



Project Result 3

Train-the-Trainer- Handout



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1 INTRODUCTION

This document should support teachers and trainers in working with adult learners with a lower level of qualification. It consists of various tips and tricks when it comes to teaching this target group.

2 EDUCATION AND ITS NECESSITY FOR LIFE AND WORK

Education is a fundamental pillar of personal and professional growth. It equips individuals with essential knowledge, skills, and competencies crucial for navigating life and work complexities. Education has become more critical than ever before in today's rapidly evolving world, where technology and innovation are reshaping industries.

2.1 The Significance of Education

We as teachers and trainers are aware of the fact that education is crucial for our lives. But it is also important to communicate that to our learners. They have to understand why and how education can influence their lives.

In the following, you can find some reasons that you can communicate to your learners:

- **Building a Strong Foundation:**

Education serves as the bedrock for building a strong foundation in various aspects of life. It empowers individuals with essential literacy and numeracy skills, fostering their ability to comprehend and communicate effectively. With a solid educational foundation, individuals gain confidence, enabling them to tackle challenges and seize opportunities.

- **Expanding Horizons:**

Education broadens horizons by exposing individuals to new ideas, cultures, and perspectives. It instilled a sense of curiosity, encouraging lifelong learning and personal growth. By engaging in education, participants gain a deeper understanding of the world around them, fostering empathy, tolerance, and open-mindedness.

- **Enhancing Employability:**

Education plays a pivotal role in enhancing employability. In an increasingly competitive job market, employers seek individuals equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for



success. Education equips participants with industry-specific competencies, critical thinking abilities, and problem-solving skills, making them desirable candidates for diverse professional opportunities.

- **Empowering Personal Development:**

Education empowers individuals to achieve their full potential. It nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and innovation, enabling participants to approach challenges with a solution-oriented mindset. Education also fosters personal development, cultivating essential life skills such as time management, adaptability, and effective communication, which are invaluable in all aspects of life.

2.2 Explaining the Importance of Education to Participants

When explaining the importance of education to your learners, you could consider the following aspects:

- **Illustrating Real-Life Examples:**

When explaining the importance of education to your participants, providing relatable and tangible examples is vital. Share stories of individuals who have achieved significant milestones and personal growth through education.

- **Showcasing Professional Opportunities:**

Demonstrate the connection between education and professional opportunities. Discuss the diverse career paths that become accessible with an educational background, emphasising the potential for upward mobility, job security, and personal fulfilment.

- **Emphasising Lifelong Learning:**

Stress the importance of lifelong learning as a continuous process. Encourage participants to view education as an ongoing journey rather than a destination. Emphasize that education is not limited to formal settings but also encompasses informal learning opportunities, such as workshops, online courses, and self-study. Encourage them to embrace curiosity and pursue knowledge in areas of personal interest.

- **Addressing Digital Competence:**



In today's digital age, digital competence is essential for success. Explain to your participants how education can bridge the digital divide and equip them with the necessary digital skills to thrive in the modern workplace. Showcase the benefits of embracing technology, such as increased productivity, improved communication, and enhanced access to information and resources.

3 BLENDED LEARNING

Blended learning is an innovative and practical approach to education that combines synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning activities. As this approach is already used very often (and will be used much more often in future), it is important that we bring the concept of blended learning also closer to the group of low-qualified learners.

3.1 Benefits of Blended Learning

The benefits of blended learning are the following:

- **Flexibility:** Blended learning allows learners to access content and resources at their own pace and schedule, accommodating different learning styles and preferences.
- **Personalisation:** It enables personalised learning experiences, as educators can tailor content to individual needs and provide targeted support.
- **Improved Engagement:** The combination of online and in-person elements fosters greater learner engagement, as it incorporates interactive and multimedia components.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Blended learning encourages collaboration among learners, fostering communication and teamwork through online discussions and group activities.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** Digital tools in blended learning facilitate the collection and analysis of learner data, helping educators identify areas for improvement and adapt teaching strategies accordingly.

3.2 Obstacles of Blended Learning

Especially for the group of low-skilled learners, blended learning brings also a lot of challenges with it:



- **Access to Technology:** Not all learners may have equal access to technology or the internet, potentially creating disparities in their learning experiences.
- **Technical Challenges:** Technical issues like connectivity problems or software glitches can disrupt the learning process and lead to frustration.
- **Training for Educators:** Educators may require training and support to effectively integrate technology into their teaching methods and design engaging online content.
- **Time Management:** Balancing the demands of both online and in-person components can be challenging for learners and educators alike.
- **Lack of Self-Discipline:** Some learners may struggle with self-discipline and time management without a traditional classroom setting.

Thus, it is important to **show your learners**, on the one hand, **the advantages of blended learning** and to **support your learners**, on the other hand, **in overcoming the challenges they face**.

The **success of blended learning** largely depends on three key rules:

- 1 Assigning a uniform duration to all modules, making it easier for learners to adapt to the format.
- 2 Providing a study guide to help learners pace themselves according to their learning bandwidth and avoid binge learning. The guide also serves as a motivational tool by setting clear learning milestones.
- 3 Implementing progress check-ins shortly after the first instructor-led session helps nudge learners back on track and allows for timely responses to concerns and questions.

These rules have been tried and proven to contribute significantly to the success of blended learning programs.

3.3 Tips for communication during blended learning sessions

Communication is the key in any educational setting. It determines your relationship with your learners and directly influences their engagement and motivation for learning.

