



IO1- TEACHER'S BOOK

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1 Introduction

The Teachers Book is the 1st Intellectual Output within the 4E project. It is earmarked for adult teachers and serves the purpose of showing them a background of the unemployment issue among 50+ people in the European Union, their needs and methods of teaching them the necessary skills to reenter the labor market, as well as presenting the best practices dealing with the problem from the project partners' countries.

The output highlights the importance of life-long learning and demonstrates theoretical means to implement it. The overview of the problem is followed by the research-based ideas for innovative ways of educating adults as well as areas within which the education should focus, ending with exemplary actions of the participating partners' countries on the issue.

The Teachers Book is the first, theoretical, part of the methodology, which will later be complemented with the training material based on the results of the market research, encompassing practical examples of the concepts presented before.

1.1 Main results of the research in partner countries

Partners have conducted an in-depth research in order to address the real needs of senior workers in the present teachers' book.

The research can be accessed in the following address: <http://4eproject.eu/2020/07/30/desk-research-situation-of-the-citizens-50-on-the-labour-market-and-the-required-skills/>

The main findings regarding the level of unemployment in participant countries show some disparities. The country with the lowest rate of senior unemployment is Italy with 7% and the highest is 36.5% of Czech Republic. Countries with higher rates are Greece (34.3%), Lithuania (21.5%) and Hungary (20.16%). Spain (11.79%) and Sweden (7.1%) have rates below 20%.

The **most demanded skills** for workers are similar for all countries, in this sense the report shows the importance of soft skills, digital skills and communication skills have for employees. Foreign languages are also frequently mention as key skills for workers. The term **soft skills** imply many different skills, the most mentioned in participant countries are teamwork; adaptability and flexibility, and creativity.

Participants on interviews share common opinions about the **main barriers** that workers over 50 years old face when trying to re-enter on the labor market or when trying to apply to a new position. Lack of



2 Innovative ways of educating people 50+

Evidently, older workers need innovative types of training in which the conveyed material is not only theoretical but also useful in practice and could be applied in the workplace. However, the learning process of older workers can be very unique - they are not so flexible as younger learners, they have their own personal lives and jobs, activities, other duties, so this can pose some challenges for both trainers and learners. On the other hand, older employees have more experience, are strong specialists in their field and strive for everyday improvement.

The development of competencies and skills that employers' value is crucial for older workers' future job prospects. For this reason, this chapter will address innovative types of learning that are widely used in teaching, as well as in non-formal education programs. Below you will find more detailed information on the seven key innovative types of learning, which are suitable and efficient for educating older workers.

2.1 Learning with Technologies

Another view found around the world surrounds the use of technologies as a key to students improving their learning and 'marketability.' Within the realm of technologies, teachers encourage students to innovate, bringing them full-circle into the 21st-century where visibility and adaptability rule.

Learning technologies are communication, information and technological tools used to enhance learning, teaching and assessment. This may involve computer-based learning or multimedia materials that could be used to supplement in class activities. Key categories include tutorials, simulations, productivity tools, communication tools- email etc.

Three-dimensional (3D) printing technology involves using computer-aided design (CAD) software to develop a model or obtaining a 3D print file from a database or other source and using a 3D printer to produce a physical object. Benefits of using 3D printing technologies as an educational tool include 3D printing positions students as creators, therefore creating innovators; 3D printing creates responsible digital citizens; fuels the creative process and promotes problem-solving skills as well as creative thinking.

In terms of **augmented reality**, the basic scheme of this method is through the use of technological device, which allows you to visualize different sources of information of a physical object within the real world with virtual components. In education, augmented reality enables us to create interactive models for learning and training purposes.



An increasingly ageing workforce along with the increasing use of technology in modern workplaces mean that employability of older adults is at stake. Therefore, **learning with technologies method** of teaching is suitable for older adults as it provides them with skills necessary to increase their employability in today's work environment.

2.2 Personalized Education

According to the traditional learning model, trainings usually take place in groups - this means that each learner has certain knowledge, competencies, insights, but they are at different levels. Bearing in mind the 21st century advances in new technologies and innovations, **personalized learning** is gaining popularity these days. Personalized teaching responds to each learner's case – present knowledge, skills, learning needs and pace of learning.

With older learners in particular, personalized training can be beneficial in that it considers not only the learner's existing abilities, but also the potential difficulties that older workers face in the workplace. In addition, the newest technologies create the possibility to assess their skill level before the training and expectations, their progress during the training as well as the ability to determine the next steps, which are needed for further improvement.¹ In other words, each learner gets an individual plan of the training which is based on their individual skills and interests.

However, there are a couple of risks of personalized learning. Firstly, it should not be confused with self-learning. The learner should still be able to receive support from the trainer, therefore, personalised learning must be combined with other training techniques as well, such as teaching in groups or mentoring. In addition, the use of new technologies should not be a necessity for personalised learning.² Although personal education is mostly associated with e-learning, it works perfectly in class during personal interactions with learners.

All in all, personalized education type of learning considers the skills and strengths of learners beforehand and ensures that each learner achieves the highest possible results.

¹ https://evollution.com/attracting-students/todays_learner/personalized-learning-is-key-to-meeting-students-needs-in-continuing-education

² <https://iite.unesco.org/pics/publications/en/files/3214716.pdf>

2.3 Flexible Learning

Another way of learning that is gaining popularity among both younger and older learners is **flexible learning**, which offers students the possibility to choose *how, what, when* and *where* they learn.³

In other words, the time, place, and pace of learning may be determined by learners.⁴ *Pace* refers to the learner's ability of planning time and study at a time and pace convenient to him/her. *Place* is especially important for a learner who is studying and working at the same time. During flexible learning, the learner can choose where he/she will study, e.g., at workplace, home, coffee shop, hotel room abroad or any other place convenient for him or her. *Mode* means the application of distance learning and blended learning methods as well as the usage of flexible learning technologies.

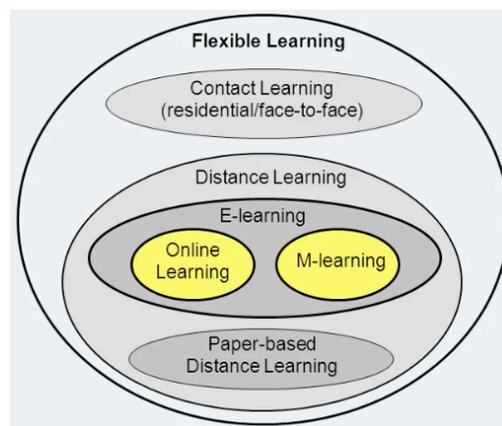


Diagram No 1: The subsets of flexible learning (Brown, 2004)⁵

The possibility of being in control and choosing these aspects of learning are extremely important for older learners. This type of learning provides an opportunity to combine the learning process with work and personal life, which is a huge benefit for older workers.

As the diagram shows, flexible learning can include both distance learning and contact learning. In summary, a flexible way of learning is possible both online and in contact trainings and gives the student more control in choosing the nature of the learning process.

³ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/flexible-learning>

⁴ <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/classification-approaches-web-enhanced-learning/11249>

⁵ https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-subsets-of-flexible-learning-Brown-2003_fig1_234673347

2.4 Competency-Based Learning

Competency-based learning is “an approach to teaching and learning more often used in learning abstract learning rather than concrete skills“. It could also be described as a type of learning, that focuses on the outcomes as well as the learners’ real-world performance.⁶

Consequently, this way of learning focuses on the development and application of acquired competencies in the workplace after the completion of training. Competency-based learning is particularly useful for older workers as it focuses on the gaps in competencies needed in the workplace.

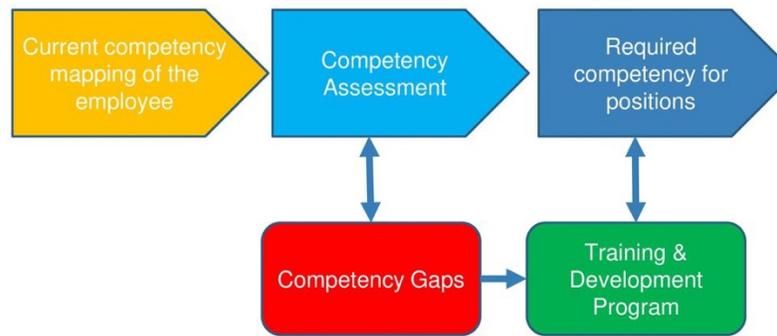


Diagram No 2: Competency-based Training Framework, 2017⁷

The diagram shows that in competency-based training, mapping of current employees’ competencies is particularly important. This is the first step to successfully launching a competency-based learning program. It is followed by competency assessment, during which specific competence gaps will be identified. To overcome these gaps essentially is the main goal of the training. The following step is the creation of Training & Development Program, which focuses on dealing with filling in the learners’ competency gaps as well as improvement of the needed competencies for specific work position.

Competency-based learning is mainly oriented towards the observable outcomes of the trainings. This type of learning is usually useful for the older workers while it is relevant to the latest labor requirements and focuses greatly on the needs of the workplace.

