



Social Circles Community Coaching Programme

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COMMUNITY COACHING PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The primary objective of the Community Coaching Programme (CCP) is to empower adult educators and community leaders to deliver the comprehensive “Social Circles” learning model. By enhancing the skills of professionals engaged in adult education, the CCP aims to help older adults access learning opportunities that foster social cohesion and combat isolation.

Recognising that older learners possess diverse styles and preferences, the CCP adopts a flexible pedagogical approach. It provides lesson plans, adaptive teaching methods, and digital tools tailored to various skill levels. A core component of the programme involves training local volunteers and educators to act as mentors, offering the bespoke guidance and encouragement older learners need to navigate the educational landscape.

A HOLISTIC EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

The CCP is a dual-purpose intervention; it treats the development of adult educators—our key intermediaries—as being just as vital as the needs of the end users. The programme focuses on:

- **Social Connectivity:** Integrating group activities, forums, and networking to build a sense of camaraderie.
- **Digital Empowerment:** Supporting educators in mastering the Social Circles Toolbox and creating their own micro-learning resources.
- **Innovative Delivery:** Capitalising on the ubiquity of digital channels and non-traditional, embedded micro-learning to reach older adults where they are.

DELIVERY AND STRUCTURE

The CCP was piloted at a Transnational Training Event in France in May 2025, followed by local pilots involving five additional educators per partner country.

The curriculum consists of **42 hours of training**, balanced between **18 hours of face-to-face (F2F) instruction** and **24 hours of self-directed learning (SDL)**. It is available in English, Swedish, French, German, Italian, and Slovenian via a MOOC, a printable PDF handbook, or an interactive online flipbook.

CORE LEARNING MODULES

The 42-hour curriculum is divided into three modules (each comprising 6 hours F2F and 8 hours SDL):

Module	Focus Areas
1. Introduction to Community Coaching	Basic coaching skills, intergenerational mentoring, and applying micro-learning techniques to adult education.
2. Mentoring the "Silver Society"	Healthy and active ageing, digital inclusion, and strategies to combat loneliness and social exclusion.
3. Developing Micro-Learning Resources	Practical support for educators to create digital resources specifically for hard-to-reach older learners.

Upon completion, adult educators will be:

- **Professionally Prepared:** Adequately trained to operate within alternative, informal educational settings.
- **Technically Proficient:** Comfortable utilising new resources and delivering micro-learning within a blended learning context.
- **Creative Developers:** Familiar with micro-learning theory and capable of designing bespoke activities to engage older adults.

LEARNING OUTCOMES MATRIX

Goals	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3
Learning about alternative educational approaches (micro-learning theory)	X		
Introduce the LifeComp conceptual framework into own educational courses	X		
Acting competently in new virtual learning environments	X	X	X
Increased awareness of the social condition of older people		X	
Facilitating peer learning opportunities and mentoring		X	
Gain greater flexibility in teaching by applying less formal educational programmes	X	X	X
Sharpen active listening skills in the specific communities of older learners			X
Provide learning opportunities ad hoc for seniors by developing own micro-learning educational resources			X
Know how to apply different learning modes to support the different learning styles of older people (<i>work in small groups, little theory and a lot of practice, connections with real life, creation of affective circles of socialisation etc.</i>)	X	X	X
Know and use blended learning methods	X	X	X
Use the resources of the Social Circles Toolbox effectively	X	X	X
Fostering and stimulate interest in research and innovation for an inclusive education	X	X	X

MODULE 1 - INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY COACHING



MODULE 1 - INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY COACHING

ADDED VALUE

Key concept/motto

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”

John Dewey (1916), Democracy and Education

Community coaching reframes adult education as a relational and inclusive practice rather than a purely instructional one. For older adults who may experience disengagement, low confidence, or social isolation, learning becomes possible when educators prioritise trust, relevance and emotional safety. This module positions adult educators as community coaches who support learning through listening, encouragement and flexible micro-learning interactions embedded in everyday contexts. By combining coaching principles with micro-learning theory, the module equips educators to lower barriers to participation, foster autonomy, and create meaningful learning experiences within less formal and community-based environments.



F2F LESSON PLAN

MODULE TITLE

Introduction to Community Coaching and Microlearning Theory

TIME

6 hours

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Learning about alternative educational approaches (micro-learning theory)
- Introduce the LifeComp conceptual framework into own educational courses
- Acting competently in new virtual learning environments
- Gain greater flexibility in teaching by applying less formal educational programmes
- Know how to apply different learning modes to support the different learning styles of older people (work in small groups, little theory and a lot of practice, connections with real life, creation of affective circles of socialization etc.)
- Know and use blended learning methods
- Use the resources of the Social Circles Toolbox effectively
- Fostering and stimulate interest in research and innovation for an inclusive education

MODULE OVERVIEW

This 6-hour module is structured into **three learning units**, each approximately two hours long. The training combines short theoretical inputs with guided reflection, peer exchange and practical exercises.

- **Session 1:** Community coaching in adult education
- **Session 2:** Micro-learning theory and alternative learning approaches
- **Session 3:** Applying micro-learning within community-based learning settings

Each session integrates discussion, case-based work and collective reflection to support transfer into practice.

IT REQUIREMENTS

- Laptop and projector
- Stable internet connection
- Access to the Social Circles MOOC
- Flipchart or digital collaborative board
- Video conferencing platform (for hybrid/blended delivery)

TRAINING MATERIALS LINKS

- *Social Circles MOOC – Educators Toolbox* <https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>
- *LifeComp Framework (European Commission, 2020)* https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en

SELF-ASSESSMENT SESSIONS, IN AND OUT, FOR COMMUNITY COACHES

Two narrative self-assessment moments are included to assess participants' confidence and their perception of the role.

- **Initial reflection (30 minutes):** Participants reflect on their current role, confidence and experience working with older adult learners and informal learning settings.

How do I currently define my role as an adult educator?

In which situations do I already act as a coach rather than a teacher?

How confident am I in less formal or community-based settings?

How comfortable am I working in blended or digital environments?

What challenges do I face when learners disengage or withdraw?

- **Final reflection (30 minutes):** Participants reflect on changes in perspective, confidence and intended practice after completing the module.

What has changed in how I understand my role?

Which approaches from this module will I apply immediately?

How has my perception of older learners evolved?

What support do I need to sustain this way of working?

Participants write a short personal commitment (5 to 6 lines) to take home.

LEARNING UNIT 1

TITLE

Community Coaching as an Adult Education Practice

DURATION HOUR(S)

2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

1. Reframing the educator role (30 minutes)

The trainer introduces community coaching as a practice that complements traditional teaching in adult education, particularly in non-formal and community-based contexts. The session contrasts three professional roles: teacher, facilitator and coach, highlighting differences.

- **Teacher** : content expert, structured transmission, outcome-driven.
- **Facilitator** : process guide, supports group interaction.
- **Coach** : relational partner, stimulates reflection and autonomy.

Participants analyse differences in:

- Power dynamics
- Responsibility for learning
- Use of learner experience
- Emotional dimension of learning

Key message: Community coaching does not replace teaching, it complements it in non-formal contexts.



2. Coaching principles in practice (15-20 minutes)

Introduce and explain the 5 core coaching principles:

1. **Active Listening:** listening to understand, not respond, use of body language
2. **Open-ended Questioning:** prompting reflection and autonomy
3. **Goal Clarification:** focusing on what learners want to achieve
4. **Strength-based Feedback:** highlighting capabilities, not deficits
5. **Non-judgemental Stance:** creating safe learning space

Link explicitly to **LifeComp competences:**

- Empathy
- Collaboration
- Flexibility
- Self-regulation

The input emphasises that community coaching does not replace teaching, but responds to situations where relational, emotional or motivational barriers prevent engagement. Educators are invited to consider how a coaching mindset supports autonomy, confidence and participation among older learners.

3. Hand out printed case studies (see annex).

Participants work with short case studies describing older adult learners facing barriers such as low confidence, fear of failure or past negative learning experiences. In small groups, participants:

- Identify typical educator responses focused on content or instruction.
- Reframe these responses using coaching principles such as active listening, open-ended questioning and strength-based feedback.

Groups discuss how coaching addresses emotional and relational barriers rather than solely skills gaps

4. Identifying barriers to participation and coaching responses (40 minutes)

Participants brainstorm common barriers to participation experienced by older adults and map each barrier to an appropriate coaching response. The trainer facilitates a collective synthesis, highlighting recurring patterns and effective strategies.

- Fear of failure
- Low digital confidence
- Past negative school experiences
- Social anxiety
- Perceived irrelevance

For each barrier, groups define:

- A content-focused response
- A coaching-focused response

Map each barrier to a coaching principle or approach.

Trainer Tip: Create a visible table on flipchart or screen showing barriers vs. coaching responses.

The goal is to understand that coaching addresses emotional and relational barriers, not just skills gaps.

5. Reflection and transfer (20 minutes)

Participants individually reflect:

- Which coaching skill will I practise first in my context?
- Which barrier do I feel most able to address now?
- What support do I need to adopt a coaching mindset consistently?

Optional: Facilitator invites participants to share their reflections with the group.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- *Social Circles MOOC – Educators Toolbox* <https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>
- *LifeComp Framework (European Commission, 2020)* https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en

TIPS FOR SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SESSIONS

- Use breakout rooms for case work.
- Encourage cameras on...
- Use shared documents for barrier mapping.
- Keep theoretical input short (max. 15 minutes at a time).

ANNEX 1 – CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY A

Margaret (76) attends a weekly community digital skills session at a local library. The group consists of twelve older adults with varying levels of confidence. The educator notices that Margaret consistently arrives early, sits at the back, and writes detailed notes during demonstrations. However, when it is time for hands-on practice, she hesitates visibly.

When asked if she would like support, she responds politely, “No thank you, I’ll watch first.” She rarely asks questions in front of the group. During pair work, she allows her partner to take control of the device. If she makes a mistake, she laughs nervously and says, “I’ve never been good at school things.”

In a short informal conversation after class, Margaret shares that she left school at 14 and has always felt “behind” academically. She explains that her grandchildren are “naturally clever” with technology and she worries about “looking foolish” in front of others.

The educator feels tension between keeping the session on schedule and providing Margaret with individual encouragement. Other participants are progressing quickly and asking for more advanced content.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What emotional and biographical factors are influencing Margaret’s participation?
2. How might a traditional instructional response differ from a coaching response in this situation?
3. What risks arise if the educator focuses only on task completion?
4. Which LifeComp competences are most relevant here?
5. How can autonomy be supported without increasing Margaret’s anxiety?
6. Where should professional boundaries be maintained?

CASE STUDY B

Thomas (68) is a retired engineer who volunteers as an informal peer supporter during community learning sessions. He is confident, articulate and eager to help others. During sessions, he frequently intervenes to explain tasks before the educator finishes instructions. He often corrects other participants mid-task, sometimes taking their device to “show them properly”.

Some learners appear relieved to receive his help. Others become quieter when he approaches. One participant later comments privately that she feels “slow and stupid” when Thomas corrects her publicly.

The educator appreciates Thomas’s enthusiasm but notices that group dynamics are shifting. Participation is becoming uneven, and some learners appear increasingly passive.

At the same time, the programme coordinator values Thomas’s involvement because volunteer support reduces staffing pressure.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the benefits and risks of peer dominance in community learning?
2. How might a coaching approach address the group dynamic without discouraging Thomas?
3. What power dynamics are at play?
4. How can the educator protect psychological safety while maintaining community spirit?
5. How should institutional expectations be balanced with learner wellbeing?

CASE STUDY C

Aisha (71) joined the programme after relocating to be closer to her daughter. She is highly motivated and attends every session. She completes tasks carefully and frequently asks, “Is this right?” before proceeding.

If the educator is occupied, she waits rather than continuing independently. She apologises repeatedly when making minor mistakes. When praised, she appears relieved but immediately seeks confirmation for the next step.

In private conversation, she explains that she previously attended a formal adult education course where she felt criticised by the instructor for working too slowly. She does not want to “get it wrong again”.

The educator worries that constant reassurance is limiting Aisha’s autonomy, but is also concerned that withdrawing support too quickly may damage trust.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What underlying needs might Aisha be expressing?
2. How can coaching principles strengthen her autonomy without creating insecurity?
3. How can feedback be structured to reduce dependence on approval?
4. At what point does support become counterproductive?
5. Which LifeComp competences should the educator consciously model?

CASE STUDY D

During a blended learning pilot, several participants are invited to join an optional WhatsApp group to continue peer interaction between sessions. Most agree, but two participants decline without explanation.

One of them, David (73), continues attending face-to-face sessions but avoids any discussion of digital communication outside class. When the educator gently explores his reluctance, David states, “I prefer things the old-fashioned way.”

Later, another participant mentions that David previously experienced online fraud and is cautious about digital platforms.

The programme funder is keen to demonstrate measurable digital engagement and encourages the educator to increase online participation rates.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can the educator respect David’s boundaries while encouraging digital inclusion?
2. What assumptions might the educator be making about resistance?
3. How should external performance pressures be managed ethically?
4. Where is the line between encouragement and coercion?
5. How does a coaching stance differ from persuasive instruction in this case?

LEARNING UNIT 2

TITLE

Micro-learning Theory and Alternative Educational Approaches

DURATION HOUR(S)

2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

1. Introduction and Conceptual Framing (30 minutes)

The session begins by focusing on disengagement rather than methodology. Instead of immediately introducing micro-learning as a concept, facilitators guide participants to examine why older adults disengage from learning in the first place.

Participants work in small groups and identify barriers under three categories:

- **Cognitive barriers** (e.g. overload, pace, memory concerns, too many objectives in one session)
- **Emotional barriers** (e.g. fear of failure, shame, low confidence, previous negative school experiences)
- **Structural barriers** (e.g. transport, long sessions, digital access, rigid scheduling)

Groups briefly share findings. The facilitator highlights patterns and emphasises that disengagement is often not a lack of motivation, but a response to friction in the learning design.



Micro-learning is then introduced as a structural and pedagogical response to these barriers. It is presented not as “smaller content”, but as an intentional design aimed at reducing cognitive overload, lowering emotional pressure and increasing accessibility.

Key principles include:

- Short, focused learning units with a single objective
- Contextualisation within real-life tasks
- Flexibility in delivery mode
- Integration of action and reflection

Facilitators highlight common misconceptions: micro-learning is not superficial, digital-only, or fragmented learning, but a thoughtful reorganisation of content for accessibility and engagement.

The facilitator provides a concise and focused theoretical input linking micro-learning to three foundational perspectives:

Cognitive Load Theory

Learning improves when information is delivered in manageable units. Smaller segments reduce overload and increase retention.

Experiential Learning

Even short learning moments can follow the cycle of action, reflection and transfer.

Self-Determination and Motivation

Short, achievable tasks strengthen feelings of competence and autonomy, which are essential for re-engaging low-confidence learners.

2. Diagnostic Exercise: Is This Really Micro-Learning? (25 minutes)

Before redesigning their own activities, participants analyse three prepared session outlines (see Annex 1).

Working in small groups, they examine:

- Which example represents well-designed micro-learning?
- Which only appears short but lacks core principles?
- Which contains overload despite good intentions?
- What is missing in each case?

Groups justify their conclusions using the theoretical foundations presented earlier.