Although there are some similarities between communication in a Face to Face (F2F) or an online setting, we will discuss the main differences.



Non-verbal communication is very important in both settings. Nevertheless, it's even more important in F2F communication: the clothes you wear, the way you use your hands, your facial expression, your position with regards to the other person. They all have an influence on your communication.

It's always better to **communicate on the same eye level**, not using your hands too much, but also not using them at all and try to smile, nod and pay attention to the learners. It's important that they **feel comfortable and understood**.

When it comes to online communication, the following aspects should be considered:



In online communication, it's not so easy to use your hands properly as they usually do not appear on camera. It's important to nod when the other person is speaking and to **NOT** look away from the screen. **The learner needs to feel that you are paying attention**. When you look away from the screen, either on your phone or to someone else in the room with you, the person that is speaking on the screen feels left alone.

When you speak to your learners online, it's better to **speak directly to the CAMERA** and not to the screen. This will add a little extra connection with your learners as they have the feeling that you are looking directly at them.

In online communication, it's important **to have your camera ON and your face in the middle of the image**. It's true that some learners might attend your online class with their cameras shut off. There might be a valid reason for it. Therefore, it's advisable to encourage them to turn their camera on, without obliging them to do so. Maybe after class you can give them a personal call and ask them for the reason they didn't or couldn't put their camera so, together, you can try to find a suitable solution.



In online communication it's also important to **articulate well** and make sure that all learners have understood you. Your tone and pitch also play an important role. You have to be aware that some of your online learners might have difficulty understanding or hearing you.

Since we are dealing with low-skilled adults, it's important to have **clear and respectful communication**. We should be aware to not use sarcasm or humour if we are not 100 % sure that the learners will understand it correctly. It's better to be neutral than to try to be funny.

At the beginning of any course, and especially with learners that have for long not been active in education, it's advisable to **set certain communication rules**. When to speak, how to ask questions, respectful language, etc. But also, and moreover in online communication, it's important to agree on the communication channels. Do we use WhatsApp, email or maybe even Slack? Do we interrupt the teacher, raise a virtual hand or put our questions in the chat? When these things are agreed on by all parties at the beginning of the course, communication will be smoother and more effective.

4 HOW TO DEAL WITH THE IT LITERACY OF THE LEARNERS

The European Commission defines digital literacy as:

“Digital literacy encompasses the safe, critical and responsible use of and engagement with digital technologies for education, training, work and participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation (including programming), security, and problem-solving.”

Blended learning almost always includes items of online and/or digital learning. Therefore, it's essential that the learners have a minimum level of IT literacy. Otherwise, the way in which the course is presented (online/digitally) may be more difficult for them than the actual course content.

When teaching low-skilled adult learners, **we CANNOT assume high levels of IT literacy**. It's usually rather the opposite. They might be fine playing games, sending WhatsApp, looking at Instagram or YouTube on their smartphones, but that doesn't imply they know how to work with learning management systems, shared learning applications or connect to and participate in a Teams or Zoom class.



If a learner has few proper digital skills, he/she is excluded from digital learning. This exclusion can result in less educational opportunities and a lower level of employability.

Throughout the course, but mainly at the start, it is adamant to support the learner as much as possible.

Some tips are:

- Invite the student to take some online lessons from the Access2Learn course. Do the first module together with them and encourage them to do other parts at their own pace.
- Explain all the IT terminology that the students can encounter during their course. Explain it in layman's terms and make sure they understand. Also, explain the differences or similarities between the different terminology. Things like blended learning, learning management system, distance learning, flipped classroom, or online classes, may sound easy to you but confusing to your low-skilled adult learner.
- Make sure always to use the same terminology and even make a glossary list for your learners.
- Have patience with your learners. Some need more time to get used to this new learning environment and might need personalised help.
- Create a good rapport with your learners and practice active listening. It's important to be proactive in this case and analyse possible difficulties that your learners might face. Remember that they are adults and might be ashamed to admit that they don't know or understand certain "simple" IT things.
- NEVER make fun of a learner who doesn't understand or has an IT problem. Again, be patient and explain again. Sometimes it might be necessary to have a one-on-one session with your learners to help them overcome a problem instead of doing it in front of the whole class.

Helping your adult learners with their IT literacy is not so much about WHAT to teach them about or help them with; **it's mainly about the HOW.**

5 MOTIVATION AND SELF-DISCIPLINE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Supporting motivation and self-discipline among students during online lessons can be challenging, but here are some tips on how to maintain motivation:



- **Establish clear expectations:** Set clear guidelines and expectations for student behaviour during online lessons. Clearly communicate these expectations at the beginning of the course and remind students regularly. Tell students when cameras should be on and when off. Remind students not to do household tasks when studying at home.
- **Foster a positive and inclusive online learning environment:** Create a positive and inclusive atmosphere where students feel comfortable and motivated to participate. Encourage collaboration, active engagement, and respectful communication among students. Provide opportunities for students to share their ideas and thoughts during online discussions or through collaborative projects.
- **Provide regular feedback:** Recognise and acknowledge their efforts and achievements. Encourage peer feedback and peer-to-peer interaction to create a sense of community and support.