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competency-based_learning

⁷ <https://slideplayer.com/slide/13699499/>



2.5 Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

In regard to tertiary education, problem-based learning is gaining popularity in Australia. Students are given a real-world problem then they work together to find a solution to this. In Australia, nursing programs have begun to embrace this style of teaching and learning because it challenges the students to work as if they're dealing with real problems they'll encounter in the workplace. Teachers find it invaluable because students learn more with this method. Problem based learning is an educational method in which complex real-life problems are used as a vehicle to promote student learning of concepts and principles as opposed to direct presentation of facts and concepts. Problem based learning can help to develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and communication skills.

Problem based learning is often group oriented. PBL encourages students to examine and define the problem; explore their already existing knowledge about the underlying issues; determine what they need to learn and where and how they can acquire the tools and information needed to solve the problem; evaluate possible solutions to the problem; solve the problem themselves and report on their findings.

In order to effectively utilize the PBL method, the teacher should first: articulate the learning outcomes of the project; create the real life problem and establish ground rules right in the beginning in order to ensure effective team work; introduce students to group processes and do some warm up exercises and establish how will the outcomes of the project be evaluated and assessed.

Problem based learning has many advantages for both students, instructors and institutions. PBL learning is student-oriented and students tend to find it more enjoyable than other forms of learning. Furthermore, PBL encourages greater understanding and students who have experiences with PBL find their abilities higher. Moreover, with the use PBL, students develop lifelong skills.

Working adults, especially those aged 50+ learn differently than young people. PBL method is a great fit for working adults or/and older people as rather than expecting students to passively receive information, PBL has students demonstrate their knowledge by successfully completing a project or solving a problem. It's a more active learning model proven to produce sustained knowledge and problem-solving skills.



2.6 E-learning (distance learning)

Distance learning (or e-learning) is a formalised teaching and learning system specifically designed to be carried out remotely by using electronic communication. Since distance learning is less expensive to support and is not constrained by geographical considerations, it offers opportunities in situations where traditional education has difficulty operating. Students with scheduling or distance problems as well as employees may benefit from e-learning, as this method of education tends to be more flexible and can be carried out virtually anywhere.

Among some of the popular distance learning technologies belong: **Voice-centered technology** (CD or MP3 recordings or Webcasts); **Video technology** (such as instructional videos, DVDs, and interactive videoconferencing); and **Computer centered technology** (delivered over the internet or corporate intranet).

Basic principles of E-learning are individuality and flexibility, independence, multimedia, student support (high information about study possibilities, motivation to study, individualized sets of study program, etc.), and openness.

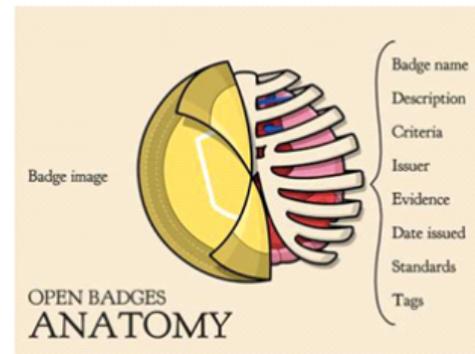
E-learning method of teaching is suitable for working adults and older people (aged 50+) on which the project is focused as it has several benefits to it: it not only improves your knowledge retention, but it also fits into your schedule. Students do not have to make travel arrangements and can customize their learning experience without it interfering with their work or home life. Furthermore, the range of options available is big and has no age barrier.

2.7 Certification of soft skills and knowledge gained through non-formal education

Essential for the today's rapidly changing economy and technological development is the ability to valorize the wide range of transferable skills, allowing employers to better match people to jobs, skills such as organizational and time management, conflict resolution, interpersonal and intercultural awareness. They may be acquired not just in a traditional learning environment, but also in informal and non-formal educational settings and online through open educational resources especially in the adult education sector.

The recognition of knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside the formal education is comprehensively specified in the European Council Recommendation on validation of nonformal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01) and in the Communication from the Commission Opening up Education: Innovative teaching and learning for all through new Technologies and Open Educational resources (SWD(2013) 341 final).

Open digital badges are tools that have the potential to communicate achievements, abilities, strengths, qualities of learners. In the past several years, badges have been attracting the attention among educational reformers, since badges can be used in the school system at various levels as a complement to the standardized certificates or grades. In higher education, students have to complete courses in



virtual learning environments, or in adult education institutions outside the formal schooling, e.g. non-formal education centers, which do not assess competencies and skills in a standardized way.

A badge contains metadata about the badge description, a list of criteria to earn the badge, the issuing organization, the issue date and possibly the expiration date and eventually the web address linked to evidence in order to verify it. Employers, educational institutions or associations can access the metadata saved within each digital image and check online what the badge earner had to do in order to obtain it.

There are three main actors involved in the process of creating and issuing a digital badge: the issuer, the badge earner and the consumer.

The issuer is the educational institution or company in charge of designing and issuing the badge. It also decides who from the staff is entitled to award badges. The issuer awards badges when learners have met criteria or reached benchmarks in their learning experiences. The badges represent different skills, achievements, often aligned to certain competency frameworks, like European Framework of Reference for Languages, or the European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. Ideally, the Issuer wants their badges recognized as a trusted



document and have a high worth to outside associations, institutions or labor market. Since the Issuer is responsible for the authenticity and quality of the badges, they oversee and validate that the learner has properly attained the badge. The badges are also seen as a form of marketing since outsiders will see what skills or learning outcomes are obtainable within an educational setting.

The earner is the learner who receives the badge as an evidence of learning achievements, progress and participation into different events and courses. A single badge can be part of a larger constellation of badges and serve as a milestone for a learning path. The relationship between the Issuer and badge Earner is verifiable. On adult education level the earner may be young adults working towards obtaining general school-leaving qualifications, lifelong learners, learners in vocational training courses, or even trainers etc. The earner must be able to store and export the badges earned and to incorporate them into a CV or online professional networks.

The third actor involved is the consumer, who may be an employer, an educational institution or an association of some type.

Consumers will check the badges and the metadata contained; they want to see badges, which are of value, transparent, authentic and easily verifiable. Based on the metadata and badges they will be able to assess the badge holder.⁸

⁸ Open badges for adult education: <https://www.open-badges.eu/>. Guidelines for implementation and Guidelines for educators.

Tool for the creation of digital badges for e-learning platforms: <https://openbadges.org/>



3 Development of soft skills

Nowadays, almost every job advertisement includes “excellent communication and problem-solving skills” as an expectation, but what exactly does that mean? How can a candidate determine if he or she excels in these areas, and why does this skill line bear so much importance?

While creating a biography, candidates tend to list their studies, work experience, and every opportunity that resulted in their professional growth over the years in order. These measurable, verifiable skills are called hard skills. However, there are also issues that seem to have nothing to do with the work in question and might be irrelevant at first. Employers tend to ask behavior-based interview questions to monitor soft skills. Soft skills, also known as social skills, cannot be described by education, as they are subjective, and not immediately visible. However, if the candidate possesses the required soft skills for the position, the success rates of the personal interviews will rise immensely.

How do I know I am well?

Regardless of the job to which the candidate is applying for, employers will expect the applicant to possess at least a few soft skills. In order to succeed at the job interview, or later during work, people must successfully get along, and interact with many of their colleagues from different departments, as well as managers, co-workers, clients, vendors or even their future customers. Social skills are essentially valued by every employer; therefore, it is best to improve, and most importantly, gain awareness of our own social skills. If the candidate is easily getting along with other colleagues, a strong soft skill in their repertoire might be effective communication.

Soft skills can be developed!

In the following chapter, the nature and the overall importance of soft skills will be discussed, which is a collective term, the sum of all the skills that mean interpersonal skills, or social skills. The good news is, that interpersonal skills can be maintained, and further developed! These skills, however, are also very hard to teach, which is why this chapter aims at highlighting some important soft skills, while showcasing various best practices along the lines of teaching them successfully.^{9,10}

⁹ <https://blog.cvonline.hu/2018/karriertanacsok/soft-skills-vagyis-a-puha-keszsegek-mit-kell-tudni-rola/17400>

¹⁰ <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/list-of-soft-skills-2063770>



Did you know?

Soft Skills can be classified in four different categories: self-image and vision of the world; context and performance related; social interaction and methodological, intuitive and lateral thinking.¹¹

3.1 Communication skills

It is of common understanding that communication at all levels in life and in all ages is one of the key competences. In the high demands on today's job market communication is essential for succeeding especially for those over 50 years of age who might need to change jobs or find a new job.

According to definition communication is "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour"¹². The need of adequate communication is inevitable, in spoken and written communication. But proper communication is the matter of numerous aspects. It requires a shared set and understanding of symbol systems, such as language, letters, gestures, etc.

When people communicate, they do not really think consciously about the process itself, the kind of interaction they need, and think about these aspects from the perspective of the other person. But it should not be a surprise that there are different kinds and types of communication. When we are consciously clear about what we want as a result of the communication process, and the kind of communication we want, we are able to work intentionally to create what we want, and to consider what the other person wants, therefore we may become better communicators.

