the potential of their ideas, evaluate feasibility, and understand how value is created and delivered. By introducing foundational entrepreneurial tools and frameworks, educators can guide learners toward more strategic and realistic thinking without stifling their creativity.

3.1.2. OBJECTIVES

This unit aims to:

- ✓ Equip participants with the tools to help students move from idea generation to structured planning.
- ✓ Build confidence in using basic business modelling methods such as the Business Model Canvas.
- ✓ Strengthen participants' ability to support opportunity recognition and feasibility assessment.
- ✓ Foster an attitude that values critical thinking, structure, and iteration as part of the entrepreneurial process.

3.1.3. KNOWLEDGE

By the end of the unit, participants will:

- ✓ Understand the core elements of business models (e.g., value proposition, customer segments, revenue streams).
- ✓ Know how to use tools such as the Business Model Canvas and Lean Canvas in educational settings.
- ✓ Recognize methods and indicators of opportunity identification and idea validation.

3.1.4. SKILLS

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Introduce and apply structured tools to help learners plan and evaluate business ideas.
- ✓ Facilitate simple research and feasibility assessments.
- ✓ Support learners in translating creative ideas into viable, structured concepts.

3.1.5. ATTITUDES

Participants will:

- ✓ Value structured thinking as an essential complement to creativity and intuition.
- ✓ Encourage learners to explore ideas with a realistic and critical lens

3.2 - THEORY BACKGROUND

3.2.1. THEORY BACKGROUND

Entrepreneurial ideas often start with creativity, inspiration, or intuition. While these elements are essential, they are not sufficient on their own. Without structure, ideas remain vague, unrealistic, or difficult to communicate. Structuring is the process of turning ideas into clearer, more actionable concepts that can be tested, improved, and potentially implemented.

In entrepreneurship education, structuring is not about limiting creativity. Instead, it provides **scaffolding** that helps learners move from imagination to action.

3.2.2. FROM IDEAS TO OPPORTUNITIES

An idea becomes an opportunity when it addresses a real problem, creates value for a specific group, and has the potential to be sustained. Many learners struggle at this stage because they:

- focus too broadly,
- skip feasibility considerations,
- or fall in love with solutions before understanding the problem.

Educators play a key role in guiding learners through this transition by introducing simple frameworks that help break down complexity and support critical thinking.

3.2.3. WHY STRUCTURE SUPPORTS LEARNING

Structure helps learners:

- clarify assumptions,
- make ideas visible and discussable,
- identify gaps and weaknesses early,

- and communicate ideas to others.

In VET contexts, structure is particularly valuable because learners often prefer practical clarity over abstract theory. Visual tools such as canvases, diagrams, and step-by-step frameworks reduce cognitive overload and support shared understanding within teams.

3.2.4. BUSINESS MODELLING AS A LEARNING TOOL

Tools like the Business Model Canvas, Value Proposition Canvas, or Persona Canvas are not meant to produce perfect business plans. In educational settings, their main value lies in:

- supporting discussion,
- encouraging iteration,
- and helping learners see how different elements of an idea connect.

Business modelling helps learners understand that entrepreneurship is not only about the product or service, but also about customers, value, resources, and sustainability.

3.2.5. FEASIBILITY AND CRITICAL THINKING

Structuring introduces learners to feasibility thinking without discouraging creativity. Feasibility does not mean predicting the future with certainty; it means asking better questions:

- Who exactly is this for?
- Why would they care?
- What is needed to make this work?
- What are the biggest uncertainties?

These questions develop critical thinking and help learners move beyond wishful thinking toward realistic exploration.

3.2.6. LEARNING THROUGH SIMULATION AND TIME PRESSURE

Simulations such as short startup challenges or “pressure cooker” activities expose learners to the realities of entrepreneurial decision-making. Time pressure forces prioritization, simplification, and teamwork. Mistakes become visible quickly, creating strong learning moments.

Experiencing this process helps educators better understand the challenges their students face and prepares them to support learners more effectively.

3.2.7. ITERATION AND LEARNING FROM CHANGE

A key entrepreneurial competence is the ability to iterate—adjusting ideas based on feedback, reflection, and new insights. Structuring tools support iteration by making changes visible. Learners can compare earlier and later versions of their ideas and clearly see improvement.

This reinforces an important mindset: **changing an idea is not failure, but progress**.

3.2.8. THE EDUCATOR'S ROLE IN STRUCTURING

When facilitating structuring activities, educators should:

- avoid presenting tools as "correct" or "final",
- encourage adaptation rather than strict compliance,
- focus on learning outcomes rather than polished results.

The goal is not to turn learners into business experts, but to help them think more clearly, realistically, and confidently about their ideas.

3.2.9. STRUCTURING AS EMPOWERMENT

Ultimately, structuring is also a form of empowerment. When learners gain tools to organize their thinking, they feel more capable of acting on their ideas. Structure transforms uncertainty from something overwhelming into something manageable.

In entrepreneurship education, structure enables learners not only to imagine change—but to take the first concrete steps toward creating it.

3.2.10. REFERENCES

Blank, S., & Dorf, B. (2012). *The startup owner's manual: The step-by-step guide for building a great company*. K&S Ranch.

Brown, T. (2009). *Change by design: How design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation*. Harper Business.

Fayolle, A., & Gailly, B. (2008). From craft to science: Teaching models and learning processes in entrepreneurship education. *Journal of European Industrial Training, 32*(7), 569–593. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090590810899838

Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y. (2010). *Business model generation: A handbook for visionaries, game changers, and challengers*. Wiley.

Ries, E. (2011). *The lean startup: How today's entrepreneurs use continuous innovation to create radically successful businesses*. Crown Business.

Shepherd, D. A., & Patzelt, H. (2018). *Entrepreneurial cognition: Exploring the mindset of entrepreneurs*. Springer

3.3 - EXERCISES & ASSIGNMENTS

Below, you can find all activities for this unit. Please note: the indicated timeframes are general indications. So consider, based on your personal training, to adjust the activity according to your needs.

