



Reality Check

New methods of school-work cooperation

MODULAR TRAINING CONCEPT



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A. Introduction

The **idea** of creating a training concept that is concise and of easy implementation stems from the realization that trainers, counsellors, but especially school teachers have the enthusiasm and willingness to learn and experiment with new educational methods but lack the time to do so. Indeed, the discovery and study of alternative educational methods requires dedicated time.

That is the fundamental premise on which this training offer was designed, in an attempt to provide educational material that is at the same time innovative, quick to consult and easy to implement for everyone.

The **aim** is to enable other actors in the fields of schools and the world of work, interest groups, NGOs, administrations, etc. to:

- Initiate and coordinate RealityChecks networks
- To be able to use the 12 proven and evaluated RealityChecks
- Develop and implement own RealityChecks.

The findings for the students' benefit acquired by the Reality Check consortium during the project implementation period are made available to everyone interested in developing and implementing alternative methods of career guidance.

The aim is to provide a training concept that meets a contemporary, high-quality standard: unusual learning settings, training methods, applied tools developed according to the target group. The training concept was developed accordingly from content, duration and learning objectives for the target groups, attractive and designed modularly to facilitate access to participation.

The main **target groups** of this training concept are teachers, pedagogues, trainers, career counsellors, NGO workers, and company tutors as well.

The aim is to enable participation at local, regional, national and European levels. The training is basically accessible to everyone. No specific previous knowledge is required, but having interest in the topic is relevant.

The document **structure** involves an introduction to the starting concept; the presentation of the Modular Training Concept, with a detailed explanation of the three modules it is composed of; three overview diagrams in the form of tables, to provide a visual and immediate idea of the organisation of the training in practice.

B. Reality Check – Modular Training Concept

The training concept covers the focus areas and all relevant findings from the work of the cooperation partnership "Reality Check – Try it out and discover your talent", so that the added value can be conveyed through regional work, development and offering "Reality Checks" for students and the actors in the school and working world.

The Handbook and Toolbox RealityCheck, two materials produced in the framework of the project, form the basis of this training concept. The [Handbook Reality Check](#) is a manual to create more awareness of the possibilities of cooperation between school and the world of work. We want to create a more positive attitude towards this topic among teachers as well as entrepreneurs. In the longer term, we believe this will help students make more reflective career choices. The digital [Toolbox Reality Check](#) is a collection of the 12 RealityChecks developed by the partnership, described in detail and accompanied by step-by-step instructions for implementation.

The Modular Training Concept is divided in three modules:

Module 1 - The Added Value of Networks between Schools and Companies

Module 2 - Reality Checks in Practice: from Understanding to Implementation

Module 3 - How to Create Your Own Reality Check

Each of them is described involving general information (title, duration, ideal number of participants, etc.), main objectives, and step-by-step activities implementation).

1 Module 1 – The Added Value of Networks between Schools and Companies

Title: The Added Value of Networks between Schools and Companies

Duration: Approx. 2 hours

Participants: 12 persons

Type: Interactive Workshop

Target Group: Decision-makers and management level from schools and the world of work as well as representatives from the Federation of Austrian Industries, Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Labour, employment agencies (AMS), municipalities, school authorities, NGOs, etc.

Focus: Local level; networks between schools and between companies

Aim of the Workshop

Learn, exchange, make your first and additional steps to create your network; get in contact with others; develop strategies to lead and maintain your network.

Workshop Structure

Part 1: Establishing Networks (approx. 55 minutes)

Step 1: Analyse the current situation

- List of relevant strategies, action plans, and initiatives connected to Reality Check
- Identify existing or new networks and initiatives
- Map upcoming regional developments

Step 2: Compose the members of the network

- Identify key stakeholders
- Define short-term contributions and long-term impact

Step 3: Define the role and function(s) of the network

- Possible roles: Dialogue, Consultation, Policy development, System development
- Main functions: Improving communication, cooperation, quality, regional development, internationalisation, identifying needs

Step 4: Set up timelines, milestones, responsibilities

- Define next steps for building the network

Step 5: Structure the Regional Network

- Decide on open vs. closed network model
- Clarify decision-making, working groups, meeting rhythm, and reporting

Part 2: Fostering and Maintenance of Networks (approx. 55 minutes)

Step 1: Define Clear Roles and Responsibilities

A strong and sustainable network needs clarity:

- Who is in charge of coordination, communication, and organization?
- What roles and tasks exist – and how binding are they?
- Are there rotating responsibilities or topic-specific leads?