6 KEEPING THE LEARNERS' CONCENTRATION HIGH

For low-qualified adults it is usually difficult to stay concentrated during lessons, also in lessons in class or a seminar room. But in online lessons, it is even more difficult for them. They might be distracted by different things when learning or attending video conferences at home (e.g. by their phone, their family, etc.). They might also have technical problems, and learning with digital devices is much more exhausting than in a classroom. Thus, it is important that we as teachers support the learners in keeping their motivation high.

Here, you can find some tips for your teaching:

- **Use versatile and varied teaching methods:** Incorporate various teaching methods to keep students engaged and motivated. Utilise multimedia resources, short videos, interactive activities, and real-life examples to make the lessons more interesting and relatable. Consider incorporating games, quizzes, polls, padlet and breakout rooms to encourage active participation.
- **Set goals and monitor the progress:** Help students to set achievable goals for their learning and provide them with tools to monitor their progress. Break down larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps, and provide guidance on how to accomplish them. Celebrate milestones and achievements along the way to maintain motivation.
- **Provide opportunities for student choice and autonomy:** Give students the option to return assignments as videos or texts.

7 GIVING CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS IN BLENDED LEARNING

In blended learning courses, learners will sometimes learn autonomously and/or at home, and thus, a teacher is not always available for answering quick questions. Therefore, it is crucial that we prepare instructions for these tasks that are very detailed and easy to understand. Learners must be able to work with these instructions easily.

Here, you can find some tips for preparing instructions:

- **Personalise the instructions:** Recognise that each student is unique and may require different approaches to understand a task and to stay motivated and disciplined. Get to know your students individually and consider their interests, strengths, and learning styles.
- **Use verbal and written instructions:** Give the instructions in writing, but also give the instructions orally. This can be done in face-to-face sessions and/or on video.
- **Test the instructions:** Show your instructions to at least one student before letting them work autonomously. Ask him/her if everything is clear or if adjustments have to be made.
- **Test whether a colleague understands your instructions:** Ask him/her to go through the instruction and tell you if it's clear or if the person would change something.
- **Consider whether a short instruction is better than a long one:** Your instructions should be detailed and easy to understand, but, at the same time, not too long. If an instruction is too long, learners might be overwhelmed and lose motivation.
- **If there are several steps in the instructions, number them:** By numbering the steps, it is easier for low-skilled people to follow the steps and don't forget any tasks.

8 BREAKING THE ICE IN NEW GROUPS OF PARTICIPANTS

When forming a new group or team of people, the group is dominated by uncertainty and discomfort at the beginning of working together. If people do not know each other well, the atmosphere within the group is uncertain and nervous. "**Icebreaker**" games are simplified exercises designed to help groups to overcome these fears and feelings of insecurity. They also help group members navigate new situations that may arise within the group and in getting to know their colleagues.

"Icebreakers" support the group towards achieving a functioning and cooperating team. You can find a lot of tips on the Internet or in books. Also in the workshop concepts of this project a lot of activities can be found.



In the following, you can find an example for an icebreaker game in a face-to-face lesson:

Dots in motion

Description: Music helps to create a pleasant environment for gaming, and it helps the players to express themselves more spontaneously. Music does not play a significant role in this game, but it makes it easier and more interesting.

Number of people: 10 or more players.

Playing time: 10-20 minutes.

Introduction to the game: Players move freely around the room to music playing in the background. The moderator stops the music and prompts the participants to do a specific action within the next 20 seconds. Everyone must immediately do the task. When the music starts again, the participants go back to dancing until the next task is given. These tasks can be adapted to a particular theme, activity or ability of the players. This exercise can also be used to divide players into groups according to specific skills.

Examples of tasks:

- Shake hands with as many people as possible.
- Touch the four walls of the room.
- Get into a group of people with the same hair or eye colour as you have.
- Get into groups with the same birth month.
- Form groups of four and share expectations.

Tip: Consider the safety of the participants. When planning the tasks, any mobility problems or other disabilities of the participants must be taken into account.

Online meetings, virtual conferences and digital workshops have become indispensable. Compared to offline events, it is often more difficult for participants to warm up and engage in discussions in a virtual environment.

Especially in digital meetings via Zoom, Teams, Skype etc., there is a risk of participants mentally switching off. However, a **good online workshop emphasises interaction and exchange**. That's why it's essential to speak clearly and in short sentences and to vary the content as much as possible. Nothing kills the audience's attention more than a monotone voice reading out the slides of a presentation. **Practical examples and activities will help to relax the atmosphere**. Therefore, plan icebreaker activities in your online sessions, where all participants can participate vividly and contribute their perspectives. You'll find that enthusiasm is contagious, as is humour and fun.

9 ACTIVATION METHODS

Activating teaching methods are applied by the teacher in education when the learner actively, consciously and consciously sorts data, classifies them into knowledge structures, analyses, compares and evaluates information, learns independence and creativity, and develops his/her personality.

Nowadays, activating methods are experiencing a renaissance, not only for pedagogical and psychological reasons but especially for social reasons. Modern society is often described as a knowledge society, a knowledge-based information society, whose distinctive feature is the enormous growth of information, in which information and knowledge are the main driving forces of its development. This 'information explosion' (Viriiio: information bomb) pressures the school to cope with the increase in knowledge by the methods that have prevailed so far, i.e., memorising it. However, this flood of information can no longer be assimilated by the pupil in this way because it becomes a ballast that has no use but only overloads and frustrates pupils. It is **necessary to find new ways, to lead the learners to activity**, to help them to sort and use the information. In this context, there is talk of the need for a new culture of teaching and learning. In the new orientation of schoolwork, activating methods are coming into their own, as they have already proved their worth in overcoming heraldry in the past.