	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Concrete Experience	**Pressure cooker** **Purpose**: This simulation immerses participants in entrepreneurial urgency. Time pressure, incomplete information, and group decision-making replicate the reality students face. Your role is to protect momentum and prevent overthinking. **Trainer preparation** • Prepare 3 clear, contrasting challenge descriptions per group. (example challenges in the appendix: Pressure cooker challenge sheet) • Ensure timekeeping tools are visible. 1. In this activity, trainees will work in groups acting as startup teams. Each team will receive three prepared challenge or problem, chose one and come up with a creative and practical solution, that can be turned into a real entrepreneurial initiative. • value proposition • business concept • target group • resource needs • market opportunities • revenue opportunities In a maximum 2-minute pitch, groups present their ideas 2. Explain the rules clearly and firmly. 3. Emphasize action over perfection. 4. Actively enforce time limits. 5. During pitches, focus attention on logic, not polish.	45 minutes	**What to observe** • How feasibility competes with creativity. • Leadership emergence. • Simplification strategies under pressure. **Trainer tips** • Stop internet or AI use firmly. • If a group stalls, remind them: “Choose and move.” • The role of the trainer is facilitator and observer. Do not interact with the trainees only if you observe discrepancy and deviancy. The aim is that trainees experience the time pressure and the limited knowledge and resources, that they have. Does any of the groups have their own challenge? You can always let participants to use an idea/challenge in this activity that is brought by them. In this case, make sure, it is not an elaborated, ready business.

2. Reflective Observation	**Cooling down the pressure cooker** **Purpose for the trainer**: This structured reflection helps participants extract meaning from intensity. The What–So What–Now What framework supports metacognition and prepares them to transfer learning into teaching practice. 1. Groups take 20 minutes to discuss and complete the **three reflection stages** below. Trainees use flipchart or worksheet to record their reflections: ○ **WHAT?** – What happened in your group during the simulation? ○ **SO WHAT?** – Why does this experience matter? ○ **NOW WHAT?** - How will this experience influence your work as an educator? The groups select one insight from their reflection and share it with the rest of the group. (1 minute/group, optional) Hand the flipchart papers on the wall, and encourage trainees to find time to discover others reflections throughout the breaks. 2. **Facilitation steps** • Introduce the reflection framework briefly. • Let groups self-select which questions to explore. • Encourage honesty over success stories. • Optional sharing keeps energy balanced.	20 minutes	**What to observe** • Ability to articulate learning beyond outcome. • Empathy toward student experience. • Shift from "idea" to "process" thinking. **Trainer tips** • Walk around and listen; intervene only to deepen reflection. • Highlight parallels to classroom situations. About the reflection method of this activity, you can find more information here: https://reflection.ed.ac.uk/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/what-so-what-now-what

3. Abstract Conceptualization	**Giving structure to your innovation!** **Purpose for the trainer**: Participants now encounter structuring tools after experiencing chaos. This sequencing is intentional. Your role is to ensure tools are seen as supports for thinking, not rigid templates. 1. Trainees check the additional 1-page Structuring Toolbox and pick one model/framework each. Make sure that trainees within the same group all choose something different. 2. Trainees conduct an online research (internet, AI) to get information and understand the chosen tool. (25 minutes) 3. Trainees share their results within the startup teams and discuss it! (3 minutes/person) **Facilitation steps** 1. Ensure each participant chooses a different tool. 2. Keep individual research short and focused. 3. Facilitate peer teaching within teams. 4. Encourage critical comparison between tools.	40 minutes	**What to observe** • Tool–problem fit discussions. • Critical attitude toward models. • Transferability to VET contexts. **Trainer tips** • Normalize confusion, models are simplified representations. • Encourage skepticism and adaptation The activity requires individual online research. Trainees can also use AI to explain the chosen model/framework, but it is crucial to highlight that, AI might make mistakes and can be misleading. Information should always be double-checked. You can find on the following page several business development canvasses, which you may use: https://www.designabetterbusiness.tools/tools

4. Active Experimentation	**Reshape and refine!** **Purpose for the trainer:** This final activity models iteration, a core entrepreneurial competence. Participants experience how structure clarifies, rather than limits, creativity. 1. Teams return to their original idea from the "Pressure Cooker" activity. 2. As a team, they choose one of the tools introduced in this unit to reframe and revise their concept. They apply the chosen tool (model/framework) on their previously developed startup idea. 3. Teams present a short (3 minutes) summary of how their idea has changed. **Facilitation steps** 4. Bring groups back to their original idea. 5. Support tool selection based on need, not popularity or simplicity. 6. Encourage visible changes from version 1 to version 2. 7. Keep presentations focused on learning, not selling.	30 minutes	**What to observe** • Quality of refinement. • Ability to articulate improvement. • Realistic feasibility thinking. **Trainer tips** • Ask: "What became clearer?" • Reinforce that iteration is success, not failure.

Structuring Toolbox

	Business Model Canvas	Persona Canvas	Customer Journey Canvas	5 Whys	5W + 1H
Purpose **WHY TO USE IT?**	Use it if you want to **outline the overall logic of a business** or project. It helps you understand how value is created, delivered, and sustained.	Use it if you want to **understand your target customer** better. It helps you build empathy and make decisions based on users' real needs.	Use it if you want to **understand how customers experience** a product or service from beginning to end. It helps identify positive experiences as well as pain points.	Use it if you want to **identify the real cause of a problem** instead of only addressing its symptoms. It supports deeper analysis and better decision-making.	Use it if you want to **clearly define a situation or problem** before looking for solutions. It helps you collect all essential information in a structured way.
Period of business development **WHEN TO USE IT?**	Use it when developing a new business idea, improving an existing business, or preparing for implementation and growth.	Use it at the beginning of the development process, when you need to understand who your customers are and what they need.	Use it when designing or improving a service, product, or customer experience. It is especially useful before launching or redesigning a solution.	Use it whenever a recurring problem appears or when the cause of an issue is unclear. It is useful during improvement and evaluation processes.	Use it at the start of a project, during planning, or whenever you need to analyse a situation before making decisions.
Outcome **WHAT TO EXPECT?**	A clear overview of how the business works, who it serves, how it creates value, and how it can become sustainable.	A detailed description of your ideal customer that helps you design more relevant products, services, and communication.	A visual overview of the customer's experience, highlighting important interactions, frustrations, and opportunities for improvement.	A better understanding of the root cause of a problem, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions.	A well-defined problem or situation with all key information organised, making it easier to choose appropriate solutions and next steps.

