



Best practice 1

Title of good practice	Multiple sources: learning activities on cognitive flexibility. Case of Latvia
Keywords (meta tag)	Cognitive Flexibility
Provided by	SSE Riga
Language	English
Best practices	<p>The topic and the concept of cognitive flexibility are rather new and unexplored in case of Latvia. Extensive search in literature and various sources led to a conclusion that such topic is only emerging and therefore there is not enough information or other substance that would constitute a good case for analysis. However there are multiple initiatives conducted in order to develop the understanding of the concept and facilitate more extensive teaching and development of the cognitive flexibility as a part of social skills toolbox that would be necessary to improve the employability.</p> <p><i>Cognitive flexibility origins and development in Latvia</i></p> <p>The definition of cognitive flexibility is quite broad and there is no consensus reached so far. Usually Cognitive Flexibility (CF) is defined as ability to switch between the two concepts or work simultaneously on multiple concepts or topics. Sometimes CF is simply described as shifting: between the concepts, tasks or strategies. Simplified definition opens some more gateways where development of some aspects related to cognitive flexibility can be spotted. In Latvia primarily this is the area of pedagogics and education for kids. The most comprehensive material in the field is developed by the University of Latvia: A handbook in psychology for young teachers ¹. The handbook is developed to support young teachers and improve their understanding of cognitive processes for kids. That includes also the ability to work with multiple tasks or switch easily between the tasks. So even if not explicitly stated it can be attributed to CF. Cognitive psychology and to some extent also flexibility to switch between tasks are mainly focused on the kids from age 0 to 18. A good example on this is the informative material prepared by State Education Content Centre². The material mainly analyses the different development stages for kids but there are also some useful tools provided for the assessment of cognitive capabilities. Those tools can be used for all ages e.g. Woodcock Johnson cognitive test can be used for people from 2 to 90 years of age but in Latvia it is primarily used for kids and younger generation. This allows us to conclude that there exists a stereotype that after the secondary school there is no need to pay attention to the cognitive processes and flexibility.</p> <p>This does not mean that the cognitive psychology completely disappears from the educational agenda. It is still there but only to some limited extent. This covers primarily education of teachers and psychologists. The subject was not identified in some other educational programs e.g. management or human resource development</p> <p><i>Cognitive flexibility the identified initiatives</i></p>



The extensive search for initiatives that can be attributed to the cognitive flexibility gave a very limited to none results. One of the human resource management consulting companies Organization Development Academy (ODA) has developed a seminar material³: Self development, experience exchange seminar for State Chancellery of Latvia. One of the topics identified on the seminar agenda was cognitive flexibility. However, it was not possible to identify if the course really took place and if yes what was the target group.

Conclusions and ways forward

The above provided argumentation clearly indicates lack of sufficient focus on cognitive flexibility for students at the university level or managers. Currently it is difficult to explain why the CF is primarily focused on kids but completely forgotten at the later stages of life. One possible explanation could be that CF is very much in focus during the secondary education assuming that study skills developed during that stage are sufficient for the whole life.

International evidence clearly shows: that is not the case and cognitive flexibility can be improved during the life or professional career. Thus it can be suggested that for Latvia some decisions should be made and actions taken to reintroduce the focus of CF at the later stages e.g. university studies. Next step in turn would be to develop appropriate pedagogical materials to facilitate development of CF depending on the area of studies, area of application etc.

References	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. http://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/bitstream/handle/7/56412/svence_guna-psiologija_jaunajam_skolotajam-book.pdf?sequence=12. https://registri.visc.gov.lv/specizglitiba/dokumenti/metmat/inf_mat_vecakiem.pdf3. https://www.mk.gov.lv/lv/media/308/download
Type of material	BEST PRACTICES