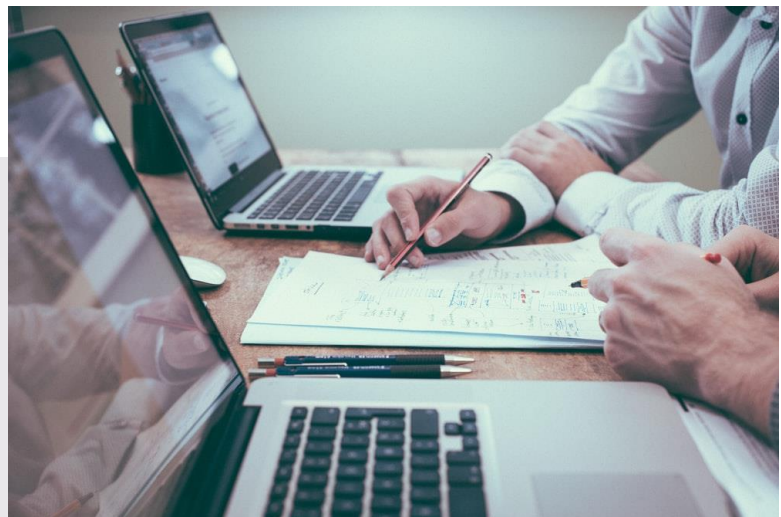SpLenDEd

Folkuniversitetet

Common framework for adult education providers to support engagement for learners with SpLDs

Common Assessment Framework for adult learning providers to assess the effectiveness of their education provision on learners with SpLDs (O2-T1)

Image source: unsplash

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Contents

Introduction

The Common Assessment Framework is a document developed by the Folkuniversitetet and Splended consortium as a tool for O2 of the Splended project. The document capitalises the findings of research performed in O1 and other relevant sources, and translates the findings into concrete indicators and respective questions for self-assessment for adult educational providers (AEPs) to measure the effectiveness of learning towards people with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs). It also includes suggestions targeting the adult education provision effectiveness improvement towards people with SpLDs.

The purpose of this tool is to support AEPs who are interested in providing best quality of education towards SpLD learners, providing best learning results for them and the main objective of education: creating good learning outcomes. Outcomes which support the individual student in their development, as well as outcomes which meet the needs of the educators and institutions. The framework is adapted in context of self- evaluation rather than evaluation by third bodies.

How was the Framework developed?

The Splended partnership has worked with research in each partner country (EL, SI, SE, CR, DE) analysing the most important criteria effecting adult education for learners with SpLDs. The research consisted of 2 major parts: field and desk research. The partners analysed relevant tools, articles, conducted interviews with professionals in the field. The process was strictly regulated by the research Methodology (O1-T1) and results were presented as Report on research and criteria (O1-T3). The analysis of research results from each partner country was summarized. The results showed the common patterns with regards to criteria of effectiveness of adult education for learners with SpLDs. Moreover, the analysis showed that there are 3 major components playing the key role in education effectiveness:

- Position of learners
- The point of view from educators
- The influence at the level of institution

Within each level we elaborated the relevant criteria, which were most consistent with common pattern discovered during the research. For each criteria relevant indicators were developed to ensure the consistency of the Framework. Further with regards to evaluation we finally developed the questions to assess the level of effectiveness of education provided by AEP with regards to SpLDs learners in each of the criteria.

Apart from supporting an integral approach on achieving these objectives the tool also incorporates the European quality standards, result of previous EU initiatives, experience of consortium. Thus, the tool will at the same time help AEPs to incorporate a uniform set of standards for good education for learners with SpLDs.

How can the Assessment Framework be of help?

•	Assess where provider stands – Assessment Framework is a user-friendly interactive tool that consists of short questions addressing specific attention areas within the educational institute regarding effectiveness of education in work with SpLDs learners. The results are presented in the form of diagram and relevant explanations with guidance are provided.

•	How to develop – After completion guidelines are provided to support attention on effective learning outcomes. The guidelines will provide general advices to enhance an institution wide commitment, policy and action plan on continuous improvement.

