



Didactical-methodological Concept of the Learning Materials



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1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digitalisation has increased, and digital competences have become more and more important. It has become obvious that the development of digital competences and the ability to learn independently is of enormous importance for everyone. The pandemic has also led to adult educators, as well as most other educators, having to conduct their courses online or in blended learning settings.

These learning settings can have many advantages for both trainers and learners. But the problem is that many learners in adult education, especially those with only a low level of qualification, do not have the necessary competences for blended learning, which means that these target groups are often excluded from these learning settings. This does not only refer to the lack of digital competences, but also to other skills, such as the ability to learn.

Learners, for example, often lack self-organisation and self-learning skills and have to come up with learning and motivational strategies on their own. Other challenges are that many learners often cannot concentrate during online learning sessions and that these have a negative impact on their health.

However, as it is very possible for the mentioned group of people to successfully participate in blended learning settings once they have built up basic competences for it, it is very important to take into account the individual learning needs of adult learners, to provide them with the necessary competences and thus offer them the opportunity to access this form of teaching.

Consequently, the Erasmus+ project Access2Learn aims at:

- raising awareness that blended learning courses should be offered to low-qualified learners.
- developing the basic digital and cognitive competences of adult learners to be able to participate in these settings.
- providing adult educators with supporting materials and tools to prepare adult learners for blended learning.

This **didactical-methodological concept** was **established for adult educators** working with low-qualified adult learners. The main objective is to develop the competences that these people need for successfully participating in blended learning settings, especially basic digital skills as well as self-learning competencies. It gives an overview of the objectives, the target group as well as the contents of the learning materials. In addition, it provides adult educators with ideas on how to include these



contents in their teaching and how to deliver them to their learners. In detail, the concept is covering the following sections:

- Target Group of the Learning Materials
- Contents and Structure of the Learning Materials
- Teaching-Methods and Media
- Challenges in Blended Learning and Strategies for Coping
- Learning Objectives covered in the Learning Materials

2 TARGET GROUP OF THE LEARNING MATERIALS

The main target group of the learning materials are **adult learners with a low level of qualification or other learning difficulties**. They could be, among others:

- people with only compulsory education
- long-term unemployed people
- people with migrant background
- people with dyslexia

Why did we choose this target group?

- Lifelong learning is getting more and more important, therefore it is crucial to motivate low-skilled learners to participate in different educational programs.
- Many low-qualified people are afraid of using new technologies, so we want to show them that it is not that difficult to work with them.
- When adults have to elaborate contents on their own, they also develop a lot of competences for their future at the same time, which is important for their professional as well as private life.
- We want to foster the self-esteem of these learners by showing them that they are able to participate in blended learning courses.

3 CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE OF THE LEARNING MATERIALS

Access2Learn provides standardised non-academic learning materials about the development of competences required for participating at blended learning settings. As the materials are related to the five main areas of the self-evaluation tool, they cover the same five areas:



- Basic digital competences
- Strengthening learning motivation
- Time management
- Learning Strategies
- Personal well-being

In addition, an introduction module was added to give learners an insight in different existing learning settings. It was decided to not choose more main competence areas because especially for this target group of low-qualified learners, the learning motivation is higher if they are not confronted with too many contents at the same time. In the following, these five main content units are explained in more detail:

3.1 Different Learning Settings and Introduction to Blended Learning

This first content unit should provide adult learners with an overview of different teaching and learning settings that are offered in the educational sector. Settings like face-to-face seminars, online seminars or blended learning are explained so that low-skilled people know what to expect from these different kinds of settings. There will be a special focus on blended learning to take away the fear of low-skilled adults that they could be left alone during these courses. In addition, different methods and tools that could be used in blended learning courses are described, so that learners get a better understanding of how such a setting could work. One of the main goals of this first unit is to highlight the importance of further education and to promote lifelong learning.

