

## ➤➤ **Principle 1:** *Connection of the ETS methodology to the lifelong learning approach*

*Do you know exactly what your educational objectives are?  
What is the social change you want to aim at?*

**The first basic principle of aETS**, in order to deliver true aETS activities, refers to the importance of full understanding of the ETS methodology in a context of adult education and relating it to your own experience as an educational practitioner in lifelong learning or non-formal education. It means that you will be able to reflect on the benefits from your own perspective in either a sport for all or lifelong learning setting. The background of this educational approach will make you understand what opportunities you might have overlooked in your own work until now, making hidden values visible and working with them more consciously than before. That will also enable you to adapt the exercises as much as needed for your own target groups of learners and the specific context you work in. This manual is therefore not just a collection of tried and tested exercises that anybody can deliver in the way they were meant to be delivered. The true impact and effect that aETS exercises can offer will only evolve to their full potential if you connect them to an overall aim of desired social change and a set of realistic learning objectives within the context of adult education.

## ➤➤ **Principle 2:** *Debriefing as the core element of the aETS practice*

That leads us to **the second basic principle** we outline in this manual, which is strongly connected to the most important element of aETS: the debriefing part of the learning process linked to the KOLB's circle explained previously.

Why do we think this is the most important part? – Because it gives adult learners not only a chance to reflect on their own behavior, but also to reflect on the whole situation and connect it to their own realities, their everyday lives and to society itself. This depends on what topic you aim to address with the exercise and how far you go into the reflection process itself.

*How do you facilitate the debriefing part of an exercise successfully?*

An important element is to prepare the questions thoughtfully and to discuss them if possible with other educational practitioners or reflect on them in advance. This will ensure a discussion by asking the right questions. The main educational objectives help in that process but it is important to match them with the level and experience of the target group and the setting in general. Furthermore, the educator still should be flexible enough to react to the given situation in the reflective practice itself.

The debriefing part is not only about asking questions, but also about moderating/leading the discussion and giving a clear structure to it. It always helps to tell to the learners what they can expect of this part of the exercise. If they are totally new to debriefing or evaluation, they should be introduced to it properly. The adult educational practitioner have to tell them what to expect and what role they play in it.

First of all and the most important one is giving and receiving feedback. Learners contribute to the discussion by observing what they saw, what they felt and what they conclude from these experiences. You might add observations during or at the end, but the biggest part should come from the adult learners themselves. This determines the actual degree of active participation and should not be blocked by the educational practitioner giving too many observations or conclusions. It is absolutely important to stick to the rules of a constructive feedback to create a positive and appreciative atmosphere within the group. It comes with experience to see when it is needed to be a strong and/or strict discussion leader and when it is more helpful to step back and let the flow of the discussion take over.

Moderation skills in general help to control the situation and the atmosphere within the group. Summing up arguments or observations will support the learners to focus their attention back on the “red thread” of a discussion. Putting down key words or making results visible will support everyone to follow the discussion and to be able to participate as well at any point, even if learners do not pay attention the whole time. The educational practitioner can also interpret some statements, not with the intention to manipulate the learners, but only in a way to open up a discussion in the direction which needs to be pursued. To ensure the understanding within the whole group the facilitator can repeat statements with other words and make sure everyone gets the intended meaning. Repeating is also really helpful when some participants have difficulties to follow and they do not dare to ask for themselves. All these tools help to give a general structure to the discussion, setting it as open and transparent for the learners which actually turns it into a learning experience.

Another tool that helps to trigger an interesting discussion is the role of “devil’s advocate” by provoking arguments with a strong or radical opinion. It is a tool which should be applied with caution, because it can lead to heated quarrels and turn into an experience some learners won’t appreciate as a learning activity.

If it happens that an argument is not well understood by the educator, then it is needed to clarify it in order to lead the discussion further, but also to give participants the example treating a situation where mutual understanding is looked for.

The right attitude is not to block, but to really understand it. It will show to learners how they can discuss successfully with each other as well. It is not enough to establish a common understanding for everyone; the educator needs to truly accept all opinions and to be open for discussion. The role of the educator does not include to agree with all opinions, but should be able to truly “hear” them. This might be really hard if the opinion is controversial to the educators’ own values or attitudes.

If the methodology is used in a team of educators it is necessary to talk about the style of leading the discussion in advance. This way interference between colleagues could be avoided. It is absolutely important to make sure all team members understand each other during the debriefing process as well, because it might cause irritation within the group if educators do lead the process into different directions.

The reflection is the moment where learning CAN take place, because it is where the learners understand that even if the situation may seem “artificial” it still shows us our own and others’ attitudes, behaviours and perceptions that we can find in “real” situations as well and in daily life. To make these simple connections understood by everyone while experiencing them will help learners change their perception or at least start to reassess them on specific topics in their everyday lives, e.g. discrimination, conflict resolution. It might trigger learners to challenge societal structures and make them see what they can change by being active citizens.

aETS’s learning effect could be also stronger than an ordinary lifelong learning session since the situation is experienced by learners in both their bodies and minds, and therefore offers a setting where different learning styles are employed. Keeping in mind that both sports and adult education use different learning styles, it is beneficial to see how the combination of the two can increase the learning effect and make it valuable to more learners by combining several learning styles at once.

Learners in adult education settings are highly responsive to the visual, aural and verbal style and in sport are responsive to the physical, social and verbal style. Matching them increases the number of learners who achieve a true learning experience according to their own preferred style and rhythm<sup>10</sup>.

Then there is the side of debriefing that is the educators’ own experience. If educators are able to challenge their own exercises and develop them further they will be able to understand how the exercises, presented in this Manual can be delivered to their highest potential. The reflection process within aETS should always apply to the educational practitioner so to enable him/her to reflect on the whole impact of the exercise, on the learners’ reactions and the process itself. This includes all parts: preparation, announcements, logistics, moderating the discussions and the debriefing part, giving and receiving feedback and co-working with team members. That enables the practitioner to be open for the possible challenges during an aETS session which is led.

## ➤➤ **Principle 3:** *The “missing link” between sports and adult education*

*How can I best use the resources of both sport and lifelong learning?*

**The third basic principle** is closely connected to the previous ones. We believe that aETS gives an advantage to both types of practitioners, within the sport for all context and those in adult and non-formal education. There is a match of two sets of values that add up to a new dimension of learning possibilities. On the one hand the implicit values of sport (e.g. fairplay, team work and responsibility); on the other hand the implicit values related to lifelong learning (e.g. participation, taking initiative and inclusion). We will elaborate the implicit values of sports in detail, because it will show how the match of two sets generate new opportunities to both sport trainers/coaches and adult and non-formal education practitioners.

We believe that the match of the two sets of values not only merges both, but creates a new way of individual learning opportunities that exceeds the two separate ones. aETS creates a new dimension of developing social skills because it combines the learning experience with a conscious personal reflection process.