Who are beneficiaries:

-	Adults educational providers, VET providers
-	Institutions working with learners with SpLDs
-	Public services
-	Educational organisations
-	Social, educational research institutions
-	NGOs
-	Providers
-	Consultants in the area of employment, integration, social support, etc
-	Mental health providers, coaches, personal assistants to people with special needs

This assessment is valuable tool for AEP and other target organisations to consider. The assessment framework is a great opportunity to see where organisations stands in terms of effectiveness of education with regards to SpLds learners, what areas can be improved and how, what areas are the providers already good at and can event share as good practice with colleagues.

Self-assessment showed to be more important comparing to other existing schemes of evaluation, since the self-assessment can give the possibility for provider to reflect on the strong and weak aspects of own effectiveness of education. The self-assessment has also shown to be valuable in terms of sustainability and accessibility for the use for providers. It generates immediate result, can be used directly and provides a good picture of the condition of education with regards to learners with SpLDs.

Factors affecting adult education effectiveness on learners with SpLDs

Based on the results of O1, FU has summarized main findings and generated the key factors affecting education for learners with SpLDs.

	Criteria	Indicators
1.	Testing and early identification of SpLDs	Multidimensional assessment of learners needs Possibility for AEP to direct the learners to the testing/diagnostic center

		Capacity for AEP to test learners and find SpLDs within their institution
		Opportunity to adapt the approach of testing within the institution or center
2.	Recognising strengths and potential of SpLDs	Tools used to motivate learners
		Increasing self-confidence of learners
		Instruments for recognising and updating of existing skills
		Acknowledging learner's success and potential
		Accepting diversity
3.	Ensuring post-educational progress of the learners	Preventing drop out
		Tools to monitor post educational employability, inclusion in society, further learning (assessment questionnaires, follow up)
		Development of independence of learners and ability to cope with difficulties on their own after the education
4.	Awareness about institution and reaching out the learners	Level of awareness and connection with all relevant organisations working with learners
		Channels for promoting of AEP
		Reaching out disadvantaged groups, immigrants, vulnerable individuals
5.	Constant upskilling of adult educators	Mobility, EU projects for teachers
		Continuous education
6.	Communication and recognition of needs of learners	Ability to communicate with learners
		Prioritisation of learners
		Understanding the needs of learners
7.	Methods and forms of implementation of education for SpLDs learners	Inclusive learning environment
		Use of evidence-based learning methods for successful education
		Focus on the project- based learning/innovative learning
8.	Systematic quality assurance	Level of satisfaction of SpLDs learners with education
		Instruments for systematic QA exists and are used constantly
		Monitoring for innovativeness

9.	Provision of necessary adjustments	Accessibility for learning premises for learners with physical needs
		Affordability of the program for the learners
		Technical support
		Individual learners' approach which is adapted either in individual or group classes.
		Cooperation with target group organisations and support from local authorities
10.	Updated and adjusted curriculum	The open dialogues and flexibility in curriculum development
		Multidisciplinary curriculum including development of soft skills
		Adapted evaluation procedures (exams) for learners with SpLDs
		Curriculum can be adjusted according to possibilities and interests of the learners

Assessment procedure

1. Filling in the details about institution

Name of institution:	
City:	
Country:	

2. Answering the questions (approximately 30 questions) by choosing option from 1 to 5 (fully disagree to fully agree)

The questions can be answered by administrative, teaching stuff or directors of the institutions. Anyone interested in the level of quality of education provision to SpLDs learners in their institution can use this evaluation.

3. Receiving feedback regarding level of development of your institution in each criterion

As results of answering the set of questions, provider will receive the points with

Max level per category: 15

Recommended level: min 10

Description regarding each criterion with possible recommendations regarding criteria will be presented if the score if below level 10.

Provider will receive the Guide with recommendations (O2-T3) regarding the criteria

Maximum points per criteria: 15.

Stage	Points	Interpretation
1. Critical result	1-3	Pay attention to this criterion. It is recommended to pay attention to it and improve it with the highest priority.
2. Phase of development	4-9	Substantial development is recommended. You have some positive progress in this area, however there is still need for improvement. You can prioritise this criterion after improving criteria under category 1. Critical result
3. Satisfactory	10-12	Satisfactory, but even more development is possible once there are resources and the criteria from stages 1 and 2 are addressed.
4. Excellence	Over 12	Congratulations! You are proficient in this area, you are recommended to continue with your activities and even share your results as good/best practice with other institutions, if you would like to.

