iDream

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I01 – Establish a common Profile of Tutors and evaluation

Background

Traditional learning and development mainly focuses on face-to-face training and paper-based resources. It's also difficult - and expensive - to deliver high quality face-to-face training with consistency across a larger organization or transnationally. The internet had transformed how learners access information and teachers/tutors/trainers were focusing 'upskilling' their digital skills in order to keep learners engaged.

In recent years, training, development, and lifelong learning was undergoing considerable changes, to include the requirements of new digital technology and requirements of learners. The impact of the global pandemic Covid-19 accelerated the changes, switching the move to digital into first gear.   Digital and blended learning is more accessible, cost effective, and can provide a more tailored learning experience. As working from home becomes the "new normal," digital training has gone from a luxury to a necessity.

Learning institutions, organizations, agencies, and tutors/teachers/trainers are now including e-learning into their lessons which has resulted from working from home and distance learning which affected most institutions across Europe during lockdowns.

Now more than ever before, trainers need to be up to speed with technology to ensure they remain capable of delivery and to ensure no student is left behind either through social or digital disadvantage.

1. Introduction

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the project partners will elaborate the common profile that matches all partner countries (initial assessment) and will revisit the profile after receiving feedback during project implementation (final assessment) to come to a final agreed common profile for the adult educators in the process of career changing.

The element of innovation is that this common profile will put more importance on psychological support as a solution for beneficiaries' struggles. The impact of this IO is that even after the project ends, the trainers among the partnership will keep the same teaching methods and being empowered by this experience, will train other trainers in the same manner. The diverse range of profiles of participants will inform the structure and modular content of the training materials. This document will be available in 5 different languages.

2. Specificities of digital training

To **develop a digital training,** it's not enough to simply 'know the lesson by heart.' Online training requires the trainer to be able to captivate the student with interesting content, but it is also fundamental how it is presented before their eyes. Especially, when all of a sudden, training has completely turned around and been transformed.

The fact that we no longer can attend a regular classroom course has made the biggest difference. Now, professionals from the e-learning world must (re)adjust and **manage teams remotely**. This new paradigm requires new essential skills and tools for trainers to create successful training experiences.

The digital trainer should organize his/her lesson taking into consideration **21st Century Skills**. They allow the participants to access, analyze, manage, synthesize, evaluate, create, share information, in a variety of forms and media. Digital trainers should prepare participants to use these skills and become Lifelong Learners.
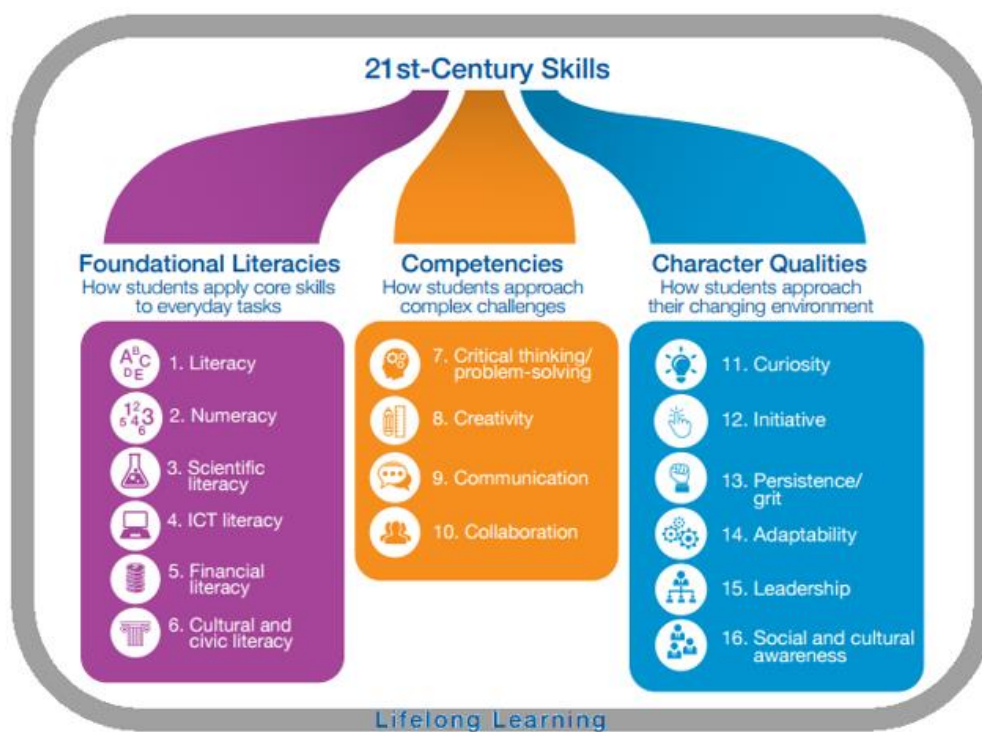
STEM Education Helps Teach Skills Necessary for 21st Century Success (2015)

3. **Methodology**

To map the profile of the digital trainer, surveys were conducted. The survey questions emerged from the findings in separate focus group reviews and observations by each partnership member, to interpret practice in the different countries. Questions in the survey explored the characteristics and skills of the digital trainer and the expectations of learners. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey results. The survey was translated into 7 languages, which reflects the composition of the Erasmus+ partnership and enables the survey to be carried out across the partnership and associated partners linked to the project.
The survey was piloted for intelligibility, time needed to complete and potential technical or logistical errors during completion.