Pressure cooker challenge sheet

People forget important appointments and deadlines	Many people miss appointments, payments, or deadlines because reminders are scattered across emails, apps, and notes. This causes stress, extra costs, and frustration.
Queues and waiting times waste time	People lose a lot of time waiting in lines (shops, services, offices) without knowing how long it will take. Waiting feels inefficient and irritating.
Finding reliable local services is difficult	People often struggle to find trustworthy plumbers, cleaners, tutors, or repair services. Reviews are unreliable or outdated.
Too many subscriptions are hard to manage	People forget which subscriptions they have and how much they pay each month. Canceling or tracking them takes effort and time.
Shared living spaces create small conflicts	In shared houses or student flats, cleaning tasks, bills, and shared responsibilities are often unclear. This leads to tension and arguments.
People lose or forget their personal items	Keys, chargers, documents, or bags are often misplaced at home, work, or school. Replacing them costs time and money.
Scheduling group activities is complicated	Finding a time for meetings, sports, or social activities is frustrating when many people are involved. Endless messaging slows decisions.
People don't know what to cook with what they have	Many people have food at home but don't know what meals they can make with it. This leads to food waste or unnecessary shopping.
Local events are hard to discover	People often hear about local events too late or not at all. Information is scattered across different platforms.
Simple tasks are forgotten in busy days	Small but important tasks (watering plants, taking medication, returning items) are easily forgotten. Forgetting causes inconvenience or damage.
Parents and caregivers miss important information	Messages from schools, clubs, or care services get lost among emails and chats. Important updates are missed.
People don't know where to get quick help	When small problems occur (broken bike, tech issue, form filling), people don't know who to ask or where to go quickly.
Unused items sit at home	People own items they rarely use but don't want to sell or throw away. Storage becomes cluttered.
Newcomers don't know how things work	People moving to a new city or school struggle with basic information: transport, services, rules, or habits. Asking feels awkward.
People forget to follow through on goals	People set small goals (exercise, learning, admin tasks) but lose track after a few days. Motivation fades without reminders or support.

UNIT 4 - GOAL SETTING

To empower VET educators with agile goal-setting techniques designed for high-uncertainty environments. The focus is to move from rigid planning to dynamic "validated learning," where goals act as hypotheses to be tested through coaching, experimentation, and constant adaptation.

4.1 - OBJECTIVE

By the end of this unit, VET educators will be able to:

4.1.1. IMPLEMENT AGILE COACHING (GROW MODEL):

- **Action:** Apply the Goal-Reality-Options-Will model to facilitate student-led discovery.
- **EntreComp Link:** *Coping with Uncertainty, Ambiguity, and Risk.* (By using GROW, the educator helps the student navigate the unknown without providing a "map," fostering self-reliance).

4.1.2. DIFFERENTIATE GOAL TYPES FOR PERSISTENCE:

- **Action:** Distinguish between **Performance Goals** (outcomes) and **Learning Goals** (competences) to manage student anxiety.
- **EntreComp Link:** *Self-awareness and Self-efficacy.* (Focusing on learning goals builds the student's belief in their own ability to develop and succeed despite initial setbacks).

4.1.3. MANAGE UNCERTAINTY VIA STRATEGIC MAPPING:

- **Action:** Utilize the **Goal-Uncertainty Matrix** to determine which elements require experimental testing vs. fixed planning.
- **EntreComp Link:** *Vision.* (Understanding how to navigate uncertainty allows educators to help students turn a broad vision into a series of manageable, testable steps).

4.2 - THEORY BACKGROUND

In high-uncertainty environments such as entrepreneurship education, traditional methods of linear planning and static goal setting often fail. When vocational education and training (VET) students are pushed to create value under volatile conditions, relying on rigid, long-term benchmarks can increase anxiety and lead to operational paralysis.

To counter this, Unit 4 shifts the focus from traditional predictive execution to an agile framework where goals act as testable hypotheses. By mastering how to write and structure flexible milestones using specific entrepreneurship models, a coach equips students to maintain project momentum and adapt dynamically to real-world market feedback.

4.2.1. TRANSITIONING FROM SMART TO THE FAST GOALS FRAMEWORK

For decades, educational curricula have relied on the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) framework. While highly effective for stable, predictable tasks, the "Achievable" and "Time-bound" components of SMART can inadvertently encourage students to lower their ambitions to guarantee compliance, or trap them into executing a flawed plan simply because a deadline was set.

In entrepreneurship education, market parameters and consumer behaviors shift rapidly, requiring goals to be written using the **FAST framework**:

- **Frequently Discussed:** Written goals must serve as the structural centerpiece of weekly coaching sessions rather than a one-time grading rubric, allowing students to pivot or persevere based on ongoing data collection.
- **Ambitious:** Goals should explicitly stretch the students' perceived technical and operational capabilities to foster innovative problem-solving and break through conventional structural boundaries.
- **Specific:** Milestones must be tied to concrete, observable actions and behavioral outcomes (e.g., instead of writing "work on marketing," a student writes "secure 2 signed letters of intent from local vendors").
- **Transparent:** Goals are published visibly within the VET incubator or hub, utilizing peer transparency to drive accountability and collaborative support networks.

Key coaching takeaway: Writing goals through the FAST framework shifts the student's psychological relationship with planning from a rigid contract to an active, evolving steering mechanism.

4.2.2. REFRAMING GOALS AS TESTABLE HYPOTHESES (THE LEAN STARTUP MODEL)

To write goals that survive a highly uncertain market or environment, students must be trained to translate traditional, task-based academic milestones into explicit, validated learning experiments based on Lean Startup principles.

When a student writes a standard task goal like *"Write a 20-page marketing plan"* or *"Launch a complete e-commerce website,"* they are using causal logic—assuming they can predict what the consumer wants. An entrepreneurial coach forces the student to strip away these unvalidated assumptions and rewrite the milestone as a **Lean Hypothesis** using a strict structural format:

Hypothesis Goal Format: *"I believe that [Specific Target Audience] will [Measurable Real-World Action] because of [Core Value Proposition]."*

Once written in this format, the goal naturally dictates its own execution metrics. Success is no longer measured by whether the student completed a bureaucratic task (e.g., writing the document), but whether they generated **Validated Learning** through real-world interaction.

4.2.3. THE GOAL-UNCERTAINTY MATRIX AND TARGET CLARITY

Not all milestones within a VET curriculum carry the same degree of risk. To help students determine how a goal should be written and tested, educators utilize the **Goal-Uncertainty Matrix**, a two-by-two grid tracking "Goal Clarity" against "Uncertainty Level".

- **Low Uncertainty / High Clarity Quadrant:** Written as standard operational tasks (e.g., registering a domain name, calculating base material costs). These follow predictable pathways and do not require hypothesis testing.
- **High Uncertainty / Low Clarity Quadrant:** Written exclusively as **Learning Goals** rather than Performance Goals. For instance, if a team is highly uncertain about their delivery model, writing a performance goal like *"Sell 50 units online"* triggers intense anxiety. Reframing and writing it as a learning goal—*"Validate whether our target audience uses mobile checkout or desktop platforms"*—completely shifts the behavioral motivation.

Key coaching takeaway: Focusing the written goal on *learning* rather than *performance* protects student self-efficacy, normalizes mistakes, and treats setbacks as data points rather than personal failures.