The activity of the pupils is not in itself the aim of education, because it could be only an external or apparent activity that does not contribute to the achievement of a higher degree of personal development. The activation of pupils in the educational process means **focusing on the development of personality, on the growth of competencies, and on reaching ever higher horizons**. Activity is not the final result of education but a means for continuous growth and a necessary process of personality improvement. We have pointed out that activity is transformed into independent work when the pupil, although under the teacher's supervision, but gradually more without outside help, **manages educational situations with the aim of relatively complete freedom from direct guidance**

and influence. Activity thus becomes a necessary condition of personal development, an educational factor which forms the basis and starting point of all life manifestations.

There are many activating methods, procedures, and variants, especially in corporate training and adult education.

- **Discussion methods**

The common denominator of all forms and variations of discussion methods is mutual communication, in which participants exchange views on the topic, argue, and thus jointly arrive at a solution to the problem under discussion.

- **Heuristic methods** (heureka, from Greek: I have found, I have discovered)

They are related to the basic equipment of a person to search, to orient him-/herself, to solve his/her needs by trial and error, currently, it is a search for a strategy in solving problems based on available information using logical procedures. In school education, heuristics is often applied as a problem-solving method (learning by discovery), which can vary in difficulty level and is therefore applicable to any age group.

- **Situational methods**

These methods focus on solving real-life problems, for example, the analysis method, conflict resolution, etc. They were originally used in the legal and economic fields, but have gradually made their way into secondary and primary schools, but have had to be adapted to the abilities and interests of the pupils. The essence of situational methods is to solve a problem case without a clear-cut outcome.

- **Staging methods**

Staging methods are based on ancient traditions of performing various events, legends and myths in model situations (ancient drama). In education, various situations and roles are portrayed with educational and upbringing intentions (e.g. J. A. Comenius' Schola ludus). A distinction is made between structured (with a script) and unstructured (without a detailed script) productions, multifaceted role-playing, etc.

- **Didactic plays**

Play is a specific type of activity that is common to humans and higher animals at an early stage of development but accompanies humans in various forms throughout their lives. It

involves both the rational-cognitive and motor domains and the emotional and imaginative domains; it has value in itself and does not pursue any specific goal.

- **Working with text**

Text work has a long tradition, and numerous proven techniques, but it must be encouraged and improved even today. It is still necessary to teach pupils to read with comprehension, make extracts and navigate through the mass of information. There is now a drive to combine reading and writing with critical thinking, which involves more complex approaches to working with text, developing thought processes, but also the logical expression of one's own ideas (oral, written and graphic)

- **Mental mapping**

The pictorial way of learning has always been promoted, but today it is being applied with a new emphasis. Mental mapping is about engaging both hemispheres in learning, graphically arranging ideas, and bringing the interrelationships between concepts to the fore. Mental mapping facilitates the logical assimilation of knowledge, provides an overall view of the subject, teaches systematic thinking and creates a visual network of relationships.

- **Group methods**

These activating methods involve forms of teaching/learning in which several pupils work together. This group works sometimes include methods with topics that are discussed in other contexts, e.g. brainstorming, brainwriting, etc. In school teaching, pair work, which often transitions into small group work, is a good practice. Seminars, exhibitions, posters, etc. also have an activating potential.

10 MODEL/DIDACTIC GAMES

Game situations are of great importance for pedagogy; they are currently used in school education and lifelong learning. The play has different missions and different conceptions. It is a form of activity that is different from work and learning.

A special category of games is didactic games, which use the strong motivation of the participants for educational purposes. While games generally lead to activities that must be productive, didactic games deliberately evoke productive activities and develop thinking, as they are **based on problem-solving situations**. In doing so, the repetition of certain games or stages of games can be directly

used for learning. A didactic game can be defined as a **self-realisation of pupils, governed by specific rules and pursuing educational objectives**. In any activity, if the outcome of the activity is judged in terms of the order of the participants, it is a competition. The most effective pedagogically are competitive games, which increase activities' momentum (frequency), combining the naturally conceived and necessary division of labour within groups with a strong interest in the final result (evaluation). Games and competitions are based on multiple, highly purposeful (factual) and, under the given conditions, completely natural (spontaneous) communication.

Didactic play is analogous to the spontaneous activity of children and adults who pursue didactic goals. It can take place in the classroom, in the gym, on the playground, in the village, or in nature. It has its own rules, and requires continuous management, and final evaluation. It is intended for individuals and groups of pupils, and the role of the pedagogical leader ranges from the main organiser to the observer. It has the advantage of being stimulating, as it arouses interest, increases the involvement of the participants in the activities carried out, encourages their creativity, spontaneity, cooperation and competitiveness, makes them use different knowledge and skills, and involves life experience. Some didactic games are close to real-life model situations.

Adults have a different motivation to play than children. They like to play, but **they need to know why they are doing it and what the educational goal is**. Playing cannot just be unproductive fun. This brings to the fore the analysis that takes place after the game is over. It is feedback that can be useful for everyday life situations.