Why this matters: Shared responsibility ensures that the network remains active and resilient – even when individuals change.

Step 2: Renew Commitment of Members Regularly

A network is not self-sustaining – it needs ongoing engagement:

- Use regular meetings or formats to check in: Who is still involved? Who wants to contribute?
- Create space for new impulses, participation opportunities, and formats
- Address resources openly – time, funding, support

Why this matters: Participation is based on perceived benefit – and must be actively shaped and renewed.

Step 3: Integrate Evaluation and Feedback

Reflection drives development:

- What works well in the network – what doesn't?
- Where do members see added value?
- Which offers or structures need to be adjusted?

Methods:

- Quick feedback rounds during meetings
- Annual review or "network check"
- Joint reflection on goals and progress

Why this matters: Sustainable networks are learning systems – they evolve with changing needs and contexts.

Workshop Closing (10 minutes)

- Summary of learnings
- Personal reflection: "What will be my next step?"
- Collection of key takeaways for all participants

Optional Materials:

- Handout: "Reality Check Network Building Blocks"
- Group worksheet: "Evaluate and Refresh Your Network"
- Presentation slides for both parts (can be provided on request)

2 Module 2 – Reality Checks in Practice: from Understanding to Implementation

Title: Reality Checks in Practice – From Understanding to Implementation

Duration: Approx. 5–6 hours

Participants: 12 persons

Type: Interactive Workshop

Target Group: Educators, counsellors, trainers and other professionals who support young people during the transition from school to work

Focus: Practical use of Reality Checks, examples from real settings, and ideas for adapting them to different work contexts

Aim of the Workshop

To explore the concept of Reality Checks in depth, understand how they can be used in practice, and reflect on how to apply them in your own professional setting. Participants will learn from real examples, try out methods themselves, and exchange ideas with colleagues.

Workshop Structure

Part 1: Understanding Reality Checks (approx. 90 minutes)

Step 1: Getting started – Who are you and what are your expectations?

Participants introduce themselves and talk about what they hope to gain from the workshop.

Method: Pair interviews and short plenary round

Why it matters: Helps create a positive learning environment and connects the content to participants' work

Step 2: The role of educators and counsellors in transitions

Group discussion on current challenges in supporting young people and how Reality Checks could help.

Method: Card-based exchange and clustering of ideas

Why it matters: Makes it easier to see where RCs can add value in your own context

Step 3: What are Reality Checks?

Short presentation with examples of different RCs and their goals. Digital overview of the RC toolbox.

Method: Presentation, Q&A, gallery walk (posters or digital input)

Why it matters: Builds a shared understanding of the key ideas behind Reality Checks

Part 2: Trying it out – Working with Reality Checks (approx. 3 hours)

Step 1: Example 1 – Simulation and group reflection

One RC is presented in detail (target group, structure, outcomes). Participants simulate selected elements of the RC.

Method: Input, hands-on activity, group reflection

Why it matters: Practical experience helps participants understand how RCs work and how young people might engage with them

Step 2: Example 2 – Group analysis and comparison

A second RC is explored in small groups. Teams analyse the context, purpose and activities. Short presentations follow.

Method: Group work, peer feedback

Why it matters: Shows how flexible RCs can be and what needs to be considered when adapting them

Part 3: Making it your own (approx. 60 minutes)

Step 1: Planning your own use of RCs

Participants fill in a “Practice Canvas” to plan how they could use a RC in their setting (target group, goals, resources, next steps).

Method: Individual work followed by pair exchange

Why it matters: Supports real-life transfer and makes the workshop relevant beyond the training room