The facilitator guides a short plenary synthesis, clarifying that:

- Short duration alone does not define micro-learning.
- A single objective and clear transfer are essential.
- Reflection and learner action must be integrated.

This exercise strengthens conceptual precision before participants move into practical design.

3. Microlearning redesign (40min)

Participants analyse one of their existing learning activities through a micro-learning lens, examining clarity of objectives, duration, engagement and opportunities for practice. Small-group discussion highlights how micro-learning can support inclusion and re-engagement

Discussion Prompt: “Think of a learning activity you deliver. How could you segment it into micro-learning moments?”

Examples if needed:

- A peer discussion on local history
- A literacy or numeracy challenge embedded in a social activity

Participants work in pairs or small groups to redesign one of their own activities into a micro-learning format, considering:

- **Objective:** What exactly should the learner achieve in this short session?
- **Sequence:** How will the micro-unit fit into larger learning goals?
- **Engagement:** How will the activity be motivating, relevant, and accessible?
- **Reflection:** How can learners apply what they learned immediately?
- **Sharing:** Each group presents their redesigned micro-learning moment in 3–4 minutes, followed by brief peer feedback focusing on clarity, engagement, and inclusivity.

4. Reflection and Integration (20 minutes)

The session closes with guided reflection to consolidate learning:

Participants individually note:

- Which micro-learning principle they find most valuable for their context
- How micro-learning could help learners who previously disengaged
- Practical changes they will implement in the next week

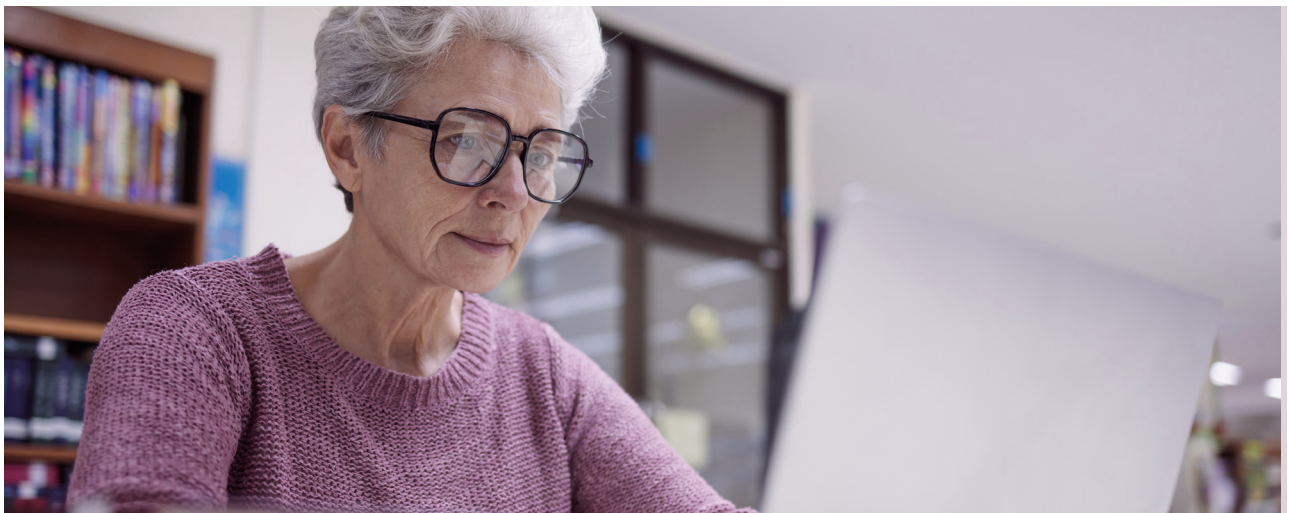
Optional peer-sharing allows reinforcement and exchange of ideas. Facilitators emphasise that micro-learning is as much about mindset as method, encouraging participants to see learning as incremental, flexible, and learner centred.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- *Social Circles MOOC – Educators Toolbox* <https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>
- *LifeComp Framework (European Commission, 2020)* https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en
- *Micro-learning:* https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1096751624000149?utm_
- *Cognitive load theory: Skulmowski, A., Xu, K.M. Understanding Cognitive Load in Digital and Online Learning: a New Perspective on Extraneous Cognitive Load. Educ Psychol Rev 34, 171–196 (2022).* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-021-09624-7>
- **Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle** in the context of adult and “silver” learners : https://www.hlomag.co.uk/apr20/silver-learners?utm_

TIPS FOR SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SESSIONS

- Keep theoretical inputs short and focused.
- Use collaborative boards for redesign.
- Use break out rooms for group work.
- Use chat and polls to lower participation barriers.
- Encourage peer feedback in small groups.



ANNEX 2 – DIAGNOSTIC EXERCISE MATERIALS

Is This Really Micro-Learning?

Example A – “Digital Confidence Workshop”

Title: Getting Confident Online

Duration: 90 minutes

Objectives:

- Understand basic internet safety
- Learn how to create a strong password
- Recognise phishing emails
- Explore privacy settings
- Download and use a messaging app

Structure:

- 30-minute presentation with slides
- 20-minute demonstration
- 20-minute guided practice
- 20-minute Q&A

Reflection or Transfer: None explicitly planned

Example B – “Using Voice Messages”

Title: Sending a Voice Message

Duration: 10 minutes

Objective: Send one voice message using a smartphone

Structure:

- Facilitator demonstrates how to record and send a message
- Participants repeat the steps

Reflection or Transfer: No reflection; activity ends once message is sent

Example C – “First Voice Message to a Friend”

Title: Sending Your First Voice Message

Duration: 15 minutes

Objective: Each participant sends one successful voice message

Structure:

1. Short explanation (2 minutes)
2. Step-by-step demonstration (3 minutes)
3. Individual practice (5 minutes)
4. Pair reflection:
 - What felt easy?
 - What was unclear?
5. Transfer task: Send a voice message to a family member later that day

Built-in Support:

- Participants choose their contact
- Peer support encouraged
- No pressure to complete more than one message

Group Analysis Questions

For each example:

1. Is there a single, clear objective?
2. Is the duration aligned with attention and cognitive load?
3. Is learner action central?
4. Is reflection integrated?
5. Is there a clear transfer moment?
6. Which theoretical principle (cognitive load, experiential learning, autonomy) is present or missing?

Participants prepare a short justification for their conclusions.

LEARNING UNIT 3

TITLE

Applying micro-learning within community-based learning settings

DURATION HOUR(S)

2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

1. Mapping Learning Opportunities in the Community (30 minutes)

The facilitator begins by prompting reflection on where learning occurs outside formal classrooms. Examples include:

- Libraries, cafes, and community centres
- Social or hobby groups
- Volunteer or mentoring settings
- Informal peer gatherings



Exercise:

- Participants individually map their local community, noting:
 01. Spaces where older adults naturally gather
 02. Existing informal learning activities
 03. Potential micro-learning moments that could be embedded

Discussion:

- Participants share examples with the group, highlighting opportunities for low-barrier engagement.

Trainer Tip: Emphasise that micro-learning does not require new sessions; it can enhance and transform existing activities.

2. Designing Micro-learning Interventions for Community Contexts (40 minutes)

The facilitator presents practical guidance on adapting micro-learning to community settings, integrating coaching principles:

- **Objective Clarity:** Each micro-learning moment should have one clear, achievable outcome.
- **Timing and Flexibility:** Activities should be short (5–20 minutes) and easy to join or leave.
- **Peer Learning:** Encourage participants to interact and support each other.
- **Relational Engagement:** Coaches facilitate discussion, reflection, and inclusion rather than simply providing content.

Exercise:

- Working in pairs or small groups, participants select one location or existing activity from their mapping exercise.
- They design a micro-learning interaction tailored to that context, including:
 - Objective
 - Duration
 - Learning resources
 - Facilitation approach
 - Peer support elements

Sharing: Each group presents their micro-learning plan to the class (3–4 minutes), receiving feedback focused on clarity, inclusivity, and practicality.

3. Facilitating Engagement and Peer Learning (30 minutes)

The session explores how community coaches can maintain motivation and participation:

- **Peer recognition:** Encourage learners to share achievements and experiences.
- **Psychological safety:** Create an environment where mistakes are accepted as part of learning.
- **Encouragement and scaffolding:** Offer support without taking control, fostering learner autonomy.
- **Social integration:** Activities can double as social connection opportunities.

Discussion Exercise:

- Participants reflect on common challenges in their contexts, such as low attendance, lack of confidence, or diverse abilities.
- In small groups, they brainstorm coaching strategies to overcome these barriers using micro-learning approaches.

Trainer Tip: Capture strategies on a visible table for later reference.

4. Reflection and Integration (20 minutes)

The unit concludes with personal and group reflection to consolidate learning and support transfer into practice:

- Individual reflection prompts:
 01. Which micro-learning activity could I implement next week?
 02. What community space or context could I use that is currently underutilised?
 03. How will I ensure participation and inclusion?
- Optional peer discussion: share one action they will take, providing accountability and reinforcing community learning.

Trainer Note: Emphasise that this is iterative learning. coaching and micro-learning approaches are refined over time as educators experiment in real-world contexts.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- *Social Circles MOOC – Educators Toolbox* <https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>
- **A systematic review of mobile-based microlearning in adult learner contexts** https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372907157_A_systematic_review_of_mobile-based_microlearning_in_adult_learner_contexts
- *LifeComp Framework (European Commission, 2020)* https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en

TIPS FOR SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SESSIONS

- Use breakout rooms for case work.
- Encourage cameras on during discussions.
- Use shared documents for barrier mapping.
- Keep theoretical input short

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING (SDL)

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 1

Learning about alternative educational approaches (micro-learning theory)

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- *Learning about alternative educational approaches (micro-learning theory)*

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

In this activity, you will deepen your understanding of micro-learning theory as an alternative educational approach in adult education.

Begin by watching this short [video](#) on micro learning. With this information in mind explore the Social Circles MOOC. Focus on understanding micro-learning not simply as “short sessions”, but as intentional pedagogical design.

As you explore, take notes on the following:

- What are the defining principles of micro-learning?
- How does it differ from traditional lesson structures?
- How does it respond to cognitive, emotional and practical barriers experienced by older learners?



Write a structured reflection (approximately one page) explaining micro-learning theory in your own words. Conclude your reflection by identifying one potential limitation or misunderstanding of micro-learning that educators should avoid.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Social Circles MOOC – <https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>
2. **What is Microlearning? [2-Minute Explainer]** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlbsuPAibfY>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment questions:

- Can you explain micro-learning theory clearly and confidently?
- Can you distinguish between micro-learning and fragmented teaching?



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 2

Introduce the LifeComp conceptual framework into own educational courses

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- *Introduce the LifeComp conceptual framework into own educational courses*

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

In this activity, you will examine how the LifeComp conceptual framework can be integrated into your own educational practice.

Begin by reviewing the [LifeComp framework](#) carefully. Pay attention to its three areas and associated competences.

Select one course or learning programme you currently deliver. Analyse where LifeComp competences are already present, even if they are not explicitly named.

Then develop a short integration plan in which you describe:

- Which LifeComp competences you will intentionally introduce.
- How you will make them visible to learners.
- How reflection on competences could be embedded into your sessions.

Conclude with a short written explanation of how introducing LifeComp strengthens inclusive and community-oriented education.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

European Commission (2020) LifeComp Framework: https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment questions:

- *Can you clearly identify LifeComp competences within your own course?*
- *Have you moved from implicit to explicit integration?*

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 3

Acting competently in new virtual learning environments

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

Acting competently in new virtual learning environments

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

This activity invites you to critically reflect on your competence in virtual learning environments.

Begin by reviewing the digital tools included in the Social Circles Toolbox. Reflect honestly on your current level of confidence when facilitating online or blended sessions.

Conduct a structured self-evaluation considering:

- How you manage participation online.
- How you support older learners digitally.
- How you respond to technical challenges.
- How you maintain engagement in virtual spaces.

Select one digital tool from the Digital and Social Media module of the Social Circles Toolbox and explore it in depth. Document its core functions, accessibility considerations and potential barriers for older learners.

Conclude with a written reflection on how acting competently in virtual environments contributes to inclusive education.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

Social Circles Toolbox: <https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/digital-and-social-media/>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment questions:

- Do you feel confident facilitating interaction online?
- Can you anticipate digital barriers faced by older learners?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 4

Gain greater flexibility in teaching by applying less formal educational programmes

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

Gain greater flexibility in teaching by applying less formal educational programmes

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

In this activity, you will examine the degree of formality within your current teaching practice.

Select one structured course or session you deliver regularly. Analyse its structure, identifying elements that are highly formal, such as rigid sequencing, lecture-based delivery or fixed outcomes.

Now reimagine this session using a less formal educational approach. Consider dialogue-based learning, peer exchange, experiential tasks or community conversation circles.

Write a reflective narrative describing how the same content could be delivered more flexibly. Reflect on how such flexibility might affect learner engagement, autonomy and confidence.

Conclude by identifying one realistic change you can implement to increase flexibility without compromising quality.



LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- Social Circles MOOC – <https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>
- **What is Microlearning? [2-Minute Explainer]** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlbsuPAibfY>
- **European Commission (2020) LifeComp Framework:** https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment questions:

- Where do you rely on structure for your own sense of control?
- How might greater flexibility improve inclusion?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 5

Applying different learning modes

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

Know how to apply different learning modes to support the different learning styles of older people (work in small groups, little theory and a lot of practice, connections with real life, creation of effective circles of socialization etc.)

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

In this activity, you will critically evaluate how you apply different learning modes in your sessions.

Select a recent learning session and reconstruct it in writing. Analyse how the following were addressed:

- Small group interaction
- Balance between theory and practice
- Real-life relevance
- Creation of affective circles of socialization

Reflect on whether your approach genuinely supported diverse learning styles among older people.

Write a short evaluation explaining what worked well and what requires adjustment. Identify specific ways to strengthen practice-based learning and deepen social connection within your sessions.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- Microlearning: Enhancing student engagement in higher education, By LaVonne Riggs-Zeigen / July 2025
- <https://elearnmag.acm.org/featured.cfm?aid=3704733&rss=true>
- *LifeComp competences related to collaboration*: https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment questions:

- Did you prioritise practice over extended theory?
- Did you intentionally foster effective circles of socialisation?



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 6

Use blended learning methods

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

Know and use blended learning methods

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

In this activity, you will reflect on the pedagogical logic of blended learning methods.

Begin by reviewing the blended learning approach presented in this youtube video: Understanding Blended Learning: The Future of Education: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrYOXk5HB1Y>

Reflect on the purpose of combining face-to-face and digital elements.

Write a structured reflection addressing:

- When blended learning is appropriate for older learners.
- When it may create additional barriers.
- How relational continuity can be maintained between physical and digital spaces.

Conclude by describing one scenario in which blended learning strengthens participation and autonomy.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- Blended Learning for the Adult Education <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/blended-learning-adult-education-classroom>
- Understanding Blended Learning: The Future of Education - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrYOXk5HB1Y>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment questions:

- Can you clearly explain the rationale behind blended learning?
- Do you recognise situations where blended learning may not be suitable?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 7

How to put in practice

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

Use the resources of the Social Circles Toolbox effectively

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

This activity focuses on deepening your familiarity with the Social Circles Toolbox.