10.1 Team vs. problem

Many adults are motivated to play by a challenge. Therefore, 'team versus problem' games are suitable for adults, as they require the skills and experience of a whole team of people working together to find a solution. In these challenges, the end goal is known, while finding a way to reach that goal is in the hands of the group members, who must reach it themselves. Such a game leads to the acquisition of experience that the participants can use in their practice. During the game, participants can experiment; they do not have to worry about making a mistake, because it will not be reflected in their professional life and will remain a game mistake.

10.2 Role-playing in simulated situations

Games are usually part of a set of activation methods in adult education. However, the play also appears in simulation, staging and role-play methods. Model situations help participants to learn a

process or practice a practical skill. Games for dealing with model situations tend to be overly fictional and usually take place in a supernatural setting, which should give the participants the necessary perspective.

For example, games are used in which players have conflicting interests and try to defend their positions. Through the game, **participants can learn how to resolve disputes diplomatically** in the workplace, but also in other areas of their lives. Observing the participants during the game makes it possible to identify who in the group is submissive, who is dominant, who tends to lead, and who prefers to be led. As part of the evaluation of the game, the most and least likeable people in the story can be analysed, which strategies worked well and which did not, what the participants realised during the game and how they apply this in their real life.

10.3 Objectives of educational games

A game aims to establish contact between people in a group, improve communication, promote creativity, foster self-knowledge, train cooperation or deepen the topic discussed. The important point of educational games is the **EXPERIENCE**. Research shows that knowledge that we have connected to emotions stays in our memory longer. For example, it can be the joy of a participant figuring something out independently. Such knowledge is of higher value to the participant than a lesson presented to them in a ready-made form.

Some games are suitable for the beginning of the course for familiarisation purposes; others are suitable for the end of the course for feedback. Some games promote concentration; others are for relaxation. When choosing a game, we should always keep in mind the goal we are pursuing.

The goals of the model games:

- **Icebreakers**
They will break and melt the ice. They are games to help participants express themselves better and more calmly.
- **Getting to know each other**
During the games, participants will learn more about each other, everything from names to personal information. This is a great way to start the workshop!

- **Building trust**
Games and activities can help the group work better together as a team. If colleagues in the group become friends, a new form of trust is created. Group members learn to trust each other during the games.
- **Conflict resolution**
Games are a valuable tool to help resolve conflicts in a group.
- **Revealing hidden problems**
When a group is brought together, problems that no one has ever known about before may be revealed.
- **Balancing**
Games help to balance things out. Balancing can be helpful when a group faces a challenge or an activity requiring creativity.
- **Pushing the limits**
When playing games, participants can test what their own limits and boundaries are in a the group, in a safe environment.
- **Pedagogical skills**
Games improve discussion and questioning skills as well as leadership skills.
- **Relaxing or energizing**
Games help to change the energy level of the group and help members to relax after a hard work. Games can also be used to wake up a sleepy group.
- **Problem-solving**
Games can be used as tools in problem-solving.
- **Relaxation and laughter**
Games can release emotions such as anger and frustration relatively safely.

Games and exercises can simulate real-life experiences and help us think about applying knowledge. They can also introduce a certain amount of complexity or questioning and thus stimulate a process of action-reflection-action throughout the proceedings. Into the good game or exercise will involve everyone in the group to support the group. The purpose is to maximise participation and allow as

many people as possible to express themselves in a unique way. They are supported by individual participation and expression and can bring synergy to the group through action. They provide a common basis for a well-functioning group and create favourable conditions for the growth of participatory behaviour and democratic spirit.

11 HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE FOR BLENDED LEARNING

For a blended learning approach to work, it is important to consider both, the hardware components and the software to be used. Here is a brief overview of the most important points.

For the hardware, consider the following:

Make sure that each learner has a reliable computer or that computers are available for loan that can be used by the learners.

Also ensure that a stable internet connection is available for blended learning concepts.

Make sure your learners can see and hear each other. Test your and your learners' microphones and cameras before starting the blended learning course.

In principle, there are no limits to software requirements - work with the best possible variety of tools to motivate your learners to learn! However, in order to create a blended learning environment that works, there are some basic things to consider:

- Use a **Learning Management System (LMS)**: Your organisation may already offer an LMS tool to support and manage your learners' learning processes. A well-known example is Moodle. If you want to try out another free tool, try [edapp](#).
- Choose a **video conferencing tool** that suits you and your learners, such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams or Zoom. This will allow you to organise face-to-face classes online.
- If you don't have the option of setting up an LMS, or still need an additional platform for sharing data and feedback, use tools such as Google Drive or Dropbox.
- Use **creative content creation tools**. Your learners will be more engaged if the content is exciting and creative. Canva, for example, makes it easy to create engaging learning sheets or presentations. They can use the templates and change the text.

- You can also show some **tools to organise learning or group works** to your learners. They can use them to create to-do-lists, to coordinate all tasks and to communicate with each other in group works. One example for that is Trello.
- You should also show **platforms for self-learning** to your students. It is beneficial for them if they know where they can find additional information relating the course content. They could watch, for example, YouTube videos or use open educational resources.