Step 2: Closing and feedback

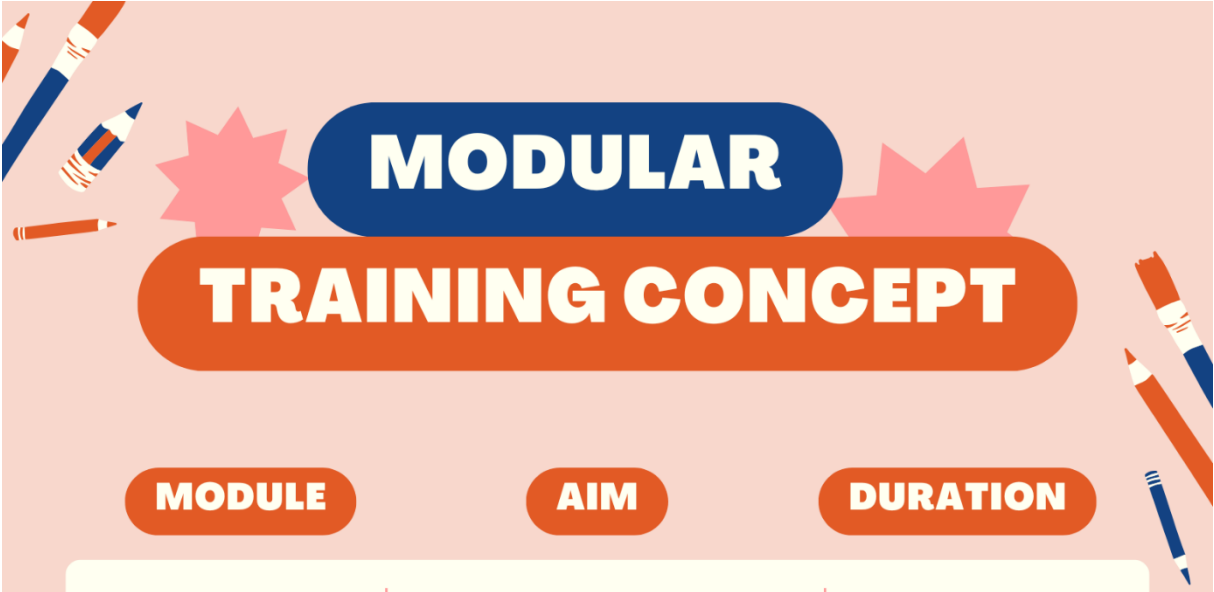
Participants share one takeaway or action point. Feedback is collected using sticky notes or an online tool.

Method: Lightning round and short evaluation

Why it matters: Helps everyone reflect and improves future training

Optional Materials

- Practice Canvas template
- Overview of 12 Reality Checks
- RC Implementation Checklist
- Presentation slides (available on request)



MODULAR TRAINING CONCEPT

MODULE	AIM	DURATION
The Added Value of Networks between Schools and Companies	Discover the steps to create your network; Get in contact with others; Develop strategies to lead and maintain your network	2 hours
Reality Checks in Practice: from Understanding to Implementation	Reality Checks: how to use them in practice, how to apply them in your professional setting. Learn from real examples, try out methods, and exchange ideas	5-6 hours
How to Create Your Own Reality Check	Help young people gain real-world work experience and make informed career decisions. Learn to plan, conduct, and evaluate a RealityCheck programme	2-3 hours



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3**Module 3 – How to Create Your Own Reality Check**

Title: How to Create Your Own Reality Check

Duration: Approx. 2-3 hours

Participants: 12 persons

Type: Interactive Workshop

Target Group: Educators, counsellors, trainers and other professionals who support young people during the transition from school to work

Focus: Practical use of Reality Checks, examples from real settings, and ideas for adapting them to different work contexts

Aim of the Workshop

This course will guide participants through the process of creating and implementing a "Reality Check" program. The program helps young people gain real-world work experience and make informed career decisions. Through structured steps, participants will learn to plan, conduct, and evaluate their own Reality Check programme.

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Define their target group and set SMART goals for the Reality Check program.
2. Analyze labor market trends and align career opportunities with the interests of the target group.
3. Build a regional network of partners to support the Reality Check.
4. Integrate career counseling and skills clarification into the program.
5. Draw inspiration from best practice examples and adapt them to their context.
6. Structure the Reality Check process with clear phases (orientation, practice, reflection).
7. Collect and use feedback to evaluate and improve the program.
8. Ensure the long-term impact of the Reality Check through ongoing evaluation and transfer.

Workshop Structure

Part 1: Preparatory work: getting started (approx. 75 minutes)

Step 1: Introduction to Reality Check (15 minutes)

Objective: Introduce participants to the concept of a Reality Check and the overall course structure.

Key Content:

- Briefly introduce yourself and the purpose of the course.
- Define the concept of a "Reality Check" in career development.

Activities:

- Provide an overview of the course and its objectives.
- Why Reality Checks Matter
- Discuss the importance of giving young people insights into the real world of work.

Step 2: Defining Target Group & Setting SMART Goals (30 minutes)

Objective: Help participants define their target group and formulate SMART goals for the Reality Check.

