

e-Bulletin 1

<http://matureproject.eu/>

What is MATURE about?

MATURE, *Making Adult Teaching Useful, Relevant and Engaging*, is:

- A European Lifelong Learning Programme (Grundtvig) multi-lateral project.
- A partnership between personnel working on later life learning from 8 European countries, coordinated by the Institute of Lifelong Learning at the University of Leicester in the UK.
- A project that focuses on the training needs of adult educators to support their work with disadvantaged seniors.
- A partnership committed to participation, collaboration, active ageing and learning.

MATURE partners will create a training programme that offers theory, practical advice and information to underpin effective group learning. The project pays particular attention to learning for seniors disadvantaged by health, dependency, cultural or attitudinal factors. Units of continuing professional development will be produced. They will be accessible online for self study or used by trainers to develop courses of differing lengths.

The project team will investigate ways in which barriers to participation might be overcome. This will involve exploration of the potential of collaborative practice between education and other agencies concerned with the promotion of well-being in later life.

The MATURE team will create an advice booklet demonstrating the potential of learning for older adults and offering guidance about cooperative working practice.

More detailed information about the MATURE project and its products can be found on the website where there is also information on making and maintaining contact with the project team.

The Partnership

MATURE partners come from: Austria, Germany, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland and the UK. They represent a range of statutory, voluntary and NGO organisations.

Team members have all had extensive experience of national and European project work that focuses on older people and later life learning. Each brings to the partnership individual strengths in teacher training, work with seniors, project management, voluntary and community work, quality assurance and research.

The First Meeting in Leicester

The MATURE project began on October 1st 2012 but the first face-to-face meeting of partners took place between the 5th and 7th February 2013 at the University of Leicester, UK.

At this kick-off meeting the partnership reviewed the work achieved to date, planned next steps and took part in the first public event of MATURE, a seminar entitled 'Why does learning matter for older adults?'

The business meeting provided the team with opportunities to consolidate understanding of project responsibilities and milestones. Strong team work was in evidence during round table and small group discussion. Confidence in the partnership's ability to pull off a challenging set of outcomes was high. A positive atmosphere prevailed where the sense of purpose was matched by the good humour of the participants.

**The project MATURE has been funded with support from the European Commission.
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Partners debated outcomes of the project's research phase. A 32 page report including data and case study evidence from all team members was prepared prior to the meeting. (The final draft of this report will be available from the website in June 2013).

Using information from the report, partners began the complex task of creating the framework for the MATURE training programme.

The seminar 'Why does learning matter for older adults?' drew an audience of 65 with representation from a range of organisations. A significant number of seniors attended and took part in lively discussions about learning, participation and active ageing.

Speakers included Professor John Benyon from the Institute of Lifelong Learning at the University of Leicester (<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/lifelong-learning>), coordinator of the MATURE project; Jim Soulsby, facilitator of the ForAge EU network (<http://www.foragenetwork.eu/en/>) that works to spread the outcomes of work in later life learning across Europe; Melissa March, Chief Executive

Officer of Learning for the Fourth Age (<http://www.l4a.org.uk/>), Leicester, UK, a social enterprise that provides learning opportunities in care settings; Jane Watts, Programme Manager, National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (www.niace.org.uk); Diarmuid Moore, Assistant Director of the Workers Educational Association, Northern Ireland (<http://www.wea-ni.com/>) and member of the GATE (Generations Ageing together in Europe) EU Learning Partnership.

Evaluation provided evidence of an action packed and stimulating event that generated new ideas, new networking and a whole new approach to group yoga led by our MATURE German colleague.



The partnership has now dispersed to tackle its various tasks in preparation for our second meeting in Torun, Poland in July 2013. We are particularly pleased that this meeting will coincide with the 10th World Conference on Computers in Education and MATURE team members are already planning ways to make new contacts for the project at this prestigious event.

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