In the following, you can find some **practical tips and tricks for successful blended learning lessons**:

- As with face-to-face teaching, it is important to have a **good structure for the content** to be taught. Plan the face-to-face and online sessions in advance. Think about **which content is particularly suitable for online lessons** and which needs to be considered in a lesson in class.
- **Regular communication and exchange** are essential for successful teaching. Make sure your learners can reach you during agreed times and let them know how to contact you as soon as possible. Also motivate learners to share their thoughts, questions and experiences with other learners and encourage this through explicit tasks.
- **Interactive elements** have a positive effect on learners' learning success. Blended learning can use a variety of different elements. Support the learning with podcasts or videos to encourage further thinking and understanding. Include graphics or quizzes to keep the content varied.
- **Group works** cannot only be done offline, but also during online lessons or as asynchronous learning. You can use breakout rooms to organise group works during a lesson, or you can give your students homework they can do in a group. Group works decrease the feeling of being alone during blended learning and increases the motivation of your learners.
- Remember to provide your learners with the **opportunity to give feedback** on their online learning experiences. In face-to-face classes, you will notice if some are struggling or dissatisfied and can respond to their needs. In online classes, this is more difficult and feedback tools can help you to manage your learners' frustration.
- **Prepare well for online meetings** with learners. Make sure that you can test the setup with a colleague beforehand. Check that your microphone and camera will work with your chosen videoconferencing tool. Use the features of the different tools. Screen sharing allows you to share your presentation or other content. There are features for involving learners, such as show of hands or short polls or the use of breakout rooms, as mentioned above.

12 SUITABLE TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS FOR INTERACTIVE LEARNING

There are a myriad of tools available for interactive learning. It's important to choose the one that serves the learning needs of the course but is also user-friendly for your adult learners. Sometimes it's better to **stick to a few tools that work well** than to use new ones in every class. This would shift the focus from the purpose of your course (the learning objectives) to the new tools and gadgets that appear in every class.

In general, there are several reasons to use tools in interactive learning:

Video conference/online classes

New tools pop up almost every day, although there are some tools that the majority of teachers and learners are most familiar with:

- Zoom
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Meet

Before you start your course, it is important to inform the learners of the tool that you will be using. You might want to send them a **video tutorial** on how to use it and offer **personal assistance** in case they need it.

Learning Management System

This is a tool that supports the development, delivery, assessment, evaluation and administration of a course. Some of these tools can be very complete, with multiple features for the learner and the teacher. It is very important to make sure that ALL learners know how to use it, to make sure that they make the most of it. Sending video tutorials and **spending some time in class to get used to the LMS** is therefore a very good idea.

Some Learning Management Tools that you could use are:

- Google Classroom
- Desire2Learn
- Moodle
- Instructure Canvas

Collaboration tools

Online collaboration between learners and/or with the teacher is one of the most powerful features of digital learning.

These tools offer greater flexibility and the possibility to work independently from each other on the same task/document. Again, it's vital that all learners feel comfortable using the tool and not to use too many different tools in the same course.

Collaboration tools can be used for brainstorming, planning, writing, editing, making presentations, etc.

Some popular tools are:

- For brainstorming and mind mapping: Miro, Mindmeister, Padlet
- For texts (planning, writing and editing): Etherpad, Google Docs, Word (Office 365)
- Presentations: Google Slides, Keynote, Canva, PowerPoint (Office 365)
- Design: Canva

Feedback/checking knowledge

It's easy to use tools to ask your learners for feedback and/or check what they have learned in a pleasant and playful way.

Some feedback tools are: Mentimeter or Slido.

The most popular tool for personalising online quizzes is Kahoot.

13 TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS

As the level of digital competencies of the course participants might be quite low, it is the responsibility of a teacher to offer technical support to them. Teachers have many possibilities to offer support to learners in case of technical problems in the context of blended learning. The following measures can be taken:

- Let learners know at the beginning of the course **when you will be available** in case of technical problems.

- On the one hand, you can share your telephone number as a **contact** and indicate that you are available during some specific hours. On the other hand, it is necessary to share an e-mail address. This will enable learners to direct less urgent enquiries to you.
- **Set up some rules** for your learners on how to deal with technical problems.
- Spend the first lesson(s) on **explaining the different tools** that will be used during this blended learning course. Open them together with your learners and click through them, so that there is no fear of using these unknown tools anymore. Point out that learners can also consult the help pages of each tool.
- In each face-to-face lesson in class you should **proactively ask your learners if they have faced any problems** during self-learning or online classes. This gives each learner the possibility to share one's uncertainties or fears.
- In learning management systems, you can set up a facility so that **learners can share information and problems with each other**, for example a chat. This feature can be used in case of technical problems, e.g. if you are unavailable.
- **Refer to known problems** that have arisen in previous teaching situations. If possible, summarise the most common problems and solutions in a document and make this document available to your learners.
- **Encourage learners to read the document on common problems** before contacting you, or to ask fellow learners before trying to contact you by phone or email.

Finally, it is necessary to **provide learners with the opportunity to give feedback**. This can be done by sending out an evaluation questionnaire or by including a quiz at the end of a lesson. In this way, blended learning units can be continuously improved which will result in a higher motivation of the learners.

14 LEARNING MATERIALS

Preparing learning materials for online or blended learning requires a careful planning and strategy. This also applies to adapting existing materials for this purpose.