Types of Communication

Communication can be categorized in more than one way, depending on our criteria of classification:

By channel of communication:

Verbal – using words

Oral – speaking – chats, meetings, lecture, etc.

¹¹ <https://skillsmatch.eu/soft-skills-definitions/>

¹² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/communication>



Oral communication makes use of spoken words. Basically, it presumes individuals conversing with one another, either through face to face conversation or phone call, Skype etc. But it also includes other oral manifestations such as lectures, speeches, presentations, discussions, interviews etc.

Written – letters, emails, notes, etc.

Written communication is basically any type of communication that employs written words. Communicating through writing is necessary in the modern world, as we live in the age of information and everything has to be documented. The ever-increasing use of computers and computer networks to organize and transmit information means the need for competent writing skills is rising.

Non-verbal; e.g.: eye contact, body language, emoticons, etc.

Nonverbal communication is basically communicating without words. It can exist as a support for verbal communication but can also exist on its own. It's communication other than oral and written, such as gesture, body language, posture, tone of voice or facial expressions, is called nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is all about the body language of speaker.

By type of recipient(s):

Intrapersonal communication – communication with oneself

Interpersonal communication – communication between 2 people

Group communication – communication between more than 2 people

Mass communication – communication to large groups of people

By style and purpose:

Formal

Style of communication in this form keeps a distance and is official. Official conferences, meetings and written memos and corporate letters are used for communication. Hence formal communication is straightforward, official and always precise and has a stringent and rigid tone to it.

Informal

Requires people to have a closer relationship than strangers therefore it occurs mainly between friends and family. Informal communication does not have any rigid rules and guidelines.

Of course, there are many other approaches to classify communication by other aspects.



Communicating effectively in the workplace

While there are several communication skills you will use in different scenarios, there are a few ways you can be an effective communicator at work:

Being clear and concise. Try to reduce the chance of misunderstandings by making your message as easy to consume as possible. Reducing your message down to its core meaning and cutting off long, detailed sentences helps others quickly understand your goals. While providing context is helpful, it is best to give the most necessary information when trying to communicate your idea, instruction or message.

Practicing empathy. Understanding your colleague's feelings, ideas and goals can help you when communicating with them. For example, you might need help from other departments to get a project started. If they are not willing to help or have concerns, practicing empathy can help you position your message in a way that addresses their apprehension.

Assertivity. Being assertive might be necessary to reach your goals in various situations at the workplace. You might ask some colleagues to cooperate in reaching your goals, ask for payraise or resist an idea you do not think will be beneficial. While presenting with confidence is an important part of the workplace, you should always be respectful in conversation. Keeping an even tone and providing sound reasons for your assertions will help others be receptive to your thoughts.

Using and reading body language. As set above, body language is a very important part of communications in general and in the workplace. You might get a deeper understanding of the messages communicated to you if you pay close attention to people's facial and body expressions and movements. You should also pay close attention the way you might be communicating (intentionally or not) with your own body language.

3.2 Teamwork

As it happens in other fields, even teamwork is a buzzword to which we attach totally different meanings.

We consider important to start from defining the goal that we want to obtain through Teamwork: mobilising the potential of all the participants to a group.

If we use this point of view, it is essential to rely on facilitation techniques that has been developed to this end, from Liberating Structures [Lipmanowicz 2014] to LEGO Serious Play [Kristiansen 2014].



Even starting from this point of view, we have to keep our learners aware that, as they surely have experienced in their workplace, only a few companies are sufficiently developed to use this techniques, mainly placed in what [Laloux 2014] calls green and teal level organizations: considering that our goal is that of developing future-proof workers, the ability to facilitate or to take part in facilitated meetings is of paramount importance.

All recent facilitation methods try to enforce taking turns in discussion, to allow to every person involved in the meeting the possibility of speaking and exploiting her own creativity.

But teamwork isn't only based on meetings: in the last 50 years there has been a flourishing of organizational theories and techniques, in part stemming from production (Toyota Production System, Lean, ...), in part from IT (Agile, Scrum, ...); at the base of all of them there is a push toward a greater autonomy and responsibility for every worker.

All of them are centered around the use of visual metaphors and visual tools, from Kanban to Obeya Rooms: it is a revolution with respect to an education based on the use of words.

All of these remarks want to underline the need for a special attention when training older workers: the majority of them have been grown with an image of the Life as a linear path (the age of game, the age of study, the age of work, the age of rest) and of the education as an asymmetric activity, hetero-directed; now these same persons have to learn that Life is cyclic, that Learning is Lifelong, and that they have to be protagonists of their own learning and job activities.

As underlined in [Burns 2002], "Andragogy requires teachers of adults to know when to stop talking and listening": the duty of the teacher in adult education is that of accompanying the learners from a state of dependence to a state of autonomy, enhancing self-esteem and self-direction and helping to find the motivation to learn.

In this specific domain, the learning can take place in small chunks of 30 to 45 minutes, to respect the usual span of attention, and role-play has a central role, always coupled with debriefing periods, to enable the learners to readjust to their usual roles.



3.3 Resilience

On today's labour market, jobseekers are mainly evaluated based on their CVs, even though employers are increasingly demanding such personal qualities as for ex. stress resistance and the ability to handle complex situations. In these times of pandemic and very insecure situation on the labour market, soft skills play a greater role than ever before for those seeking job. Especially the ability to deal with stress, difficulties and / or trauma is among the most important right now. In psychology it is called resilience and it is one of the sought and appreciated soft skills of the employees.

What is "Resilience"?

In psychology, resilience means an individual's ability to handle a difficult or stressful situation. The concept of resilience can be explained by the "art of knowing how to navigate between "storms and flash floods". More precisely, resilience is a psychological phenomenon that allows an individual suffering from a traumatic experience to accept this event in order to overcome the shock, recover her- or himself and move on. A "resilient" person can thus handle a difficult situation that causes stress or grief and remain positive in spite of the circumstances.

The concept of resilience can also be defined as a degree of individual resistance and resilience to the setbacks and challenges, high resilience corresponds to a greater resistance and ability to recover.

Researchers disagree on how much of the resistance capacity is genetic. People seem to differ in terms of innate ability to handle the stresses of life. But it is obvious that resilience is also likely to be conscious. It is therefore possible to strengthen one's inner self and one's belief in oneself, to redefine oneself as a capable and competent person who can resist setbacks. It is possible to strengthen one's psyche and it is possible to develop a sense of control over life.

Resilience is also a capacity found in other soft skills; stress management, optimism, motivation, flexibility, adaptability, creativity, etc. A resilient individual also has many other abilities that help to overcome his or her traumatic phases in life and stressful situations at work and do it effectively. According to a study, adaptability is one of the most valued soft competencies on the labour market.

The American psychologist Edith Grotberg believes that everyone needs to be reminded of her or his strengths. She encourages people to develop their resilience by thinking and becoming aware of the following aspects:



I HAVE: Think about what external support you have, for example your relationships, your routines and the everyday structure, ie. the "rules" you live by and the role models you have.

I AM: Think about who you are, for example that you are a person with a view of life, a person who cares about others, a person who can be proud of her- or himself and who has inner strengths that can be developed.

I CAN: Think about what you can do, for example that you are good at communicating, solving problems, treating other people with respect, forming new relationships and acquiring new skills that give you happiness, well-being and success.

In summary, resilience is an important adaptive ability for humans and resilience has been shown to have strong positive connections with positive emotions and with the meaning of life.

3.4 Creativity

As markets become saturated and competition gets stronger, it is necessary to find innovative approaches to address business problems, or even enhance learning possibilities. The concept of creativity is of course an elusive one. How is it possible to enhance creativity if it cannot be properly defined and measured? Essentially, creativity governs a whole lot of novelties, which must be applied correctly in order to achieve the desired goal. By obtaining a creative mindset, individuals can skilfully address occurring obstacles and problems, aiming to achieve triumph over each case.

It is advised to consider creativity over multiple scenarios, instead of relying exclusively on explanations provided by dictionaries and articles only. Intelligence, talent, and social environmental factors are capable of influencing the potential of creativity, but they are not restricting, or prioritising for individuals, effectively meaning that anyone, and everyone can be creative. There cannot be enough stress on the positive, or on the contrary, the detrimental outcomes of social environmental effects, due to the immediate positive or negative feedback from other members of society. Its influential power is enormous, as is most cases, these factors are playing crucial part in moving a person towards a final decision, be it business, personal, or learning oriented cases. By considering other viewpoints, individuals may reshape their thoughts to create a final creative response to a certain problem, however, in many cases the original fragile creative spark is prone to be erased entirely, due to the heavy outsider influence. External opinions can be carefully assembled to provide guidelines for the individual, for the reason that the role of the individual is of paramount importance in assessing the final idea in terms of viability, actionability, and appropriateness. (Amabile 2012)



However, the question remains open as to how to improve someone's creativity. Techniques and methods are encouraging creative actions, regardless of the field of study of an individual. The focus is on a variety of aspects of creativity, including techniques for idea generation and divergent thinking, or methods of reframing problem.