Explore the Toolbox systematically. Select at least three resources relevant to your context.

For each resource, write a short analysis including:

- Its intended purpose.
- The type of learners it supports.
- The facilitation skills required.
- Possible adaptations to increase inclusion.

Conclude with a reflective paragraph explaining how the Toolbox strengthens your role as a community coach.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- *Social Circles Toolbox* : <https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment questions:

- Are you selecting resources strategically?
- Do you understand the pedagogical intention behind each tool?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 8

Interest in research & innovation in adult education

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

Fostering and stimulate interest in research and innovation for an inclusive education

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

In this activity, you will engage with research and innovation in inclusive adult education.

Identify one recent article, project or initiative related to inclusive education, digital inclusion, community coaching or adult learning innovation.

Read or explore the selected resource carefully. Write a short analytical summary outlining:

- The central innovation or research finding.
- Its relevance for older learners.
- Its potential impact on inclusive education practice.

Conclude by identifying one action you will take to remain informed about research and innovation in your field.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

Erasmus+ Project Results Platform: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/?page=1&sort=&domain=eplus2021&view=list&map=false&projectTopics=new+innovative+curricula%2Feducational+methods%2Fdevelopment+of+training+courses__31047505&projectField=adu%3A+adult+education__31047625&searchType=projects

Relevant academic or professional networks

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment questions:

- Are you actively engaging with research?
- How can innovation improve your inclusive practice?

MODULE 2 - MENTORING THE SILVER SOCIETY





MODULE 2 - MENTORING THE SILVER SOCIETY

ADDED VALUE

KEY CONCEPT/MOTTO

“One is not born old; one becomes old. And it is the others who make you feel so.”
(Simone de Beauvoir, *The Coming of Age* (1970))

Mentoring the Silver Society means challenging passive narratives of ageing and embracing the vision of active ageing, where seniors have the right to participate, learn and belong. It means challenging the social narratives that isolate seniors; adult educators are key agents in reshaping ageing into a space of learning, relevance and empowerment.

F2F LESSON PLAN

MODULE TITLE

Mentoring the Silver Society: Empowering Educators to Foster Active Ageing, Digital Inclusion and Social Connection

TIME

6 hours

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Recognise barriers to participation, indicators of loneliness, and forms of digital exclusion among older adult learners.
- Apply respectful, non-patronising mentoring and communication strategies that promote dignity, autonomy and active ageing.
- Design and adapt micro-learning and low-threshold learning activities suited to the needs, motivations and pace of older adults.
- Facilitate inclusive learning environments that foster social connection, peer interaction and sustained engagement in lifelong learning.
- Reflect on their own role as educators and mentors and apply ethical boundaries that support trust and learner autonomy.

MODULE OVERVIEW

The module “Mentoring the Silver Society” equips adult educators with the social, pedagogical and relational competences needed to engage older adults who experience loneliness, digital exclusion, or disengagement from learning.

Through short theoretical inputs, reflective exercises, case-based work and peer exchange, participants explore the realities of ageing today, recognise indicators of social isolation, and practice mentoring approaches that promote dignity, autonomy and trust.

The module places education in a broader social context, highlighting its role as a connector between people, generations, services and communities. Educators learn how micro-learning and community-based education can rebuild social circles and support active ageing without infantilising or overburdening older learners.

By the end of this module, adult educators will be able to:

- Recognise barriers to participation, loneliness indicators and digital exclusion among older adult learners.
- Apply respectful mentoring and communication strategies that promote dignity, autonomy and active ageing.
- Design micro-learning and low-threshold digital activities adapted to the needs of seniors.
- Facilitate learning environments that support social connection, peer interaction and engagement in lifelong learning.

This 6-hour module is structured into three learning units, each approximately two hours long. The training combines short theoretical inputs with guided reflection, peer exchange and practical exercises.

Learning unit 1: Understanding the silver society

Learning unit 2: Digital inclusion

Learning unit 3: Education as a social connector

TRAINING MATERIALS LINKS

1. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

SELF-ASSESSMENT SESSIONS, IN AND OUT, FOR COMMUNITY COACHES

Initial self-assessment session (IN) (30 minutes):

The purpose of this session is to help participants:

- Reflect on their current experiences and attitudes when working with older adults.
- Become aware of their own assumptions, strengths and challenges.
- Establish a personal reference point for learning during the module.

Step 1: Individual reflection

Reflect on these questions individually and respond in writing:

- What experiences have I had so far when working with older adults?
- What do I find most challenging in engaging older learners who may feel lonely or excluded?
- How confident do I feel in mentoring older adults rather than “teaching” them?

- How do I currently approach digital inclusion and respectful communication?
- What do I hope to gain from this module?

Step 2: Group exchange

Participants share one insight or expectation in pairs or small groups.

It's important that:

- participants choose what (and if) they share
- listening is as important as speaking

Final self-assessment session (OUT) (30 minutes):

The purpose of this session is to support participants in:

- Reflecting on how their understanding and practice have evolved.
- Identifying new competences, attitudes and approaches.
- Considering how learning will be applied in their professional context.

Step 1: Revisit the IN reflection

Briefly revisit the notes you took during the initial self-assessment.

The goal now is to notice change, continuity and growth. Compare how you felt before the module and now.

Step 2: Individual reflection

Reflect on these questions individually and respond in writing:

- What new insights have I gained about ageing, loneliness and digital inclusion?
- Which mentoring or communication strategies do I feel more confident using?
- How has my understanding of my role as an educator or community coach changed?
- What moments or activities during the module were most meaningful for me?
- What is one concrete change I want to make in my practice?

Step 3: Group exchange

Participants share one learning moment or a future intention in pairs or small group.

LEARNING UNIT 1

TITLE

Understanding the Silver Society

DURATION HOUR(S)

2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Theoretical background (30 minutes):

Trainers introduce the concept of the Silver Society by presenting contemporary perspectives on ageing in Europe. The session explores demographic change, increased life expectancy, and the diversity of older adults' life situations, moving beyond stereotypes of dependency and decline.



KEY TOPICS INCLUDE:

- social transitions linked to retirement, bereavement, and health changes
- indicators of loneliness and social isolation
- structural and personal barriers to participation in adult education
- the role of adult education in promoting active ageing and social inclusion

The input highlights that disengagement from learning is often not due to a lack of interest, but to accumulated experiences of exclusion, loss of confidence, or feeling “out of place”. Trainers invite participants to reflect on how these dynamics appear in their own educational contexts.

Reflective exercise (25 minutes):

Participants engage in a guided reflective activity aimed at uncovering personal assumptions about ageing and older learners.

Individually, participants respond to short prompts such as:

- What images or words come to mind when I think of “older learners”?
- When do I unconsciously lower expectations?
- What does “active ageing” mean in my practice?

Participants then discuss their reflections in pairs or small groups, focusing on how implicit beliefs can influence teaching style, communication, and course design. The trainer facilitates a short plenary exchange to surface common patterns and emphasise the importance of awareness as a professional competence.

*You can expand this exercise by using Appendix 1, where you can find more questions. In this case, the exercise will last longer, and we recommend using individual reflection first, then pairs, then plenary.

Group work (40 minutes):

Participants work in small groups (3–4 people) on short case studies describing older adults in different life situations, for example:

- a recently retired person experiencing loss of routine and purpose
- an older adult living alone with limited social contacts
- a senior interested in learning but hesitant to join formal courses

Each group analyses one case, identifying:

- potential risks of loneliness or disengagement
- existing strengths, resources, and motivations
- barriers to participation in adult education
- possible educational or mentoring entry points

Groups document their findings and prepare a short summary.

Reflection (25 minutes):

Groups present their case analyses in plenary. A facilitated exchange follows, encouraging participants to compare cases with their own experiences in adult education settings.

The trainer guides the discussion towards:

- recognising patterns across different profiles
- understanding the educator's role as a connector and mentor
- distinguishing between support and overprotection

The session concludes with a synthesis of key insights that will feed directly into the following units on digital inclusion and education as a social connector.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 1: Artistic and cultural disciplines

- Understanding Others Through Storytelling
- Mindfulness Through Art

2. EU policy on ageing, digitalisation and rights

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2023/older-people-digital-rights>

TIPS FOR SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SESSIONS

- Use breakout rooms for reflective and case-based activities
- Offer prompts visually and verbally to support different learning styles
- Allow silent reflection time before group discussion
- Use polls or chat responses to surface sensitive insights safely

LEARNING UNIT 2

TITLE

Digital inclusion

DURATION HOUR(S)

2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Theoretical background (25 minutes):

Trainers introduce digital exclusion as a multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond a lack of technical skills. The focus is placed on emotional, social and relational barriers experienced by older adults, such as fear of making mistakes, shame about “not keeping up”, dependence on others, and previous negative learning experiences.

The session also addresses accessibility barriers (language, cognitive load, physical limitations) and highlights the risk of paternalistic or infantilising teaching approaches. Trainers emphasise the educator’s role in fostering autonomy, trust and dignity rather than dependency, and present digital inclusion as a process of empowerment rather than performance. A short plenary discussion invites participants to connect these concepts to their own teaching contexts.



Interactive activity (35 minutes):

Participants work in small groups (3–4 people) to map everyday digital practices commonly used by older adults, such as:

- messaging family or friends
- accessing public or health services
- managing appointments or payments
- pursuing hobbies, cultural interests or community activities

Each group selects 2–3 practices and reflects on why these activities matter socially, emotionally or practically for older adults. Participants are guided to move from a tool-centred perspective (“learning how to use a smartphone”) to a meaning-centred one (“staying connected to grandchildren”, “maintaining independence”, “feeling part of society”).

Groups document their reflections on a shared board or flipchart, identifying:

- the social value of each digital practice
- possible emotional barriers
- how educators can introduce these tools in a motivating and respectful way

A short plenary exchange follows, where groups share key insights.

Role-play activity (40 minutes):

Participants engage in structured role-play exercises to practice mentoring conversations around digital skills. In each group of three:

- one participant plays the role of the older learner
- one plays the educator/mentor
- one acts as an observer

Scenarios are based on realistic situations, such as:

- an older learner afraid of using online banking
- a participant reluctant to use messaging apps
- a learner who relies heavily on family members and feels dependent

Educators practice:

- using respectful, non-patronising language
- pacing learning according to the learner’s comfort
- asking for consent before intervening
- reinforcing autonomy and confidence

Observers use a simple checklist to note effective strategies and moments of tension or improvement. Roles rotate so each participant experiences all three perspectives.

Reflection (20 minutes):

The group reconvenes for a guided reflection facilitated by the trainer. Participants discuss:

- what made the mentoring interactions feel empowering or discouraging
- how language, tone and body posture influenced the learner's confidence
- how small changes in approach can reduce fear and dependency

The exchange highlights good practices identified during role-play and links them back to the initial theoretical input. Trainers summarise key takeaways and encourage participants to transfer these strategies into their own educational practice.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 3: Digital and social media

- Digital Safety: Consent and privacy online
- Connecting with Others in Online Communities
- Mastering a New App in 30 Minutes

2. Recommendations for transferability of ICTskills4All results

https://all-digital.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/O6.A1.Exploitation-Roadmap_EN.pdf

3. Faith – Feeling safe to transact online in the third age (e-learning)

https://elearning.faith-project.eu/?_gl=1*tw557k*_ga*MTY2ODQ2MzY0MC4xNzY5NTIxMjY2*_ga_E45SZYRM98*czE3Njk1MjEyNjUkbzEkZzAkdDE3Njk1MjEyNjUkajYwJGwwJGgw

TIPS FOR SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SESSIONS

- Model inclusive facilitation by using a slow pace, clear instructions and frequent check-ins.
- Use live demonstrations sparingly and always explain actions step by step.
- Encourage participants to narrate their actions aloud to support shared understanding.
- Allow extra time for reflection and questions, acknowledging different digital comfort levels.



LEARNING UNIT 3

TITLE

Education as a social connector

DURATION HOUR(S)

2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Theoretical background (25 minutes):

Trainers introduce education as a powerful social connector that goes beyond knowledge transfer. The session explores how learning spaces can counter loneliness by creating opportunities for belonging, mutual recognition, and shared purpose.

Key topics include:

- education as a safe social space
- peer learning and mutual support among older adults
- informal and community-based learning formats
- the role of the educator as a connector between people, services, and communities

Examples of socially connective educational practices are presented, such as learning cafés, intergenerational encounters, thematic clubs, and informal micro-learning moments embedded in everyday community life.

Practical activity (40 minutes):

Participants work in small groups (3–4 people) to rethink a familiar adult education activity (e.g. digital skills, cultural activities, budgeting, health-related learning) through a social inclusion lens.

Each group:

- selects a typical learning activity they currently offer or know well
- identifies where social interaction already exists and where it could be strengthened
- redesigns the activity to intentionally foster connection, peer exchange, and a sense of belonging

Participants are encouraged to consider low-threshold approaches, such as informal settings, flexible participation, shared roles, and opportunities for conversation before and after learning moments.

Groups document their redesigned activity using a simple template (aim, social dimension, educator's role, inclusion strategies).

Reflection:

- What was most challenging in redesigning the activity?
- What small change could already improve social connection in your current practice?
- How could this concept be adapted for different groups of older adults?

*You can use the template in [Appendix 2](#) in order to expand this exercise.

Group work (35 minutes):

Building on the previous activity, groups develop a concrete socially connective learning concept targeted at older adults in their local context. Examples may include:

- learning cafés or discussion circles
- buddy or peer-mentoring systems
- intergenerational learning sessions
- hobby-based learning groups

Each concept includes:

- a clear social purpose
- a description of the educator's mentoring role
- strategies to welcome and retain participants
- potential partnerships (libraries, NGOs, community centres)

The emphasis is on feasibility, simplicity, and adaptability rather than complex programme design.

Reflection (20 minutes):

Groups briefly present their learning concepts in plenary. The exchange focuses on:

- how each concept supports social connection
- how it reduces barriers to participation
- how it can be adapted to different local contexts

Peers provide constructive feedback, highlighting strengths and offering suggestions. Trainers synthesise recurring themes and underline the importance of intentional social design in adult education.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 1: Artistic and cultural disciplines

- Organising a Local Cultural Event
- Understanding Others Through Storytelling

Topic 4: Sports and hobbies

- Creating and Connecting Through Your Interests
- Trying a New Hobby Without Fear

2. Cycling without age

<https://cyclingwithoutage.org/>

3. Men's shed

<https://menssheds.org.uk/>

TIPS FOR SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SESSIONS

- Use breakout rooms with clear instructions and time reminders
- Encourage visual mapping of ideas using shared boards or slides
- Keep presentations short and informal to lower performance pressure
- Build in short reflection pauses to maintain engagement

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING (SDL)

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 1

Recognising Loneliness and Social Isolation in Older Adults

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Recognise indicators of loneliness and social isolation among older adults.
- Understand risk factors and protective factors for social inclusion.
- Reflect on the educator's role in identifying and responding to loneliness.

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

Introduction (10 min)

Watch a short video about loneliness in older age: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pyr7Zf-eVq4> (8 minutes). If you have time, you can also watch this additional video (30 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDFUqnkm6Ak>

Reflect on how loneliness differs from being alone.



Self-reflection (15 min)

Think of older learners you have worked with. Identify signs that might indicate loneliness (withdrawal, low participation, excessive dependence, silence, etc.).

