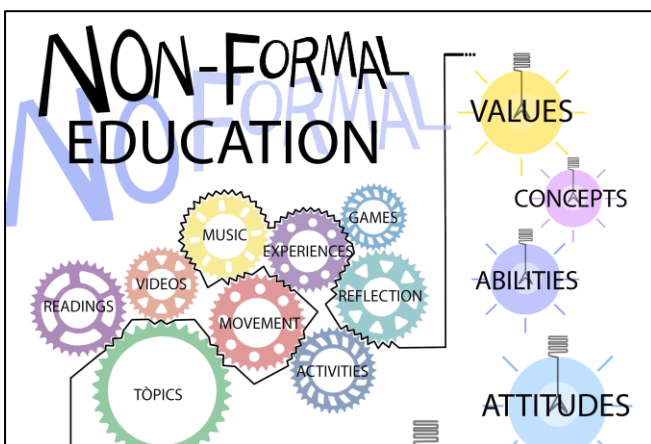


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A way to encourage students to take the initiatives

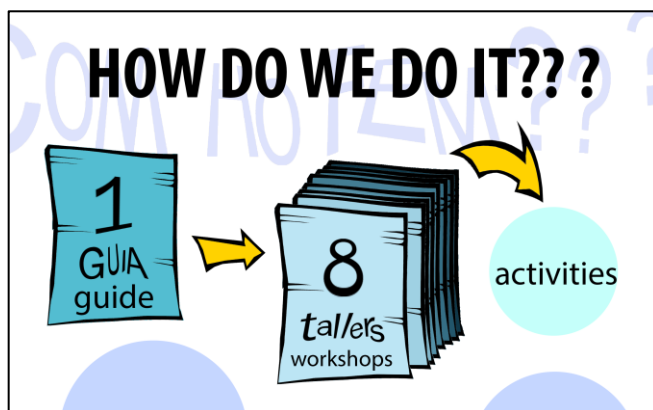


The main goal of the Fem tec! activities is to encourage students to see taking the initiative as a way of living their lives. We start by recognising non-formal education as a tool for transmitting concepts and values and for preparing young people for life.

These activities promote experimentation on topics that are attractive to young people and adolescents, and they promote the joy of discovery as a motivation to learn.

In addition, the *Fem tec!* activities are designed from a neuroeducational perspective, with the goal of optimizing students' capacity for attention and encouraging them to learn about values, abilities, attitudes and skills.

Fem tec! provides activities to address twelve topics associated with acquiring life skills. We've selected topics we see as key to empowering young people, and we suggest working on each topic or theme using a guide made up of eight workshops.



Why fem tec?

TEC is the acronym for *Treballem l'Emprenedoria a Classe* (working on initiative in the classroom) or *Treballem l'Emprenedoria al Carrer* (working on initiative in the street).

We chose the title *Fem tec!* because it fits well with the life phase and the expectations of the young people these activities are meant for. As an expression, in Catalan it can refer either to success in games or, figuratively, in other areas:

*fer tec*¹

1 RECREATION To hit a target. To hit one ball with another, earning a point.

2 fig. To be successful, to achieve an objective, reach an agreement.

Neuroeducational principles used in designing activities

Neuroscience provides theoretical justification for the use of play as a means of facilitating learning. Play provides achievable goals in a stress-free environment, promoting attention and motivation as ways of encouraging the learning process. In addition, a playful setting makes students more receptive and promotes creativity, communication and spontaneity.

In addition, scientific evidence for the plasticity and extraordinary development of our brains during adolescence (and until the age of 20-25) justifies working with young people to acquire skills and abilities that are useful for the creation of an adult personality and the development of their own moral compass. The same studies show that at this age, parts of the brain associated with decision-making and problem-solving (executive function) mature.