Key Content:

- Explain the benefits of using the SMART method for goal-setting in career planning.
- Discuss the role of practical experiences like internships, workshops, and career counseling in guiding young people's decisions.

Activities:

- Defining Your Target Group
- Participants will brainstorm potential target groups (e.g., students, trainees, young adults).
- Discuss how to identify the specific needs and aspirations of the target group.
- Setting SMART Goals
 - Specific: What exactly should participants learn?
 - Measurable: How will success be tracked?
 - Achievable: Are the goals realistic given the available resources?
 - Relevant: Does the goal align with the target group's needs?
 - Time-bound: What is the timeframe for achieving the goals?
- Activity: Group exercise to create a SMART goal for their Reality Check.

Step 3: Needs Analysis and Identifying Career Opportunities (30 minutes)

Objective: Guide participants through labor market analysis to match opportunities with their target group's interests.

Key Content:

Labor Market Needs - discuss the importance of analyzing local, regional, and national labor market trends.

Key areas to focus on:

- Careers with long-term prospects
- Sectors facing shortages of young talent
- Regional job availability.

Activities:

- Group discussion or short research task to identify industries with future prospects.
- Aligning with Target Group Interests
- How to assess the interests and aspirations of the young people in your target group.
- How to match these interests with market needs.
- Participants draft a list of careers that align with the needs of their target group.

Part 2: Structuring a Reality Check (approx. 50 minutes)

Step 4: Integrating Career Counseling & Skills Clarification (20 minutes)

Objective: Help participants understand how to integrate career counseling and skills clarification into the Reality Check.

Key Content:

- Career Counseling Overview
- How to integrate career counseling into the Reality Check process.

Activities:

- Discuss the role of career counselors in guiding young people toward the right career.
- The importance of aptitude tests, skills assessment, and strength identification.
- Integrating Counseling into Your Reality Check (10 mins)
- Activity: Participants plan how they will include career counseling in their Reality Check framework.
- Activity: Develop a feedback survey or discussion template.

Step 5: Realization, Reflection, and Feedback (30 minutes)

- **Objective:** Teach participants how to structure their Reality Check into phases: orientation, practical experience, and reflection.
- **Key Content:**
- Discuss the three phases of a Reality Check:
- Orientation Phase: Introductions, tests, and preparation.
- Practical Experience: Internship, vocational school days, etc.
- Reflection Phase: Group discussions and feedback.
- Collecting Feedback

- The importance of gathering feedback to measure success and identify areas for improvement.

Activities:

- Create a structure of a Reality Check
- Develop a feedback survey or discussion template

Part 3: Finalization (approx. 50 minutes)

Step 6: Evaluation, Transfer & Implementation (20 minutes)

Objective: Ensure participants understand how to evaluate their Reality Check and integrate it

Key Content:

- Evaluating and Improving the Reality Check
- How to measure success using surveys, group feedback, and self-reflection.
- Ensuring Long-Term Impact
- How to make the Reality Check an ongoing part of your educational work.

Activities:

- Participants create a plan for ongoing implementation and sharing results.
- Group discussion on how to incorporate feedback for improvement.
- Tips for documenting and sharing the results of your Reality Check

Step 7: Ensuring Long-Term Impact & Transfer (20 minutes)

- **Objective:** Help participants ensure their Reality Check becomes a sustainable and integral part of their educational work.
- **Key Content:**
 - How to document processes and share findings with colleagues or stakeholders.
 - Strategies for ensuring the Reality Check is repeated annually or integrated into existing programs.
 - The importance of transferring knowledge to create long-term impact.

Activities:

- **Group Exercise:** Participants create a plan for ensuring their Reality Check program is sustainable and impactful.
- **Discussion:** Share ideas for integrating feedback and improving processes over time.

Step 8: Wrap-Up and Q&A (10 minutes)

Objective: Conclude the course, answer any outstanding questions, and outline next steps.

Key Content:

- Recap the key concepts covered in the module.
- Answer questions and clarify doubts.
- Provide resources for further learning.

Activities:

- Final Reflections: Participants share one key takeaway from the session.
- Q&A: Open the floor for questions and provide further resources.

Assessment:

Participants will complete several activities throughout the module, including:

1. Developing SMART goals for a Reality Check program.
2. Conducting a needs analysis and matching career opportunities to their target group.
3. Creating a feedback survey and plan for sustainability.

