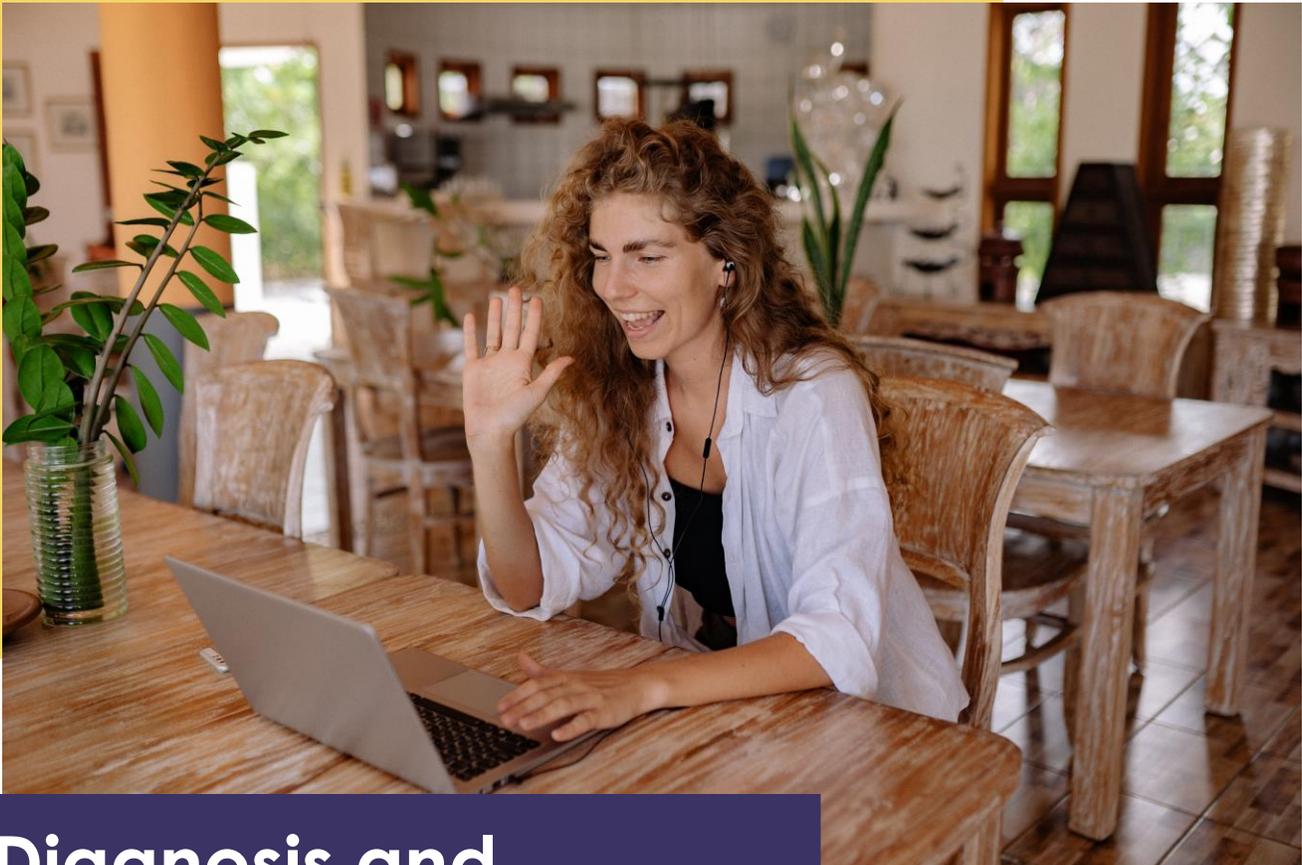




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Diagnosis and solutions for distance communication