NB: *For further information read the guidance with regards to relevant criteria.*

Example of the scale result:
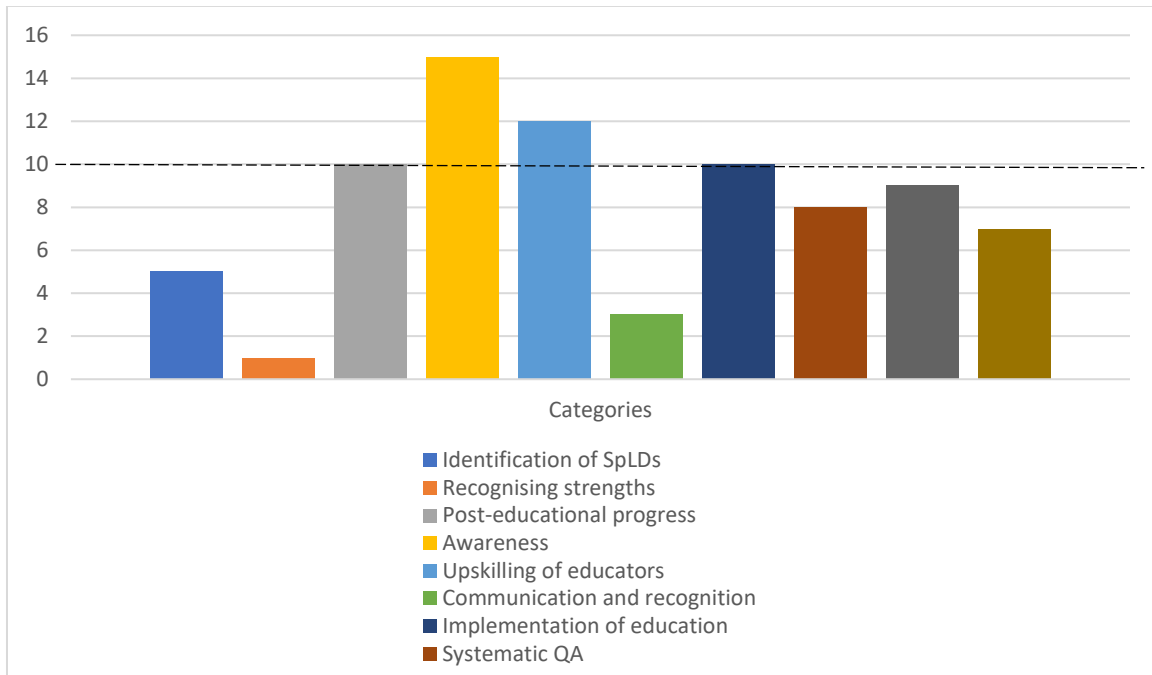
Assessment questions

(Testing and early identification of SpLDs)

We have opportunities to test/diagnose SpLD in learners within our institution or center

1 Fully disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither disagree nor agree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Fully agree

Our institution has procedures and possibilities to direct the learners to the testing/diagnostic center

1 Fully disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Neither disagree nor agree	4 Somewhat agree	5 Fully agree

To my knowledge all learners with SpLDs in our institution had opportunity to undergo or done testing and diagnosing of their special needs

1	2	3	4 Somewhat agree	5 Fully agree

Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree		

In our institution we constantly use methods to motivate learners with SpLDs and acknowledge their success (e.g. use certificates, diplomas, ceremonies, celebrations)

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

We recognise existing skills of SPLDs learners from previous education or soft skills (question forms, previous certifications)

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Accepting and celebrating diversity among learners is valuable for us

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

(Ensuring post-educational progress of the learners)

The drop out levels are low among our students with SpLDs

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

We have and use tools to monitor the progress of our learners once they finished our educational program (in terms of employability, inclusion in society, further learning), usch tools as follow up interviews, questionnaires, contact with learners, municipalities, employment offices, etc.