Case Analysis (20 min)

Analyse a short case study describing an older learner. Identify:

- possible loneliness indicators
- potential causes
- supportive educational actions

*You can find the short case studies in Appendix 3: Case studies

Action Planning (15 min)

Write down 3 concrete actions you could implement in your practice to reduce loneliness through education.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Short video on loneliness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDFUqnkm6Ak>
2. Longervideoonloneliness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDFUqnkm6Ak>
3. Social Circles MOOC
<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 1: Understanding Others Through Storytelling

Topic 1: Mindfulness Through Art

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Verification questions

- Can you list at least three indicators of loneliness in older adults?
- Can you identify risk factors for social isolation?
- Can you propose at least one educational intervention to reduce loneliness?

Self-reflection questions

- How confident do you feel in recognising loneliness in your learners?
- What barriers prevent educators from addressing loneliness?
- How can education contribute to meaningful social connection?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 2

Respectful Communication and Non-Patronising Language

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understand the impact of language on dignity and autonomy
- Recognise patronising and ageist communication patterns
- Apply respectful mentoring and facilitation language

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

Introduction (10 minutes):

Read short examples comparing ageist or patronising language with respectful, empowering alternatives in educational and caregiving contexts. You can find the examples in [Appendix 4: Short Examples](#).

Focus on how language can:

- unintentionally position older adults as dependent or incapable
- reinforce stereotypes about ageing and learning
- affect confidence, motivation and willingness to participate

Reflect briefly on the following guiding questions:

- How does tone influence the way a message is received?
- How can “good intentions” still produce exclusion?



Self-observation (15 minutes):

Individually reflect on your own communication style when working with older adults.

Think about:

- words or expressions you commonly use when explaining tasks
- how you simplify instructions
- how you offer help or correction

Write down at least 5 phrases you use in educational or mentoring contexts that could be perceived as:

- overly protective
- infantilising
- implying reduced competence or autonomy

Examples may include phrases related to speed, ability, or reassurance.

Then reflect:

- In which situations do I use these phrases most often?
- What assumptions about ageing might they reflect?

Reframing exercise (20 minutes):

Select five phrases from the previous step and rewrite them using respectful, autonomy-supportive language.

When reformulating, consider:

- Does the new version respect the learner's competence?
- Does it invite choice rather than impose help?
- Does it support independence and confidence?

Example structure:

Original phrase: _____

Reframed version: _____

After rewriting, briefly note:

- What changed in the tone?
- How might the learner feel differently hearing the new version?

Additional exercise: Application (15 minutes):

Write a short mentoring dialogue (5–7 exchanges) between an educator and an older learner.

Choose one scenario, for example:

- explaining a digital task
- responding to a mistake
- encouraging participation in a group activity

Ensure the dialogue demonstrates:

- respectful tone
- clear but non-condescending explanations
- encouragement without pressure
- acknowledgement of the learner's autonomy and experience

After writing the dialogue, reflect:

- How does this language support dignity and confidence?
- What behaviours accompany respectful language (pace, listening, patience)?

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 1: Understanding Others Through Storytelling

Topic 3: Connecting with Others in Online Communities

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Verification questions

- Can you identify at least three patronising or ageist language patterns?
- Can you reformulate a patronising statement into a respectful alternative?
- Can you explain how language influences autonomy and participation?

Self-reflection questions

- How did this activity change your awareness of everyday communication?
- Which language habits are hardest for you to change, and why?
- How will you consciously integrate respectful communication into your educational practice?



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 3

Active ageing and motivation in later life

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understand the concept of active ageing.
- Identify motivational factors for older learners.
- Design learning offers that connect to purpose and identity.

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

Introduction (10 minutes):

Read a short overview of the concept of active ageing (e.g., WHO framing) and reflect on how it relates to adult education.

Focus on these ideas:

- active ageing is not “being busy” — it is about participation, autonomy, dignity and wellbeing
- learning can support independence, social connection, and sense of purpose
- motivation in later life is often tied to meaningful roles, relationships, and real-life relevance

Quick reflection (write 3–4 lines):

- What does “active ageing” mean in my educational context?
- What is one example of learning that clearly supports participation or wellbeing?

Motivation map (15 minutes):

Individually create a motivation map: list possible reasons older adults participate in learning.

Use the prompts below and write at least 2 examples per category.

Possible motivation categories

- Social: meeting people, belonging, shared activity
- Practical: services, digital tasks, daily life problem-solving
- Identity & purpose: feeling useful, contributing, continuing a role
- Curiosity & enjoyment: hobbies, culture, creativity
- Health & independence: mobility, mental wellbeing, staying active

Then underline which motivations you think are most common in your local context.

What blocks motivation (10 minutes):

Now list 5 common barriers that reduce motivation or participation, even when a learner might benefit.

Include at least one from each type:

- Practical barriers: transport, cost, time, accessibility
- Psychological barriers: shame, fear of failure, feeling “too old”, low confidence
- Social barriers: not knowing anyone, feeling out of place, previous exclusion
- Learning barriers: pace, cognitive overload, unclear instructions

Which barrier is most under-recognised by educators?

Persona exercise (25 minutes):

Create a short persona (a fictional but realistic learner) using the template below. Keep it brief but specific.



Persona template

- Name / Age:
- Living situation (alone/with family/rural/urban):
- Social situation (strong network/limited network):
- Interests (2–3):
- Motivation to learn (pick 2–3 from your motivation map):
- Barriers (pick 2–3 from barrier scan):
- What makes this person feel respected and safe in a learning setting?

This persona should reflect a learner you could realistically meet in your community.

Now design one learning opportunity that fits your persona's motivations and reduces at least one barrier. Keep it feasible.

Write a short “micro-action plan”:

- Activity title:
- Goal 1 sentence:
- Format low threshold: e.g., learning café, buddy approach, short thematic session
- Social connector: how will it foster belonging/interaction?
- Motivation hook: what makes it meaningful for the persona?
- Barrier reduction: what will you adapt to make participation easier?

Bonus question: Write one invitation sentence you would use to attract this learner (non-patronising, motivation-based).

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. WHO Healthy ageing

<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/healthy-ageing-and-functional-ability>

2. Active ageing A Policy Framework <https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/0418705f-1c82-4fe2-82d6-d4faee89dfa0/content>

3. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 4: Creating and Connecting Through Your Interests

Topic 4: Trying a New Hobby Without Fear

Topic 2: Investing Your Time in the Community

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Verification questions

- Can you explain active ageing in your own words?
- Can you list at least three motivations for learning in later life?
- Can you design one learning activity aligned with a learner's motivation and barriers?

Self-reflection questions

- Which motivations are easiest for you to support in your practice, and which are hardest?
- Where do you think educators unintentionally reduce motivation?
- What is one change you will make to increase relevance and dignity in your learning offers?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 4

From bite-sized micro-learning resources to adult education

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understand microlearning as a supportive entry strategy for older adult learners
- Recognise how microlearning reduces fear, cognitive overload and disengagement
- Identify suitable microlearning formats for first contact with older adults
- Plan a simple microlearning-based entry experience that supports autonomy and trust



STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

Introduction (10 minutes):

Read a short explanation of microlearning in the context of adult education for older adults.

Focus on these principles:

- learning in small, manageable units
- immediate relevance to everyday life
- no long-term commitment required
- flexibility in time, place and pace

Reflect briefly:

- Why might short learning moments feel safer than full courses?
- How does microlearning support dignity and autonomy?

Write 2–3 sentences capturing your reflection.

Learner perspective (15 minutes):

Think of yourself as an older learner encountering education for the first time in years.

Reflect on:

- What would make a learning activity feel non-threatening?
- How much time and effort would feel acceptable?
- What topic would feel immediately useful or motivating?

Write down:

- 3 topics suitable for microlearning entry (e.g. messaging family, hobbies, daily tasks)
- 2 emotions microlearning could help reduce (e.g. fear, shame, pressure)

Identifying effective microlearning formats (10 minutes):

Review different microlearning formats commonly used with older adults.

Examples:

1. short video (1–2 minutes)
2. step-by-step visual guide
3. single-question reflection or tip
4. short peer-sharing moment
5. mini task with immediate outcome

For three formats, write:

- why this format suits older learners
- when and where it could be used (online, community space, informal setting)

Design a microlearning experience (15 minutes):

Design a microlearning-based entry experience for older adults. Use the template in Appendix 5: Microlearning experience.

Focus on accessibility and trust, not content complexity.

Reflection (10 minutes):

Reflect on:

- How can repeated microlearning moments build confidence over time?
- How does microlearning respect learners who prefer limited engagement?
- When and how might an educator invite deeper participation without pressure?

Write a short reflection (5–6 lines).

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. What is microlearning

<https://www.coursera.org/enterprise/articles/what-is-microlearning>

2. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 3: Mastering a New App in 30 Minutes

Topic 1: Mindfulness Through Art

Topic 4: Trying a New Hobby Without Fear

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Verification questions

- Can you explain why microlearning is effective as an entry point?
- Can you identify at least two suitable microlearning formats for older adults?
- Can you design a simple microlearning entry experience?

Self-reflection questions

- How does microlearning change the power dynamic between educator and learner?
- What risks should educators avoid when using microlearning (e.g. oversimplification)?
- How could microlearning support inclusion in your local context?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 5

Intergenerational monitoring and peer learning

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understand the principles of intergenerational mentoring and peer learning.
- Recognise the social and educational benefits of reciprocal learning relationships.
- Identify potential risks (stereotypes, power imbalance) and inclusion strategies.
- Design a simple intergenerational or peer-learning activity suitable for older adults.



STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

Introduction (10 minutes):

Read a short introduction to intergenerational mentoring and peer learning in adult education.

Focus on the following ideas:

- learning is not one-directional (knowledge flows both ways)
- older adults are not only learners, but also carriers of experience and expertise
- peer and intergenerational learning can strengthen confidence, social ties and mutual respect

Reflect briefly:

- What is the difference between teaching someone and learning together with someone?
- Why might reciprocal learning be empowering for older adults?

Write 2–3 sentences capturing your reflection.

Experience reflection (15 minutes):

Reflect on your own experiences of learning from someone else, either:

- someone older
- someone younger
- a peer outside a formal educational role

Write short notes responding to the prompts below:

- What made this learning experience positive or meaningful?
- How was trust built between the people involved?
- What role did respect and listening play?

Underline one element you believe is essential for successful mentoring or peer learning.

Avoiding stereotypes (10 minutes):

Read short descriptions of common risks in intergenerational and peer learning, such as:

- older adults being positioned only as learners, not contributors
- younger participants being seen as “experts” by default
- over-helping, dependency or loss of autonomy
- discomfort caused by assumptions about age or ability

You can find the descriptions in Appendix 6: Common risks.

Answer briefly:

- Which of these risks do you find most likely in your context?
- What could an educator do to reduce or prevent it?

Write at least two concrete preventive actions.

Design task (15 minutes):

Design a simple and realistic intergenerational or peer-learning activity that could work in your local context. Use the template in [Appendix 7: Design task](#).

Reflection (10 minutes):

Reflect on the following questions:

- How does this activity support social connection and belonging?
- How does it recognise older adults as active contributors?
- What small change could make this activity more inclusive or comfortable?

Write a short paragraph (5–6 lines) summarising your key insight.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. The role of intergenerational learning in adult education

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/oer-role-intergenerational-learning-adult-education>

2. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 1: Understanding Others Through Storytelling

Topic 1: Organising a Local Cultural Event

Topic 4: Creating and Connecting Through Your Interests

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Verification questions

- Can you explain the difference between mentoring and peer learning?
- Can you identify at least two benefits of intergenerational learning?
- Can you design a simple reciprocal learning activity?

Self-reflection questions

- What stereotypes might affect intergenerational learning in your context?
- How can educators ensure reciprocity and avoid power imbalance?
- How could this approach strengthen community connections?



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 6

The educator as mentor: roles, boundaries and responsibilities

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understand the difference between teaching, mentoring and supporting
- Recognise ethical boundaries when working with older adults
- Reflect on emotional labour and responsibility in mentoring roles

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

Introduction (10 minutes):

Think about (and research) the different roles educators may take when working with older adults (e.g. teacher, facilitator, mentor, etc.)

Focus on the idea that:

- mentoring involves relationship and trust, not only problem-solving
- educators are not counsellors or caregivers
- clear boundaries protect both learners and educators

Write 2–3 sentences answering:

- Which role do I most often take in my work with older adults?
- Which role feels most challenging for me?

Role reflection (15 minutes):

Reflect on situations where boundaries may become unclear.

Think about:

- learners sharing personal or emotional issues
- requests for help outside educational scope
- long-term dependence on the educator

Write short notes:

- What situations make me uncomfortable or unsure?
- Where do I feel pressure to “do more” than my role requires?

Underline one situation where clearer boundaries would help.

Scenario analysis (20 minutes):

Read 2–3 short mentoring scenarios (e.g. emotional disclosure, dependency, repeated requests for personal help). You can find them in Appendix 8: Scenario analysis

For each scenario, write:

- What is the risk in this situation?
- What response supports learning without crossing boundaries?
- Who else (service, colleague, organisation) could support the learner?

Focus on referral, reassurance and limits, not solutions.

Personal role (15 minutes):

Write a short personal statement (8–10 lines):

- What is my role as a mentor in adult education?
- What are my professional limits?
- How do boundaries support trust and sustainability?

Keep this statement as a reference for your practice.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Tips for teaching senior adult learners

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/tips-teaching-senior-adult-learners>

2. 12 Essential roles of a teacher in modern education

<https://www.indeed.com/hire/c/info/12-roles-of-a-teacher>

3. 7 roles of a teacher in the 21st century

<https://etoninstitute.com/blog/the-7-roles-of-a-teacher-in-the-21st-century/>

4. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 1: Understanding Others Through Storytelling

Topic 2: Investing Your Time in the Community

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Verification questions

- Can you distinguish mentoring from teaching and caregiving?
- Can you identify at least one boundary risk?
- Can you propose a safe mentoring response?

Self-reflection questions

- Which boundaries are hardest for you to maintain?
- How can boundaries strengthen trust?
- Who supports you as an educator?



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 7

Building trust and long-term engagement with older learners

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understand trust as a foundation for adult learning
- Identify behaviours that build or undermine trust
- Apply consistency and reliability in educational practice
- Plan early engagement strategies for older learners

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

Introduction (10 minutes):

Read a short text on why trust is important to older adults.

Think about:

- trust as emotional safety
- importance for learners with past negative experiences
- trust built through consistency, not charisma

Write briefly:

What makes me trust a learning environment?



Reflection (15 minutes):

Recall one positive and one negative learning experience (as learner or educator).

Write notes:

- What behaviours increased trust?
- What behaviours reduced trust?
- What role did predictability and listening play?

Underline one behaviour you want to strengthen in your practice.

Building trust (30 minutes):

Trust does not appear automatically. It is built through small, consistent actions before learning begins, during the first sessions, and over time.

In this exercise, you will identify practical actions you can take to help older learners feel safe, welcome and confident.

Step 1:

Think about the moment before learners join a learning activity. Write down at least two things you can do to make first contact feel safe and clear.