It consists of the following subchapters:

- Types of Learning Settings
- Different Learning Methods in Blended Learning

3.2 Basic Digital Competences

In this unit, the learners have the possibility to develop basic digital skills that are needed for online sessions within blended learning. It focuses on the basics, e.g. on how to turn on/off a computer, how to work with the hardware of a computer, how to create digital documents or how to communicate with others. There will also be some information about solving small problems that could occur when working with digital devices. A special focus will be on working with learning



platforms, especially with bit EU academy because our developed materials can be found on this platform.

It consists of the following subchapters:

- Main Components of a Computer
- E-Mails
- Creating Digital Documents
- The Internet
- Data Security and Safety
- Learning Platforms
- Video Conferencing Tools
- Problem Solving

3.3 Strengthening Learning Motivation

Missing motivation to learn was one of the most often mentioned problems during our research. Therefore, this content unit deals with strategies for motivation and their impact on learning success. In addition, learners will find some supportive tips on how to strengthen self-discipline and resist temptations during learning processes.

It consists of the following subchapters:

- Intrinsic and extrinsic Motivation
- Self-Discipline

3.4 Time Management

This section deals with time management issues throughout the whole learning process. Adult learners receive some inputs about organising their learning loads, including efficient break management. A special focus is made on preparing for exams as they cause a lot of stress and troubles in relation to time management. In this context, the prioritisation of the whole learning content is also an important topic.

It consists of the following subchapters:

- Planning a Learning Process



- Preparing for an Exam
- Prioritising Learning Contents

3.5 Learning Strategies

As everybody is a different learning type, this unit provides the opportunity to determine this type and tips on how to learn best for each type. Adults should be able to define their personal learning strategies and also to know how to learn sustainably in order to be successful when learning. It is also shown how a learning environment as well as the learning materials should be organised. Additionally, focus is made on different learning settings like face-to-face courses and self-learning and how to get the most out of these settings.

It consists of the following subchapters:

- Different Learning Types
- Preparing a Climate supportive for Learning
- Preparing Learning Materials
- Learning in Face-to-Face Sessions
- Starting an autonomous Learning Process
- Memory Strategies

3.6 Personal Well-Being

This unit focuses on durable skills and the learner him- or herself. It should contribute to a change from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset on the side of the learners. It also provides the learners with some tips on what to consider when working in a team and on critical thinking as well as active problem-solving. In addition, some inputs are shared in relation to dealing with exam anxiety and stress.

It consists of the following subchapters:

- Growth Mindset
- Learning in a Team
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Exam Anxiety and Stress Management



The learning objectives of all the content units mentioned above can be found in chapter 6.

A content unit consists of different contents and learning activities:

- Texts to read
- Videos, animations and screencasts to watch
- Pictures and infographics for visualisation
- Reflection tasks
- Useful tips for the learners
- Assessment activity at the end of most sub-chapters

In order to ensure that the learning contents are suitable for heterogeneous groups, the units can be learned in self-study mode and are completed with high motivation, the consortium has committed itself to the following principles when creating the contents:

- Each unit is designed according to the previously developed **curriculum** to ensure consistency of the content and the target-oriented sequence.
- The **learning objectives** of each unit and the contents are developed in the sense of a competence orientation.
- The units have a uniform **sequence** and **design**.
- The readers are addressed directly in order to establish a **connection to the learners' life world**. In this way the learners are to be encouraged to reflect, but above all to think actively.
- As the content is equally addressed to all genders, attention is paid to **gender-neutral language**, which should not impair the reading flow. Where possible, neutral wording is given preference.
- **Pictures** and **examples** are used to lighten up and explain the situation. Variety is important for the eye as well as for memory and motivation.
- The units are written in a **varied way** - this can be achieved, for example, by following explanations or theoretical content with examples or concrete situations from everyday life, which consolidate the knowledge.
- The text is intended to replace the personal component that trainers usually bring to the table. It is therefore written in a way that is **self-explanatory** and accessible, according to the motto "Write the learning content as if you were explaining it verbally".