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Development of independence and learners' ability to cope with difficulties on their own are one of our focus areas in learners' education

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

(Awareness about institution and reaching out the learners)

We constantly deploy numerous channels for promoting of our educational services and try to make sure that we reach our all potential learners including SpLDs

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

We have special channels to reach out learners with SPLDs and vulnerable/disadvantaged groups in the society to make sure they are aware of our services

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Our institution has constant connection and cooperate with all relevant organisations working with SpLDs learners (public services, institutions, NGOs, municipality, etc)

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

(Constant upskilling of adult educators)

Teachers in our institution has access and use national and EU programs for exchange, mobility, EU projects (particularly we have experience within projects supporting disadvantaged learners, learners with special needs)

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Continuous education and upskilling among teachers, learning methods on working with learners with SpLDs is one of the priorities for our institution

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Our teachers possess sufficient set of skills and competencies to support learners with SpLDs and update those skills continuously

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Effective communication and recognition of needs of learners

Ability to communicate with learners in effective way is a key milestone for our institution and is systemically used

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Prioritisation of learners' needs is one of our focuses in education specifically when working with SpLDs learners

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Understanding and recognising the needs of learners is important part of educational process when it comes to SpLDs learners

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Methods and forms of implementation of education for SpLDs learners

In the classrooms of our institution we have inclusive learning environment for all students (meaning learners with SpLDs are part of natural educational process and are not excluded from the class group)

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

We constantly find out and use the modern evidence-based learning methods for effective education

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

We focus on the project- based learning/innovative learning instead of ineffective outdated techniques

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Systematic quality assurance

We systematically measure the quality and effectiveness of our educational services, as part of standard protocols for our institution

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Most of our SpLDs learners are satisfied with the level of education within our institution

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

We monitor various indicators in quality assurance including innovativeness, inclusivity, equality, etc.

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Provision of necessary adjustments

All of the learning premises within our institution are accessible for learners with specific physical needs

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

All of the methods and classes in our institution are accessible for learners with SpLDs (according to their possibilities and limitations). All the needed technical support is provided for learners (hearing devices, laptops, tools for dyslectic learners, etc)

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Our program is affordable for all the learners including those from vulnerable/disadvantaged groups of the society

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

During the development of curriculum for our courses we are open and flexible, we make sure that it is based on the market needs and learners needs. We also make sure that there is a scope for flexibility and adjustment according to possibilities of the learners with SPLDs.

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Our learning curriculums are multidisciplinary and include development of soft skills

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

We have and use adapted evaluation procedures (testing) for learners with SpLDs (according to their possibilities and limitations)

1	2	3	4	5
Fully disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Fully agree

Open questions

1. How do you reach learners with SPLDs and vulnerable/disadvantaged groups in the society and inform them about your services?

2. What set of skills and competencies do teachers need to have to support and educate learners with SpLDs?

3. How does your organization or center test/diagnose SpLD in learners and recognise existing skills of SPLDs learners?

4. What methods and forms of implementation of education for SpLDs learners are used in your organization/center?

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5. What methods, tools or system are used in your organization/center to motivate learners with SpLDs and acknowledge their success?

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6. How do you measure the quality and effectiveness of our educational services?

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7. How do you monitor the progress of your learners once they finished the educational program?

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Conclusion

The Common Assessment Framework suggests the model for evaluation of effectiveness of adult education provision. It is adapted for the self-evaluation process for adult education institutions. The Framework includes the elaborated factors affecting adult education effectiveness on learners with SpLDs. It is strongly connected to the results identified in O1. In order to transfer the criteria elaborated in O1, the indicators were formulated as measurable categorical, ordinal variables. To achieve it the indicators specified in O1, were turned into questions and fields of self-assessment for use of the AEPs. The framework provides a description of the assessment principles, type of organisations to be assessed under the framework, grading scale of assessment results, definitions of terms used in the framework, as well as summative schematic diagrams of the criteria, and verbal descriptions of the framework. Not less important, the framework is adaptable in the context of self- evaluation rather than evaluation by external actors. This gives more sustainability and explores higher potential for the use of the tool. It also helps providers to use and have the benefits of this product directly without the need to involve the third parties.

Expected results by the use of the framework to each beneficiary:

Direct results

- receiving information regarding education effectiveness for learners with SpLDs
- feedback regarding strong and weak aspects of the education provision
- experience of self-reflection wither regards to education effectiveness of own institution
- receiving guidance on how to improve certain criteria of effectiveness

Indirect results

- possibility of networking
- opportunity of growth of institution
- additional tool and achievement result to institutional portfolio