4.2.4. THE ACTION-ORIENTED GROW MODEL MATRIX

To ensure that written goals transform into immediate traction, the coach facilitates milestones using the structured **GROW Model** (Goal, Reality, Options, Will), focusing heavily on the execution of the "Will" phase:

- **Goal:** Identifying the broad value-creation milestone.
- **Reality:** Analyzing current resource limitations and constraints.
- **Options:** Brainstorming alternative lean experiments or prototypes.
- **Will:** Writing a specific, unbending commitment to low-risk action over the next 7 days.

When managing high uncertainty, the final written action plan must bypass passive "research" behaviors (such as googling competitors or reading articles) and mandate a **One-Step MVP (Minimum Viable Product) Test**. The action step must be written to be achievable within a **24-hour timeframe**, forcing students out of theoretical analysis and pushing them directly into low-risk, immediate real-world validation.

4.2.5. EFFECTUAL GOAL SETTING (THE BIRD-IN-HAND MODEL)

In traditional business planning, entrepreneurs write goals based on an idealized future outcome and then try to source the necessary means to reach it. Effectuation theory flips this paradigm. Effectual goal setting relies on the **Bird-in-Hand principle**, which mandates that an entrepreneur defines their goals based entirely on their immediate, available means:

- **Who they are:** Their personal traits, tastes, and unique capabilities.

- **What they know:** Their specific expertise, technical education, and experiential knowledge.
- **Whom they know:** Their immediate professional and personal networks.

Instead of writing a goal such as *"Raise €5,000 for manufacturing,"* an entrepreneur practicing effectual goal setting writes a means-driven goal: *"Identify three local partners within our existing network who can provide raw workshop materials for free."* This anchors the goal in immediate execution, eliminating external resource dependencies.

4.2.6. REFERENCES

- Blank, S. (2020). *The Four Steps to the Epiphany: Successful Strategies for Products that Win*. Wiley.
- Kerr, S., & Landauer, S. (2004). Using stretch goals to promote organizational effectiveness and personal growth. *Academy of Management Executive*.
- Maurya, A. (2012). *Running Lean: Iterate from Plan A to a Plan That Works*. O'Reilly Media.
- Osterwalder, A., et al. (2014). *Value Proposition Design*. Wiley.
- Ries, E. (2011). *The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses*. Crown Business.
- Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001). Causation and Effectuation: Toward a Theoretical Shift in Entrepreneurship Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 243-263.
- Sull, D., & Sull, C. (2018). With Goals, FAST Beats SMART. *MIT Sloan Management Review*.
- Whitmore, J. (2017). *Coaching for Performance: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

4.3 - PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

In entrepreneurship education, these exercises move the student from **Causal Reasoning** (predicting the future) to **Effectual Action** (creating the future)

4.3.1. THE " 10-CUSTOMER COFFEE" (VALIDATION GOAL)

- **Theoretical Basis: Customer Discovery & Problem/Solution Fit.** This example is based on the premise that entrepreneurs must "get out of the building" to validate the existence of a problem before building a solution.
- **Academic Reference:**

Blank, S. (2020). The Four Steps to the Epiphany: Successful Strategies for Products that Win. Wiley. Osterwalder, A., et al. (2014). Value Proposition Design. Wiley. (Specifically the sections on "Customer Profile" and "Proving the Value Proposition").

4.3.2. THE "SMOKE TEST" LANDING PAGE (COMMITMENT GOAL)

- **Theoretical Basis: The Lean Startup & Minimum Viable Product (MVP).** This activity focuses on "Validated Learning." Instead of asking customers what they *might* do, the goal measures what they *actually* do (a click is a behavioral proxy for commitment).
- **Academic Reference:**

Ries, E. (2011). The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses. Crown Business. Maurya, A. (2012). Running Lean: Iterate from Plan A to a Plan That Works. O'Reilly Media.

4.3.3. THE "BIRD-IN-HAND" PARTNERSHIP (RESOURCE GOAL)

- **Theoretical Basis: Effectuation Theory.** This example applies the "Bird-in-Hand" principle, where the entrepreneur starts with their means (who they know and what they have) rather than waiting for external capital (causal logic).
- **Academic Reference:**

Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001). Causation and effectuation: Toward a theoretical shift in entrepreneurship research. Academy of Management Review, 26(2), 243-263. Read, S., et al. (2016). Effectual Entrepreneurship. Routledge.

4.3.4. THE "PIVOT OR PERSEVERE" SPRINT (AGILE GOAL)

- **Theoretical Basis: Agile Goal Setting & Pivot Theory.** Entrepreneurial goals must be "FAST" (Frequent, Ambitious, Specific, and Transparent) rather than "SMART" and static. The ability to "Pivot" is a strategic goal in itself when uncertainty is high.
- **Academic Reference:**

Sull, D., & Sull, C. (2018). With Goals, FAST Beats SMART. MIT Sloan Management Review. Kerr, S., & Landauer, S. (2004). Using stretch goals to promote organizational effectiveness and personal growth. Academy of Management Executive.

4.3.5. THE GROW MODEL FACILITATION

- **Theoretical Basis: Self-Determination Theory & Coaching Psychology.** By using the GROW model, the trainer supports the student's **Autonomy** and **Competence**, which are the primary drivers of intrinsic motivation in entrepreneurial learning.
- **Academic Reference:**

Whitmore, J. (2017). Coaching for Performance: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership. Nicholas Brealey Publishing. Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. American Psychologist

4.4 - EXERCISES & ASSIGNMENTS

	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
1. Concrete Experience	**THE PREDICTION TRAP** Teams are forced to write and commit to a rigid performance target for an entirely unfamiliar task before collecting any baseline data, demonstrating the flaws of predictive planning. Instuctions: 1. Separate trainees into their fixed training startup teams. 2. Introduce an unfamiliar, ambiguous manual task (e.g., guessing the exact cost, origin, or weight of an unlabelled container of scattered VET materials, or sorting a complex deck of randomized criteria cards). 3. **The Static Constraint:** Before touching the materials or testing the task, teams have exactly 5 minutes to write down their exact, unchangeable quantitative milestone performance target. 4. Teams must immediately execute the task under a strict 10-minute countdown to hit their written target exactly. MATERIALS TO Provide: * Unlabelled containers filled with randomized VET workshop elements, tools, or raw items. * Sharpies and large target-setting index cards. * A highly visible countdown timer.	**45 minutes**	**Goal:** Direct experience of how predictive goal-setting fails in unvalidated environments, causing intense misallocation of effort. **Output:** A written, unvalidated performance target compared against real-world execution metrics. Trainer implementation tips: Direct experience of the frustration and necessity of adapting goals in real-time. **Enforce the Pre-Commitment:** Trainees will try to negotiate a test run or gather data first. Refuse all requests neutrally: *"You must write down your exact target metric based entirely on your current assumptions."* **Do Not Adjust Rules:** Keep the rules completely unchanged throughout the execution phase. The learning emerge entirely from the wild variance between their written predictive goal and the unpredicted reality.