The basis and foundation for the development of the learning materials is the compatibility of the contents for different learning platforms. The design of the learning materials is therefore aimed at



being as easy to learn as possible in self-study and at the same time being well adapted, expanded, updated and used in different learning settings and digital environments. A second focus is made on awakening and maintaining the self-motivation of the learners. Learning should be fun and the process of dealing with the learning material should be associated with enrichment.

4 TEACHING METHODS AND MEDIA

The learning materials are created to develop the competences of adult learners for participating at blended learning. To bring this blended learning concept closer to these learners, we suggest delivering these contents also within a blended learning setting.

Therefore, the contents are designed in a way that adult educators can use them within a face-to-face session, but they could also be used as self-learning contents. The following aspects were considered when choosing this teaching method:

- developing the very basic (digital) competences could be easier in some face-to-face sessions at the beginning
- learning via the learning platform enables self-organised learning with a high degree of autonomy
- self-competence, i.e. the ability to act responsibly for oneself, is encouraged
- trainers or teachers can optionally act as learning facilitators
- due to the high degree of individualisation and flexibility, the contents are well suited for the target group of low-skilled adults

4.1 Modular Learning

All the developed learning units and subchapters are developed in such a way that they can be used for modular learning. They do not depend on each other, and they are as short as possible. This enables individual learning paths and ensures that each learner can focus on the contents he or she really wants and needs to learn about. In addition, it results in a high motivation and above all a satisfaction of the learners.

This modular learning approach guarantees that even very heterogeneous groups can work well with the learning content and acquire it at a pace appropriate to their individual needs. Participants also acquire and expand their competences for self-organised and self-responsible learning and thus acquire a skill that is becoming increasingly important.



4.2 Competence Orientation

The competence-oriented project design is optimal for offering **individualised competence acquisition**. In addition to **technical competence**, this should also include an expansion of **learning competences** and **basic digital skills**. All contents are prepared in such a way that they are directly applicable and usable for every learner. In terms of **competence orientation**, the following overarching learning outcome is pursued:

- Learners are able to understand in what way they can use the newly acquired knowledge in their personal everyday life.
- They can apply the newly acquired knowledge in their everyday life.
- This sense of achievement leads to motivation, willpower and goal orientation and has a positive effect on learning performance and the success of learning and examination.
- Learners can independently acquire, structure, use and correctly interpret the knowledge and information necessary to solve a task. In this way they acquire the competence to develop and implement learning strategies (learning competence), which enables them to engage in lifelong learning.
- The learners are taught that they themselves can proactively influence the achievement of their goals and are able to shape the acquisition of knowledge by taking personal responsibility. This increases self-esteem and the ability for self-management, self-motivation and self-reflection.

4.3 Communication and Support by the Adult Educator

The idea of creating the learning contents is that the materials are used by adult educators together with their learners. This means that it is important that there is a teacher or trainer who guides and supports the learners, especially for the target group of low-qualified learners.

Therefore, it would be important to offer the learners some possibilities for exchange and discussions about the contents as well as for asking for help when they have some problems. A few ideas on how to promote the exchange of the learners can be found in another result of the project – in the workshop concept.

To promote the learning activities of the adults, the adult educator is responsible to support them in strengthening their motivation, e.g. by providing clear instructions or by explaining the materials and

the learning platform well. In addition, the learners should be allowed to learn the contents they need and prefer to learn at an individual pace.

One thing that should also be mentioned here is that it is important to communicate with and support learners, but only to a certain extent. By using these materials, adults should develop competences and confidence to learn independently, and they should get motivated to participate in other lifelong learning programs in future. Therefore, they have to get used to work/learn autonomously and to ask for help if needed. This should be considered when implementing blended learning.

4.4 Media

For these materials, different media can be used to access the contents: They are provided via the **project's website**: <https://access2learn.eu/open-educational-resources/>. There they **can be downloaded and printed** and then used within a face-to-face session or also for a self-learning session.

In addition, they can be found on the e-learning platform bit academy EU which is provided by the Austrian organisation Miles Learning GmbH.