Building the survey

The online survey tool was developed across the partnership to allow for European wide participation and to ensure relevant data was captured from a variety of respondents. The survey consisted of multiple-choice and open-ended questions to collect qualitative as well as

quantitative data. Respondents could then read in their language and respond to the question by selecting an answer and comments where appropriate. At the end of the survey, the respondent had the option to leave an overall comment in writing.

The responses were collected anonymously. When submitting their answers, the participants gave permission for the partnership to use the survey data.

Distribution of the survey

The call to participate in the survey was distributed via the partnership networks in each jurisdiction, using existing partnership social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and via the dedicated project platforms of Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, partners utilized their organizational website and mailing lists with a brief explanation of the call to participate in the survey in the languages that were available to the project teams: English, Polish, Spanish, Dutch, French, Greek and Turkish.

Existing trainers engaged in training in each jurisdiction received a personal direct email request to participate. One week before the deadline of the survey, reminders were sent out to these possible participants and published on social media channels to maximize engagement.   The survey was open for 10 weeks and the deadline was extended for an additional 2 weeks to allow late respondents to still participate.

4. **Results – Digital Tutor/Trainer Skills**

The survey successfully engaged 66 tutors/trainers from across 8 European countries, providing a diverse and inclusive response, which was used to influence the development of the toolkits of the project. Taking in consideration what we want to achieve in the iDREAM project, we consider that digital tutors/trainers need to be multifaceted, with diverse from social abilities to technical ones, **transversal skills**. Tips included:

- incorporating audio and video into lesson plans
- maximizing online discussion forums, utilizing Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) to encourage participation from all learners, facilitate group discussion, group work and or peer review activities.

- consider accessibility issues of learners.

- consider how the course will be structured in an online approach; to what extent you will employ asynchronous (not live) and synchronous (live) methods, discussion forums or group work

- recording the sessions will allow you to share the experience with those that were unable to attend

- follow up your live sessions with asynchronous discussion forums

- regular communication between lessons to maintain momentum.

- consider creating a recorded mini lecture/seminar or Q&A session, where you answer questions submitted to you from your students in advance.

- group work could be a great way to keep your students connected and help them to still feel a sense of connection to the course.

- check that learners have the required digital tools needed to collaborate

- provide clear guidelines for group activities and their assessment (if summative)

Learning Materials

The Digital Trainer should avoid simply providing existing classroom materials online for students to read through. This may already be a service you offer learners to supplement your face-to-face teaching and not as the sole means of instruction.

When sharing learning materials online, consider how you replace the face-to-face presence, context, and explanation that you would share in the classroom.

Offer expanded explanations on PowerPoints or additional resources provided. Ask yourself if you believe that the learner will understand the meaning of your content if reliant on the digital lesson alone. If not, add an explanation or additional resources to support their understanding such as core texts/resources that learners will need and explore online alternatives such as Open Educational Resources (OER).

Accessibility

Delivering online courses provides additional opportunities to increase access to education. However, much like face to face training, learners face challenges to accessing content including those with sensory (e.g.sight, hearing), cognitive (e.g. dyslexia/dyspraxia) and physical (e.g.mouse/typing) access needs.

Designing online courses to be accessible to all is a fundamental principle of open and equitable education. Legislation compels training organizations to ensure that all digital materials used on campus or online are fully accessible.

Guidance for Digital Accessibility

Designing for users on the autistic spectrum

Do

- use simple colors
- write in plain English
- use simple sentences and bullets
- make buttons descriptive - for example, Attach files
- build simple and consistent layouts

Don't

- use bright contrasting colors
- use figures of speech and idioms
- create a wall of text
- make buttons vague and unpredictable - for example, Click here
- build complex and cluttered layouts

Designing for users of screen readers

Do

- describe images and provide transcripts for video
- follow a linear, logical layout
- structure content using HTML5
- build for keyboard use only
- write descriptive links and headings - for example, Contact us

Don't

- only show information in an image or video
- spread content all over a page
- rely on text size and placement for structure
- force mouse or screen use
- write uninformative links and headings - for example, Click here

Designing for users with low vision

Do

- use good contrasts and a readable font size
- publish all information on web pages (HTML)
- use a combination of color, shapes and text
- follow a linear, logical layout,
- ensure text flows and is visible when text is enlarged/zoomed to 200%
- put buttons and notifications in context