Techniques to promote creativity:

DO IT

The DO IT method by Robert W. Olsen is a structured process for creativity. It stands for, defining the problem, having an open mind, identification of the best solutions, and finally, transforming. The whole process works as a self-assessment, which bestows the capability to visualize, conceptualise and shape thoughts into a conscious, actual task to be solved. It serves as a wonderful self-assessment tool.

SCAMPER method:

This technique promotes creativity and creative thinking elaborated by Bob Eberlee in the middle of the 1920's. The technique consists of a meticulous checklist, where you can generate new ideas when you start working with a basic idea. This technique is specially designated to improve a product, a service or a process in a company.¹³

3-6-5 method:

This method is a written variation of the brainstorming technique, where participants write ideas on a piece of paper which is being passed around for everyone to contribute their ideas.¹⁴

MIND MAPPING:

Mind mapping is a classic creativity enhancer technique which is used to visually represent ideas, words, tasks or other linked concepts, which are based on a key idea or word. This method truly shines when many inputs must be synergized, creating logical connections between them, and hooking these ideas into a corporeal form in a creative way.¹⁵

Ways to improve your creativity at work

¹³ Learn more about the technique here: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCT_02.htm

¹⁴ See more about this method in the following link: <http://youtu.be/TR1i1PPd8ZU>

¹⁵ More about mind mapping: <http://youtu.be/wLWV0XN7K1g>, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_wWWGJi_VU



These points are focusing on individual creativity improvement, reflecting on the factors influencing creativity.

- Dress up and decorate your workspace in ways that reflect your passion and energy.
- Everyone has a preferred lifestyle and working habits. Embracing your decision-making and problem-solving styles, and personal interests positively impact who you are at work.
- What makes you feel passionate? What kinds of things do you channel your energy into? What are you committed to? Take all three to work with you and put them to work for you.
- Every creative act begins with a conception. Make sure to realise and shape your ideas into actionable concepts.
- Every creative act develops through an incubation phase. Make sure you put safe boundaries around your own creative work time, so it does not get overwhelmed with other responsibilities. It is essential to let the flow of thoughts wander off every now and then. Who knows what an individual can recover, or discover during one of such journeys?
- Every creative act ends with realisation. Make sure you help each of your personal, or professional projects grow to its next level. Every small step counts!
- Celebrate your beginnings, and your endings. Mark the big moments, and look for reasons to play, and enjoy yourself! It is one of those factors we tend to dismiss, claiming there is no time for fun or games.
- Know when it is time to move on (from ideas, or projects) and start implementing them, to arrive at a final destination.

So, when can we talk about development, and growth in terms of creativity? It will have visible consequences. Regardless of the field where the individual is completing acts, the developed products will become more refined, sophisticated, and unique. The first few steps may be the hardest in every learning process, but with consistence and determination, even the clunkiest raw stone can be refined into a unique, beautiful gemstone.¹⁶

¹⁶ Find out more:

<http://beadlinks.com/creativity/710.php>

<https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/how-to-boost-workplace-creativity/>

http://www.getvetter.com/posts/127-5-ideas-for-boosting-staff-creativity-in-the-workplace#.U7R3tfl_sQk



4 Specific methods for language training

In the ever-changing and fast-paced job market of today, where workers need to be versatile and ready to acquire new skills, the position of people over 50 years of age is challenged. Therefore, there is an apparent need for quality, accessible education opportunities for 50+ workers. More specifically, a large obstacle that these professionals face is the lack of language skills, especially of the English language, which is becoming increasingly a large part of today's necessary qualifications, and European citizens over 50 years of age show a shortcoming in this specific skill. In order to meet the minimum requirements in a large number of sectors, workers over 50 years of age need to have proficiency in at least one foreign language, preferably English.

It is vital to consider the needs of this target group when a methodology for language learning is proposed and considered. The target group of workers over 50 years of age share a lot of the specificities of adult learners, such as the increased responsibilities, compared with non-adult learners, which make the need apparent for a more flexible, non-formal approach to language teaching. What is more, this target group faces the situation of this age, that most skills and experiences have been consolidated already, and it is difficult to achieve the mindset of a lifelong learner if it has not been the case in the past.

It is of vital importance to provide the adult learners with possibilities for self-assessment before the beginning of any training, because they might possess skills that they are not aware of, or they might be unable to assess their levels of competence accurately. What is more, by acquiring the skill to self-assess, they are able to monitor their own learning, which is a vital tool in the concept of lifelong learning. Monitoring the learning experience also provides them with an elevated sense of autonomy, and they are better able to motivate themselves and continue with the process of learning.

4.1 Task-based Learning

Task-based learning, a refinement of the communicative approach, focuses on the completion of specific tasks through which language is taught and learned. Language learners use the language that they know to complete a variety of assignments, acquiring new structures, forms and vocabulary as necessary.

Little error correction is provided. In this type of learning environment, three- to four-week segments are devoted to a specific topic: ecology, security, medicine, religion, youth culture, etc. Students learn about a specific topic, step-by-step, using a variety of resources, with each unit culminating in a final project such as a written report or presentation.



Activities are similar to those found in a communicative classroom, but they are always based around a single, specific theme. The students are provided with materials that are tailored to the needs of the specific target group, such as worksheets, books, leaflets and audio files, but they do not act as the main source of learning, but rather as tools and guidelines for the students to create their own learning. As mentioned above, it is important to provide workers/learners over 50 years of age the flexibility and the space for them to use their pre-existing skills in order to advance their learning experience. An advanced extension of this practice of independence and autonomy is to help learners create and set their own objectives for learning the target language.

4.2 Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

4.2.1 Technology enhanced language learning: New didactic approaches

Foreign language learning and teaching have been changing over the years with the new technological developments that have introduced new approaches to make learning more efficient and attractive to learners. Innovations in the field of ICT offer new benefits for fostering competences in foreign languages and allows learners to take a more active participation in the process.

Teachers must take an active role as well in carefully planning the didactical approaches to match the potential of technology-enhancing learning with the needs of their students and exploit the full potential of the technologies used.

In this sense, we must differentiate two types of foreign language learning using ICT methods, the one that uses e-learning as a support system and the learning that is completely ICT-based.

The didactical approaches and tools presented in sections **Key elements of successful ICT-based language learning** and **Hands-on ideas for implementation** can be used in e-learning as a support system or in ICT-based learning with the correspondent particularities that will be pointed.

4.2.2 E-learning as a support system: Blended Learning and Flipped Classroom

The use of e-learning as a support system for language learning and teaching is based in two didactic approaches; commonly denominated Blended Learning and Flipped Classroom.

Blended learning: blended learning is a didactical approach that combines traditional classroom methods with online training. The learning process is a combination of face-to-face sessions with online learning. The online sessions can happen synchronously and asynchronously.



Flipped classroom: this educational technique consists of two components, the use of computer technologies and the involvement of interactive activities in face-to-face sessions. The information that is going to be used in face-to-face sessions is introduced to students prior to the sessions via e-learning platforms or mobile-apps. Students have more opportunities to participate in engaging activities during the in-class sessions. Flipped classroom is based in the core idea of providing and creating a learning community in which students develop knowledge through constructive learning experiences, peer interaction and collaboration.

The purpose of both learning strategies is to find the optimal combination of in-class and distance learning in order to reach the learning objectives and efficiency criteria as much as possible. The use of new technologies creates added value and must be implemented having in mind the final educational purpose.

4.2.3 Didactic principles for ICT based language learning

All pedagogical principles that apply to traditional face-to-face learning can be applied in e-learning training with some changes to introduce technological advances. ICT language learning requires the creation of web-based learning environments; which contributes to the engagement of students in the learning process. The requirements that must take into account for the design are:

- Course design
- IT skills of teachers and students.
- Technical support for users.
- Motivation of learners.
- Creation of a community.
- Time management tools.

Based on these requirements, Trepule et al. (2015) suggest the following didactic principles to support the learners' success in increasing their proficiency in a foreign language:

- **Learner centeredness:** technology-enhanced language learning should be learner centered to achieve positive learning results.
- **Meta-cognitive activities:** fostering and supporting learners' meta-cognitive activities of reflection, self-assessment and self-efficacy for autonomous learning.
- **Social interaction:** building social presence in terms of discussion channels or other ways of connection with teachers and other learners.



- **Time management:** offering tools for time management for achieving milestones and goals in a set of time.

In addition to these principles, the Community of Inquiry (Col) framework encompasses three interdependent elements that facilitate meaningful online learning (Wu et al., 2017):

- **Teaching presence:** refers to how teachers sequence the learning activities and facilitate learning; encompasses the design, direction and support of student activities.
- **Social presence:** refers to the social and interpersonal communication required for online learning; ideally includes open communication with others and cohesive communicative responses.
- **Cognitive presence:** refers to the development of critical thinking skills, the ability to create meaning out of ideas.

4.2.4 Key elements of successful ICT-based language learning

Digital environments for language learning must be well-balanced to enable an approach that is student-centered and helps to increase the quality of the learning and the feeling of belonging to a community.