Course Completion:

Upon completion, participants will have a well-rounded understanding of how to plan, implement, and evaluate a Reality Check program, ensuring they are equipped to help young people make informed career decisions.

Optional materials

- Reality Check Checklist (for participants to reference)
- SMART Goal Templates (for target setting)
- Feedback Survey Template (for collecting feedback)
- Examples of Best Practices (links to real-world examples)

C. Training Overview

Modular Training Concept (M1) – The Added Value of Networks between Schools and Companies						
	Duration (min)	Topic	Learning goals	Content	Method	Material
Part1	15	The State Of The Art	Analyse the current situation (in the field of operation)	List of relevant strategies, existing networks, initiatives connected to Reality Check	Doing a Network Building Simulation; Guided brainstorming	Slides, Analogue or digital board for shared notes
				Map upcoming regional developments		
	10	Network Members	Compose the members of the network	Identify key stakeholders	Input + Group discussion	Sticky notes (analogue or digital)
				Define short-term contributions and long-term impact		
	10	Network functions	Define the role and function(s) of the network	Possible roles: Dialogue, Consultation, Policy development, System development	Reflection; Discussion	Analogue or digital board for shared notes
				Main functions: Improving communication, cooperation, quality, internationalisation, identifying needs		
	10	Work Timeline	Set up timelines, milestones, responsibilities	Define next steps for building the network	Discussion	Visual timeline/calendar
	10	Network Structure	Structure the Regional Network	Decide on open vs. closed network model	Reflection; Discussion	Analogue or digital board for shared notes
				Clarify decision-making, working groups, meeting rhythm, and reporting		

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Part2	15	Roles & Responsibilities	Define Clear Roles and Responsibilities between Members	Who is in charge of coordination, communication, and organization?	Input + Group discussion	Sticky notes (analogue or digital)
				What roles and tasks exist – and how binding are they?		
				Are there rotating responsibilities or topic-specific leads?		
	15	Active Participation	Renew Commitment of Members Regularly	Use regular meetings or formats to check in: Who is still involved? Who wants to contribute?	Methods discussion	Visual timeline/calendar
				Create space for new impulses, participation opportunities, and formats		
				Address resources openly – time, funding, support		
	15	Evaluation & Improvement	Integrate Regular Evaluation and Feedback	What works well in the network – what doesn't?	Methods discussion	Visual timeline/calendar
				Where do members see added value?		
	10	Workshop Closing	Sustainable networks are learning systems – they evolve with changing needs and contexts.	Summary of learnings	Final discussion in plenary	Analogue or digital board for notes sharing in plenary
				Personal reflection: "What will be my next step?"		
				Collection of key takeaways for all participants		
Subtotal in minutes	110					



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Modular Training Concept (M2) – Reality Checks in Practice: from Understanding to Implementation						
	Duration (min)	Topic	Learning goals	Content	Method	Material
Part1	30	Introduction: participants	Participants reflect on their expectations to Reality Check; getting to know each other; Pre-assessment	Who are you?	Interviews, small group sharing	Flipchart, markers, name tags
				What do you expect of Reality Check?		
	30	Discussion: Role of pedagogues / career guides	Understanding the challenges pedagogical staff face in school-to-work transitions; identifying where Reality Checks can be supportive	Challenges in accompanying young people; Role of Reality Checks	Guided discussion, card-based exchange	
	30	Introduction: Reality Checks	Base infos	What is a Reality Check?	Presentation; Plenary discussion, Q&A; digital input	Slides, handout
			Common understanding of RC	Purpose/Why		
				What's new? / What's different?		
				How to engage the students better		
	10		Getting an impression of all existing Reality Checks and on different approaches/applications	Short Overview on all 12 Reality Checks		website
Part2	90	Reality Check: Example 1	Understanding of the context of the Reality Check (e.g. different learning outcomes)	Short description	Input + discussion	
				Contextualisation (age group, duration, kind of activity, learning outcome)	Group work	



