APPENDIX A:
SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

FROM **RESULT 2:**

MANUAL FOR THE TRAINING
IN **AUDIO EDITING METHODOLOGIES** AND **TECHNOLOGIES IN PRISON**

MUSIC FOR FREEDOM

Erasmus+

Enriching lives, opening minds.

Module 1: Introduction to Music Production

5.1.2 SOLO, TRACK ENABLE, AND HANDS-ON EXPLORATION

Objective:

Help participants familiarize themselves with the DAW interface and the structure of a professionally arranged music session. By the end of the session, they should be able to navigate a DAW, identify different track elements (e.g., drums, bass, synths), and manipulate basic session controls.

Materials Needed:

- **Computers** with DAW installed (**Ableton Live** preferred, or another DAW if required).
- **Pre-made professional Ableton Live session** (prepared before the lesson).
- **Headphones** for each participant.

Lesson Duration: **1 hour**

Lesson Structure:

1. Introduction to the DAW (10 minutes)

- Trainer introduces the **DAW interface**, focusing on:
  - Session View as a Mixing Desk:
    - Each track in **Session View** represents an individual instrument or sound, just like the channels on a physical mixing desk.
    - Participants can **mute**, **solo**, **and adjust volume faders** for each track.
    - Explain that this is where we control the balance between instruments before moving to arrangement and recording.
  - **Tracks and Clips**: Explanation of MIDI and audio tracks.

- Walk participants through:
  - How to **play, pause, and navigate** a session.
  - How to **solo, mute, and adjust volume** on different tracks.

2. Track Exploration (20 minutes)

- Trainer **demonstrates** different track elements in the pre-made session:
  - Drums: Kick, snare, hi-hats.
  - Bass: Low-end foundation.
  - Melody/Synths: Lead instruments or pads.
- Participants take turns **soloing, muting, and adjusting levels** on different tracks.
- Trainer encourages active listening by asking:
  - "What happens when we remove the drums?"
  - "How does the bass affect the feel of the track?"

3. Hands-On Practice (20 minutes)

- Participants perform the following **hands-on exercises**:
  - **Muting and soloing** tracks to hear individual elements.
  - **Adjusting volume levels** to see how balance affects the mix.
  - **Exploring basic effects** (e.g., adding reverb or filter sweeps to a synth).
- Trainer **monitors progress**, providing **one-on-one guidance** where needed.

4. Group Reflection (10 minutes)

- Trainer leads a group discussion:
  - "What did you notice about the track structure?"
  - "What parts of the DAW were easiest/hardest to use?"
  - "What would you like to learn more about?"
- Encourage participants to reflect on their experience and **share their observations**.

Teaching Notes & Tips:

- **Use the analogy of a mixing desk** when explaining **Session View** to make it easier for participants to understand.
- If a participant is **struggling, pair them with a peer** for guidance.
- Some participants may **hesitate to touch the DAW**—remind them that **exploration is key** and that mistakes are part of learning.
- Use **analogies** to explain concepts (e.g., "Think of mixing like cooking—you balance different flavors to make the whole dish work!").

MODULE 2:
LYRIC WRITING AND
VOCAL RECORDING

Module 2: Lyric Writing and Vocal Recording

5.2.8: RECORDING VOCALS

Objective:

Teach participants how to record clean vocals, including microphone techniques and setting up a recording session in the DAW. By the end of this session, participants should be able to correctly position a microphone, adjust input levels, and record their voice into a track.

Materials Needed:

- **Computers** with DAW installed (**Ableton Live** preferred, or another DAW if required).
- **Audio interface** (single-input interface such as Focusrite Scarlett Solo or Behringer UM2).
- **Condenser microphone** (e.g., Audio-Technica AT2020, Rode NT1-A).
- **Headphones** for monitoring.
- **Portable sound booth** (if available) or makeshift sound treatment (e.g., foam or blankets).
- **Pre-written lyrics** (or prompts for participants to create lyrics).

Lesson Duration: **1 hour**

Lesson Structure:

1. Introduction to Vocal Recording (10 minutes)

- Trainer explains **why proper vocal recording technique is important**, covering:
  - The difference between good mic positioning vs. bad mic positioning (distance, angle).
  - How to avoid **plosive sounds ("p" and "b" sounds popping the mic)** using a pop filter.
  - Why monitoring with **headphones** is necessary to prevent feedback and background noise.

- **Demonstration**: Trainer records a **short vocal phrase** incorrectly (e.g., too close to the mic, speaking off-axis, too much background noise), then records it properly to **compare the difference**.

2. Setting Up the DAW for Recording (15 minutes)

- **Trainer demonstrates** how to:
  - Create a new **audio track** for vocals.
  - Set the **input source** (microphone through audio interface).
  - Adjust **gain levels** to avoid distortion (aiming for a **healthy signal** without peaking).
  - Enable **monitoring** so the participant can hear themselves in the headphones..
- Participants follow along, **setting up their DAW for vocal recording**.