Wu et al (2017) point out the following elements of a successful e-learning environment:

Social interaction – building social presence: learning does not happen in isolation, the process of sharing and discussion with other learners has an enormous impact on learners' motivation and achievements. Online discussions can provide spaces for giving and receiving direct feedback, exchange of ideas and reflections. Forums, chats and other ICT tools can be used to promote the social interaction. In this sense, ICT-based language courses can also help to maintain the spirit of a group in between different student years or in between face-to-face courses.

Interactivity and cooperation: In e-learning environments, the exercises must be dynamic and integrate a playful component. Gamification plays a fundamental role in capturing and maintaining the attention of students. In order to facilitate proficiency in the foreign language, activities should be designed to be student-centered and encourage students to actively engage in interactive activities based in real life situations.

Individualization: one of the main advantages that e-learning has to offer is the individualization of the training paths and contents for participants.



Student autonomy: E-learning cultivates students' autonomy and allows them to work at their own pace. Personalization of training paths promotes the autonomy of students as the learning content adapts to their needs, the student gradually becomes responsible for their own learning.

Authentic language learning: e-learning allows to create activities in authentic, supportive, interactive and collaborative learning contexts. Online learning communities provide learning opportunities to use foreign languages in a more authentic way. Experience shows that web-based language learning offers students the possibility to communicate in a more "natural" environment.

The role of teachers: the role of teachers changes considerably in online learning. The teacher is the central figure in the process of technology-enhanced learning. The main role of the teacher is the planification of the course and the support and guidance of students.

In blended courses the role of the teacher is more linked to instructional skills and to provide engaging and affective learning activities and promote their participation in in-class activities.

In virtual courses, teachers serve more as a guide, guiding students through their learning paths.

4.2.5 Hands-on ideas for implementation

Design software: There are many design programs to create online training materials that are interactive, and to engage students. For example:

- **Moodle:** <https://moodle.org/>. The most famous e-learning platform in the world. Open-source code platform, free and multilingual.
- **ATutor:** Open Source Web-based Learning Management System (LMS) used to develop and deliver online courses. <https://atutor.github.io/atutor/index.html>
- **Dokeos:** open source LMS tool for pharmaceutical and healthcare businesses. It offers features such as course authoring, progress tracking, reporting, and certification management. <http://www.dokeos.com/>

Information and planification tools: tools that allow the teacher to communicate with students and to share information with them.

- **Google Calendar:** <https://calendar.google.com/>. Teachers can create a calendar with the course planification and share it with students. Google calendars can be exported.



Communication tools: communication tools are essential in order to create a sense of community and to promote authentic learning experiences. There are many tools that can be used.

- **Message/forums:** Moodle platforms allow students to send messages to the teacher and to other students. The system also allows to create discussion forums in which all participants on the courses are invited to participate.
- **Tandem:** mobile application in which students from all over the world are able to connect with native speakers and practice what they have learn in real life conversations.
<https://www.tandem.net/es>
- **Other free connection applications:** Skype, Hangouts, WhatsApp, Viber etc.

Recommendations for practice:

- A technology-assisted online learning community should provide an authentic setting for genuine interaction among students.
- Recent studies point out that synchronous interactions are a key motivator for engaging students in tasks. Students reported that languages are best learned through interaction with native speakers. Thus, the development of a community of practitioners is recommended (Michil, Appel, Ó Ciardubháin, Jager & Prizel-Kania, 2015).
- Students' responsibility for performing the online learning activities is essential. To support the students' learning progress, teachers must have tools for monitoring their progress throughout the whole process. (Wu et al., 2017)
- In case of a flipped classroom, keep the online courses open for participants for at least half a year after the course ends, thus offering possibilities for a longitudinal learning process. (Mullamaa, 2010)
- Every online learning environment should provide particular tasks for moderation to address potential mal-use. (Michil et al., 2015)



4.3 Communicative approach

The communicative approach is the most widely used and most widely accepted approach to classroom-based foreign language teaching today, and in many ways, is a culmination of those approaches and methodologies that appeared before.

It emphasizes the learner's ability to communicate various functions, such as asking and answering questions, making requests, describing, narrating and comparing. Task assignment and problem solving—two key components of critical thinking—are the means through which the communicative approach operates.

Unlike the direct method, grammar is not taught in isolation. Learning happens in context; detailed error correction is de-emphasized in favor of the theory that students will naturally develop accurate speech through frequent use. Students develop fluency through communicating in the language rather than by analyzing it.

A communicative classroom includes activities through which students are able to work out a problem or situation through narration or negotiation, and thus establish **communicative competence**. Thus, some activities might include composing a dialogue in which the participants negotiate when and where they are going to eat dinner, creating a story based on a series of pictures or comparing similarities and differences between two pictures.

Language café

The communicative approach can be implemented in various manners. One such practice is the language café. The language café is a sociable way to learn and practice the foreign language of choice, because learners are not only provided with the opportunity to practice with other learners, but also acquire and exchange useful information, skills, and experience related to job searching. What is more, it could provide (potential) employees over 50 years of age to create a strong social support group. As 50+ learners have the tendency to avoid formal training, the methodology of the language café seems ideal due to its foundations on the principles of free expression and exchange of ideas and information. The themes of the language café conversations can revolve around conducting online job searches, submitting applications, preparing for interviews, and surviving in the competitive labor market of today. Usually a facilitator who speaks the target language should be present, in order to help the students stay on course and to answer any inquiries that might occur. It is advised to keep the meetings regular in order to maintain



the motivation levels high. This method has the added advantage that it is a low-cost method of learning, as learners are able to advance at the cost of a drink.

Cyber Café

A variation of the language café, which is a modern adaptation, is the cyber café. The principles are the same as the language café, but the setting changes drastically, as the meetings take place online. The students are able to learn a foreign language in practice in a virtual room, with the help of audio-visual tools such as a chat, a video chat, or a teleconference. The facilitator is also present in this form of language café, has a similar role of giving the students themes that they can discuss in the target language, and answers inquiries. The added role that is specific to the cyber café is that they would also need to facilitate with the registration and helping with the use of the online tools such as the online platform and the teleconference tools (such as Skype, Zoom, etc.). The topics of discussion can be similar to the language café topics. Depending on the mode, the learners have the opportunity to practice not only their speaking and listening skills, but also their reading and writing skills when communication is achieved through written text. The added advantage compared to language café is that there is increased flexibility in time and space, as the learners do not need to meet physically, but can learn at the comfort of their own home, and they do not need to travel to the actual café venue. One possible disadvantage is that for the specific target group of people over the age of 50 years, there might be some practical obstacles related with the low digital skills that might prove to be a hindrance. However, during the needs analysis of the target group prior to the training, it can be assessed whether the language café or the cyber café is a better fit for the specific group of learners.

Tandem

The Tandem language exchange application that has been mentioned earlier is a tool that helps learners of a foreign language improve their skills in pairs. The learner chooses the language that they want to improve, and they are matched with other users who are also interested to learn and practice the same language. The application gives the opportunity to practice all aspects of the language, listening and speaking, and also reading and writing. The aim of the Tandem language exchange is to make sure that communication has occurred and that both partners have understood each other clearly. Although it is not necessary for 50+ people to communicate with each other, it would be a more efficient way for them to help each other, as their needs for a specific level of the language are usually similar. In the case that the learner does not possess even a basic level of understanding of the language, it is usually advised that



the partner either is a native speaker, or has the teaching competences to help the learner achieve the first level of communication skills in the foreign language.



5 Specific methods for ICT training

Information and communication technologies (ICT) is a sum of technology tools and resources for creating, spreading, changing and managing the information. Coming of ICT in education has brought many novelties and essentially changed its values, methods and results. It is supposed that these skills once developed by students/trainees would lead to the improvement of their status in life, development of the nation's economy, creation of self-employment, and proper utilization of human and material resources.

In the age of information technologies traditional educational methods are not effective enough. Present system of education demands introducing quick and non-traditional educational methods and forms in educational process what could acquire educational process more actively and motivate students for self-education. The process is complicated and demands teachers and trainers as well as students and participants to obtain skills to work with IT tools and software. Computer, interactive board, multimedia data projector, internet etc. technology tools have discovered new possibilities for teachers and trainer in teaching process and for students in learning process. ICT gives access to non-traditional informational sources, raises effectiveness of self-education, promotes creativeness, and brings to realisation new educational forms and methods. Success of education depends on how quickly and easy we can get information of different amount.

As ICT teaching cannot boast with a long history, in most cases they have not been clearly formulated, and their formation is not so conscious but rather instinctive, which also results in the fact that most teachers do not use one single method but a sort of blend of methods, where one of them is represented dominantly.