2. Reflective Observation	**Reaction to Change Debrief** A team evaluation analyzing behavioral and strategic patterns when dealing with arbitrary milestones. Instuctions: 1. Prompt groups to evaluate their process using the *"What? So What? Now What?"* reflection framework. 2. Direct teams to discuss specific prompts: *"Did your written target motivate you, or did it cause panic once reality drifted from your initial guess?"* and *"How did committing to an unvalidated guess alter your team's tactical focus?"* 3. Ensure each participant reflects deeply on their cognitive defaults. Materials to provide: * Copies of the "What? So What? Now What?" reflection guide. * Individual reflection journals or workbook pages. * Whiteboard markers and flipchart papers.	**40 minutes**	**Goal:** Build an explicit awareness of the anxiety and strategic blindness that appears when trying to predict the unknown. **Output:** A short entry in individual reflection logs tracking reactions to unvalidated metric demands. **Trainer implementation tips:** **Identify Target Attachment:** Look out for teams that prioritized hitting their arbitrary written guess over adapting to the real physical properties of the task. Guide them to trace the link between arbitrary numbers and operational anxiety. **Capture Raw Data:** Ensure participants write down their exact initial assumptions vs. final results before moving to theory.

3. Abstract Conceptualization	**HYPOTHESIS STRUCTURING WORKSHOP** An objective framing workshop where participants convert their arbitrary speculative targets into testable learning hypotheses. Instructions: 1. Create a large 2×2 matrix on the wall labeled with "Goal Clarity" and "Uncertainty Level". 2. Have trainees place their initial speculative goals from Exercise 1 into the high-uncertainty quadrant. **3. The Intervention:** Force trainees to strip away the guesswork numbers and rewrite the exact same objective exclusively as a **Learning Goal** using the strict Lean Startup template. Materials to provide: * Masking tape (to map out the large 2×2 floor/wall matrix). * Color-coded sticky notes (Green for initial assumptions, Pink for rewritten hypotheses). * Digital cameras or smartphones to photograph the matrix outputs.	**45 minutes**	**Goal: Master how to write objectives that replace outcome anxiety with clear validation metrics.** **Output:** A photographed matrix with high-uncertainty speculative metrics converted into hypotheses. **Goal:** **Trainer Implementation tips:** * Enforce the Strict Format: Do not allow trainees to write general tasks. They must use the exact structure: *"I believe that [Target] will [Action] because of [Value]"*. * Focus on the Shift: Emphasize that rewriting the goal as a learning milestone transforms a failure to guess correctly into an opportunity to collect clean data.

4. Active Experimentation	**THE ACTION TRIGGER CIRCLES** A fast-paced coaching circle where participants design immediate, real-world low-stakes validation experiments based on their rewritten goals. Instructions: 1. Divide trainees into triads (coaching circles). 2. Each individual selects their rewritten hypothesis from Exercise 3. 3. Trainees take 25 minutes to complete a strict **One-Step MVP Test Plan** template designed for immediate execution without predefined calendar delays. 4. Teams use the GROW coaching framework to refine and stress-test the blueprint. Materials to provide: *** Printed One-Step MVP Test Plan Templates** (featuring the Lean Hypothesis Frame, Behavioral Metric column, and Action/Pivot thresholds). * **GROW Coaching Log & Script Matrix Guide** (with pre-printed outloud coaching prompts for Goal, Reality, Options, and Will). * **"Action vs. Passive Research" Audit Checklist scorecards** (for table centers). * **Unit 1 Learning Charter** visibly displayed in the room.	**60 minutes**	**Goal:** Achieve the transition from theoretical classroom planning into low-risk, immediate real-world action. **Output:** A completed, actionable, one-page GROW coaching log and MVP test outline. **Trainer Implementation tips:** **Ban Passive Tasks:** Intervene immediately if a trainee proposes a task like "googling competitors" or "reading market reports". Mandate active interaction tasks like *"calling a competitor"* or *"interviewing a potential customer"*. **Audit Proxy Metrics:** Ensure validation thresholds measure a physical *action* or commitment, not a general user *opinion*.

UNIT 5 - EXPERIENCING

In the previous unit, your trainees have learned how to set goals by using the GROW model and other tools. They have reflected on their own decisions and experienced working in teams to bring ideas which are first on paper into real life.

This unit focuses on experiential learning, where trainees will move beyond theoretical exercises and take ownership of realistic entrepreneurial experiences. The goal is to help them understand what it means to act as an entrepreneur, face challenges, make decisions under uncertainty, and learn from outcomes (both successes and failures).

5.1 - OBJECTIVE

Trainees move from conceptual business design to experiential entrepreneurial action. As a trainer, your role is to facilitate structured learning experiences in which trainees engage in realistic business challenges and reflect on their decisions, behaviors, and outcomes.

During this unit, trainees will:

- test the feasibility and profitability of their business ideas in small groups;
- make decisions under uncertainty and time pressure;
- confront setbacks and adapt strategies;
- reflect on both hard skills (planning, financial reasoning, execution) and soft skills (teamwork, initiative, resilience);
- analyze how experiential processes shape entrepreneurial thinking and behavior.

By the end of the unit, trainees will better understand entrepreneurship not only as a business concept, but as a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral process.

5.2 - THEORY BACKGROUND

This unit is grounded in experiential and constructivist learning theory. According to David Kolb (1984), learning occurs through a cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Entrepreneurship education is particularly suited to this model because opportunity recognition and venture creation require iterative action and reflection.

From a cognitive perspective, entrepreneurship involves decision-making under uncertainty. Saras Sarasvathy (2001) introduced Effectuation Theory, demonstrating that expert entrepreneurs do not primarily predict the future but instead act based on available means, form partnerships, and leverage contingencies. This contrasts with purely predictive, planning-based models and provides a theoretical basis for simulations and adaptive exercises.

Innovation-oriented exercises draw on Design Thinking (Brown, 2009), which emphasizes user empathy, rapid prototyping, and iterative testing. These principles align with contemporary entrepreneurial process models that view venture creation as experimental rather than linear.