For accessing the e-learning course of the Access2Learn project, a link will be shared with trainers and learners. The users have to create a free account before they are able to start learning. After logging in, they can enter the course and find the overview page. There they can see the different units and sub-chapters of the course as well as assessment activities and their learning progress:

COURSE

(EN) Access2Learn - Developing Competences for Blended Learning

The screenshot shows the course interface for 'Access2Learn'. On the left, a 'Learning Progress' box points to a progress bar showing 'Completion 17 of 76' (22%) and 'Success 1 of 46' (2%). On the right, a 'Content Units' box points to the first unit '(EN) Different Learning Settings'. A 'Sub-chapters' box points to 'Introduction', 'Why lifelong learning pays off', and 'Types of learning settings'. An 'Assessment Activities' box points to 'Exercise 1' and 'Phase Report' under each sub-chapter. The interface also shows 'Different methods in blended learning', 'Learning at the workplace', and 'Summary' as sub-chapters. Below these are units for '(EN) Basic Digital Competences', '(EN) Strengthening Learning Motivation', and '(EN) Time Management'.

As already mentioned, the course is designed for individual learning. The learners can choose which unit and/or sub-chapter they would like to learn about. To check the learning success, they can do some assessment activities. The platform is designed in a way that it is very easy to understand and to use. It contains a lot of graphics, videos and animations in order to strengthen the motivation of the learners. Thus, it can be guaranteed that our target group of low-skilled adults is also able to learn with the platform – at least with support of the teacher or trainer.

To be able to access the courses, the learners only need a digital device (computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone) as well as an Internet connection.

5 CHALLENGES IN BLENDED LEARNING AND STRATEGIES FOR COPING

This chapter is dedicated to the special challenges in practising blended learning and conveying the contents. The most important points to be considered are:

- The challenge of the heterogeneity of the target groups is met by individuality at all levels. This allows people to make learning progress at their own pace and to learn content that is still lacking for the skills in the field.

- The challenges in terms of self-motivation and self-discipline are mainly met by the design of the learning materials and the tips included.
- Many learners think that they are not able to learn contents on their own and that they need a trainer for learning. Therefore, the contents are designed in a very easy and self-explanatory way with many practical examples so that also low-skilled adults can manage learning with them on their own.
- Another challenge is to check the learning progress of the learners. Thus, most content units, especially those about learning competences, include short assessment activities at the end. The results can be used as a basis for grading, but also as self-check for the learners about their progress. In addition, it is recommended that the trainer checks the progress regularly and actively, e.g. during face-to-face sessions or by contacting the learners.

6 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

6.1 Different Learning Settings and Introduction to Blended Learning

Types of learning settings	Different Learning Methods in Blended Learning
<p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between different learning settings. • explain the concept of blended learning. 	<p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe different methods that could be used within a blended learning setting. • mention different tools that support blended learning.

6.2 Basic digital Competences

Main Components of a Computer	E-Mails
<p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • start and shut down their computer. • turn on the screen of their computer. • use the mouse of your computer. • use the keyboard. 	<p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create an e-mail address. • log in to their e-mail account. • use an e-mail program (especially reading and writing e-mails).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charge their laptop. 	
<p>Creating Digital Documents</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create digital documents, especially Word- and PowerPoint-documents. • save documents and to distinguish between different formats. • find documents that they have downloaded or saved to their computer. • work with online drives. • navigate between different opened windows on their computer. 	<p>The Internet</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe that it is possible to learn everywhere and anytime. • connect their device with the internet. • enter the internet on different electronic devices. • use a search engine in order to find information that is relevant for them quickly. • describe the criteria of reputable online sources of information. • find open learning materials and knowledge portals online • charge their laptop.
<p>Data Security and Safety</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain how their personal data can be protected. • indicate how their digital device can be protected. • identify dangerous links and webpages. 	<p>Learning Platforms</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the advantages of learning platforms and to name different platforms. • explain which possibilities arise with using these platforms for learning. • deal with the bit EU academy platform.
<p>Video Conferencing Tools</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • log in to a common video conference tool and participate at an online lesson. • communicate with others via a video conference tool. • collaborate for diverse tasks with other colleagues via a video conference tool. 	<p>Problem Solving</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • try different possible solutions when it is not possible to start their computer. • cope with the problem of a screen that does not work. • restart a computer when it is hanging up. • describe the functions of the task manager.