3. Hands-On Recording Session (25 minutes)

- **Each participant takes turns recording a short vocal phrase**, applying what they've learned:
  - Maintaining the correct **distance from the microphone**.
  - Controlling their **voice dynamics** (not shouting too close to the mic).
  - Using a **pop filter** correctly.
- Trainer provides **individual feedback** on positioning, volume, and performance.

4. Playback and Group Reflection (10 minutes)

- Participants listen back to their recordings.
- Trainer facilitates a discussion:
  - "What differences do you hear between recordings?"
  - "What was challenging about recording your voice?"
  - "How does your recorded voice sound different from how you hear yourself normally?"
- Encourage participants to **give each other constructive feedback** and reflect on how they can improve their next take.

Teaching Notes & Tips:

- **Keep it interactive:** Instead of just explaining, **show mistakes first** (bad mic technique, distortion) so participants can **hear why proper technique matters**.
- **Make them comfortable**: Many participants may feel awkard hearing their recorded voice for the first time—reassure them that this is normal!
- **Encourage confidence**: Some participants may be shy—use encouragement and emphasize that no one's first take is perfect.
- **Adapt for space limitations**: If no portable sound booth is available, try **draping blankets over a corner of the room** or using makeshift acoustic treatments.

MODULE 3: BEATMAKING AND TRACK CUSTOMIZATION

Module 3: Beatmaking and Track Customization

5.3.1: BEATMAKING

Objective:

Teach participants how to create their own beats using the pre-existing professional DAW session as a model. By the end of the session, participants should be able to program a basic drum pattern using a MIDI drum rack, understand rhythmic structure, and experiment with different drum sounds.

Materials Needed:

- **Computers** with DAW installed (**Ableton Live** preferred, or another DAW if required).
- **MIDI controller** (e.g., Akai MPK Mini, Novation Launchkey Mini).
- **Pre-made Ableton Live session** (or other DAW session with drum samples).
- **Headphones** for each participant.

Lesson Duration: **1 hour**

Lesson Structure:

1. Understanding Drum Patterns and Rhythm (10 minutes)

- Trainer explains the **importance of rhythm in hip hop production**, covering:
  - The role of the **kick (low end, groove)**, **snare (backbeat)**, and **hi-hats (fills and movement)**.
  - Basic **4/4 time signature** and how beats are structured in bars.
- **Demonstration**: Trainer plays different **classic hip hop drum patterns** and explains why they work.
  - Example: Boom-bap vs. trap rhythms.

2. Introduction to MIDI and Drum Racks (15 minutes)

- **Trainer demonstrates** how to:
  - Load a **drum rack** with kick, snare, and hi-hats.
  - Use a **MIDI controller** or **computer keyboard** to trigger drum sounds.
  - Record a **basic drum pattern** in the DAW.
- Participants **experiment with triggering sounds** using the MIDI controller.

3. Hands-On Beatmaking (25 minutes)

- Each participant programs a **basic 4-bar drum loop**, following this structure:
  - **Kick** on beats **1 and 3**.
  - **Snare** on beats **2 and 4**.
  - **Hi-hats** filling in between (optional).
- Trainer circulates to **assist with quantization, velocity adjustments, and groove settings**.
- Participants tweak their patterns and **experiment with different drum sounds**.

4. Playback and Feedback (10 minutes)

- Participants play back their drum loops for the group.
- Trainer encourages feedback with questions like:
  - "Does the beat feel too robotic or too loose?"
  - "What can we do to make the rhythm groove better?"
  - "What would you add to improve the beat?"

Teaching Notes & Tips:

- **Make it hands-on**: Have participants interact with drum sounds as early as possible to build engagement.
- **Encourage rhythmic feel**: If a beat feels "off," show how quantization or adjusting note velocities can improve the groove.
- **Use examples**: Compare simple drum loops to professional hip hop beats to help participants understand what makes a beat work.
- **Adapt to Available Equipment**: If MIDI controllers aren't available, use computer keyboards for drum triggering.

MODULE 4: MIXING AND AUDIO ENHANCEMENT

Module 4: Mixing and Audio Enhancement

5.4.1: INTRODUCTION TO MIXING

Objective:

Introduce participants to the basic concepts of mixing, including **EQ (Equalization)**, compression, and reverb. By the end of the session, participants should be able to apply simple mixing techniques to balance their tracks, ensuring clarity and cohesion.

Materials Needed:

- **Computers** with DAW installed (**Ableton Live** preferred, or another DAW if required).
- **Pre-made professional Ableton Live session** with separate drum, bass, melody, and vocal tracks.
- **Headphones** for each participant.

Lesson Duration: **1 hour**

Lesson Structure:

1. Understanding the Purpose of Mixing (10 minutes)

- Trainer explains **why mixing is important**:
  - Making sure all instruments **fit together without clashing**.
  - Balancing volume levels for **clarity and presence**.
  - Adding **effects like EQ**, **compression**, **and reverb** to enhance the final track.
- Trainer plays a **before-and-after example** of a mixed vs. unmixed track to demonstrate the impact of mixing.