Some of the neuroeducational principles applied in *fem tec!* activities are:

- Multiple activities are provided so that educators can choose those that best adapt to the different interests and learning-teaching styles of their group of students.
- The search for meaning in the experiences is innate, so active reflection is promoted in each activity on topics associated with the interests and personal experiences of students. Activities are also designed to become personal experiences that lead to learning.
- Work on emotions is considered a basic part of the learning process, and essential when working with life experiences.
- We suggest activities that stimulate multiple senses in order to favour different mechanisms for learning and retaining what is learned.
- We propose activities that focus especially on executive functions, stimulating the development of the pre-frontal section of the brain.

The use of neuroeducational principles in designing Fem tec! materials has a positive effect on student initiative, especially in two dimensions:

1. The optimization of students' perceptive and cognitive abilities. This will necessarily take place even if participating students and educators don't actively or consciously work to make it so.
2. The optimization of participants' individual skills, with the necessary involvement of both students and the educators directing the activities, through the observation of students' reactions during the activities.

¹Diccionari.cat

Working on abilities and life skills

In addition to having an educational purpose, these activities promote the development of multiple skills such as searching for information, expressing feelings and recognizing states of mind, reasoning, imagination, creativity, or communication. In addition, especially in activities where students work as a team, they promote things like taking on a role, assertiveness, empathy, responsibility or respect.

Activities involving reflection provide an opportunity to work on skills such as the association of concepts and actions, active listening, critical thinking, creative thinking, etc. In the end, they're about practicing skills such as reflection using our own observations or experiences, argumentation or critical thinking in order to provide suggestions that our young people can use to change what they don't like about their surroundings.

Suggestions for getting the most out of *fem tec!* activities

In order to get the most out of these activities, we suggest that the **space** where workshops are held be distributed in a way that's different from what students are used to. Either the furniture should be rearranged, or the activity should take place in a new space. Either way, the setting should be as open as possible to ensure that the activities can take place comfortably.

Emotions are a basic part of our learning process: a positive, receptive emotional state strengthens the cognitive process. As a result, we suggest that before starting each workshop, educators offer students a space to **share** how they're feeling and their expectations for the event about to take place, giving them the freedom to **opt out** of the workshop or activity. It's important that we observe their reactions to these questions, and that we keep this in mind when presenting workshop activities.

In order to ensure students have a proactive disposition towards learning, we suggest that once they have expressed their willingness to take part in the workshop, we summarize the activities involved in the session using the information in "Before you begin this workshop". This section also provides a context for the topics addressed during the workshop within the corresponding guide.

The different activities involved include concepts such as **motivation**, **teamwork**, **creativity**, **communication** and **emotions**. As a result, they work on individual issues such as self-learning, self-esteem and social abilities, while also reinforcing group consciousness and tightening bonds of trust. The workshops also include activities for working on **gender relationships** and **equality** among young people. We encourage you to use these materials not only to work on the contents addressed directly by the workshop, but also to address themes that bridge different workshops, especially regarding gender relationships and the promotion of non-discriminatory treatment among young people.

It's important to **place the group of students at the centre of the action**; of the many activities proposed for each workshop, we should choose the ones that best match the interests and concerns of our group. If the group is particularly participative in one of the activities, we recommend encouraging this rather than rushing to complete all of the activities that go with the workshop.

Group activities promote **spontaneity** among students. As a result, these workshops can be a valuable opportunity to observe their reactions and attitudes. It's important to remember that some activities can stir up emotions and feelings that students have not expressed beforehand. Under such circumstances, it's important that the educators moderating the workshops be prepared to provide the students with the guidance they need. If necessary, it might even be a good idea to send them to professionals who specialize in these sorts of situations.

We feel that an important part of the process is individual and group **reflection** on the activities. Each workshop will end with the activity “What can I take away from this?” Once the workshop is over, we’ll invite students to make their impressions public using the hashtag **#fem_tec**. Sharing their experience is a way to make their work more visible, and to make them feel like they’re participating in a project that goes beyond their immediate surroundings (their youth space, classroom, school...).

