

ICLife: Tools for inclusion

How to make life on a campus for higher education more inclusive.

Tool: Inclusive Further Education for PID



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What's in a name?

The training 'Inclusive Further Education' of co-workers in logistics is part of the project Inclusive Secondary Education at the Thomas More (Belgium) University of Applied Sciences. The project offers continuing education for people with intellectual disabilities, in collaboration with a number of professional organisations for people with disabilities.

The training is well framed. Before the training starts, welcome days are organised so that the students can get to know each other as well as the campus. Also, students of Thomas Moore are ready to support the students with an intellectual disability.



Course participants are also invited to actively participate in life on campus, such as introduction days on campus, participation in activities with a buddy, participation in a sports activity, etc.

At the end of the training, the student receives a *learning certificate*. This is a certificate of experience demonstrating participation in the

training. In addition, you also make an individual portfolio during the training. The portfolio contains an overview of the student's talents, possibilities and learning points.

Target group

This course is intended for people who want to engage education at their own pace. Everyone with an intellectual disability 16 years and over is welcome.

It is expected and verified that the student with an intellectual disability is:

- strongly motivated to work as a co-worker in logistics;
- willing to learn and think about themselves;
- preferably living in the province where the training takes place.

What's needed?

The training consists of three welcoming days and 14 training days. Students also do an internship of at least 3.00 hours per week in a period of 15 weeks.

We can distinguish 4 phases in the training:

1. Information moment for interested PID and intake
2. Welcome days on campus
3. The training with internship
4. Presentation of the learning certificate and portfolio

1. ***Information moment for those interested and intake***

Necessary attention must be given to *the first information moment*. It focuses primarily on the students themselves, which means that it must be presented in a simple language, with sufficient interaction and also sufficient pauses and breaks in between. We think it is also important that the information moment is held at more or less the place where the training will take place. In this way, the student will get an accurate picture of the environment, mobility opportunities around and on campus, the atmosphere of the university, ...

Every potential student is supposed to bring someone (or several people) from his own network: this can be a parent or family member, a tutor, a teacher at school, etc. In this way, these people can think along with the prospective student about what is desirable and possible.

If the student wants to start the program, an intake interview with the course counsellor follows: during this interview, some questions are asked that look for motivation, experience and precise learning questions. *Experience in logistic support is not a requirement*. Some practical details are also questioned: e.g. need for support (ADL, reading or writing,...).

The following elements are the most important criteria to be considered in order to be able to start:

- Is the person motivated to work as a co-worker?
- Is the person willing to learn and think about themselves? In other words: is he or she able to self-reflect to some extent?
- The student's place of residence: the student should preferably live in the province where the training takes place.

2. Welcome days on campus

During the welcome days PID and their entourage will get to know the campus and life in and around the school. We look at the different services and functionalities on campus. We look at the course of an academic year and how the campus organises this. Life before and after class, the life in and around university housing and the social life of a student are also included in the welcome program. We discover how a

student lives together in Geel. We reflect on PID's own impressions and experiences during this first introduction.

At the end of the day, PID will reflect on their own impressions and experiences during this first meeting.

3. The training and internship

The training consists of three welcome days and 14 training days. PID will also do an internship of 3.00 hours per week in a period of 15 weeks. We deliberately cover both training and internship in one teaching block, because there is a strong interaction between the two: internship experiences are discussed during the lessons and skills are practiced in the lessons that are useful during the internship.

The starting point of the training is that it is based on the talents of the students. It is therefore not a course where a certain 'standard' has to be achieved. Every student is different and has different possibilities. Important in the training is that the students get a realistic picture of what they can and cannot do. They do try to learn knowledge and skills that are important in the work domain, but always adapted to the possibilities of each student. A lot of attention is also paid to communication, which will eventually strengthen the student's network. In this way, students learn to be more firmly in their shoes.

The structure of the lessons depends on the possibilities and needs of the students. That is why specialized instructors are necessary. They have to be professionals who can diagnose at the same time, build up teaching material and educate people with intellectual disabilities. It goes without saying that we will rely on existing and already developed teaching materials, such as those developed by educationalists such as Feuerstein, well-known authors in the field of Disability Studies, etc.

After four days of training, the internship will start. At least half a day of training per week will be done during 15 weeks, on a day of choice. It is not possible to do an internship on the day of the course (e.g. every Tuesday).

Each trainee chooses to do an internship in one working domain: administration, taking care of

people, gardening, welcoming activities, hosting, cooking, ... The training ensures that a suitable internship is found that matches the interests of the trainee. The trainee can also offer his or her own internship, for example a workplace where he or she already does voluntary work. Possible tasks will be looked at on a tailor made basis. The necessary skills are practiced together. The students preferably do an internship at a workplace near their home. This strengthens their network.

In addition to the trainee, each internship has a workplace supervisor and an internship supervisor. *The workplace supervisor* is a regular contact person who follows up the internship and supports PID on the work floor. The trainees are trained as co-workers. This means that he or she always works together with a colleague on the work floor, the workplace supervisor. In principle, the workplace supervisor is always present when the trainee is doing an internship.

The internship supervisor will visit the internship at least twice to discuss the trainee's talents, learning points and progress. The conversation always takes place with the trainee present, so that transparent communication can take place and the person with a disability feels respected. The internship is evaluated in between, and at the end.

During the training days, the trainees exchange internship experiences with each other. These are important learning moments for the trainees, in which self-reflection; listening and learning from each other; role-playing; practicing skills; ...etc. are given a prominent place.

4. Presentation of the learning certificate and portfolio

Each student will receive a learning certificate afterwards. In addition, each co-worker also receives an individual portfolio. You can read more about this under the heading 'Who gets what out of it?'

Budget

Organising such training costs a lot of money. After all, you need specialised teachers, while

the lessons have to be given in small groups (i.e. 8 students with intellectual disabilities) in order to keep it feasible for the various people with various intellectual disabilities.

At Thomas More the following is paid by the students:

- € 61 if you can present a certificate of disability
- € 320 without exemption of subscription fees

It goes without saying that it is not feasible from a budgetary point of view to organise training effectively with these limited resources. At Thomas More (Belgium) we work with project funds: these are temporary budgets that are allocated within the framework of a specific project. Unfortunately, project funds are temporary in nature. For those academic years during which we do not receive the necessary project funds, the training cannot be organized. We ask for a structural incorporation of such training, subsidized by the government.



Who gets what out of it?

People with an intellectual disability who took part in the training have a considerably better chance of finding work. Exceptionally, this can be paid work, but also voluntary work or work under the guidance of a job coach.

Each student receives a learning certificate afterwards. The learning certificate is not a diploma, but it is an official document issued by the university and is therefore proof that the training was completed. It is issued after attending a course and proves the presence of the person concerned. In the case of learning certificates, no assessment has taken place and it

has not been verified whether the competences dealt with were acquired.

In addition, each co-worker also receives an individual portfolio. The portfolio contains an overview of the individual talents and opportunities for further growth. This portfolio is an important document for finding adapted work: it clearly states what the competences are of a person (for example: this person can read and write; he can count but not count in the sense of dividing, subtracting, multiplying) and what the learning points are (for example: this person cannot concentrate for more than 10 minutes; this person cannot read non-stop for an hour). After completion of the training, we will consult with PID and their network (including the trainer, workplace supervisor or internship supervisor) to see whether working as a co-worker is a suitable work aim. We will look for possibilities to give the ex-student a structural place in the work field.