2. Introduction to Basic Mixing Tools (20 minutes)

- **Equalization (EQ)**:
  - Trainer demonstrates how to use EQ to shape frequencies and avoid clashes (e.g., reducing bass muddiness, making vocals clearer).
  - Participants experiment by boosting and cutting frequencies on different instruments.
- **Compression**:
  - Trainer explains **how compression evens out volume levels** and helps instruments sit better in the mix.
  - **Hands-on**: Participants apply a **preset compressor** to a drum track or vocal and adjust threshold settings.
- **Reverb & Space**:
  - Trainer demonstrates adding **reverb** to a vocal track to create depth.
  - Participants apply reverb to a sound and experiment with **wet/dry balance**.

3. Hands-On Mixing Practice (20 minutes)

- Participants work on a pre-mixed session, where they apply:
  - **EQ to carve space** for each instrument.
  - **Compression to balance dynamics** in a drum loop or vocal track.
  - **Reverb to add depth** to an instrument or vocal.
- Trainer circulates, helping participants fine-tune their settings.

4. Playback and Feedback (10 minutes)

- Participants **play their mixed versions** and compare them.
- Trainer leads a discussion:
  - "How did EQ affect the clarity of your mix?"
  - "Did compression make the sound more controlled?"
  - "How does reverb change the feel of a track?"

Teaching Notes & Tips:

- **Keep it practical**: Avoid long theory explanations—let participants **hear the differences** when adjusting mixing settings.
- **Encourage subtlety:** Many beginners overuse EQ or reverb—remind them that **small adjustments make a big impact**.
- **Use presets if needed**: If compression feels overwhelming, **start with a preset** and tweak from there.
- **Make it fun**: Ask participants to **deliberately make a bad mix** (e.g., too much reverb, extreme EQ settings) to help them understand why subtlety is key.

MODULE 5:
MUSIC BUSINESS
AND DISTRIBUTION

Module 5: Music Business and Distribution

5.5.2: MUSIC DISTRIBUTION ON DIGITAL STREAMING PLATFORMS

Objective:

Introduce participants to the basics of **digital music distribution**, including **how to release their music on streaming platforms** (Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube Music, etc.), how metadata works, and what to consider when uploading their tracks.

Materials Needed:

- **Computers** with internet access (if available).
- **Example distribution platforms** (screenshots of DistroKid, TuneCore, or a similar service).
- **Example track metadata** (artist name, song title, album cover, etc.).

Lesson Duration: **1 hour**

Lesson Structure:

1. Introduction to Music Distribution (15 minutes)

- Trainer explains:
  - What **digital streaming platforms (DSPs)** are and why they are important for artists.
  - The role of **music distributors** (DistroKid, TuneCore, CD Baby, etc.).
  - The difference between **self-releasing music** vs. **signing with a label**.
- **Discussion**: Ask participants:
  - "Which platforms do you use to listen to music?"
  - "Have you ever thought about how artists get their music on these platforms?"

2. Understanding Metadata and Preparing a Release (20 minutes)

- **Trainer demonstrates the key elements needed for releasing a track**:
  - **Artist Name**: The name the music will be released under.
  - **Track Title**: How to properly format song titles (e.g., avoid all caps, check spelling).
  - **Album Cover**: Explain basic image requirements (square format, high resolution).
  - **Audio Format**: MP3 vs. WAV and why **high-quality audio** is important.
  - **Song Credits**: Who should be credited? Producers? Featured artists?

- **Hands-on Exercise**: Participants fill out a **mock release form** (on paper or digitally), listing their **artist name, track title, and album cover ideas**.

3. Uploading Music (Simulated Exercise) (15 minutes)

- Trainer walks participants through:
  - **How a typical upload process works** (using screenshots of a platform like DistroKid).
  - **Selecting stores** (Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, etc.).
  - **Setting a release date** and why planning ahead matters.
  - **Choosing a pricing model** (e.g., free releases vs. monetized tracks).
- **Discussion**: What are the key things to check before submitting a release?

4. Common Pitfalls & Final Q&A (10 minutes)

- **Trainer covers common mistakes**:
  - Uploading **low-quality audio**.
  - Not formatting metadata correctly.
  - Using **copyrighted material** (samples) without clearance.
  - Forgetting to **credit collaborators**.
- **Q&A session** where participants can ask about their own music distribution concerns.

Teaching Notes & Tips:

- **Keep it practical**: Instead of deep theory, focus on step-by-step guidance and real-world examples.
- **Encourage planning:** Participants should think ahead about their artist name, track titles, and visuals before releasing music.
- **Make metadata fun**: Ask participants to create a **fictional artist name** and mock-release a song to get them thinking like real artists.
- **Relate to their experience**: Many participants will have streamed music before—connect the lesson to how they **consume music themselves**.