CORDIALIS

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PREFACE

The global COVID-19 health crisis revealed the need for citizens to use digital tools in education and many professional and cultural sectors and brought to light existing problems relating to distance communication. According to UNESCO (2020), over 60% of pupils in schools around the world were affected by school closures or limitations regarding participation in face-to-face communication and interactions in traditional educational settings. The same phenomenon occurred at other educational levels (universities, polytechnics, adult education, apprenticeship training, etc.) and more generally in public and private professional sectors worldwide. The problem of digital insecurity, the lack of experience with distance communication tools and an inadequate IT infrastructure were highlighted, especially in relation to seniors. These problems are also linked to the geographical isolation of citizens living in remote, isolated or rural areas. For these populations, digital tools, practices and skills can offer real opportunities to compensate for geographical isolation: connecting places of learning, e-commerce and cultural exchanges.

While digital tools offered a powerful resource to counter isolation in times of health crisis, the lack of digital skills or training in their use highlighted problems with distance communication. For instance, according to the European Digital Education Action Plan (2021–2027), before the crisis, almost 60% of respondents had not used distance and online platforms for learning. In addition, in a small-scale survey (n = 79) on distance learning, interaction and motivation (University of Turku, January 2022), pre-service and in-service language teachers (n = 48) reported that they would like to have new tools and support in the use of new technology (44%), acquire new tips and methods for distance teaching (50%) and learn new methods for group management (35%) and increased interactivity during distance teaching (60%). However, they also had the desire for more engaging activities (42%), better Internet connection (39%) and fewer plenary-type lessons (28%). Conversely, interviews were conducted in different partner countries (France, Italy, Lithuania in February 2022) on the needs of professionals in cultural and informal education centres (especially media libraries) and artisans who carry on local traditions and know-how. They revealed that the digital habits and skills of the populations living in remote areas are often insufficient.

The research project “Connecting Remote Areas through Digital Competences and Cultural Heritage” (CORDIALIS) responds to these above-mentioned needs by providing methodological improvements in the form of pedagogical materials and tools for hybrid learning, teaching, communication and interaction. Interactions or events can occur online, virtually or in live face-to-face situations. Furthermore, CORDIALIS fills these digital gaps by contributing to improving the skills of citizens living in remote areas by connecting them through their local cultural heritage. CORDIALIS enhances the local heritage in partner countries (i.e. Italy, Finland, France and Lithuania) to connect citizens, accompany them in the development of their digital skills and strengthen their common awareness of belonging to the European entity. This manual, with its 36 Question/Answer cards, is part of a range of products and kits for professionals and citizens and is available through an online resource centre created by CORDIALIS (<https://www.cordialiserasmus.eu>). CORDIALIS provides training tools in digital skills for professionals working in these remote areas or those who are in contact with citizens living in these areas. The professionals concerned are those in adult education, language teachers, pre-service teachers, teacher educators, adult language learners, those from the cultural sector (e.g. librarians), craftsmen, artists and local cultural stakeholders. The central idea of CORDIALIS is that local cultural specificities can be strengthened through an online presence and by offering central resources to enhance communication and intercomprehension among European citizens and increase their cultural awareness and educational and economic opportunities. Communication is a central force in enhancing social and societal involvement and the inclusion of individuals.

The manual provides a short theoretical backdrop through which to present a diagnosis and solutions for distance communication in various contexts. The thirty-six activity cards rely on this framework. CORDIALIS members who have collaborated on this manual hope that readers find it inspiring and that it will facilitate improvements in the digital and interactive skills of citizens and professionals living in remote areas (e.g. archipelagos) who wish to mobilise or develop these skills.

INTRODUCTION

In the future, digital competence will arguably be one of the basic competences of all citizens from early childhood to adulthood and beyond, which makes it a challenge for all educators, educational institutes and stakeholders (Ilomäki et al., 2016). The development of digital competence should be combined with the development of other key competences for lifelong learning described by the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR, 2001, 2018, 2020), including communication skills in a foreign language, initiative and entrepreneurship, social and networking skills and cultural awareness. Competence in distance communication is an essential part of digital competence. In distance communication, motivation to participate in activities, engagement in group work and interaction in online contexts are affected in several ways. Verbal and non-verbal phenomena related to naturally occurring social interaction (e.g. simultaneous speech, feedback and turns in interaction, eye contact, facial expression and body movements; see Sacks et al., 1974; Mondada, 2019) are affected or transformed or can even be absent, thereby hindering distance communication and potentially leading to misunderstanding.