Focus on:

- how you invite people
- how information is shared
- how first contact is made

Examples:

- using friendly, simple language in invitations
- explaining clearly what will happen and what is optional

Step 2:

Think about the first one or two sessions. Write down at least two actions that help learners feel comfortable and respected.

Focus on:

- pace and clarity
- tone of communication
- group atmosphere

Examples:

- checking if the pace feels right
- agreeing on simple group rules together

Step 3:

Think about what happens after learning has already started. Write down at least two actions that help maintain trust over time.

Focus on:

- consistency and reliability
- follow-up and acknowledgement
- respectful communication

Examples:

- starting sessions on time
- acknowledging participation and effort

Reflection:

Which action do you already do well?

Which action would you like to start doing more intentionally?

Application (15 minutes):

Design a short plan for the first three sessions of a learning activity, focusing on trust.

Include:

- what you prioritise (safety, connection, clarity)
- what you deliberately avoid (pressure, testing, overload)

Write 6–8 bullet points.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. The benefits of healthy relationships and connection for older adults

<https://junipercommunities.com/the-benefits-of-healthy-relationships-and-connection-for-older-adults/>

2. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 1: Mindfulness Through Art

Topic 1: Understanding Others Through Storytelling

Topic 4: Creating and Connecting Through Your Interests

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Verification questions:

- Can you explain why trust matters in adult education?
- Can you identify at least three trust-building strategies?
- Can you design an engagement plan for early sessions?

Self-reflection questions:

- How do you respond when trust is fragile?
- What behaviours communicate reliability?
- How can trust be rebuilt after setbacks?



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 8

From training to practice: mentoring in the local community

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Translate mentoring concepts into concrete local action
- Identify opportunities for mentoring older adults in the community
- Prepare for piloting activities within the Social Circles framework
- Commit to realistic, small-scale implementation

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

Introduction (10 minutes):

Review key ideas from the module:

- mentoring and dignity
- inclusion and autonomy
- trust and social connection

Reflect briefly:

- What idea from this module stayed with me most?



Local mapping (15 minutes):

Map your local context by listing:

- spaces (community centres, libraries, NGOs)
- groups of older adults
- unmet needs or gaps

Circle one opportunity that feels realistic.

Pilot planning (20 minutes):

Design a small-scale mentoring or learning initiative.

Write about:

- target group
- goal
- setting
- mentoring approach
- one inclusion strategy

Keep it simple and achievable.

Reflection (15 minutes):

Answer:

- What is one concrete action I will take in the next 3 months?
- What support do I need?
- What might challenge me?

Write a short commitment statement.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Social Circles MOOC

<https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/educators-toolbox/>

Topic 1: Organising a Local Cultural Event

Topic 2: Investing Your Time in the Community

Topic 4: Creating and Connecting Through Your Interests

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Verification questions

- Can you identify a local mentoring opportunity?
- Can you outline a simple pilot activity?
- Can you identify at least one partner?

Self-reflection questions

- What motivates you to apply this learning locally?
- What support do you need to succeed?
- How can small actions lead to long-term impact?

ANNEX 3 – EXERCISES AND CASE STUDIES

Appendix 1: Reflective exercise questions

Appendix 2: Group work

Appendix 3: Case studies

Appendix 4: Short examples

Appendix 5: Microlearning experience

Appendix 6: Common risks

Appendix 7: Design task

Appendix 8: Scenario analysis

APPENDIX 1: REFLECTIVE EXERCISE QUESTIONS – “AGEING LENSES”

1. Personal perceptions of ageing

- What words or images do I instinctively associate with “older age”?
- Where do these images come from (family, media, professional experience, society)?
- Which of these perceptions might limit my expectations of older learners?

2. Professional attitudes and teaching practice

- Do I adapt my teaching differently for older adults? If yes, how and why?
- When working with older learners, do I focus more on protection or on empowerment?
- Have I ever avoided introducing an activity because I assumed it would be “too difficult” for older participants?

3. Expectations and autonomy

- How comfortable am I with older learners making their own choices, even when I think another option might be better?
- Do I give older learners enough space to experiment, fail, and learn at their own pace?
- In what situations might I unintentionally reduce autonomy while trying to be supportive?

4. Ageing, learning and motivation

- What motivates me to keep learning as I grow older?
- How might older adults define “useful” or “meaningful” learning differently from younger learners?
- Do my learning offers reflect the interests and life experiences of older adults?

5. Language and communication

- What language do I use when addressing older learners (tone, pace, simplification)?
- Have I ever used expressions that could be perceived as infantilising or patronising?
- How can I communicate respect, competence and trust through small everyday interactions?

6. Social inclusion and belonging

- How do I recognise when an older learner feels out of place or unwelcome?
- What signals of loneliness or social withdrawal have I noticed in my practice?
- How can education become a space of belonging rather than performance?

7. Self-positioning as an educator

- What role do I see myself playing in the lives of older learners: teacher, mentor, facilitator, connector?
- What makes me feel confident or insecure when working with older adults?
- What is one assumption about ageing that I am willing to question or change?

APPENDIX 2: GROUP WORK: DESIGNING EDUCATION AS A SOCIAL CONNECTOR

Step 1: Choose a Starting Point (5 minutes)

As a group, select one learning activity or topic you are familiar with or currently offer.

Examples:

- digital skills (smartphone, email, online services)
- cultural or creative activities
- budgeting or everyday life skills
- health, wellbeing or hobbies

Step 2: Reflect on the Current Format (5 minutes)

Discuss how this activity is usually organised.

Answer together:

- Is the activity mainly individual or social?
- When do participants interact with each other?
- What might make someone feel excluded, insecure, or invisible?

Step 3: Redesign the Activity as a Social Connector (15 minutes)

Now rethink the activity with the explicit goal of fostering social connection. Use the guiding questions below to redesign your activity:

A. Social Purpose

- What kind of connection do we want to support (peer support, friendship, mutual learning, intergenerational exchange)?
- How can you ensure that participants feel they belong, not just attend?

B. Learning Format

- How can learning happen with others rather than alone?
- Can participants help, mentor, or learn from each other?
- Can informal moments (coffee, conversation, shared reflection) be integrated?

C. Role of the Educator

- How does the educator act: teacher, mentor, facilitator, connector?
- How can the educator encourage participation without pressure?

D. Inclusion Strategies

- How will newcomers be welcomed?
- How can shy or less confident participants be supported?
- How can participation remain flexible and feel comfortable learning?

E. Local Connections

- Which local spaces or community hub could support this activity (library, NGO, community centre, municipality)?
- How can the activity be embedded in everyday community life?

Step 4: Summarise Your Socially Connective Learning Concept (5 minutes)

Use the space below to summarise your redesigned activity.

Title of the activity	
Target group	
What makes this activity socially connective?	
One concrete next step to implement it locally:	

APPENDIX 3: CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Maria – “I Don’t Want to Be a Burden”

Maria is 72 and lives alone since her partner passed away three years ago. She occasionally attends activities at a local community centre but rarely speaks during group sessions. When offered additional support, she politely declines and says others need it more. She relies heavily on her daughter for digital tasks and often apologises when asking for help. Maria expresses interest in learning but doubts her abilities and fears taking up too much time.

Case Study 2: Anton – “I Used to Know How Things Worked”

Anton is 68 and recently retired. During his working life, he felt competent and respected. Since retirement, he avoids educational activities because he feels “outdated”, especially in digital contexts. He attends one digital skills session but leaves early, saying the content is “not for him”. He prefers to observe rather than ask questions and avoids group interaction.

Case Study 3: Elza – “I’m There, but Not Really Part of It”

Elza is 75 and regularly attends adult education courses. She is punctual and completes tasks but rarely interacts with other participants. During breaks, she sits alone and uses her phone. When asked about her experience, she says she enjoys learning but does not feel connected to the group. She has few social contacts outside the course.

Case Study 4: Jože – “I Don’t See the Point Anymore”

Jože is 80 and lives in a rural area with limited access to services. His mobility has gradually decreased and he rarely leaves home. He once enjoyed community events but gradually stopped attending. When contacted about educational opportunities, he responds that learning no longer makes sense at his age. He expresses low expectations and sees education as something “for others”.

Case Study 5: Ingrid – “I Don’t Belong Here”

Ingrid is 70 and recently moved to a new town to be closer to her children. Although she attends a language and culture course for older adults, she rarely speaks and often leaves immediately after sessions. She feels unfamiliar with local customs and struggles to build new relationships. Ingrid is polite and attentive but avoids informal conversations and group activities.

Case Study 6: Peter – “I’m Fine on My Own”

Peter is 74 and lives alone. He insists that he prefers independence and rarely joins group activities. Educators notice that he often talks at length when someone engages with him individually, but avoids social situations. He rejects activities labelled as “social” but shows interest in practical workshops.

Case Study 7: Ana – “I Used to Be Very Active”

Ana is 69 and previously volunteered in several community initiatives. Due to health issues, she had to reduce her involvement and now spends most days at home. She expresses frustration and a sense of loss when speaking about her past roles. Ana is interested in learning but doubts her ability to contribute meaningfully anymore.

Case Study 8: Milan – “Everyone Else Knows Each Other”

Milan is 76 and joins an adult education course after encouragement from a neighbour. He attends regularly but feels excluded because other participants already know each other. Milan rarely speaks and worries about interrupting. He enjoys the content but feels invisible in group settings.

APPENDIX 4: SHORT EXAMPLES

1. Offering Help

Patronising / Ageist

“Let me do that for you, it’s probably too complicated.”

Respectful / Empowering

“Would you like me to go through this together with you, or would you prefer to try it first?”

2. Explaining Instructions

Patronising / Ageist

“I’ll explain it very slowly so you can understand.”

Respectful / Empowering

“I’ll explain it step by step, and you can tell me if the pace works for you.”

3. Responding to Mistakes

Patronising / Ageist

“Don’t worry, these things are hard at your age.”

Respectful / Empowering

“Mistakes are part of learning. Would you like to try again or look at it together?”

4. Encouraging Participation

Patronising / Ageist

“Come on, this will be good for you.”

Respectful / Empowering

“You’re welcome to join if it feels useful or interesting to you.”

5. Digital Learning Context

Patronising / Ageist

“Technology isn’t easy for older people.”

Respectful / Empowering

“Technology can feel unfamiliar at first. Everyone learns it in their own way.”

6. Reassurance and Support

Patronising / Ageist

“You don’t need to understand everything.”

Respectful / Empowering

“You can decide how much you want to explore today.”

7. Time and Pace

Patronising / Ageist

“We will repeat this as many times as necessary.”

Respectful / Empowering

“We can take as much time as you feel you need.”

8. General Attitude

Patronising / Ageist

“At least you’re trying.”

Respectful / Empowering

“I appreciate the effort and experience you bring.”

APPENDIX 5: MICROLEARNING EXPERIENCE

This exercise helps you design a small, accessible microlearning experience that can serve as a first contact with adult education for older adults. The goal is to build confidence, trust and motivation — not to deliver complex content.

Step 1: Think small and relevant

Before you start designing, ask yourself:

- What everyday situation could learning make easier or more enjoyable?
- What would feel useful right away for an older adult?
- What could be learned in just a few minutes, without pressure?

Step 2: Design your microlearning entry experience

Use the template on the next page. There are no “right” answers; focus on clarity, accessibility, and respect.

Step 3: Quick check

Before finishing, ask yourself:

- Is this activity easy to understand at first glance?
- Does it avoid pressure, testing, or evaluation?
- Does it respect the learner’s pace and choices?

MICROLEARNING EXPERIENCE

Microlearning title

Target group

(e.g. older adults new to learning, digitally hesitant learners, socially isolated seniors – try to be specific)

Format (circle or describe one)

- Short video
- Step-by-step tips or guide
- Mini task or challenge
- Short live demonstration
- Peer-sharing moment
- Other: _____

Duration (maximum 10 minutes)

Everyday relevance (What real-life situation does this support?)

How it supports confidence and autonomy (e.g. choice, pace, reassurance, clear success moment)

What happens next? (e.g. repeat the activity, invite the person to another microlearning moment, peer exchange, no obligation)

APPENDIX 6: COMMON RISKS

1. Older Adults Positioned Only as Learners, Not Contributors

In intergenerational and peer learning settings, older adults may gradually be positioned as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active contributors. This often happens unintentionally, especially in topics related to technology, digital tools or “new” skills. The learning structure may emphasise what older adults are expected to learn, while overlooking what they already know or can offer.

Over time, this positioning can influence how older participants perceive themselves. They may begin to speak less, hesitate to share opinions, or defer to others even when they have relevant experience. Learning may feel like a reminder of loss (of skills, roles or relevance) rather than an opportunity for growth.

2. Younger Participants Seen as “Experts” by Default

In mixed-age learning groups, younger participants are often assigned the role of “expert” without this being explicitly discussed. This is especially common in digital or technical learning contexts, where age is mistakenly used as a proxy for competence.

This dynamic can place unnecessary pressure on younger participants, who may feel expected to perform or instruct, even when they are unsure. At the same time, older learners may feel reluctant to ask questions, fearing they confirm stereotypes or appear incompetent.

3. Over-helping, Dependency or Loss of Autonomy

Over-helping is one of the subtlest risks in peer and intergenerational learning. With good intentions, mentors or peers may intervene too quickly, complete tasks for others, or repeatedly offer assistance without being asked.

While this may appear supportive, it can undermine learners’ confidence and sense of agency. Older adults may stop experimenting, wait for help, or feel that mistakes are unacceptable. Dependency can develop not because learners are incapable, but because space for trial and error is reduced.

4. Discomfort Caused by Assumptions about Age or Ability

Assumptions about what people can or cannot do (based on age, appearance, health or background) can create discomfort even when not explicitly stated. These assumptions may appear in tone, pacing, task design or casual remarks.

Participants who feel categorised may withdraw, disengage, or participate superficially. Discomfort does not always lead to open conflict; it often manifests as silence, avoidance or polite compliance.

APPENDIX 7: DESIGN TASKS

Type of activity:

- Peer learning (older–older)

(Learning among older adults based on shared experience and support)

- Intergenerational (older–younger)

(Learning exchange between older and younger participants, with shared roles)

Topic or theme (What will people learn or explore together? Choose something relevant to everyday life):

Participants (Who learns with whom? How many people? What backgrounds or roles?):

Roles (How is mutual learning ensured? Who contributes what?):

Setting:

- Formal (course, workshop, classroom)
- Informal (learning café, club, drop-in session)
- Community-based (library, NGO, community centre, outdoor space)
- ---

Educator's Role (What is the educator main role?):

- Facilitator
- Connector
- Observer
- Combination of roles:

Brief description:

How Trust and Respect Are Supported (Consider tone, pace, language, group rules, inclusion strategies.)

Reflection:

How does this activity support mutual learning, not instruction?

How does it help participants feel respected and safe?

APPENDIX 8: SCENARIO ANALYSIS

Scenario 1: Emotional Disclosure During Learning

During a learning session, Anna (73) stays behind after most participants have left. She begins talking about how lonely she feels since her partner died. She says the learning sessions are the only place where she feels listened to and asks if she can “talk more next time, just the two of us”.

Scenario 2: Growing Dependency on the Educator

Marko (68) attends your sessions regularly. He often asks you to help him with tasks he could try independently. He waits for you before starting activities and says he feels more secure when you are close. Over time, he stops engaging with peers and relies almost exclusively on your guidance.