Don't

- use low color contrasts and small font size
- bury information in downloads
- only use color to convey meaning
- spread content all over a page and force user to scroll horizontally when text is magnified to 200%
- separate actions from their context

Designing for users with physical or motor disabilities

Do

- make large clickable actions
- give form fields space
- design for keyboard or speech only use
- design with mobile and touchscreen in mind
- provide shortcuts

Don't

- demand precision
- bunch interactions together
- make dynamic content that requires a lot of mouse movement
- have short time out commands
- tire users with lots of typing and scrolling

Designing for users who are deaf or hard of hearing

Do

- write in plain English
- use subtitles or provide transcripts for video
- use a linear, logical layout
- break up content with sub-headings, images, and videos
- let users ask for their preferred communication support when booking appointments

Don't

- use complicated words or figures of speech
- put content in audio or video only
- make complex layouts and menus
- make users read long blocks of content
- make telephone the only means of contact for users

Designing for users with dyslexia

Do

- use images and diagrams to support text
- align text to the left and keep a consistent layout
- consider producing materials in other formats (for example, audio and video)
- keep content short, clear and simple
- let users change the contrast between background and text

Don't

- use large blocks of heavy text
- underline words, use italics or capitals
- force users to remember things from previous pages - give reminders and prompts
- rely on accurate spelling - use autocorrect or provide suggestions
- put too much information in one place

Assessment

The trainer/tutor/facilitator should be competent at assessing the learning outcomes of the learner to measure and assess achievement.

Skills & Competencies

Based on the results of the questionnaire developed for the trainers and which was filled in by

more than 66 tutors/trainers from 8 European countries, the following skills turned out to be

the most relevant for a digital trainer/tutor:

1.	**Communication skills**	➢ It is important to be using the right tools at the right moment depending on the objective of a digital training. During such training communication tools aimed at the maximization of the learning triangle tutor – student – content, are important. ➢ Always keep in mind the type of audience you are targeting and what their needs are. Keep in mind that the learning process is not unilateral. You have the knowledge, but your audience is the one applying it afterwards. ● active listening ● keeping the interest of the learners ● patience ● facilitator skills ● providing appropriate and timely feedback to participants
2.	**Digital competences**	➢ For any training to be effective, and to be a good digital tutor some technical abilities will be relevant, at least as a user's medium level. ● Using interactive online tools, be aware of ICT possibilities for students. ● Competence to work with devices (laptops, desktops, smart phones, microphones, headphones, etc.) ● Competence on the software solutions to be able to use them and choose the right one (zoom, teams, etc.), ● Up to date with new trends ● Motivation to learn / self-development/ continuous professional development (CPD) ● To be open minded about new technology ● Competent at graphical presentation
1.	**Communication skills**	

3.	**Organizational skills**	- Establish clear rules from the beginning concerning the digital training you are providing - Ability to structure your training so that it is suitable for distance learning. Delivering digital lessons differ from face-to-face sessions. - Online research skills: find the best information, faster. Nowadays, we can easily access any kind of information in seconds, but you should be very clear about the concepts and keywords you want to focus on, so you don't waste time on content that doesn't lead you —or your audience— anywhere. Able to identify reliable information sources to reference. - Structure the information in a way that's easy and visually attractive (in sections, subsections…)
4.	**Audience tracking skills**	- Adapt the content so it is in the zone of proximal development and learning style of different learners - To notice and interpret non-verbal body language while teaching and communicating via technologies - To stimulate interaction between the learners - Establish a sense of an online community. Isolation is one of the largest complaints of online learning. Letting participants understand that they are part of a large community makes them feel more connected and more likely to succeed in an online environment - Demonstrate empathy - be respectful and understanding with the capacity of every student and to be able to adapt when ICT problems happen (because they do, and very often) - Be supportive, including appropriate feedback to learners.

		● Keep track of participants' active involvement in online course (to do this the e-tutor needs to apply the interactivity rule: every 3-5 minutes or 3-4 slides participants should be interactive) ● track whether participants are registered/enrolled in the course ● Track learner assessment and outcomes, monitoring results
5.	**Creativity & Flexibility**	● Prepare interactive activities which are appropriate for the learners and learning styles ● Ability to keep the learners' interest, despite the distance and digital format of delivery ● Capacity to improvise ● Be able to switch between different methodologies ● Openness to new and lifelong learning experiences ● adaptability
6.	**Very good knowledge about the content of the training**	● Digital tutors will require Trainers for Trainers' (TOT) skills, because even when being a digital trainer, who already provides digital trainings, it is always important to participate in educational/formative processes. A trainer's role is focused on facilitating learners' processes and work, both individually and as a class-group to ensure learning objectives are realized.