To face these challenges, it is necessary to discuss the theoretical foundations behind the three factors illustrated in Figure 1 (below). These themes emerged from our surveys and interviews, which were gathered in the various partner countries between February and April of 2022 as part of the CORDIALIS project. The themes will exemplify the needs, practices and digital presence of current stakeholders. The examples presented in the following sections were taken from these surveys and interviews.

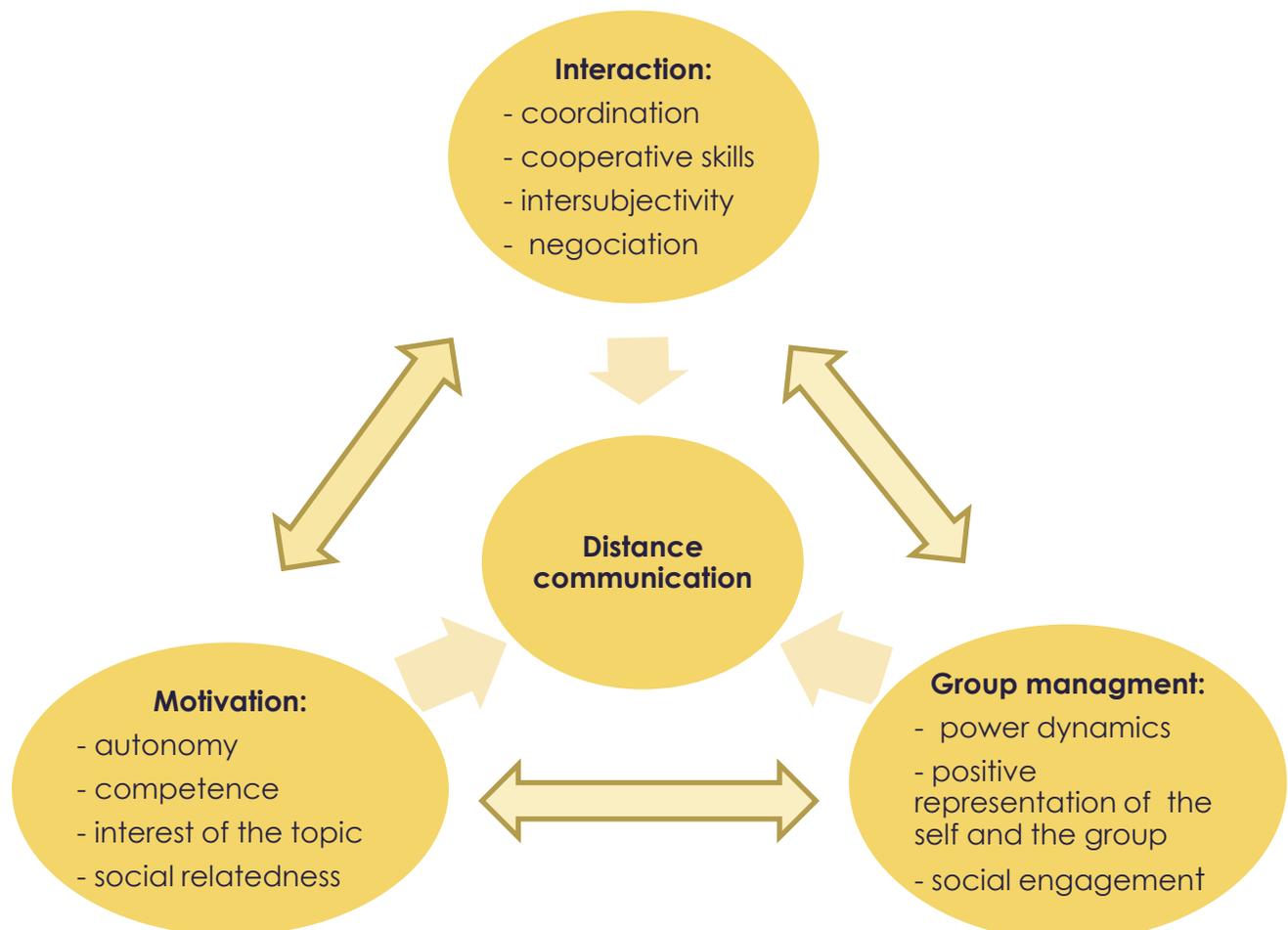


Figure 1. Components of successful distance communication.

To identify problems related to digital skills and address solutions such as how to develop communication skills, motivation or group management during distance communication, the following sections discuss these three closely interconnected factors impacting various groups of citizens: language learners and teachers, inhabitants of remote areas, professionals from the cultural sector and artisans.

The title of this publication is distance communication, but the reader should note that digital communication or interactions might take place in different contexts, on different platforms or via various digital devices. Therefore, one should distinguish between the different types of digital communication (aural, oral, written) and the available online and/or virtual resources:

- Online documents (text, image)
- Online videos/podcasts
- Writing a blog (personal or collaborative)
- E-mails and chats (live or recorded written exchanges)
- Video platforms (Teams/Zoom, etc.)
- Virtual tours and museums
- Online courses, conferences
- E-commerce platforms
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- Virtual reality (VR glasses, etc.)
- Augmented reality (AR) environments
- Virtual environments (e.g. Second Life)
- Virtual and hybrid classrooms
- Educational robots (telepresence robots, social robots, etc.)

Each of these formats result in very different interactions between the speaker/hearer, sender/receiver and writer/reader. Some types of digital communication can be more and some less adapted to the needs of the audiences targeted by CORDIALIS.

1. INTERACTIVITY