14.1 Creating learning content

When creating content for blended learning purposes, you should consider the following aspects:

- As with face-to-face teaching, you need to **define clear learning objectives** for your learners. The blended learning framework offers a variety of new methods to achieve the learning objectives.
- **Coordinate content with the appropriate use of new media.** Include podcasts or videos in the learning units. It is also recommended to work with **game-based learning opportunities** as this significantly increases the motivation of learners. You can create gamification content on your own, but you can also use existing elements of the internet.
- Take your time to **test your developed materials on the different channels.** Printed materials in face-to-face classes may be clear and easy to read, but uploading and formatting them in a different file format may cause parts to move and make whole texts unintelligible.
- **Convert existing files to PDF format** to ensure that documents are shown correctly on a PC, tablet or smartphone.
- If you are planning to use existing learning materials for blended learning lessons, it is best to **adapt them to the new circumstances.** Long, difficult texts are not suitable for the learners to work on alone. Divide these texts or presentations into several small online units.
- It is not necessary to come up with a new tool for every section; try to include some **selected media** such as videos, blog posts or short quizzes at the beginning.
- The blended learning approach is a concept that is allowed and encouraged to evolve. For this reason, **learner feedback** is essential and can be used to inform about the use of new tools.

14.2 Graphic layout – tips for visualisation

To motivate people to learn, it is recommended to **design learning materials in an attractive way.** This is an important issue for materials that are used in class, but it is even more important for materials that should be used during self-learning sessions. Self-learning is usually difficult for learners with a lower level of qualifications. Thus, everything that makes learning more motivating is needed, and an attractive graphic layout of the learning materials is one example of that. But what should be considered in this context?

- The **layout should be as easy to understand** as possible. For example, learning platforms should be easy to navigate. It is important that there are not too many things on the platform that distract learners. Or when creating videos, for example with some questions in between, it is important to design these videos in a way that makes it easy for the learners to watch these videos and answer the questions.

- Try to **mix different formats of digital content**. This can be, for example: text, images, graphics, videos, audio files or interactive content. A good variety of these options is motivating and keeps the concentration of learners high.
- When designing scripts or presentations, keep in mind **not to write too much text on one page**. If there is too much text on one page, learners might become demotivated quickly. Also, when creating instructions for self-learning tasks, think of keeping them short and easy to understand.
- To avoid too much continuous text in a script, you could **highlight some important facts**. You could, for example, create boxes between the text blocks and fill them with an important definition, a practical example or a short summary of the most important fact mentioned above. This doesn't only result in a more visually appealing document but also makes understanding the topic easier for the learners.
- **Use different colours** that suit together when creating scripts, images or videos. A colourful learning environment results in more fun when learning.
- You could **include personas** ("avatars") in your lessons. The same personas could be part of the learning platform used, but they could also be included in scripts for practical examples or in pictures and videos. This gives the learners the feeling of recognising something they already know in a new learning content.
- When creating **learning videos**, it might be beneficial to not only film yourself while explaining a certain topic but to **include some animations or a presentation in the background** so that it is easier for learners with different learning styles to follow.

14.3 Sharing materials with the participants

An important consideration is to create learning materials and make them available in LMS tools or other file-sharing programmes in such a way that all learners can access these files. Different options are available for sharing learning materials with learners:

- Learning platforms or LMS (Learning Management Systems) with the ability to download individual materials
- Storage solutions such as iCloud, Dropbox or Google Drive, where learners can also collaborate on documents
- E-mails to send documents or remind learners of courses or tasks that needs to be completed
- Use face-to-face meetings to distribute learning materials and communicate planned use of materials in online classes

Explain to your learners also that they have the possibility to **download the shared materials**. This way, the students can always access the materials, even if they leave a learning space and don't have any internet access anymore.

It is recommended to **test the accessibility** of all created and shared materials as well as tools that should be used together with your learners. In many cases, the internet speed is very good at the face-to-face location and when planning the units, but poor at the learners' learning locations. When the internet speed slows down, loading large graphics, long videos or podcasts is difficult and demotivating for learners. Thus, it would be good to test the use of these materials and tools in advance to ensure a good workflow during the course. The first homework for your learners could for example be testing to open different materials and tools and checking if everything works well.

15 PROFESSIONALISM OF THE TRAINERS

The professionalism of the lecturer is associated with the effort to describe the professional competencies that are the basis for expressing the professional quality of the trainer. There are no uniform views on the structure and classification of these professional competencies. What inspires respect and trust in the audience and what influences the success of a trainer, what is a natural source of authority, is his or her personality. It is this informal or natural authority that places the lecturer before the audience as a respected 'expert on pathways to effective adult learning', in the position of someone who can advise on problems, make decisions and maintain a respectful and individual relationship with individual learners. In the competency model of the trainer's profession, this area of professionalism is linked to the attempt to name the so-called personal competencies.

This broad term encompasses a range of qualities. In particular, personally committed trainers are characterised by a **high level of personal responsibility for the educational progress of their students and for the educational outcomes of the courses**, they also have a certain **moral quality that influences the personal and value development of the students**. The spectrum of personal competencies also includes pedagogical creativity, the ability to solve problems, critical thinking, teamwork and initiating change. Emphasis is placed on a high level of professional socialisation associated with understanding, empathy, tolerance, general outlook and broad interests in social events.

A very important aspect of the formation of a lecturer's professionalism is his/her quality and systematic professional training. Since its inception, its form has undergone and this process is not and can never be completed.

Personal image of the trainer

The image of the trainer is one of the most important areas of the trainer's preparation for presentation to the participants. In order to make the presentation interesting, you must have a personal image that makes you visible. Let's realise that the trainees will subconsciously form an opinion about you in less than a minute they see you. The **first impression** can, therefore, significantly **affect the overall impression and the success** of the presentation.

