



NEWSLETTER #1



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T4T - Tools4Teaching in Digital Education Settings

project focuses on supporting adult educators and formal, non-formal, and informal training providers to shift towards digital education effectively and to provide the same level of learners' interaction and 'human-like' experience as in the physical environment. The **overall objective** is to strengthen the capacity of adult educators and training professionals to build and sustain effective group dynamics in digital education settings to better engage their online learners.

During the implementation of the project, resource libraries have been curated, and original pedagogical content has been created. One of the main results was the preparation and design of a series of versatile modules regarding digital education, group dynamics, and hybrid educational environments. After the development of methodological guidance and additional resources for improving group dynamics in the online learning environment (Result 1 of the project), practical testing with real educators was needed; for this reason, the Learning and Teaching Training Activity (LTTA) was organized. The aim was to discuss the materials and obtain direct feedback while training educators on applying the proposed new teaching approach into their practice.

To achieve this the LTTA's host organization - MYARTIST - decided to use the concept of a Virtual Exhibition as a digital tool that can designate the value of the project's methods and also a way to combine different features of the modules. Introducing notions such as storytelling, digital storytelling, and automatic writing, the participants had the chance to get familiar with the theory developed in Result 1. Given that participants were both in-situ and online - originating from various countries - the LTTA constituted a living experience of what a blended/hybrid learning environment looks like. It is important to remember that a learning environment consists of the physical and digital setting in which learners carry out their activities, including all the tools, documents, and other artifacts to be found in that setting. Besides the physical and digital setting, it includes the socio-cultural setting for such activities." (Goodyear, 2001).



Exploiting the knowledge produced during the designing of the modules, the trainers ensured that an engagement strategy should be developed, maintaining the training simple, clear, and interesting. Given that, energizers adapted to physical and digital environments were used to reduce awkwardness and create connections. Digital tools like Jamboard allowed all participants to share their thoughts and opinions equally. Additionally, for the learning environment to be personal and social, safety was secured through the “6-part story” activity, in which participants shared their expectations, fears, and personal goals for this training, while regular check-ins were an important part of the feedback process. Given the nature of



the LTTA, the content and methodology were based on the Module of the project about Creativity. It is “the use of imagination or original ideas to create something new or different”. Usually, it is associated with artists, painters, writers, poets, actors, musicians, and other individuals who create artworks daily. However, it is important in every aspect of our lives, and everybody is somehow creative in their work, especially educators who need to constantly inspire, engage and motivate their students. The creative process is cyclical and nonlinear, linked with experimentation and self-challenges. It needs safe and supportive learning environments where learners can free their imagination, challenge themselves, struggle a bit, and re-imagine while completing the task.

The goal of the LTTA was to enhance participants’ practical skills and abilities in adapting their current online training activities to the proposed new approach and to provide a platform for discussion of ideas and viewpoints among participating adult educators and training experts.

Participants were allowed to interact with more informal techniques taught and trained by psychologist and drama therapist Stamatis Paraskevas. They created a six-part narrative introducing our protagonists, their goals, and any challenges they encounter or support they receive. They made drawings of their experiences on paper to later scan and add to our online exhibit.

After learning about automatic writing, they wrote a fairy tale together. They each had to say a word or phrase to develop their own as a group. They must coordinate their efforts and pay attention to each other. Then everyone had one minute to draw a scene from the fairy tale on a shared sheet of paper. The trainees were given time and space to reflect on their previous experiences on the last training day. They created stories with words and colors, using their bodies and the method of automatic writing. The most important factor was that they ventured out of their comfort zone.

MYARTIST showed the potential of a virtual exhibition. They discussed ensuring and improving accessibility by performing basic but efficient activities. Canva served as their main digital tool. Participants uploaded their original artworks along with titles and descriptions. Finally, they recorded audio versions of the descriptions.





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