The most widespread application teaching methods are listed and reviewed:

Problem-oriented (It chooses application tools for the gradually expanding series of tasks, or extends the used concepts and functions from the required tool.),

Application-oriented (It teaches the skills necessary for creating a certain type of document in the order of its structure and expansion.),

Menu-oriented (It teaches application knowledge through an application, or more precisely, through the menu items of the application.),

Function-oriented (It defines the general functions of an application system e.g. inserting, correcting, printing, formatting etc. for office applications, and then links concrete knowledge items to them.),



Concept-oriented (It defines the concepts used by an application system e.g. cell, row, column, block, sheet etc. for spreadsheets, and then discusses the functions related to them.),

Abstract tool-oriented (It defines the ever expanding series of abstract tools, e.g. for example for creating and formatting texts, and then discusses the necessary knowledge for each level).

5.1 Problem-oriented

The problem-oriented teaching method can well be used for teaching computer applications, where it essentially means the same as in any subject area. ICT teaching can be adapted to problem-oriented method with a little creativity. While the core problems will vary among disciplines, there are some characteristics of good POM problems that transcend fields (Duch, B. J., Groh, S. E, & Allen, D. E. (Eds.). (2001). *The power of problem-based learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus). In addition to course content, problem-oriented method can promote the development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and communication skills. It can also provide opportunities for working in groups, finding and evaluating materials, and life-long learning.

Just to demonstrate it, consider a series of application tasks that are built on one another, and structure them in a way that one needs newer and newer application knowledge to solve them; but in the meantime, one should continually use the previously acquired knowledge. It can be illustrated with an example taken from word processing:

When we teach a trainee to paste pictures for example, it is not practical to use tasks that concentrate exclusively on that. By employing this method, such tasks can be chosen that make trainees use the opportunities of pasting other objects and paragraph and object formatting learnt previously.

The continuous use of previous knowledge is essential for a deeper skills acquirement process while continuous practice helps improving acquisition and routine use in the future.

The elements of a task series might support the introduction of various new knowledge items:

the knowledge of an application type, its general structure, thinking and planning skills (How can it be solved faster, more easily and simply? etc.), good command of tools (What application system functions are needed in order to solve the given task?).

The distinctive feature of this method could be that it will easily and logically lead trainees over from one function or set of operations within the application to others if the solution of a problem can be more easily realized by using other set of operations or functions.



The main issue that you may face when employing this method – as compared to other subject areas is a small amount of necessary task books. Moreover, the tasks in these books may not be so well structured. Trainers might need to work out task themselves to efficiently use this method.

The problem-oriented method is suitable for the secondary schools where the focus is on testing different solution paths and not on the complete command of an ICT tool or application.

5.2 Application-oriented

Application-oriented method is sort of a reduced variation of the previous method with the difference that it does not encourage to teach every possibility, but it concentrates on those that are necessary for a sphere of application or a document type if applied to word processing. Regarding word processing such can be for example a cv, a form, a document merge, an article and a long line of similar tasks.

Let's consider a CV as a document type. A CV has a contact information, it has headings and ordinary lines, etc. Therefore, one may need to format paragraphs (indents and spacing), characters (font effects, size or even type). It is also very likely that among ordinary lines there will appear lists, (list of degrees or courses taken for example). In a more advanced CV there can be a picture included, and one has to ensure its positioning and sizing.

This method makes a characteristic distinction between for ex. article and a CV, as the starting document types are different. Although a significant part of the related concepts, operations and tools are, of course, identical with the ones learnt in word processing (they can even be created using the same tools), their importance, application frequency is clearly different (e.g. column, table of contents, page numbering, index etc.).

The method can be applied even in other ICT spheres. When it comes to illustrations, those can include posters, lines, illustrations, logos, mosaics, layouts, graphs, maps etc. In Spreadsheets we don't define document types as much, but those can be for example, analysis, statistics, mathematical applications, tabulations, charts, simulations etc.

The application-oriented method is one of the appropriate for adult education, where trainees learn to manage the most common document or file types, as well as go through different possibilities to work with those.



5.3 Menu-oriented

Menu-oriented method relies on the idea that the knowledge of functions assigned to the buttons in an application is equal to knowing how to use an application system. This method primarily concentrates on the buttons, functions behind them and routine usage of those. Definitely, the routines may be necessary, as it is a guaranteed way of achieving a specific goal. Some routines are more effective than others. Some effective routines result from the experience and can't be built from scratch. However, the trainer shouldn't only focus on the 'how to do' but instead help learners to construct routines by themselves, rather than ask them to memorize well-known routines. This method does not give a priority to planning or aesthetic and practical layout etc. According to this method, it would like to teach all the items on the menu of an application reducing the role of a trainee to an application user punching buttons and executing a memorized list of actions to perform as a recipe to be always followed.

The menu-oriented method is considered to be one of the worst ICT teaching methods and it is completely inappropriate for training application usage skills.

5.4 Function-oriented

Function-oriented method in computer application teaching where the application can be decomposed into a set of interacting modules where each of these modules has a clearly defined function. Thus, the application system is studied from a functional point of view and it tries to build the process of teaching upon the scope of actions within each of the function available in an application.

Within this method the trainee is introduced to these functions and is offered to choose which function to study and practice. For example, office applications are about creating, storing, modifying, formatting and then displaying and sometimes printing documents. To create a document, one can use already existing materials or create a new one from scratch. Storing a document means saving it or creating a version of it. Modification of a document assumes its transformation by taking away or adding some parts, changing or moving. Design and layout are about adjusting fonts, paragraphs, tables, elements. There are even language settings to deal with spelling and grammar, printing function to be used to format the layout of the document, slides, spreadsheets before printing.

The function-oriented focuses on the great variety of things to do in the application, which doesn't generally suit basic training but is rather used for more professional application training i.e. when trainees need to use an application often and diversely in their everyday work.



5.5 Concept-oriented

This method of teaching applications concentrates on first explaining the basic elements that are used in a certain field of application, the ones the application can be broken down into.

Accordingly, as soon as a trainee is familiar with the basic concepts of an application, it is followed by the introduction of the operations that can be done with each of those elements.

For word-processing the examples of the basic concepts are word, column, border, background. For spread-sheets – cell, column, sheet, workbook and point, line, shape, layer for graphical editors and presentation applications just a few to mention. The operations that can be done are quite similar across the applications – add, insert, delete, select, copy, format etc. How successful the teaching and learning process is, depends on choosing the right order of concepts introduced and on how well the curriculum is structured.

The concept-oriented method focuses on structures and concepts of the application which doesn't generally suit basic training but is rather used for more professional application training i.e. when trainees need to use an application often and diversely in their everyday work.

5.6 Abstract tool-oriented

This method is aimed at and encourages to teach advanced skills or know-hows of an ICT tool. The method is useful when trainees already have some previous experience of the application and have to be trained a new similar tool or they need to learn new features and options of the tool complementing the ones learnt before to become more efficient in their work.

In such circumstances one of the major difficulties comes from the previous knowledge and level of skills of the old and new tools (for example, there is a big difference in using Paint and Photoshop for picture processing, where the same shortcuts can be used for totally different things). With the adult learners it is a common situation when those, who have good skills using the tool they are used to, find it quite hard to learn a new one. The tool-oriented method is aimed at addressing this issue and plan the learning process. The teaching process is divided into a number of transitional levels so that the trainees are gradually acquiring the new skills one level at a time to learn using the new tool.

Finally, the abstract tool-oriented method is one of the suitable methods for adult education, where the trainees with the previous experience from the area are trained and acquire skills in a new ICT tool or application in meaningful way.



6 Exchange of best practices

In the present chapter, a collection of best practices from the partner countries will be presented. A best practice is an initiative such as a project, a methodology, a development of training material etc. that has potential to be transferred to a different geographic location, and have similar positive results for the target group.

These best practices mainly focus on **senior adult education**, in the areas of **digital skills** development and **language skills** development. The aims of these best practices were to enhance the employability of people over 50 years of age who are either in the job search phase, or who would like to improve their value to their employer, by training skills necessary for the modern workforce.

The purpose of the exchange of good practices is to provide a source of inspiration to stakeholders regarding actions that can be implemented in their local communities. As the best practices that are presented in the current chapter have had tangible positive results, they can become a valuable tool in the goal of supporting seniors enhance their employability.

The methodology that was followed for the collection of the best practices was a joint research of all the partners of the project 4E, who identified practices related to the thematic of the project in their own countries, and presented their findings in a comprehensive list with basic information regarding the best practice, and web links where additional information can be accessed. The results of this research can be found below.