Motivational dynamics are informed by Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), distinguishing between hygiene factors and intrinsic motivators such as achievement, responsibility, and growth. Experiential challenges activate intrinsic motivation by giving trainees ownership and accountability.

Additionally, research in entrepreneurial education highlights the importance of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) in shaping entrepreneurial intention and persistence. Hands-on challenges strengthen perceived behavioral control and confidence, key predictors of entrepreneurial action.

Simulations and structured reflection therefore function not merely as pedagogical tools but as mechanisms for developing entrepreneurial cognition, affect, and agency. Through guided reflection, trainees connect lived experience to theoretical constructs, transforming activity into learning.

Sources:

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.* W. H. Freeman.
- Brown, T. (2009). *Change by design: How design thinking creates new alternatives for business and society.* Harper Business.
- Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. B. (1959). *The motivation to work* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* Prentice Hall.
- Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001). Causation and effectuation: Toward a theoretical shift from economic inevitability to entrepreneurial contingency. *Academy of Management Review, 26*(2), 243–263. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2001.4378020

5.3 - EXERCISES & ASSIGNMENTS

All exercises in this unit relate to the Learning Outcome: *Participants will be able to facilitate experiential learning opportunities that allow students to take responsibility, present their ideas, and learn through doing.*

Please note: the indicated timeframes are general indications. So consider to adjust the activity according to your needs.

	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
1. Concrete Experience	**MAKING AN IDEA PROFITABLE** In the previous unit, your trainees developed a business idea using a specific tool. Have them work in the same groups they used for that exercise. To start, challenge your trainees by having them figure out how to make their business idea profitable entirely on their own, without relying on theories, models, or step-by-step guidance. This encourages creativity, experimentation, and real-world thinking. For this first step, the task is open-ended: each group should brainstorm on profitability and outline how their business idea could generate profit, exploring possibilities, risks, and practical approaches on their own. Once done, ask your trainees to describe their idea and findings of this activity by means of using the provided template in the workbook. Trainer: please instruct students with a brainstorm method which you know or use one referred to in the right column 'Additional information'. During the brainstorm, do not intervene at any time, just observe. By doing so, you facilitate concrete experience.	30 minutes • 5 minutes instructions • 20 minutes brainstorm session • 5 minutes filling out template	Materials: the workbook provides a template in which the trainees individually describe how their business idea could become profitable, including indicating easy and hard subjects. Alternative methods: instead of brainstorming, you can also use the following methods to determine how to make the business idea profitable: • Pre-Sell before you build (Eisenmann, T., Ries, E., & Dillard, S. (2012). Hypothesis-driven entrepreneurship: The Lean Startup. *Harvard Business School Working Paper No. 12-092.*) • Competitor reverse engineering (Chen, M.-J. (1996). Competitor analysis and interfirm rivalry: Toward a theoretical integration. *Academy of Management Review, 21*(1), 100–134. https://doi.org/10.2307/258631) • "Will you introduce me?" test (Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice* (5th ed.). Pearson.)

2. Reflective Observation	**REFLECTION: SOFT & HARD SKILLS** Next, guide your trainees into a structured reflection on the process they just experienced. The objective is to help them recognize what happened in their team; both in terms of business content and interpersonal dynamics. Ask each group to look back on how they approached making their business idea profitable. Have them reflect on two dimensions: • Hard skills. Consider the concrete outcomes: the quality of their business model description, the feasibility of their idea, the clarity of their conclusions, and what they see as the logical next step for their concept. • Soft skills. Have them assess how they functioned as a team: group cohesion, enthusiasm, proactive contribution, drive, communication, and how these affected their process and output. Once they have explored both sides, ask them to discuss the differences they observed between hard and soft skills, and to connect these insights to what they believe an entrepreneur must be capable of. The intention is to surface the understanding that entrepreneurial success requires more than analytical tools alone. Instruct your trainees to use the template in their workbook to formulate a tangible insight. Trainer: Your role is to question, not inform. Focus your questions on soft skills, related to the previous brainstorm session (step 1): • How did the group collaborate? • What energized them? • Where did momentum stall? By this, participants become aware of any gaps or missing ingredients. Avoid offering explanations; allow the insight to emerge from their own analysis.	30 minutes • 5 minutes instructions • 5 minutes reflect on hard skills • 5 minutes reflect on soft skills • 10 minutes reflect on differences	Reflection: please encourage your trainees to use Gibbs' reflection method for a thorough reflection on their experience: 1. Description | 2. Feelings | 3. Evaluation 4. Analysis | 5. Conclusion | 6. Action Plan More info on Gibbs and the 6 steps mentioned above: *https://reflection.ed.ac.uk/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle* Assignment for all trainees: look back and reflect on hard and soft skills. Materials: the workbook provides a template in which trainees individually mention items related to your observations and insights.

3. Abstract Conceptualization	**BEST PRACTICES** Entrepreneurial students need more than knowledge of business models. They must also develop soft skills such as handling stress, making decisions under pressure, managing risks, and responding to challenges. To coach students effectively, trainees need to understand these challenges themselves. By experiencing a realistic entrepreneurial situation, they gain insight into what students go through and can better support them. This unit uses experiential learning method such as a business pitch simulation, competitive challenges, or time-sensitive exercises to create an authentic entrepreneurial experience. Where possible, internships offer the strongest learning effect; when not feasible, simulation games provide a strong alternative. Existing programmes, such as those from JA Europe, offer proven frameworks for this type of learning. Use the provided PowerPoint to introduce different methods and discuss their pros and cons. Then explain the business pitch simulation used in this unit. Trainer: first use the provided PowerPoint to share general methods and tools followed by a detailed business instruction. Finally, ask trainees to use their workbook to describe what they want to focus on during their business pitch.	30 minutes • 15 minutes general theory • 10 minutes Shark Tank instructions • 5 minutes trainees work on plan	Trainer material: please refer to the PowerPoint on this part called 'Unit 5 - Experiential Learning Methods'. Other materials: the workbook provides a template where trainees describe learning items and create an action plan for the business pitch. Sources: below, you will find sources to help you understand theory more in depth. • Business pitch: McSweeney, Jordan J. & McSweeney, Kevin T. & Allison, Thomas H. & Anglin, Aaron H., 2025. "The entrepreneurial pitching process: A systematic review using topic modelling and future research agenda," Journal of Business Venturing, Elsevier, vol. 40(5). • Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Prentice Hall. • Gibbs, G. (1988). Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Oxford Polytechnic. • JA Europe programmes and affiliated national partners: *https://jaeurope.org/*