Scenario 3: Requests Beyond the Educational Role

Ivana (75) asks you repeatedly to help her with personal matters outside the course: filling in forms, making phone calls, and dealing with administrative issues. She says she trusts you more than institutions and prefers not to ask others.

Scenario 4: “You’re the Only One I Trust”

During several sessions, Katarina (71) repeatedly tells you that she does not trust institutions, public services, or “official people”. She insists that you are the only person she feels comfortable asking for advice. When you suggest contacting other services or support organisations, she becomes defensive and says, “They don’t understand people like me, you do.”

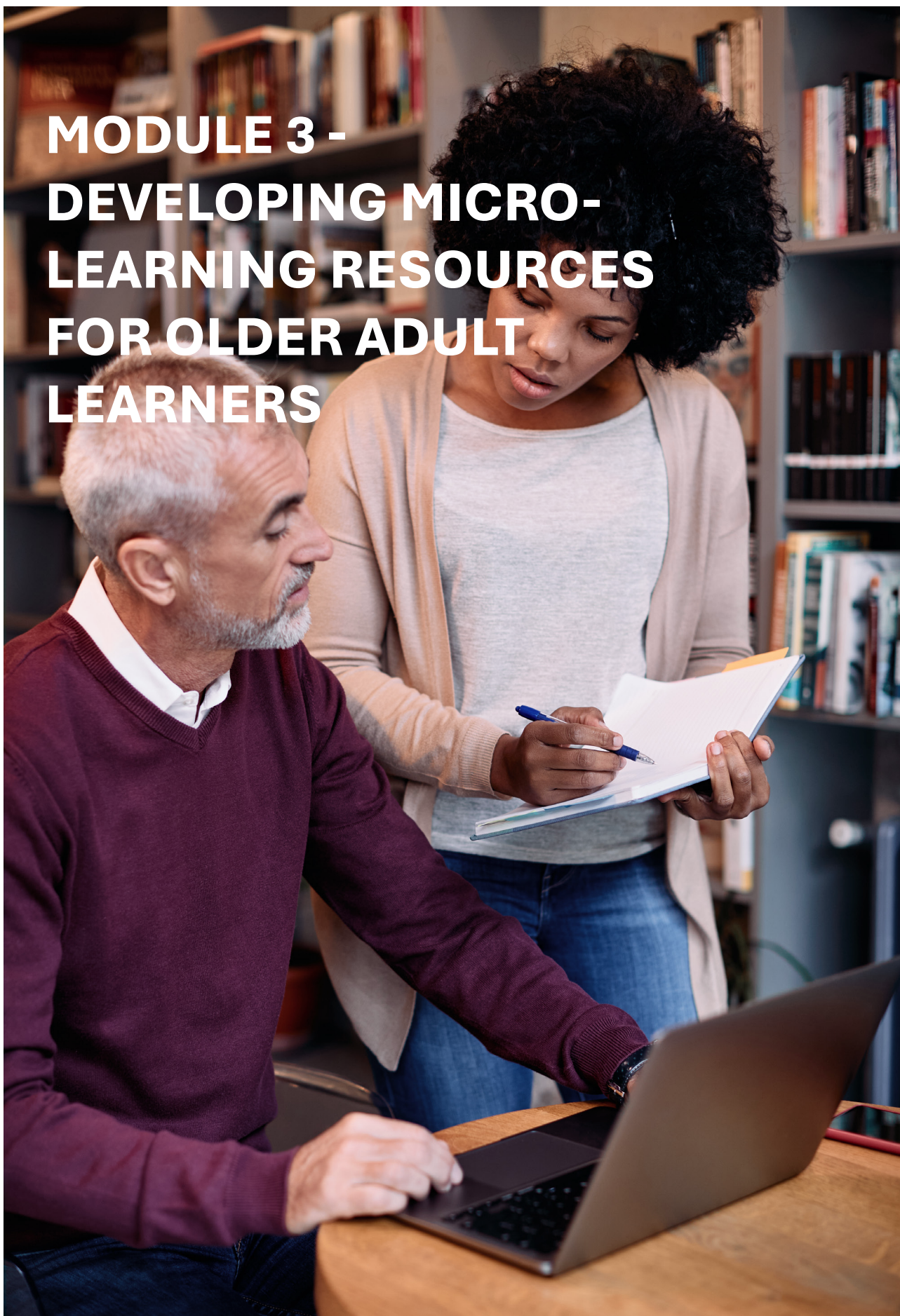
Scenario 5: Conflict Between Learners and Educator Mediation

During a peer-learning activity, two participants disagree strongly about how a task should be done. One learner later approaches you privately and asks you to “take their side” and speak to the other participant on their behalf. They say they feel uncomfortable addressing the issue directly.

Scenario 6: Expectations Beyond Educational Commitment

After several weeks of sessions, Luka (77) begins calling and messaging you outside working hours to ask questions related to the course. While the messages are polite, they become increasingly frequent. Luka says he does not want to “forget anything” and feels anxious without constant reassurance.

MODULE 3 - DEVELOPING MICRO- LEARNING RESOURCES FOR OLDER ADULT LEARNERS



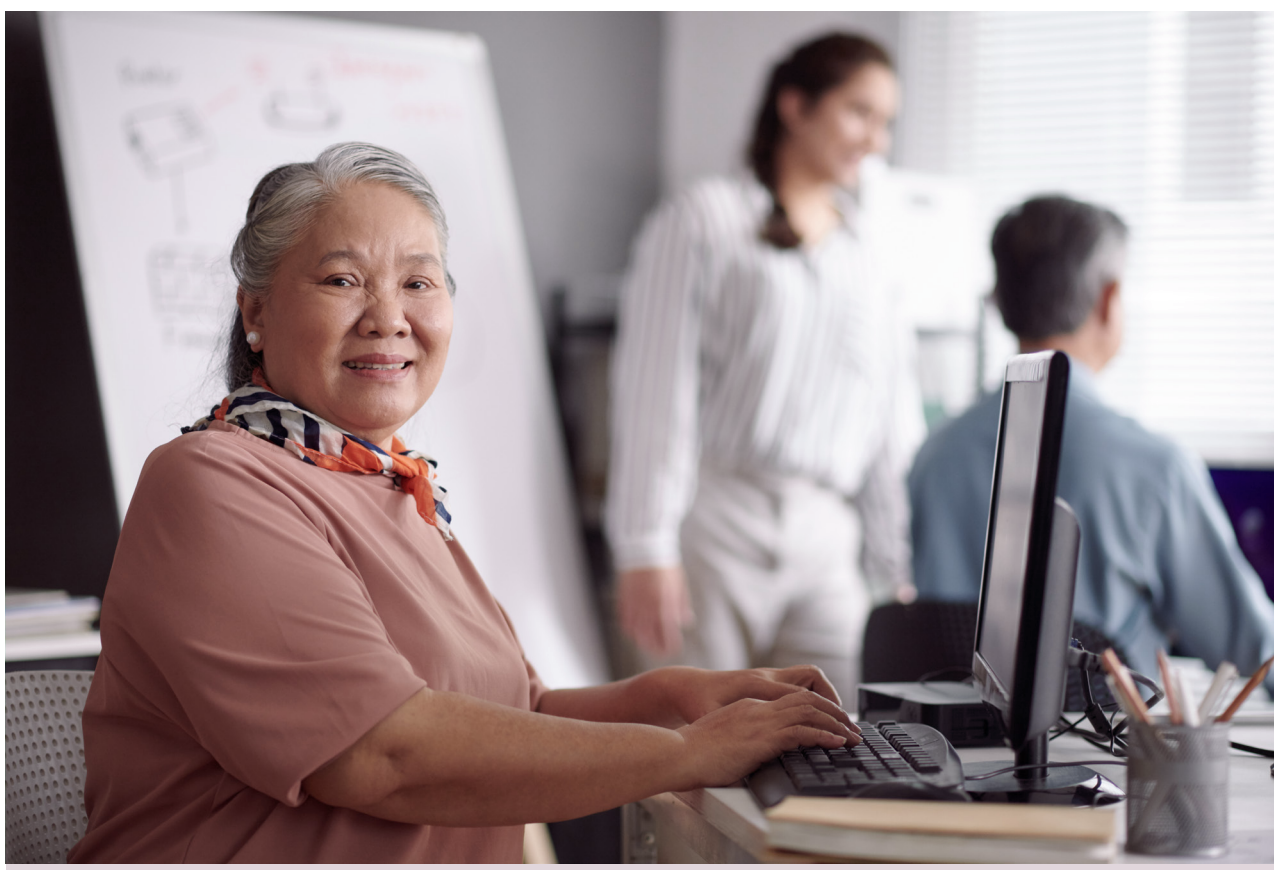
MODULE 3 - DEVELOPING MICRO-LEARNING RESOURCES FOR OLDER ADULT LEARNERS

ADDED VALUE

Key concept/motto

“Educate to Connect. Connect to Include”.

This motto captures the mission of empowering adult educators to use simple, targeted strategies to engage older adults, especially those hardest to reach. By fostering meaningful connections through learning, educators break social isolation, encourage participation, and create inclusive spaces where older learners feel valued, supported, and motivated to grow. Connection becomes the bridge between education and true social inclusion.



F2F LESSON PLAN

MODULE TITLE

Developing Micro-Learning Resources for Older Adult Learners

TIME

6 hours

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Acting competently in new virtual learning environments
- Gain greater flexibility in teaching by applying less formal educational programmes
- Sharpen active listening skills in the specific communities of older learners
- Provide learning opportunities ad hoc for seniors by developing their own micro-learning educational resources
- Know how to apply different learning modes to support the different learning styles of older people (work in small groups, little theory and a lot of practice, connections with real life, creation of effective circles of socialisation etc.)
- Know and use blended learning methods
- Using the resources of the Social Circles Toolbox effectively
- Fostering and stimulate interest in research and innovation for an inclusive education

MODULE OVERVIEW

The module **“Developing Micro-Learning Resources for Older Adult Learners”** equips adult educators with the skills to design simple, digital, and blended micro-learning resources tailored to older adults, especially those hard to reach. By combining short theoretical inputs with hands-on practice and peer collaboration, educators learn to act competently in new virtual environments, sharpen active listening skills, and adapt flexible methods to support diverse learning styles. The training emphasises human connection as the foundation for inclusive education.

Training Structure – 6 Hours (3 units × 2 hours)

Unit 1 (2h): Understanding Older Learners and Active Listening

Unit 2 (2h): Designing Micro-Learning and Blended Approaches

Unit 3 (2h): Using the Toolbox and Fostering Innovation

IT REQUIREMENTS

Hardware

- Computer or laptop with webcam and microphone
- Stable internet connection for video calls

Software & Tools

- Video conferencing platform (Zoom, Teams, Google Meet)
- Presentation software (PowerPoint, Google Slides)
- Tools for creating micro-learning resources (Canva, CapCut or video editing tools in general)
- Collaborative platforms (Google Docs/Slides, Padlet, Miro, etc.)
- Access to Social Circles Toolbox and MOOC resources



Basic digital skills

- Create, share, and upload digital content
- Use online collaboration tools

TRAINING MATERIALS LINKS

1. Link to Social Circles MOOC
2. Active Listening Techniques to Improve Conversations with Ageing Parents <https://care.samarth.community/blog/communication/active-listening-techniques-to-improve-conversations-with-ageing-parents/>
3. Enhancing Listening Skills for Better Communication in Adult Learning <https://teachers.institute/understanding-adult-education/enhancing-listening-skills-adult-learning/>
4. Microlearning <https://www.docebo.com/learning-network/blog/microlearning-defined/>
5. Microlearning helps Alzheimer's Disease Patients <https://eudl.eu/pdf/10.4108/eetel.4321>
6. EPALE - Digital Inclusion in Older Adults: A Comparison Between Face-to-Face and Blended Digital Literacy Workshops <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/digital-inclusion-older-adults-comparison-between-face-face-and-blended-digital-literacy>
7. Improving the Digital Literacy and Social Participation of Older Adults <https://www.scitepress.org/Papers/2024/126234/126234.pdf>
8. Digital Literacy Training for Low-Income Older Adults Through Undergraduate Community-Engaged Learning <https://aging.jmir.org/2024/1/e51675>

SELF-ASSESSMENT SESSIONS, IN AND OUT, FOR COMMUNITY COACHES

Initial Self-Assessment (30 minutes)

Purpose: encourage participants to reflect on their current skills, attitudes, and expectations regarding teaching older adults with digital and micro-learning tools.

Format: narrative self-reflection (written or oral).

Possible Guiding Questions:

- What is my current level of confidence in using digital tools for teaching?
- How do I usually engage older adult learners, especially those hard to reach?
- What challenges do I face when designing or delivering micro-learning activities?
- What do I expect to gain from this training?

Method:

- Short written reflection (one-page narrative or bullet points) or oral sharing in small groups.
- Trainers encourage openness and reassure that this is not an evaluation, but a personal reflection tool.

Final Self-Assessment (30 minutes)

Purpose: Support participants in evaluating their learning progress, identifying strengths gained, and defining next steps for practice.

Format: Narrative self-reflection (written or oral).

Possible Guiding Questions:

- What have I learned about creating and using micro-learning resources for older adults?
- How has my approach to blended and flexible teaching changed?
- Which strategies will I apply in my own practice?
- How can I continue developing as a community coach after this module?

Method: Participants write a short reflection comparing their “before and after” perspectives.

Optional: peer sharing (in pairs or small groups) to foster exchange and mutual encouragement.



LEARNING UNIT 1

TITLE

Understanding Older Learners and Active Listening

DURATION HOUR(S)

2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Unit 1: Understanding Older Learners and Active Listening

Short theoretical input: characteristics, needs, barriers and daily challenges of older adult learners, in reference to areas such as Artistic & Cultural Disciplines, Time and Budget Management, Digital and Social Media, Sports and Hobbies.

Practical activity: role-play and persona-building to identify learner needs.

1. **Role-play:** training methodology in which participants simulate real-world situations and experiment with behaviours, reactions, strategies and problem solving. the simulated situations are taken from hypothetical moments of daily life dealing with the approach to Artistic & Cultural Disciplines, Time and Budget Management, Digital and Social Media, Sports and Hobbies.
Then they observe and discuss the effectiveness of the educational approach used.
2. **Persona-building:** activities in which educators create “typical” profiles of older adults (called personas, based on common characteristics observed in a target group) to better understand their different needs, motivations, and barriers to learning in these areas.

Group work: creating groups mapping real-life challenges into micro-learning opportunities. i.e. identify real challenges older adults face, analyse them together, and translate them into micro-learning: that is, design a short, simple, targeted educational resource (such as a mini-tutorial, a step-by-step sheet, a short video, or practical exercise).

Exchange: sharing experiences and best practices among educators. A structured moment where participants openly discuss their own teaching experiences, challenges, and successes when working with older adults. The aim is to foster peer learning: educators learn not only from the trainers but also from each other. By exchanging stories, methods, and tools, they can identify common challenges, discover innovative solutions, and adapt effective practices to their own contexts.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Link to Social Circles MOOC

2. Active Listening Techniques to Improve Conversations with Ageing Parents <https://care.samarth.community/blog/communication/active-listening-techniques-to-improve-conversations-with-ageing-parents/>

3. Enhancing Listening Skills for Better Communication in Adult Learning <https://teachers.institute/understanding-adult-education/enhancing-listening-skills-adult-learning/>

TIPS FOR SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SESSIONS

- Use visual work platforms like Mural or Padlet for activities that require collaboration and exchange between team members
- Use slides, presentations, or other supporting materials during the short theoretical input



LEARNING UNIT 2

TITLE

Designing Micro-Learning and Blended Approaches

DURATION HOUR(S)

2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Unit 2: Designing Micro-Learning and Blended Approaches

Short theoretical input: what is micro-learning? Key principles and benefits for older learners.