6.1 The Czech Republic

Support for the development of adult education 50+ SENIOR	
Topic of the best practice	Adult education
Exact Location	Czech Republic
Method type	Soft skills, language, etc.
Implementation Date	From 2013 till 2017, from 2018 till 2022
Brief Description	<p>Support for the development of adult education 50+ SENIOR is a project focused on enhancing the education of people aged 50+ in the Czech Republic.</p> <p>The National Action Plan for Positive Aging for the time period 2013 - 2017 is currently followed by the Strategy for Preparation for Aging 2018 - 2022, the purpose of which is to formulate a strategic approach to prepare society for aging, which is inherently a cross-cutting agenda, and thus involves various areas of public policy. This framework should respond not only to the problems that affect today's seniors, but also formulate measures to prepare for the aging of society as a whole, and thus include people of all ages. It is necessary to realize that there are already numerous generations living in the Czech Republic, which will soon enter senior age, and that we must systematically prepare for life in a long-lived society.</p> <p>Since the beginning of the Positive Ageing action plan, the created programmes were always focused on one of the areas of development of seniors: 2014 - maintenance and support of mental and physical health; 2015 - maintaining and supporting the independence of seniors; 2016 - strengthening and supporting social contacts and experiencing positive emotions; 2017 - increasing the protection of physical and mental safety of seniors; and 2018 - art.</p>
Main results for the target group	<p>The project has two different target groups: students and seniors. The aim of the project is to create a course for education, where is an interaction between students and seniors. The young generation will pass on their knowledge to seniors. Students will be in the roles of lecturers and assistants. High school teachers create educational programs for seniors.</p>
Representative material	<p>https://univ.cz/dalsi-vzdelavani-skol/vzdelavani-dospelych http://www.nuv.cz/senior http://www.nuv.cz/senior-50</p>
Sources (books, articles, papers, links) or/and additional resources	<p>https://icv.mendelu.cz/u3v/30985-mezinarodni-projekt-idemasap-50plus</p>



Similar projects or possible/potential inspiration from worldwide	https://www.esfcr.cz/projekty-oplzz/-/asset_publisher/0vxsQYRpZsom/content/vyuziti-zkusenosti-stribrne-generace-?inheritRedirect=false
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Use the experience of the “silver generation”	
Topic of the best practice	Unemployment of people 50+, Exchange of Experience
Exact Location	Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Slovakia
Method type	Soft skills, language, etc.
Implementation Date	From 2/4/2012 till 31/3/2014
Brief Description	The main goal of the project was the exchange of experience and transfer of good practice in solving high unemployment of people over 50, caused by restrictions in terms of age, health, knowledge and at the same time unjustified barriers on the part of employers. People in this category face number of problems and obstacles, and they are also the most vulnerable to unemployment. When practices change and companies restructure, these people are the first to lose their jobs. Furthermore, once they regain employment, they face many obstacles mainly due to their age.
Main results for the target group	The project had many different target groups: Labour Office of the Czech Republic, research and educational institutions, employers. As thanks to the newly introduced innovative measures, they can have an indirect effect on the unemployed people over the age of 50 themselves. The purpose of the project activities was to provide the target group of organizations with a comprehensive view of the issue, including through examples of good practice from abroad, and thus help to positively influence the development of the unemployment situation. Partial goal of the project was to teach key players in the Czech Republic to work effectively with people over 50 in the labour market so that they could make full use of their potential and enable them to stay in employment. These goals were to be achieved through the transfer of tried and tested procedures and approaches from abroad and the joint development of products suited for the conditions of the Czech Republic. The partial goals were to develop an analysis of approaches in three European countries (Germany, Austria, Slovakia) and to formulate recommendations and methodologies for key actors in the Czech Republic.
Representative material	https://www.esfcr.cz/projekty-oplzz/-/asset_publisher/0vxsQYRpZsom/content/vyuziti-zkusenosti-stribrne-generace-?inheritRedirect=false



Sources (books, articles, papers, links) or/and additional resources	http://www.damaco.cz/vyuziti-zkusenosti-stribrne-generace-020/
Similar projects or possible/potential inspiration from worldwide	https://www.aivd.cz/ https://www.adoma-os.cz/projekt-50/

6.2 Sweden

E-mprove(r)	
Topic of the best practice	Unemployment of people 50+, Exchange of Experience
Exact Location	Spain, Italy, Sweden, Poland
Method type	Learning by doing, personal projects to develop IT skills, business plan development
Implementation Date	From 2016-10-01—2019-05-31
Brief Description	<p>The major goal of the E-mprove(r) project, funded by the Erasmus+ program, was to develop an on-line course for trainers and teachers of IT skills in business working with the adult learners. The course materials and modules help teachers to use different methods to inspire and empower adult learners to acquire IT skills and get acquainted with the basic concepts necessary for working with today's web platforms and on-line businesses.</p> <p>IT skills and entrepreneurial thinking are important in virtually any sphere of today's economy as it is possible to reach a much wider range of potential customers for companies of all sizes, even for the smallest ones, in your own country or/and abroad. Many companies and organizations are keen on exploiting this possibility and appreciate the staff members able contribute with their knowledge and skills to further develop this area. With the help of the project's tools, learners can test themselves on what level they are and what skills they likely need to acquire. Apart from the theoretical materials to study, drafting a business plan on-line in a facilitated environment, the learners are offered possibility to acquire hands-on experience by following step-by-step instructions in creating and managing web shops using different platforms and payment systems.</p>



Main results for the target group	<p>The project had two different target groups: teachers/trainers and students.</p> <p>Teachers: 80 trainers from the participating countries and cooperating organisations took part in the face-to-face and online course activities and received a certificate of completion. They provided valuable feedback for improving the course materials and updated their knowledge and skills for empowering their students to complement their knowledge and skills in different areas by IT skills and entrepreneurial thinking.</p> <p>Students from a number of different areas: 240 learners took part in courses lead by the project trainers during the project period.</p> <p>All the project tools developed are available and the modules are used by the participating organizations to complement their courses with the IT skills and entrepreneurship modules.</p>
Representative material	<p>www.svefi.net/e-mprover</p>
Sources (books, articles, papers, links) or/and additional resources	<p>https://emprover.inerciadigital.com http://167.99.83.198/</p>



6.3 Hungary

Well-being Living Lab Nagykovácsi	
Topic of the best practice	Unemployment of people 50+, Exchange of Experience
Exact Location	Hungary
Method type	Living lab methodology
Implementation Date	Ongoing since 2010
Brief Description	<p>In 2010 TREBAG established an Innovation Lodge and the Well-being Living Lab in Nagykovácsi, which became a member of the European Network of Living Labs (EnoLL) in 2011. The living lab is based on the results of numerous national and European educational projects and on the R&D activities built on the know-how of TREBAG.</p> <p>Living Labs are defined as user-centred, open innovation ecosystems based on systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings. LLs operate as intermediaries among citizens, research organisations, companies, cities and regions for joint value co-creation.</p> <p>Within the activities of the Nagykovácsi Well-being Living Lab special focus has been paid on the involvement and the well-being of older adults. Special projects for people 50+ have been initiated and carried out with the involvement of older citizens. It included programmes on civic engagements, physical and mental fitness, cultural programmes and various learning programmes.</p> <p>In order to reach its objectives and pursue maximum impact, the Living Lab cooperates with a lot of regional and local actors, including the Municipality of Nagykovácsi, local sport and youth organizations and public and vocational schools as well as the world of business.</p>
Main results for the target group	<p>The main target group of the living lab is various. The main focus points are families, youth and older people.</p> <p>Older people include both those active on the labour market as well as those already retired.</p>
Representative material	http://trebag.hu/living_lab
Sources (books, articles, papers, links) or/and additional resources	https://enoll.org/
Similar projects or possible/potential inspiration from worldwide	www.kifli.eu http://www.menta.uma.es/



6.4 Italy

Enhancing personal care services by means of ICT	
Topic of the best practice	Adult education and Training
Exact Location	Marche Region, Italy
Method type	On the job training, ICT
Implementation Date	From 2012 till 2014
Brief Description	Training for adults 50+, actives and working in personal care services to improve their competences, know-how and soft skills in delivering services, integrating ICT solutions (by means of PC, tablet, smartphone, etc.) to traditional intervention methods and techniques
Main results for the target group	<p>The main aims of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving quality of service • Integrating ICT in traditional services

Enhancing teamwork in healthcare and personal care services	
Topic of the best practice	Adult education and Training
Exact Location	Marche Region, Italy
Method type	On the job training, soft skills, teamwork
Implementation Date	2017
Brief Description	Training for adults 50+, actives and working in personal care services to improve their competences, know-how and soft skills in delivering services, by developing Teamwork methodologies and practices (physicians, nurses, rehab therapists, social care, formal and informal care) and integrating them with well-established techniques and procedures
Main results for the target group	<p>The main aims of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving quality of service • Reducing errors by means of teamwork



How to prepare for internationalization	
Topic of the best practice	Adult education and Training
Exact Location	Marche Region, Italy
Method type	On the job training, ICT, foreign languages
Implementation Date	From 2016 to 2018
Brief Description	Training for adults 50+ actives and working in Transportation and Logistics (warehouse management) to improve their competences, know-how and soft skills in managing company services in a situation of change in transportation, storage, freight logistics and incoming and outgoing materials
Main results for the target group	<p>The main aims of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving quality of service • Switch from local-oriented to globally oriented

How to enhance internationalization	
Topic of the best practice	Adult education and Training
Exact Location	Marche Region, Italy
Method type	On the job training, ICT, foreign languages
Implementation Date	From 2016 to 2018
Brief Description	Training for adults 50+ actives and working in Front Office jobs inside SME internationalization-oriented, to improve their competences, know-how and soft-skills (ICT, foreign languages, communication, reporting, etc.) in delivering services to internal and external Customers
Main results for the target group	<p>The main aims of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving quality of service • Scaling company size • Separating front- and back-office • Integrate in supply chains