Social interaction plays a major role in acquiring new knowledge and skills, and we have become accustomed to learning them in different social situations, such as classroom activities or during an art tour of a museum. However, the world took a turn in this area when the COVID-19 crisis shifted people from the physical world to online environments and virtual platforms. Members of society had to find new methods on how to deal with day-to-day life without seeing each other physically in face-to-face interactions. Virtual platforms, which were rarely used before, became widely used throughout the world, and telecommunication applications, such as Teams and Zoom, became widespread and popular almost overnight in professional communities and educational establishments. This shift offered society new ways of communication and various new opportunities to interact with each other, but it also created problems regarding social interaction and the explicitly learned and implicitly acquired communication rules that actors had adopted since childhood (cf. Wood & Schweitzer, 2017).

Participating in social interaction presumes the ability to communicate, which requires at least basic knowledge of communicative language competence: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence. Linguistic competence refers to the language knowledge that one retains and includes knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the social dimension of language use and includes knowledge of linguistic markers of social relations, such as politeness, register differences, dialects and accents. Pragmatic competence refers to the knowledge of language as a system and includes knowledge of how to organise and structure discourse and understanding of different meanings, such as irony, turn-taking and gestures (CEFR, 2020). However, communication does not simply involve the use of language in a correct way; it also contains positive and negative emotions (e.g. stress, dissatisfaction, depression) and different kinds of power structures (e.g. negatively loaded language, gendered communication) which affect the interaction (Wood & Schweitzer, 2017). Without the complete use of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, which require the use of non-verbal communication, participation in shared social activities would remain blurry and incomplete.