Educators are introduced to the concept of micro-learning as short, focused learning units that are easy to consume and immediately applicable. Key principles include clarity, and real-life relevance. For older learners, micro-learning reduces cognitive load, supports gradual skill-building, and increases motivation by offering quick wins.

Practical activity: creating a simple prototype micro-resource (i.e., short video, infographic with tutorial) about one of the following fields: Artistic & Cultural Disciplines, Time and Budget Management, Digital and Social Media, Sports and Hobbies.

Participants design a basic micro-learning resource using accessible tools such as Canva, PowerPoint or CapCut. Examples may include a 1-minute instructional video or a step-by-step infographic. The activity emphasises simplicity, accessibility, and direct usefulness for older adults, that are the target for which these micro resources are intended.

Group work: peer review and refinement of prototypes.

Educators share their micro-resources with peers in small groups, providing constructive feedback based on clarity, relevance, and user-friendliness. This collaborative review process helps participants refine their prototypes and reflect on how to adapt them to different learning styles and contexts.

Exchange: discussing tools and methods to combine online and face-to-face approaches.

Participants explore blended learning strategies by comparing digital and in-person methods. Through guided discussion, they share practical tools (e.g., WhatsApp groups, printed guides, community workshops) and identify ways to integrate them effectively, ensuring that learning remains accessible, engaging, and inclusive for older adults.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Links to Social Circles MOOC

2. Microlearning <https://www.docebo.com/learning-network/blog/microlearning-defined/>

3. Microlearning helps Alzheimer's Disease Patients <https://eudl.eu/pdf/10.4108/eetel.4321>

4. EPAL - Digital Inclusion in Older Adults: A Comparison Between Face-to-Face and Blended Digital Literacy Workshops <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/digital-inclusion-older-adults-comparison-between-face-face-and-blended-digital-literacy>

TIPS FOR SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SESSIONS

- Use visual work platforms like Mural or Padlet for activities that require collaboration and exchange between team members
- Provide templates for designing microlearning
- Use slides, presentations, or other supporting materials during the short theoretical input.

LEARNING UNIT 3

TITLE

Using the Toolbox and Fostering Innovation

DURATION HOUR(S)

2 hours

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Unit 3: Using the Toolbox and Fostering Innovation

Short theoretical input: introduction to the Social Circles Toolbox and innovative practices in adult education.

Participants are introduced to the Social Circles Toolbox, exploring its structure, key resources, and practical applications. The session highlights innovative practices in adult education, showing how the toolbox supports flexible, inclusive, and creative approaches to engage older learners.

Practical activity: guided exploration of toolbox resources and integration into personal practice.



Educators navigate the Toolbox with guided support, identifying resources most relevant to their context. They reflect on how these materials can be adapted or combined with their own teaching methods to create more effective micro-learning experiences for seniors.

Group work: designing a blended micro-learning activity plan about the subject matter (Artistic & Cultural Disciplines, Time and Budget Management, Digital and Social Media, Sports and Hobbies.) that combines toolbox content with self-developed resources.

Working in small groups, participants design an activity plan that blends a resource from the Toolbox with their prototype micro-resource created in Session 2. The exercise demonstrates how to align ready-to-use materials with self-developed content for a richer learning experience.

Exchange: final pitch presentations and peer feedback to strengthen ideas (Guidelines and Templates in Appendix).

Each group presents their blended activity plan in a short pitch format. Peers provide constructive feedback, focusing on clarity, innovation, and applicability for older learners. This exchange fosters collaboration, encourages refinement of ideas, and promotes a culture of shared practice.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Links to Social Circles MOOC
2. Improving the Digital Literacy and Social Participation of Older Adults <https://www.scitepress.org/Papers/2024/126234/126234.pdf>
3. Digital Literacy Training for Low-Income Older Adults Through Undergraduate Community-Engaged Learning <https://aging.jmir.org/2024/1/e51675>

TIPS FOR SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SESSIONS

- Guide participants step-by-step through the Toolbox
- Use visual work platforms like Mural or Padlet for activities that require collaboration and exchange between team members
- Ask participants to take screenshots or notes of key Toolbox resources for later use.
- Encourage short reflection breaks to discuss how they might adapt Toolbox content to their local context.

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING (SDL)

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 1

Verifying Online News: A Practical Guide to Factchecking

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Recognise the characteristics of reliable news and identify false or manipulated content online
- Use methodologies and tools of fact-checking to verify the credibility of digital information
- Critically evaluate sources and content to distinguish between truth and disinformation
- Acquire practical skills to teach others how to verify news and navigate the digital world safely
- Understand the role of accurate information verification in promoting a safer and more responsible online environment

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

1. Introduction and Objectives:

- The importance of verifying online news.
- What is fact-checking and the benefits of being able to apply it.

2. Identification of a News Item:

- Choose and present an example of a news article found online.
- The importance of selecting a news story of interest from reliable sources or social media.

3. Content Analysis:

Carefully examine the title, images, and cited sources. Ask key questions:

- Is there an authoritative source?
- Is it written sensationally?
- Are there obvious errors or inconsistencies?



4. Source Verification

Assess whether the information is consistent with other authoritative sources. Use credibility checklists to evaluate the reliability of the information.

5. Evidence Verification:

- Search for the original form of official sources or show consistency with other authoritative sources.
- Verify the publication date, the author, and the credibility of the source.

6. Consistency and Credibility Analysis:

- Assess whether the information is consistent with other authoritative sources.
- Decide if the news is reliable, false or true, and reflect on the impact of sharing unverified information.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

1. Fact – Checking Websites:

- **Snopes** – A renowned fact-checking site that verifies rumours, myths and false stories.
- **Reuters Fact Check** – Provides verification of misleading or false online claims.

2. Search and Verification Tools:

- **Google Advanced Search** – Filtering search results to find original sources and factual information.
- **Google Reverse Image Search** – To verify images and their origins.
- **Google News** – To find multiple sources reporting on the same event for cross-referencing.

3. Digital Literacy and Factchecking Guides:

- **European Commission's Digital Skills and Factchecking Toolkit** – Provides resources to improve digital literacy.
- **Centre for News Literacy / NYU** – Offers lessons and guides on evaluating information critically.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Verification questions

- Were you able to identify reliable sources and distinguish them from questionable or false information when verifying a news story? Yes/No
- Did you apply the fact-checking steps (source verification, cross-referencing, image checking) correctly during the activity? Yes/No
- Can you explain how to recognise signs of manipulation or bias in online news articles? Yes/No

Self-reflection questions

- How confident do you feel in applying these factchecking steps to real online news in everyday situations?
- Are the tools and resources provided sufficient and easy to use for verifying information independently? Why or why not?
- What modifications or additional resources would help you improve your ability to verify online news effectively in future verifications?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 2

Recognising Clickbait and Bias: Navigating Sensationalist Content

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Recognise features of clickbait and sensationalist online contentIdentify main cognitive biases influencing new interpretation
- Apply tools and strategies to critically analyse digital titles and content
- Develop skills to distinguish verified news from manipulative content
- Promote a critical and conscious approach to consuming digital content

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

1.Introduction and Objectives:

What is clickbait and cognitive biases, and why it is important to recognise them to navigate the web consciously.

Analysis of an Example of Clickbait:

Present an online article or title with clickbait characteristics, then verify the elements that reveal its nature. For example, examine the titles:

- Are they overly exaggerated or emotional?
- Do they use attention-grabbing images without concrete information?
- Do they make promises that may not be kept?

2.Search for Clues of Clickbait and Bias:

Use the checklist or guidelines to analyse the content:

- Is the tone of voice alarmist and overly emotional?
- Are there elements that could be influenced by cognitive biases?
- Are there signs of sensationalism?

3.Apply Verification Techniques:

Verify the content using tools and methods such as:

- Comparing multiple headlines or articles across several reliable sources
- Searching for alternative and official sources

4. Final Assessment and Reflection:

Ask yourself:

- Do these contents seem reliable, or do they contain elements of clickbait or biases?
- Which clues helped you to recognise them?
- Could you apply this analysis more quickly in the future?

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- A tool to verify the authenticity of news and learn how to distinguish reliable information from manipulative content - <https://www.factcheck.org/>
- A valuable resource for assessing the political leanings and biases of information sources - <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>
- Resources and tools to identify fake news and biases on social media - <https://firstdraftnews.org/>
- To factcheck information and find reliable sources - <https://toolbox.google.com/factcheck/explorer/>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Verification questions (on learning objectives)

- Are you able to identify characteristics of a clickbait and sensationalist content? Yes/No
- Can you recognise at least two main cognitive biases influencing news perception? Yes/ No
- Have you applied critical analysis strategies to distinguish manipulative content from trustworthy information? Yes/No

2. Self-reflection questions

- How confident do you feel in analysing digital contents critically in real-life situations?
- Thinking about the activity conducted, which tools or techniques seemed most effective to you?
- What modifications or additional resources could help you better recognise clickbait and biases?



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 3

Identifying AI-Generated Content
(Deepfakes and Manipulations)

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Recognise the distinctive features of AI-generated content, such as deep fakes and digital manipulations.
- Use digital tools and analysis techniques to identify false videos and images.
- Understand the risks and implications of using AI-manipulated content in digital communication.
- Develop a critical attitude towards visual and audio-visual content online.
- Promote verification practices and awareness in the use of innovative digital content.

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

1.Start with a brief introduction:

Read or listen to a short explanation about what deep fakes and digital manipulations are. Reflect on the impact of these technologies and the importance of being able to recognize them to avoid spreading false information.

2.Analysis of Images and Videos:

Observe several images or videos, some authentic and others manipulated by AI, and note:

- Unnatural facial movements
- Lighting anomalies and blurriness
- Discrepancies between facial features or unrealistic objects

3. Use verification tools and apply a method:

Select one of the analysed contents and ask yourself:

- Is it coherent and natural, or does it show anomalies?
- Are there technical or visual clues suggesting manipulations?
- Have I compared with reliable or original sources?

4. Reflect on the results obtained

Assess any resources or skills you may need to further develop

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

Coursera: “Detecting Deep fakes”

<https://www.coursera.org>

Courses dedicated to understanding and recognising deep fakes and digital manipulations.

FutureLearn: AI in Media Verification

<https://www.futurelearn.com/>

Training programs on using AI to verify digital content.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Verification questions (on learning objectives)

- Are you able to verify the visual features of AI-generated content, such as deep fakes or manipulations? Yes/No
- Have you used technical tools or manual methods to verify the authenticity of audio-visual content? Yes/No
- Can you explain why recognising AI-manipulated content is important for conscious consumption of information? Yes/No

2. Self-reflection questions

- How confident do you feel in identifying AI-generated content in a real-world context?
- Which tools or techniques seem most effective to you?
- How do you plan to integrate the learned techniques into verifying content in the future?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 4

Your Digital Footprint: Understanding and Managing Your Online Presence

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understand the concept of digital footprint and its impact on personal and professional life
- Be able to conduct a search about your online presence and evaluate the quality of available information
- Learn effective strategies to manage, improve, and protect your digital reputation
- Recognise the importance of a conscious and responsible digital footprint
- Develop a concrete action plan to proactively manage your online presence



STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

1. Start with a brief introduction:

Read or listen to an explanation about the concept of digital footprint, which is the collection of all the information and content you leave online (social media, comments, searches, publications). Reflect on the importance of understanding how your digital presence can influence your reputation and opportunities.

2. Examine your current presence:

Conduct a search about yourself:

- Use Google search engines by entering your first and last name
- Evaluate the results that appear: are they up-to-date, realistic, and do they accurately represent who you are?
- Analyse your social profiles, comments, and publicly visible images

3. Analyse the quality of your digital footprint:

Ask yourself:

- Is the online information consistent with the image you want to project?
- Are there any content that could harm your reputation or portray you negatively?
- Have you left sensitive or overly personal information?

4. Learn best practices to manage your presence:

- Study and apply management techniques such as adjusting privacy settings on social media
- Remove or limit undesirable and outdated content
- Create positive and professional content that enhances your image

5. Plan future actions:

- Decide on concrete steps you can take to improve or maintain a positive digital footprint
- Archive or delete old content
- Regularly manage your online presence
- Keep your social and professional profiles up to date
- Periodically monitor how your profile appears on search engines

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- Google My Business – a free tool to strengthen a positive online presence
- Online Reputation: How to Manage It – article on strategies for managing digital reputation
- Privacy and Online Security – guide on controlling privacy settings and protecting personal data

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Verification questions (on learning objectives)

- Do you know how to search for and evaluate your online presence? Yes/No
- Are you able to identify contents that could harm your digital reputation? Yes/No
- Are you familiar with the main strategies to improve and protect your digital footprint? Yes/No

2. Self-reflection questions

- How confident do you feel in planning actions to improve your digital presence?
- Which tools or techniques have been most helpful in managing your online reputation?
- Which areas or additional resources do you think you need to explore further for more effective management of your digital footprint?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 5

Protecting Your Privacy Online: Settings and Best Practices

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understanding the Risks of Excessive Data Sharing Online
- Knowing how to correctly configure and manage privacy and security settings on major social media platforms
- Being able to adopt security best practices (passwords, authentication, updates) to protect your data
- Developing a routine for verifying and updating privacy settings
- Promoting conscious and responsible use of digital platforms

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

1. Start with a brief introduction:

Read an explanation about the importance of protecting your digital privacy, the risks of sharing too much online, and the benefits of adopting effective security settings and common-sense practices.

2. Check the privacy settings of your profiles:

Log into major social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter) and note down:

- Privacy and security settings
- Who can see your content and profile?
- Permissions granted to connected apps and services

3. Analyse your sharing habits and ask yourself:

- Do you often share sensitive data?
- Do you respect the most restrictive privacy settings on your profiles?
- Are you aware of who can see and use the information you publish?

4. Apply Best Privacy Protection Practices:

Learn and implement security techniques such as:

- Using strong, complex passwords and changing them regularly
- Limiting the sharing of sensitive and personal information (address, date of birth, etc.)
- Managing permissions for third-party apps
- Keeping operating systems and apps updated regularly



5. Organise Regular Checks Like:

- Review and update your privacy and security settings
- Gradually update your passwords
- Monitor activities and connections to your accounts

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF):

<https://ssd EFF.org/>

Provides guides and tips for protecting yourself from online surveillance with a focus on privacy tools and practices.

- National Cyber Security Centre (UK)

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberaware/home>

Offers advice on how to protect your digital life, including password security and privacy settings.

- StaySafeOnline:

<https://www.staysafeonline.org/>

Provides information and tips on how to safely navigate the internet and manage your privacy.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Verification questions

- Do you know the privacy and security settings of major social media platforms?
- Do you know how to limit the sharing of personal and sensitive data online?
- Are you able to apply security techniques like strong passwords to your devices and accounts?