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			How to implement the Reality Check	Step-by-step guide	Input + discussion	
			Making own experiences; getting engaged in using Reality Checks; deepen the understanding of how Reality Checks working	Simulation of the Reality Check	Hands on; learning by doing	
			"Polishing": what to do and what to avoid	Dos & DON'Ts	Reflection, discussion	
	90	Reality Check: Example 2	Deepen understanding	Short description	Input + discussion	
				Contextualisation (age group, duration, kind of activity, learning outcome)	Group work	
				Step-by-step guide	Input + discussion	
				Simulation of the Reality Check		
				Dos & DON'Ts		
	30	Transfer & Implementation	Participants apply insights to their own practice	Develop ideas for implementation, define application areas	Individual work + peer exchange in tandems	Reflection sheet, practice canvas*
	15	Final reflection	Review, open feedback, next steps	Reflection, personal outlook, evaluation	Lightning round, digital feedback tool	Sticky notes, flipchart
Subtotal in minutes	325					



Modular Training Concept (M3) – How to Create Your Own Reality Check						
Time	Duration (min)	Topic	Learning goals	Content	Method	Material
Part1	15	Welcome & Introduction	Introduce the concept of a Reality Check and outline the course structure.	Briefly introduce yourself and the purpose of the course.	Provide an overview of the course and its objectives.	Flipchart, markers, name tags
	30	Defining Your Target Group & Setting SMART Goals	Help participants define their target group and formulate SMART goals for the Reality Check.	Discuss the role of practical experiences like internships, workshops, and career counseling in guiding young people's decisions.	Define your Target Group (10min) Brainstorm potential target groups (e.g., students, trainees, young adults). Discuss how to identify specific needs and aspirations of the target group.	Flipchart, markers, name tags Slides, handout Website

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				Explain the benefits of using the SMART method for goal setting in career planning.	Setting SMART Goals for your Reality Check (20min) Specific: What exactly should participants learn? Measurable: How will success be tracked? Achievable: Are the goals realistic given the available resources? Relevant: Does the goal align with the target group's needs? Time-bound: What is the timeframe for achieving the goals?	
	30	Needs Analysis and Identifying Career Opportunities	Guide participants through the process of analyzing labor market trends and matching	Labor Market Needs Discuss the importance of analyzing local, regional, and national labor market trends.	Activity: Group discussion or short research task to identify industries with future prospects.	Flipchart, markers, name tags Slides, handout



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			opportunities with their target group's interests.	Key areas to focus on: -Careers with long-term prospects -Sectors facing shortages of young talent -Regional job availability	Aligning with Target Group Interests How to assess the Interests and aspirations of the young people in your Target group. How to match these Interests with market needs. Activity: Participants draft a list of careers that align with the needs of their Target group.	Website
Part2	30	Integrating Career Counseling and Skills Clarification	Help participants understand how to incorporate career counseling and skills clarification into the Reality Check.	Career Counseling Overview	Discuss the role of career counselors in guiding young people toward the right career. The importance of aptitude tests, skills assessment, and strength identification.	Flipchart, markers, name tags Slides, handout
				How to integrate career counseling into the Reality Check process.	Activity: Participants plan how they will include career counseling in their Reality Check framework.	Website



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	30	Realization, Reflection, and Feedback	Teach participants how to structure the Reality Check and gather feedback.	Structure of a Reality Check (10min) Discuss the three phases of a Reality Check: -Orientation Phase: Introductions, tests, and preparation. -Practical Experience: Internship, vocational school days, etc. -Reflection Phase: Group discussions and feedback. Collecting Feedback (10min) The importance of gathering feedback to measure success and identify areas for improvement.	Activity: Develop a feedback survey or discussion template.	Flipchart, markers, name tags Slides, handout Website Reality Check check list
Part3	10	Evaluation, Transfer & Implementation	Objective: Ensure participants understand how to evaluate their Reality Check and integrate it into their work long-term.	Evaluating and Improving the Reality Check (10min) How to measure success using surveys, group feedback, and self-reflection. Ensuring Long-Term Impact (10min) How to make the Reality Check an ongoing part of your educational work.	Activity: Participants create a plan for ongoing implementation and sharing results. Activity: Group discussion on how to incorporate feedback for improvement. Tips for documenting and sharing the results of your Reality Check.	Flipchart, markers, name tags Slides, handout Website



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	10	Wrap-Up and Q&A	Conclude the course, answer any outstanding questions, and outline next steps.	Recap the key concepts covered in the module.	Final Reflections: Participants share one key takeaway from the session.	
				Answer questions and clarify doubts. Provide resources for further learning.	Q&A: Open the floor for questions and provide further resources.	
Subtotal in minutes	155					

D. Annexes

For additional and training support materials, please consult the annexes, in separate files, attached to this document.