Interactivity has to do with the ability of two or more participants in an activity to maintain intersubjectivity and achieve a goal. It refers to an organisation of participation regulated in turns (Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff et al., 1977) and multimodal resources (Mondada, 2019). Depending on the digital formats in which the interaction occurs, what will be understood as an interaction and a turn in the interaction will vary considerably. Interaction can be synchronous (i.e. happening in real-time) or asynchronous (i.e. without real-time interaction and often with delayed feedback and/or a closing turn sequence). In terms of the latter, the posting of a video on a platform may be considered a turn, and comment/feedback from a user of that platform may be considered a second turn through which the editor can determine what the user thinks of the production. In this case, the time gap between the first and second turn is important. In consequence, the type of interactivity observed (e.g. in an online course) might be very different from a face-to-face language interaction or a written exchange on a chat platform.

1.1. Problems of interactivity in distance communication

Depending on the nature of the activities in which the different target groups of CORDIALIS are engaged and the resources they mobilise, they will be confronted with various types of interactions involving a range of problems and solutions. That said, the aim of CORDIALIS is also to propose a combination of these solutions to enrich the practices of the various groups. For example, rather than posting a video about a craft product, a craftsman

could propose online discussions in which his potential customers could ask him directly, for instance, about manufacturing methods, or language courses could be enriched by online cultural mediation activities, for example, by working with certain types of vocabulary that can be observed in a work of art.

1.1.1. Problems of interactivity in language teaching and learning

The sudden shift from face-to-face interaction to distance communication during the global pandemic created an entirely new way of teaching and learning languages. Language courses moved from classrooms to virtual asynchronous and synchronous platforms. New challenges emerged, as listed below:

1. **Community and belonging:** At the start of a language course, participants (teacher and learners) might not know each other, which can cause misunderstandings and miscommunications between them. Individual behaviour, which consists of verbal and non-verbal communication such as gestures, has an impact on their interactions. Getting to know each other requires understanding each other's social codes and sociolinguistic markers (such as politeness and register differences; De Felice, 2017; Megawati, 2021), which might be more difficult to produce and interpret in distance interactions.
2. **Turn-taking:** Participants might not be able to see each other's faces if their cameras are turned off. This creates difficulties in turn-taking as the participants cannot read the nonverbal signs (e.g. eye contact) of the speaker to identify the relevant moment in which to initiate a turn. When participation is organised around the teacher, students usually have to take turns speaking so that the teacher can hear and correct them. Students who are listening must wait their turn to speak; however, in distance communication, this organisation of participation can be tedious.
3. **Participation:** Classroom lessons are often teacher-led, even if the learner-centred approach is adopted in language education (Maijala & Mutta, in press). In distance communication, it is even more so, which can reduce social engagement.
4. **Providing feedback:** Teachers might not be able to offer instantaneous feedback in the same way as in the classroom, and visual contact is not always feasible on a virtual platform (e.g. camera turned off, screen sharing, etc.), which can hinder nonverbal feedback. In addition to verbal feedback, a great deal of feedback occurs through nonverbal signs (e.g. facial expressions and gestures) during live discourses. By decoding the recipient's nonverbal behaviour, the speaker can interpret whether the communication is successful or needs altering.
5. **Organising peer-support:** Peer-support while doing exercises, which is crucial to some learners, is not as easily available in distance communication.
6. **Teaching materials:** The use of conventional elements from the classroom cannot be performed exactly alike. For instance, task handouts cannot be physically handed to the participants and cannot contain all the same elements as in the classroom (e.g. colouring of objects, drawing, criss-crosses). Furthermore, some learners prefer working with pen and paper (cf. Lintunen et al., 2017). Sharing materials (e.g. with audio sounds) can be more complicated due to unreliable Internet connection or other technological problems.
7. **Organisation of participation:** The number of participants might have an impact on the activity, especially with respect to the time used in activities. When working in small groups, for instance, in a breakout room, it normally takes more time to go through the activity than in a classroom.
8. **Digital skills:** Senior learners might not have sufficient knowledge of digital tools and might not know how to use them. The use of digital tools can even cause fear and anxiety in seniors.