4. Active Experimentation	**EXPERIENCE ENTREPRENEURSHIP** Instruct your trainees to prepare a business pitch in which they present the profitability of their business idea. The pitch should take no longer than 2 minutes per group. Specifically mention that you will stop the pitch if it takes longer, just as it would be done in an formal business pitch setting. This stimulates tension, which real entrepreneurs also experience in their daily lives. All groups will watch each other's pitches. After each pitch, the trainer (or trainees) will ask questions, acting as investors. Tips to keep it motivating: • Focus on learning, creativity, and effort, not just winning. • A small prize is optional; if used, make it symbolic (e.g., "most creative idea" or "best teamwork"). • Give positive feedback to recognize everyone's contributions. After all pitches, reflect as a group on their experiences. A reflection form is available in the workbook. After filling in the form, start a group talk in which trainees share their insights. Focus on: • What worked well? • How did teams handle pressure or challenges? • What skills or strategies could be applied in real entrepreneurial situations? This keeps the activity fun, safe and motivating while simulating a real entrepreneurial experience. Trainer: mainly focus on the core subject of experiencing entrepreneurship; what did your trainees learn, what are key takeaways, how can they apply the insights from this unit and/or some of the best practice cases into their own lessons? This will finalize this unit.	90 minutes • 20 minutes prepare business pitches • 30-45 minutes pitches including questions from trainer *(duration depending on number of groups)* • 25-35 minutes reflect on pitches • 5 minutes wrapping up unit 5	Materials: the workbook provides a template in which the trainees can reflect on their pitches and describe their key takeaways.

UNIT 6 - GUIDING STUDENTS

In the previous unit you have given your trainees a sneak peek to what it is to be a real entrepreneur. They experienced making decisions on their own, however, without proper instructions and/or guidance. This final unit focusses on how to guide trainees on taking ownership of their own development instead of telling them what to do.

6.1 - OBJECTIVE

In this unit, your task as a trainer is to develop your trainees' ability to guide others effectively. You will focus on helping them understand the principles of learner-centered guidance, how to provide constructive feedback, and how to support peers in *taking ownership* of their own learning. During this unit, you will provide trainees:

- an insight in the theoretical foundations of guiding stages, eg. coaching;
- practical techniques for asking effective questions and encouraging reflection;
- means how to give clear, goal-oriented feedback;
- ways how to develop the ability to gradually release support;
- exercises where they apply coaching techniques in realistic scenarios;
- a moment to reflect on their own approach based on feedback.

By the end of this unit, your trainees will have more insight in the difference between lecturing and guiding/coaching. Moreover, they will be able to coach entrepreneur students and by this, letting them take ownership of their own development. Please make sure that your role as a trainer is to act as a coach. By that, your trainees will experience what this actually means and will be able to learn from you during the unit.

6.2 - THEORY BACKGROUND

Effective guidance and coaching is grounded in clear learning principles. Unlike teaching, which focuses on delivering knowledge, or mentoring, which shares experience, effective guidance is learner-centered and supports individuals in taking ownership of their development. Adults learn best through experience, reflection, and experimentation, the basis of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). A coach facilitates this by asking questions, encouraging reflection, and supporting learners as they apply new skills.

The Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) highlights that learners grow most when challenged just beyond their current level, with support that gradually fades. In entrepreneurship education, this need to adjust guidance to learners' evolving capability is central. The framework of Situational Guidance (Luimes, 2015) describes how teachers shift roles (from instructor to coach to facilitator) depending on a learner's stage.

Feedback is a core tool in coaching: it should be specific and linked to goals. Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988) helps trainees evaluate and refine their coaching approach through structured reflection.

Sources:

- Gibbs, G. (1988). Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Oxford Polytechnic.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Prentice Hall.
- Luimes, M.D. (2015). Situational Guidance. How a teacher should support today's student in the process of self-regulation.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Harvard University Press.

6.3 - EXERCISES & ASSIGNMENTS

All exercises in this unit relate to the Learning Outcome: *Participants will be able to use coaching techniques to support student learning and differentiate between coaching, mentoring, and teaching roles.*

Please note: the indicated timeframes are general indications. So consider to adjust the activity according to your needs.

	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
1. Concrete Experience	**PRACTISE COACHING** Divide your class into groups of 3 persons each and explain the exercise. Let the group member freely choose who takes which role: • Coachee: The employee/student with a problem related to work or study, seeking a solution. For example: difficulty focusing, dealing with limited budget, balance study/work with private life, finding customers, etc. • Coach: The lecturer/coach whose goal is to help the coachee find a solution by asking questions and guiding reflection. • Observer: Watches the conversation and takes notes on what helps the coachee and on coaching techniques used. Tip: the observer should be the trainee with the most coach-like-experience. Instructions for trainees: • The coach starts the talk by asking the coachee to explain the problem. • After that, the talk on finding a solution takes place. • The third person will just observe and take notes, but not intervene. • Each talk will take approximately 10 minutes, after which all persons swap roles. • Ask your trainees to use the template in the workbook to describe their findings from the coach talk. Trainer: you will not intervene in a coach session at any time, just observe.	30 minutes • 5 minutes instructions • 10 minutes practice talk round #1 • swap • 10 minutes practice talk round #2	Assignment for observer: determine who is in the driver's seat in finding a solution for the problem: the coach or coachee? The observer can find helpful indications in the workbook. Materials: the workbook provides a template with various level indicators which will be individually filled out by alle trainees.

2. Reflective Observation	**REFLECT ON PROCES** Keep the groups of 3 persons. Instructions for reflecting on first practice coach talk: • First, the observer shares the insights with help of the template. • Then, both the coach and coachee will react on the feedback. • All persons reflect on the effectiveness of the coach-session (see below) Trainer: interact in the reflection processes, ask questions on effectiveness and give small examples of improved coach-techniques. Divide your time throughout all groups as good as possible. After the first round of reflecting, share these thoughts with the class: • Coach: did you actively provide a solution to the problem or did the coachee came up with one during the talk? • Coachee: do you think that once you encounter a totally different problem, you will be able to tackle this without the help of your lecturer/coach, based on your experience in this talk? After the sharing, let all groups reflect on the second practice coach talk. However, emphasize taking the previous insights into consideration. • First, the observer shares the insights with help of the workbook. • Then, both the coach and coachee may react on the feedback. • All persons reflect on the effectiveness of the coach-session (refer to the template for criteria on effectiveness). Finally, ask all groups to share their most important insights with the class. Also let everybody take notes on what they learned / realized.	45 minutes • 15 minutes reflect on talk #1 • 5 minutes share thoughts • 15 minutes reflect on talk #2 • 10 minutes of insight	Reflection: please encourage your trainees to use John's reflection model for a thorough reflection on their experience: 1. Describing experience | 2. Reflection 3. Influencing factors | 4. Contextual questions | 5. Learning More info on John's model and the 5 steps mentioned above: *https://www.toolshero.com/personal-development/johns-model-of-reflection/* Assignment for all trainees: describe your most important insights while reflecting on the practice talks. Materials: the workbook provides a template in which the trainees individually mention items.