The personal image is a combination of internal and external factors that make up our image that we have the greatest influence on creating. Part of our charisma is appearance, manner of speech, characteristic expressions, communication, social presentation, habits, and behaviour. How we want our surroundings to perceive us is also important - the role we profile ourselves in. We should develop our image, work on our own ourselves in the light of experience, and information acquired, and create a new image in accordance with our plans for the future. Appearance and clothing are some of the most important criteria by which we judge people "at first sight - the halo effect", even before, before they can show us their strengths and talents.

Tips to make a good first impression

There are some things that should be considered to influence your image:

- **First impression**

The first minute of the presentation is the most important in this respect - the attendees/the listeners form a crucial first impression, and therefore we should not be underestimated and we should make the best possible impression. An unfavourable first impression is difficult to remove and it costs us a lot of effort afterwards. This is mainly about visual perceptions - physical features, demeanour, clothing, facial expression, and hairstyle.

It is said that the first impression is created 55% by appearance, 38% by voice, and only 7% by content.

- **Professional impression**

It is about what we can offer in the professional sphere. It is mainly created by the following characteristics:

- competence
- credibility
- self-control
- self-confidence
- dignity

- **Clothing**

Appropriate clothing affects us both in our private and professional lives. Clothes should frame us – we, the lecturers, are important, not our clothes. At presentations, the rule of thumb is always to dress one notch more formally than the participants. Women and men must have a positive effect on all the senses of the participants, elegance, neatness, and cleanliness of dress are essential, but don't underestimate the sense of smell - the subtle scent of your image has a positive effect. Women should not look defiant and men extravagant, it reduces attention to the subject of the presentation. The lecturer may remove his/her jacket after formally asking the participants for permission. At the beginning, agree with the participants on the form of address. Hand out business cards before the presentation itself, do not put them casually in your pockets.

- **Colour of dress**

The harmony of the colours of a dress with the colour of the eyes, hair and skin is a guideline. If we have fair hair and skin, we will choose soft colour shades and muted colours. Three basic darker colours should be the basis of the wardrobe - especially black, brown and blue.

- **Make-up**

If make-up is used, it should be adapted to the occasion. It is the adjustment of the face to say how we would like the attendees to see us. Tone make-up should not disturb the overall colour harmony. The face is not a battlefield of competing colours, but part of the overall look that first catches the eye. As a rule of thumb, either choose bright eyes or a prominent mouth, never both at the same time.

- **Hair**

Choose a hairstyle that matches your face. The hair should match the overall shape of the body. Hair colour changes the overall look of the person. We can enhance grey hair by colour-coordinating all our clothes with it. The basis of a nice hairstyle is a good haircut. In general, hair should be combed and give a neat impression.

- **Scent**

You could also choose a perfume or cologne. Keep in mind to not use too much perfume and to apply it mainly to the areas where the blood pulses (temples, behind the ears, neckline, wrists).

All the above-mentioned aspects should be kept also during online teaching. Be aware that your head or the whole figure is the main element that the participants can see. Be also aware of the **background behind you during online sessions**. Check the participant's view and remove the casual mess. We recommend you to select a preset background in the online tool to avoid uncomfortable participants looking into your privacy. Choose also a quiet place during your online sessions.

16 EVALUATION

Evaluating the participants' progress and engaging in self-reflection as a trainer are integral components of enhancing the learning experience.

Evaluation of the participants

The evaluation process should be holistic and tailored to the needs of non-skilled learners. Begin by establishing clear learning objectives for each session. After the training, use various assessment methods to gauge participants' grasp of the material. These methods can include quizzes, practical exercises, and group discussions. Feedback sessions are also vital. Encourage participants to share their thoughts on the effectiveness of the training, enabling you to understand what worked well and identify areas for improvement.

Here you will find some tips on how to create an evaluation for participants:

- **Set Clear Objectives:** Clearly define the learning objectives of the training session. What should participants know or be able to do after the session? These objectives will serve as the basis for your evaluation criteria.



- **Choose Assessment Methods:** Select assessment methods that align with your learning objectives. For non-skilled learners, consider using a mix of methods such as short quizzes, practical exercises, group discussions, and hands-on activities. These methods should gauge participants' understanding, application, and engagement.
- **Create Evaluation Tools:** Develop evaluation tools such as quiz questions, rubrics for practical exercises, and discussion prompts. Ensure they are clear, concise, and directly relate to the learning objectives. Keep in mind the diverse learning styles of non-skilled learners.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Incorporate regular feedback sessions throughout the training. Allow participants to share their thoughts on the content, delivery, and overall experience. Consider using surveys or open discussions to gather qualitative feedback.
- **Measure Progress:** For longer training programs, consider periodic assessments to track participants' progress. This can help identify areas where additional support might be needed.
- **Analyse and Adapt:** Collect and analyse the evaluation data. Identify trends, strengths, and areas for improvement. Use this feedback to adapt your teaching strategies and content for subsequent sessions.

Self-Reflection for Development

Effective trainers understand the value of continuous improvement. After each training session, take the time for self-reflection. Consider what teaching strategies resonated with the participants and what could be refined. Assess your delivery style, engagement techniques, and the overall pacing of the session. Did the participants actively participate? Were the learning objectives met? Self-reflection helps you identify your strengths and areas where growth is needed.

Incorporate peer feedback as well. After observing your training, colleagues can offer insights that you might not have considered. This collaborative approach fosters a dynamic learning environment for trainers as well.



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