We recommend naming a **listener** (or, if needed, more than one) for each workshop to reinforce participants’ contributions during the reflection. The listener will be responsible for observing without intervening in the activity and recording it using a mobile phone or tablet. They will have the opportunity to share their reflections before listening to the reflections of their classmates.

In summary, the characteristics of these activities are:

Purpose	How we do it
Encourage predisposition to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring students are as comfortable as possible (respecting their moods, providing an appropriate space, ensuring a comfortable temperature...) maximizing attention and motivation in a leisurely setting using activities that are different from what students are used to adapting activities and the rhythm of workshops to the interests of the protagonists: the students
Maximize students’ abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> taking advantage of activities to detect and reinforce their strengths
Get to know students better and reinforce our connection to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> creating a space where students feel free to form and express their own opinions observe students during the activities and moments of reflection, especially involving non-verbal communication

Flexible activities

fem tec! activities are designed to be as flexible as possible, so that they can be adapted to the needs of each group and environment, be it a local youth service, a secondary school or any other space where young people are educated and given guidance.

Each guide and its corresponding workshops are designed to be used by individuals, even if they’re only used partially, taking advantage of the resources that best fit each situation, working group or the interests of the educator directing the activity. Some activities may last much longer than the estimated time if students are particularly participative. In fact, most activities can serve as an hour-long workshop on their own. We encourage you to make these materials your own, and to select whatever activities, videos and resources are most useful to you..

Basic instructions for preparing for workshops

We should first greet the group and invite them to freely express how they’re doing, how they feel. It’s important that we pay close attention to their reactions to these questions and that we take this into account

when planning workshop activities. If possible, we should give students the freedom to decide not to participate in the workshop or activity. We should then ask if anyone would like to volunteer to serve as a listener (there can be more than one). We'll then let them know that their job is to observe the activity without intervening. Nevertheless, if they would like, they can write down their observations; we should let them know that once the workshop is over, we would be happy to hear whatever they might like to share with us. If they would like, they can also take pictures or record video that they can later share with us or make public. If, during the greeting, we notice that any students are reluctant to take part in the activity, we can invite them to serve as listener.

These activities promote imagination and play, and the expressivity and creative potential of the students. During the workshops, we'll suggest that participants find creative solutions to unexpected situations, generally by promoting cooperation and teamwork. We should let the group flow freely. As facilitators, we should focus on listening to and observing the development of the group during the activities, steering the activity according to their preferences: it's better to complete only one activity and to get the most out of it than to complete them all in a hurry.

It's also important that we provide a pleasant setting and a positive environment during the workshop. Music can be a good tool for maintaining a positive climate, especially while teams work on their own (this is especially true if the music is in keeping with the preferences of the young people participating).

We should make sure to provide positive reinforcement to our students by thanking them for any contributions they make.

Completing workshops

Personal or group reflection is a basic element in Fem tec! activities. We suggest two different activities for completing the workshops:

What can I take away from this?

We should first allow the listener to speak, inviting them to express anything they would like to say about what they witnessed during the workshop. We should then encourage the rest of the group to express their agreement or surprise regarding these observations. In addition, if it does not arise naturally as a result of the contributions of the listener, we can ask each student what they will take away from that day's workshop (emotions, feelings, things learned, ideas...), which questions they found most notable, or what they liked most about what they learned that day. We should encourage them to respond with the first thing that comes to mind.

If there's time, it's a good idea for students to let us know if participation in the workshop modified their views in any way or if they have decided to change anything as a result of what happened during the workshop. Some workshops address topics that might leave students feeling powerless at the end of the session. Before completing the workshop, we should allow students to express any aspects that bring them negative feelings, what they can do about it and where to start.

We should listen to their responses without commenting on them: any answer is a good answer. We should acknowledge that the workshop went smoothly by applauding at the end of the session.

Publishing our impressions

We might suggest that students share their impressions on the day's workshop on the social networks using the hashtag [#fem_tec.@jvoentutdiba](https://twitter.com/jvoentutdiba), or publishing these reflections using other means (Facebook, blogs, posters,...).