3. Abstract Conceptualization	**OBSERVE PROFESSIONAL COACHING** In this step, you will elaborate on professional guidance and practical coaching. The class will first learn from theory, after which you will actively do a coaching session with one of the trainees. Make sure your trainee(s) take ownership of the process. In the first part, please use the provided PowerPoint with which you can explain the different stages in the development of an adolescent. Each stage needs its specific guidance, therefore a lecturer has to be able to determine the students' stage and adapt its guidance to that. This framework is called Situational Guidance. With this framework, trainees will understand the various ways how to develop the ability to gradually release support. Once understanding the stages, you will talk about practical techniques for asking effective questions and encouraging reflection. After the theory, invite somebody from your class to do a coach session in front of everybody. As you now will act as the coach, explore the problem and start to coach the coachee on the problem (preferably an education-related problem). Try to create examples in coaching based on the types of guidance. Goal of the session is to put the coachee in the driver's seat: make sure not to provide a solution, but let the coachee discover the next step himself. Do this by only asking questions. *(if you feel uncomfortable coaching, please refer to examples of good coach questions on the right)* Once the coach session has ended, ask the group what they experienced and mention key take aways. All trainees have to create a small action plan regarding the development of their own coaching style by using the insights of the theory. They can use	45 minutes • 10 minutes theory • 25 minutes professional coach session • 10 minutes reflection	Trainer material: please refer to the PowerPoint on this part called 'Unit 6 - Situational Guidance'. Coach questions: try to use specific, but open formulations, encouraging pro-activeness from the coachee, such as: • "Can you tell me more about what is challenging you?" • "What options have you considered so far?" • "How would you like the situation to look ideally?" • "What resources or skills could help you move forward?" • "What is your next step after this conversation?" • "How does this solution fit with your goals or values?" Other materials: the workbook provides a template where trainees individually describe learning items and an action plan. Sources: below, you will find sources to help you understand theory more in depth. • Johns, C. (2022). *Becoming a reflective practitioner* (6th ed.). Wiley-Blackwell. • Graf, E.-M., Dionne, F., & Fleischhacker, M. (2025). *How coaches and clients do questioning in coaching, Research and Practice, 1–25*. • Luimes, M.D. (2015). Situational Guidance.

	this action plan to describe how they want to coach in the next step, but also as a take-away for the future.		

4. Active Experimentation	**APPLY PROFESSIONAL COACHING** Divide your class into new groups of 3 persons each and explain the exercise below. Emphasize that the coachee tries -not- to provide solutions, just coach. Let the group member freely choose who takes which role: • Coachee: The employee/student with a problem related to work or study, seeking a solution. For example: difficulty focusing, dealing with limited budget, balance study/work with private life, finding customers, etc. • Coach: The lecturer/coach whose goal is to help the coachee find a solution by asking questions and guiding reflection. • Observer: Watches the conversation and takes notes on what helps the coachee and on coaching techniques used. Instructions: • Emphasize that each trainee tries to use their new coaching-insights. • The coach starts the talk by asking the coachee to explain the problem. • After that, the talk on finding a solution takes place. • The third person will just observe and take notes, but not intervene. • Each talk will take approximately 10 minutes, after which all persons swap roles. • Ask your trainees to use the template in the workbook to describe their findings from the coach talk. Trainer: you will actively intervene in a coach session at any time in order to optimize the coaching session and improve the coaches' technique. Goal: the coachee should eventually take ownership of his/her process. Once every group member has practiced, take a minute to evaluate the process with the whole class. What are the biggest takeaways, anything to share? Give everybody a minute to check their previous action plan and make changes in their future action plan. This will finalize this unit.	60 minutes • 5 minutes instructions • 15 minutes practice talk round #1 • swap • 15 minutes practice talk round #2 • swap • 15 minutes practice talk round #3 • 10 minutes wrapping up unit 6	Other materials: the workbook provides a template in which the trainees individually mention items and an action plan.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The C-ENTRE training programme is built on the idea that entrepreneurship education in VET is most effective when educators combine structured learning design with a coaching-oriented approach. The six units of the programme – Empowering, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Goal Setting, Structuring, Experiencing, and Coaching – together form a coherent framework that supports educators in guiding learners from initial ideas to reflective entrepreneurial practice.

Throughout the training, participants are encouraged to move beyond traditional teacher-centred instruction and experiment with methods that activate students as creators, problem-solvers, and reflective learners. By creating psychologically safe learning environments, supporting experimentation, and facilitating structured reflection, educators can help students develop the confidence and competencies needed to explore entrepreneurial opportunities.

The training also highlights the importance of balancing creativity and structure in entrepreneurship education. While entrepreneurial thinking requires openness to experimentation and uncertainty, effective learning processes benefit from clear goals, iterative testing, and reflective evaluation. The tools and methods presented in the training aim to help educators manage this balance in their own teaching practice.

Finally, the programme emphasises that coaching in education is not about providing ready-made solutions. Instead, it focuses on supporting learners in asking better questions, analysing their experiences, and taking responsibility for their own learning and development. By applying these approaches, educators can create learning environments where students not only understand entrepreneurship but also experience it as a process of exploration, collaboration, and continuous learning.

The C-ENTRE project hopes that the ideas and methods presented in this training will inspire educators to further develop engaging, practice-oriented entrepreneurship education in VET, and to continue experimenting with coaching-based pedagogical approaches in their own contexts.

CREDITS AND COPYRIGHT

Project information

Project title: C-ENTRE – Coaching in Entrepreneurship Education

Programme: Erasmus+ Programme – Cooperation Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training (KA220-VET)

Project number: 2024-2-HU01-KA220-VET-000294403

Project partners:

M-Around Kft.
Hungary

Nuances
The Netherlands

Bragamob
Portugal

Project website: c-entre.eu

Copyright and licence

© 2026 C-ENTRE Project Consortium

This publication is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial–NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence.

You are free to share and redistribute the material in any medium or format under the following conditions:

- ✓ Attribution: Appropriate credit must be given to the C-ENTRE project and its partners.
- ✓ NonCommercial: The material may not be used for commercial purposes.
- ✓ NoDerivatives: If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you may not distribute the modified material.

The full licence text is available at:

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0