6.3 Strengthening Learning Motivation

<p>Intrinsic and extrinsic Motivation</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. • explain how motivation affects learning success. • identify extrinsic and intrinsic motivation strategies for themselves. 	<p>Self-Discipline</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe how to strengthen one's will to learn. • explain how to maintain positive habits. • describe how to leave their comfort zone and deal with resistance or inefficiency. • fight procrastination and eliminate those things that keep them distracted from learning. • resist temptations. • create positive habits and the will to learn.
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6.4 Time Management

<p>Planning a Learning Process</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elaborate their personal learning performance curve and to adjust their daily learning load accordingly. • explain why it is important to make breaks during studying. • plan their breaks effectively. 	<p>Preparing for an Exam</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain their own responsibility for the preparation for the exam. • create learning plans and timetables. • explain different methods for an efficient time management. • get an overview of the learning materials needed for an exam. • explain how to ideally organise the time shortly before the exam.
<p>Prioritising Learning Contents</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify exam-relevant contents. • explain why it is often not possible to learn all contents in same depth. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how exam-relevant contents can be prioritised. 	
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6.5 Learning Strategies

<p>Different Learning Types</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain different learning types as well as learning strategies suitable for these types. identify which learning type they are and with which strategy and methods they can learn most efficiently. 	<p>Preparing a Climate supportive for Learning</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> point out criteria a study place should fulfil in order to be able to learn efficiently. explain how teachers and learners should behave in a course setting in order to create an atmosphere beneficial for learning. create a quiet and supportive space for learning at home.
<p>Preparing Learning Materials</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organise and store their learning materials in a way that they have them quickly at hand when they need them. indicate how taking notes could help you to understand learning content more easily. create written notes which are helpful for future learning processes. 	<p>Learning in Face-to-Face Sessions</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe what to consider when attending a course and listening to the educator. apply active listening in their future courses. explain why dealing with the subject matter independently brings maximum learning success.
<p>Starting an autonomous Learning Process</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> set SMART learning goals. indicate how a new subject can be approached. identify situations where they need support of others (colleagues, teachers,...). 	<p>Memory Strategies</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how new knowledge can be kept in your memory permanently. indicate how knowledge networks can support your learning and how they can be created and expanded.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do active problem solving when such a situation occurs. reflect their learning progress by using a learning diary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain how the (first letter) mnemonic method can be used for learning. state learning situations the hook method could be used for. identify situations in which you could use the storytelling method. explain the loci method and its application cases.
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6.6 Personal Well-Being

<p>Growth Mindset</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the difference between a fixed and a growth mindset. explain why it is important to be convinced that they are able to learn new things. explain the importance of being curious and enthusiastic relating learning something new. describe the importance of being proactive for reaching their goals. recognise that they have to be patient to reach their goals. 	<p>Learning in a Team</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement different methods to support each other when learning. apply verbal and non-verbal communication skills when exchanging with colleagues or the teacher. show empathy towards other learners. explain the importance of being reliable when working together with others. give constructive feedback to colleagues. use social media for learning in a team.
<p>Critical thinking and Problem Solving</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the term critical thinking. explain the importance of it when they search for sources (online or offline). avoid jumping to conclusions and learn how to draw appropriate conclusions. apply techniques to successfully deal with unforeseen risks and threats. compare the relative value of available options and determine the best solution. 	<p>Exam Anxiety and Stress Management</p> <p>After learning this content, the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify how exam anxiety is expressed to you. develop strategies for coping with exam anxiety (incl. methods for relaxation). reduce and manage stress. use different mindfulness techniques.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• implement different techniques to start thinking "outside the box".• develop plans for evaluating a course and for choosing adequate follow-up courses. | |
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