2. Self-reflection questions

- How confident do you feel in actively managing privacy and security settings?
- Which tools or best practices have been most useful or easiest for you to apply?
- In which areas of privacy protection do you think you need to improve further?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 6

Introduction to Artificial Intelligence: Tools and Everyday Applications

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understand what AI is and its main basic technologies.
- Know concrete examples of AI applications used daily.
- Evaluate the benefits and risks of AI technologies in personal and social contexts.
- Be able to identify accessible AI tools that can be easily used in everyday life.
- Promote a critical and conscious approach to AI technologies.



STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

1. Start with a brief introduction:

Read or listen to a basic explanation of artificial intelligence (AI): what it is, how it functions, and some of its most common applications in daily life.

2. Explore examples of everyday applications:

Reflect on and observe AI technologies you regularly use, such as:

- Voice assistants (Siri, Alexa, Google Home)
- Recommendation algorithms (Netflix, Amazon)
- Customer support chatbots
- Facial or image recognition systems
- Automatic translation tools (Google Translate)
- Automation of emails, calendars, and smart reminders

3. Study the underlying technologies:

Conduct brief research on major AI tools and technologies, such as:

- Machine Learning
- Deep Learning
- Neural Networks
- Natural Language Processing (NLP)
- Computer Vision

4. Try out AI tools:

If possible, use some free applications or online demos:

- Voice assistants (for example, ask something to Google Assistant or Alexa)
- Automatic translation sites
- Facial or image recognition software (like object recognition on Google Lens)

5. Reflect and evaluate:

Ask yourself:

- How do these technologies impact my daily life?
- What are the benefits and risks?
- How can I use these applications consciously and critically?



LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- BM Watson – Examples and applications of AI for everyday use.
- Google AI Experiments – Interactive, simple demos to explore.
- Google Cloud AI tools – AI tools accessible even for beginners.
- Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (W3Schools) – Basic educational resource.
- Explainer videos: What is Artificial Intelligence? (add relevant link)

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Verification questions (on learning objectives)

- Do you understand the main basic concepts and technologies of AI? Yes/No
- Are you familiar with some practical examples of AI applications you use daily? Yes/No
- Can you reflect on the benefits and risks of AI technologies? Yes/No

2. Self-reflection questions

- How confident are you in recognizing AI tools and using them responsibly?
- Which AI applications seem most useful or interesting to you?
- Which areas or aspects do you think you should further explore to deepen your understanding of AI technologies?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 7

Create an effective post on social media

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understanding the characteristics of an effective, brief, engaging and positive post.
- Knowing how to create strategic textual and visual content, while respecting clarity and conciseness.
- Gaining practical skills in writing and designing social media posts.
- Developing the ability to evaluate and improve one's own social media content independently

STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

1. Introduction:

Take a moment to read or listen to an explanation about the importance of effective communication on social media. Reflecting on this, consider the goal of creating content that is short, engaging, and positive/ able to capture attention and encourage meaningful interaction with your audience. Effective communication can make a difference in strengthening your message and building strong relationships online.

2. Analyse examples of effective posts:

Take a few successful publications (for example, on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter) and observe:

- The length of the message
- Clarity of the message
- The use of engaging and positive images or emojis
- The positive and motivating tone

3. Study the characteristics of a good post:

Find or consult guidelines on how to create an effective post, which should include:

- An engaging headline or opening sentence
- A brief and direct message, without ambiguity
- Supporting visual elements (images, videos, or emojis)
- A positive, motivating, and respectful tone

4. Try creating your own post:

Write a short message for a specific role or occasion, for example: promoting an event, motivating the community, or sharing good news.

- Apply the learned rules:
- Be concise, without beating around the bush
- Use relevant visual elements and emoji
- Get feedback from others (for example, asking if the message is clear and engaging)

5. Evaluate and improve:

Compare your post with the initial examples and ask yourself:

- Is it concise and to the point?
- Is it engaging and positive?
- Does it respect the tone and values of my community?

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- Guidelines for Effective Social Media Posts <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-content/>
- Visual editing tools and emoji's <https://webdesign.tutsplus.com/c/graphic-design>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Verification questions (on learning objectives)

- Are you able to create a short, clear, and engaging post? Yes/No
- Do you know what techniques to use when creating images, emoji, or a positive tone to enhance your message? Yes/No
- Can you evaluate and improve your own post by checking its effectiveness? Yes/No

2. Self-reflection questions

- How confident do you feel in creating effective posts for different social platforms?
- Which elements (textual, visual, tone) have helped you the most to make your message engaging?
- In which aspects or tools do you think you need to deepen your knowledge to further improve your content?

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY 8

Connecting in Online Communities: Empathy and Constructive Interaction

DURATION (MINUTES)

60'

LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

- Understanding the importance of empathy and respectful communication in online communities.
- Knowing how to adopt active listening techniques and constructive responses in digital contexts.
- Fostering positive interactions that promote inclusion and mutual respect
- Developing the ability to manage conflicts and negative comments in an empathetic and constructive manner
- Encouraging a more collaborative, respectful and engaging digital environment.



STEP-BY-STEP DESCRIPTION

1. Start with a brief introduction:

Read or listen to an explanation about the importance of building positive relationships in online communities. Reflect on how empathy and respectful interactions can foster a healthier, more inclusive, and constructive digital environment.

2. Observe examples of positive interactions:

Analyse conversations or comments in online communities (social media, forums, discussion groups), asking yourself:

- How respectful and constructive are the comments?
- Do the interactions show empathy and mutual respect?
- How are conflicts or negative comments handled?

3. Learn the principles of empathy and effective communication:

Study the best practices:

- Actively listen to others' opinions
- Respond with respect and without judgment
- Use a positive and encouraging tone
- Promote constructive dialogue and mutual understanding

4. Practice interacting in online contexts:

Take part in discussions, comment, and share content while respecting the principles of empathy, simulating constructive responses or messages to practice:

- Critically evaluate your contributions: Are they respectful? Do they encourage dialogue? Do they promote a positive environment?

5. Reflect on the results and improvements:

Ask yourself:

- How comfortable do you feel communicating respectfully online?
- Which constructive communication strategies have been most helpful to you?
- In which situations could it be more useful to apply the principles of empathy?

Note the effective behaviours and the areas for improvement to develop active, empathetic, and constructive participation.

LINKS AND LEARNING RESOURCES TO BE USED

- Empathetic Communication Strategies <https://positivepsychology.com/silent-treatment-abuse/>
- Managing Online Conflicts <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sallypercy/2025/09/17/5-tips-for-managing-conflicts-within-your-team/?ctpv=searchpage>
- Connect with Safety <https://connectsafely.org/>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Verification questions (on learning objectives)

- Do you know of active listening techniques and empathetic responses in online communities? Yes/No
- Are you able to recognise respectful and constructive behaviours in digital interactions? Yes/No
- Do you know how to manage conflicts or negative comments in an empathetic and positive way? Yes/No

2. Self-reflection questions

- How confident do you feel in participating in respectful and constructive online discussion?
- Which empathetic communication strategies do you find most effective?
- In which situations do you think you need to improve your ability to interact with respect and empathy?



ANNEX 4 - FINAL PITCH PRESENTATIONS

1. GUIDELINES

Introduction

The **Educators' Toolbox** aims to provide adult educators with a robust toolbox of Open Education Resources (OERs) that will allow them to provide **flexible and engaging micro-learning sessions** for older adult learners. The resources are focused on the acquisition of skills that older adults are interested in obtaining in an informal setting. The resources should be media-rich, accessible, and usable in a variety of online and offline learning environments.

The Toolbox comprises **24 micro-learning resources** which adult educators can deliver to older adult learners, to support their re-engagement in adult education. This directly links to our project objective to create and promote learning opportunities among all citizens and generations, especially older adult learners who may have been absent from formal education. The aim of the project is to entice older adults to re-enter education as a form of combatting their own social isolation while promoting adult education as a method of building basic competences and social connection.

These resources will cover topics that are engaging and interesting to older adults and will be directly linked to the 9 LifeComp competences as a means of encouraging an interest in lifelong learning amongst older adults. Adult educators will use these resources to develop the LifeComp competences in adult learners through topics that are engaging to older adults, but still develop their skills through bite-sized methods.

What is Micro-Learning?

Micro-learning refers to learning materials that are targeted, specific and delivered in short snippets or bite-sized formats. Micro-learning is not just delivering learning in short, time-bound sessions, it is also concerned with delivering learning content that is very targeted and specific to the learner's training need and interest.

In this context, micro-learning resources are short, digital resources which use micro-learning techniques to deliver targeted education content to learners. They are typically digital resources that are available online through web platforms or smart devices, so that learners can access materials at a time and place that is convenient to them.

Micro-learning resources, although short in duration, should still always be developed based on defined learning outcomes. This ensures that quality learning content is delivered to learners in this format.

Design Principles for Micro-Learning Resources

Based on the assumption that multimedia environments can easily cause different kinds of overload and therefore hinder learning, Mayer (2011) created different design principles to be adhered to when creating multimedia-based, micro-learning resources.

Educators should consider the following principles when designing their micro-learning resources:

Principle	Descriptions
Coherence principle	Information that is not relevant in the first place should be excluded.
Signalling Principle	Hints for the organisation of essential information and material should be highlighted.
Redundancy Principle	The same information should not be presented twice.
Spatial Contiguity Principle	Corresponding information should be placed near each other.
Temporal Contiguity Principle	Corresponding information should be presented simultaneously.
Segmenting Principle	Learning material should be presented in user-paced units.
Modality Principle	Animation and narration is better than animation and on-screen text.
Multimedia Principle	Words and pictures are better than words alone.
Personalisation Principle	Words should be in a conversational style, not in a formal one.
Voice Principle	Text should be spoken in a friendly human voice rather than a machine voice.

COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL CIRCLES TOOLKIT

Video

- Introduction to the topic.

Adult Educator Manual

- Lesson plan for delivering targeted learning to older adult learners.

Learner Handout

- The learner handout contains suggested self-directed activities for older adults to enhance their competences in daily life.

Assessment Quiz

- An online assessment (quiz) accompanying each learning resource, available on the MOOC platform.

Link

- <https://socialcircles-elearning.eu/>

INTRODUCING THE LIFECOMP FRAMEWORK

LifeComp is a versatile conceptual framework that serves as a foundation for curriculum development and learning activities. It was developed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in collaboration with the European Training Foundation (ETF), and it consists of 9 competences essential for personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship, and employability in a rapidly changing world. These competences are grouped into three interconnected areas: Personal (P1-3), Social (S1-3) and Learning to Learn (L1-3).

The 9 competences are:

- (P1) Self-regulation
- (P2) Flexibility
- (P3) Well-being
- (S1) Empathy
- (S2) Communication
- (S3) Collaboration
- (L1) Growth mindset
- (L2) Critical thinking
- (L3) Managing learning

To gain a more in-depth understanding of the LifeComp framework, access this link: [LifeComp Framework](#).

2. TEMPLATES

Video

Introduction (50 to 75 words)	
Key Learning Content 1 (100 to 150 words)	
Key Learning Content 2 (100 to 150 words)	
Reflection and Transfer (50 to 75 words)	
Closing Remarks (50 to 75 words)	

Adult Educator Manual / Lesson Plan

Theme	
Estimated Duration (mins):	60'
Topic Title:	
Competencies Addressed:	Select 1 or 2 competencies from the LifeComp Framework
Aim of the Session:	Use bullet points
Learning Objectives:	Use bullet points
Description of Activities:	Describe in present tense what steps the adult educator should take in leading this activity. (Ex: The educator divides the group into 4 smaller groups.)
Resources or Materials Required:	
Suggested Assessment/ Follow-up:	Reflection questions, assessment questions

LEARNER HANDOUT

Theme	
Estimated Duration (mins):	60'
Topic	
Competencies Addressed:	Select 1 or 2 competencies from the LifeComp Framework
Title of the Activity:	
Benefit of this activity for older adults:	What will older adults achieve by completing this activity? Use bullet points
Step-by-step instructions:	Describe here what steps older adults should take in completing this activity as part of their self-directed learning. Use Bullet points 1. Divide the group 2. Explain task3....
Link to Additional Resources or Reading Materials:	Include links here to additional online sources or resources that can help older adults to further develop their knowledge of this topic. (Ex: How to Use Instagram to Sell your Hobby Products: https://makelocalforglobal.com/how-to-use-instagram-to-sell-your-hobby-products/)
Self-reflection Questions:	Include 1 or 2 self-reflection questions, to encourage older adults to self-assess what they have learned so far through the video and activity.
Template (if required)	

ASSESSMENT QUIZ

There are different types of question formats that can be used for the assessment quiz. These include multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, matching, and drag-and-drop. You can find structure for developing the different types of questions below, with an example included. Please follow this structure when developing your quiz and include at least 10 questions.

- **Multiple Choice Question**

Question:

[Insert your question here]

Options:

- Option A: [Insert answer option here]
- Option B: [Insert answer option here]
- Option C: [Insert answer option here]
- Option D: [Insert answer option here]

Correct Answer(s):

Example:

Question:

What is the largest planet in our solar system?

Options:

- Option A: Earth
- Option B: Mars
- Option C: Jupiter
- Option D: Saturn

Correct Answer(s):

Option C: Jupiter

- **True/False Question**

Statement:

[Insert the statement here]

Correct Answer:

[Select one: True / False]

Example:

Statement:

The Great Wall of China is visible from the Moon.

Correct Answer:

False

- **Fill-in-the-Blank Question**

Sentence/Prompt:

[Insert sentence or question here with a blank]

Correct Answer(s):

[Insert the correct answer(s) here]

Example:

Sentence/Prompt:

The process by which plants make their own food is called _____.

Correct Answer(s):

Photosynthesis

- **Matching Question**

Instructions:

Match the items in Column A with the correct items in Column B.

Column A:

1. [Insert item 1]
2. [Insert item 2]
3. [Insert item 3]

Column B:

- a. [Insert item a]
- b. [Insert item b]
- c. [Insert item c]

Correct Matches:

1. [Insert correct match for item 1]
2. [Insert correct match for item 2]
3. [Insert correct match for item 3]

Example:

Instructions:

Match the countries in Column A with their capitals in Column B.

Column A:

1. France
2. Japan
3. Australia

Column B:

- a. Canberra
- b. Paris
- c. Tokyo

Correct Matches:

- 1 → b (France → Paris)
- 2 → c (Japan → Tokyo)
- 3 → a (Australia → Canberra)

- **Drag-and-Drop Question**

Instructions:

Drag each item to its correct category or position.

Draggable Items:

- Item 1: [Insert draggable item here]
- Item 2: [Insert draggable item here]
- Item 3: [Insert draggable item here]

Drop Zones:

- Zone 1: [Insert drop zone name here]
- Zone 2: [Insert drop zone name here]
- Zone 3: [Insert drop zone name here]

Correct Matches:

- Item 1 → Zone 1
- Item 2 → Zone 2
- Item 3 → Zone 3

Example:

Instructions:

Drag the following animals into their correct classification.

Draggable Items:

- Lion
- Shark
- Eagle

Drop Zones:

- Mammals
- Fish
- Birds

Correct Matches:

- Lion → Mammals
- Shark → Fish
- Eagle → Birds



Social Circles



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