Introduction to meeting facilitation	
Topic of the best practice	Adult education and Training
Exact Location	Marche Region, Italy
Method type	Presentations, role play
Implementation Date	From 1999 to 2001
Brief Description	Training for adults 50+ actives and working in Condominiums Administration, to introduce them to facilitation techniques by means of role playing, for a better conflict management during condominium meetings
Main results for the target group	<p>The main aims of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the ability of Condominium Administrators in facilitating meetings • Introduction to conflict management, active listening and non-violent communication

6.5 Spain

Speak-app: oral communication skills for adults in foreign languages	
Topic of the best practice	Adult education and training
Exact Location	Spain, Portugal, Austria, UK.
Method type	Andragogic methodology and authentic learning.
Implementation Date	From 01/09/2017 till 30/08/2019
Brief Description	<p>Speak-app project, funded under the Erasmus+ program had as main aim to create an online course for teachers and trainers of foreign languages for adult learners about specific methodologies to promote the development of communication skills in foreign languages.</p> <p>The online course was complemented with an app to practice the language they are learning with native speakers. Several research papers document that the use of language in real life situations improves and motivates students into continue learning. Students are matched based on their language level and their personal interests to help them to find topics for conversations.</p>



Main results for the target group	<p>The project had two different target groups: teachers/trainers and students.</p> <p>Teachers: 150 teachers from all Europe participated in the online course and received a diploma of completion. They updated their knowledge and skills for motivating their students to continue learning.</p> <p>Students of foreign languages: 170 learners of foreign languages are registered in the app to meet students with similar language level and interests.</p> <p>All tools are available and running.</p>
Representative material	http://www.speakapp.eu/
Sources (books, articles, papers, links) or/and additional resources	https://app.speakapp.eu/
Similar projects or possible/potential inspiration from worldwide	Tandem application: https://www.tandem.net/es

6.6 Greece

Show learning project	
Topic of the best practice	An Erasmus+ project that aims to train IT trainers on the needed special skills so as to teach seniors.
Exact Location	Greece, Slovenia, Spain, Denmark
Method type	Capacity building, trainings and exchange of good practices
Implementation Date	2019 - present
Brief Description	<p>Main objectives of the project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of senior expectations & needs in learning environments, focusing on IT training; • Improved knowledge & use of pedagogical tools, new technology in educating seniors; • Exchange of good practice among partners; • Create the basic theoretical foundations for the implementation of education of IT to seniors;



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know seniors as an extremely diverse group of adult learners for whom education is being prepared according to their needs and for them
Main results for the target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compendium of existing innovative and effective practices and tools in teaching technology to seniors - Job Profile of IT trainers of seniors - Training programme for IT trainers - Video for sharing the successful experiences by teachers and seniors
Representative material	https://mailchi.mp/df7a7b0d48be/2nd-slowlearning-newsletter
Sources (books, articles, papers, links) or/and additional resources	https://slowlearning.eu/slowlearning-project-for-seniors/
Similar projects or possible/potential inspiration from worldwide	-

50 και Ελλάς (50+ Greece): Access to the digital world	
Topic of the best practice	A book to teach tablet and smartphone use to elders with a simple style, and a lot of pictures and explanations
Exact Location	Athens, Greece
Method type	Educational material in the form of a book
Implementation Date	2012-today
Brief Description	The goal is to familiarize older people with the use of digital technology in order to make their daily lives better and easier. More specifically, they are taught how to use tablets and smart devices, to browse the Internet (web), to use social media (Social Media) and other useful applications (eg notes, email, Google maps) etc.
Main results for the target group	More than 7,500 people have participated in the program from 2012 until today.
Representative material	One chapter of the book can be accessed here: https://www.50plus.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/M2-book-Kef-04-051-056-2018.pdf
Sources (books, articles, papers, links) or/and additional resources	The whole book is accessible for free for members of the 50+ Ελλάς (50+ Greece). Membership costs 15 euro annually:



	https://www.50plus.gr/%ce%b3%ce%af%ce%bd%ce%b5-%ce%bc%ce%ad%ce%bb%ce%bf%cf%82/
Similar projects or possible/potential inspiration from worldwide	-

6.7 Lithuania

Training Centre PRO (mokymaiPRO.lt)	
Topic of the best practice	Adult education and training
Exact Location	Lithuania and all foreign countries, where Lithuanian migrants live
Method type	Online learning, life-long learning
Implementation Date	From 2010 till now
Brief Description	<p>Training Center PRO has been providing various type of courses, such as administration, accounting and finances, personnel and sales management, marketing, archiving, psychology and many more trainings since 2010.</p> <p>Technological progress allows the Training Centre PRO to provide distance learning throughout Lithuania and abroad. Classroom trainings were organized in the largest Lithuanian cities, and distance learning is gladly chosen not only by the residents of all Lithuanian cities, but also by Lithuanian expats living in Greece, England, Norway, the USA and other countries.</p> <p>All training materials are provided in concentrate way and easy to understand, quizzes are interactive, in some courses videos are provided as iliustation of the material. The training is acceccible more quickly (even in less than one hour), in any place of the world in any time, the only requirement is internet and computer.</p>



Main results for the target group	<p>While monitoring the market of training services and responding to the needs of users, the Training Centre PRO offers the most relevant practical training to date, focused on the market needs.</p> <p>Modern e-learning tools gives opportunity to reach people all over the country and even beyond its borders. There are no age limits for participants of the trainings in the classroom or remotely - both young people and seniors are welcome in the Training Center PRO trainings.</p> <p>Approximately 500 learners each year attend e-learning courses at www.mokymapro.lt.</p>
Representative material	http://mokymapro.lt/
Sources (books, articles, papers, links) or/and additional resources	https://www.facebook.com/mokymapro
Similar projects or possible/potential inspiration from worldwide	Coursera.org - an international learning platform, which offers MOOS (massive open online courses), as well as certifications and degrees in different subjects.

Feeling younger by getting older (FYGO)	
Topic of the best practice	Life-Long Learning Grundtvig Learning Partnership project
Exact Location	Italy, Turkey, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Finland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Poland, Greece, Lithuania, Norway, Cyprus, Bulgaria
Method type	Soft skills, active ageing, life-long learning
Implementation Date	From 2012 till 2014
Brief Description	<p>The main goals of the project “Feeling younger by getting older” were:</p> <p>1) to connect youngsters and elderly people through informal learning; 2) to ensure that the aging population will be better and continuously integrated into current cultural, social, political, technological or economic life events.</p> <p>Partners from 14 different countries organized study visits, created elder-friendly guidelines for online resources approach and arranged innovative ICT trainings for elderly citizens. The project’s final mission was to develop an Internet portal for the aging population for them to be better and continuously integrated.</p>



<p>Main results for the target group</p>	<p>The main aims of the project were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote the creation of a culture of active ageing as a lifelong process; • to ensure the rapidly growing population of people who are currently in their late 50s and over will have opportunities for employment and active participation in social and family life, including through volunteering, lifelong learning, cultural expression and sports; • to involve young generations in these activities. <p>The project was awarded as STAR project by European Commission.</p>
<p>Representative material</p>	<p>https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/feeling-younger-getting-older-project-activity-reports</p>
<p>Sources (books, articles, papers, links) or/and additional resources</p>	<p>https://www.facebook.com/FYGO-Feeling-Younger-by-Getting-Older-124027487780786/ https://emrbi.org/feeling-younger-by-getting-older/ https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/case-study-feeling-younger-getting-older-fygo</p>
<p>Similar projects or possible/potential inspiration from worldwide</p>	<p>The Third Age University - an independent, non-governmental organization that works with elderly and disabled people, while considering their needs and opportunities, as well as social policy innovations and life changes.</p>



7 Conclusions

The unemployment level of people over 50 years old is worryingly rising and requires an innovative approach. The research conducted in each of the project partners' country indicated soft skills, digital skills, communication and language skills as the most important competences in the current labor market. The main barriers faced by 50+ workers recorded in all the partner countries include lack of flexibility, resistance to changes and teamwork difficulties. For educating the older workers, innovative education methods are needed to suit their needs, with a large accent put on new technologies as a training tool, personalized learning, as well as flexible learning, competency-based and problem-based learning, e-learning, and validating skills and knowledge obtained through non-formal education. Nowadays, soft skills are increasingly important and appreciated in work places, out of which communication skills, teamwork, resilience and creativity are the most repeatedly mentioned in job advertisements. Additionally, language (and especially English) qualifications are more and more vital in work, which poses a challenge for a large group of 50 year olds. There is a new approach providing language training to adults needed, such as task-based learning, Computer Assisted Language Learning, or communicative approach. Next to that, ICT skills, progressively crucial in today's world, have to be taught among older workers in a quick and non-traditional manner. There have been many initiatives and projects led in the countries of the project partners from which examples can be drawn in order to help older workers adapt to the labor market in demand of new kind of skills from the employees.



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