1.1.2. Problems of interactivity in cultural mediation

Adults with little familiarity in the use of digital technologies might avoid digital tools and distance communication, which can hinder their social life. In cultural mediation, networking is an important aspect of work life, and exclusion from social circles can cause significant harm in the future.

1. **Participation:** In distance interactions, participants who are less accustomed to listening might monopolise the conversation more regularly than in face-to-face interactions. This can cause anxiety among participants who are not certain of the turn-taking rules in distance interactions. In addition, this can cause disproportion in the sharing of knowledge in meetings.
2. **Technical problems:** The use of different digital tools (e.g. PC, smartphone or tablet) can create problems in interaction due to the range of interfaces used by participants and poor connection speeds between users served by different wired or WLAN connections.
3. **Formality of the situation:** Forming a connection with participants can be more difficult for the mediator in distance interaction because there is no one-to-one informal interaction as in face-to-face encounters.

1.1.3. Problems of interactivity in the sale/purchase of craft products

Artisanal products are traditionally sold in marketplaces, various fairs and/or artisanal events. Today, selling and buying are increasingly occurring online and via e-commerce platforms, thereby enabling artisans and craftsmen to enlarge their clientele, sell more products and have more people to interact with. There are, however, many challenges to overcome:

1. **Digital marketing:** Craftsmen and artisans might lack knowledge of marketing, which is how one can form a connection and reach target audiences. A lack of knowledge of digital marketing is a major issue for people who need to generate more sales.
2. **Digital presence:** Some artisans do not use a sufficient number of virtual channels to sell their products; for instance, they might even lack their own website completely, rendering interaction with potential clients difficult. Artisans do not always advertise their craft work on social networks and might even lack social media presence completely. Artisans who do have a social media presence might, however, be quite passive on their pages, and they may not invest in their posts (e.g. poor photo quality). This is generally mainly due to lack of time and/or competence, particularly among older generations (e.g. in Lithuania).
3. **Sales opportunities:** Some artisans and craftsmen still prefer to make their main sales at trade fairs, but the problem is that they have to pay for participation, and fairs do not take place on a regular basis.

1.2. Solutions for generating interactivity in distance communication

Interactivity in distance communication can be enhanced in many ways, but in accordance with the questionnaires and interviews conducted during this project, the most pressing concerns could be resolved by focusing on (1) turn-taking, (2) the nature of the activity, (3) sharing rules during virtual/online sessions and (4) using cameras.

1.2.1. Solutions for generating interactivity in language learning and teaching

The solutions offered are applicable to both language teachers and learners and, in general, adult educators and adult learners.

1. **Community and belonging:** The teacher should start new lessons with warm-up activities in order to lower the level of anxiety between participants who may not know each other. This would also enhance participants' readiness to familiarise themselves and interact with each other. To see each other's nonverbal signs (Knapp et al., 2013), such as face and body movements, participants should turn on their camera at least at the beginning of the lesson, at the end, and every time it is their turn to speak. It is also recommended to have cameras on during group work (e.g. in breakout rooms). If students feel uncomfortable about everyone being able to see their home or face, there is a possibility in many synchronous virtual platforms to blur or replace the background with a picture. The other solution for the teacher is to use focus mode, which hides the video feeds from other participants and enables only the teacher to see the participants' faces. Like in a classroom situation, the participants are not constantly staring at each other's faces and would most commonly be facing the teacher, who would be the only one seeing their faces all at once. By deploying focus mode, the situation might seem a little more usual, potentially creating a safer environment for the students to use their cameras.
2. **Turn-taking:** The teacher should also generate clear turn-taking instructions for the course (e.g. create a name list of the students on the chat, with the speaking order or the use of hand-raising or emoticons to ask for a turn to speak). There are several ways a teacher can apply turn-taking rules in distance communication. Each teacher should find a way that best suits them, but the most important part is that the teacher sets clear turn-taking rules for all students. This creates a safer environment for students who lack the confidence to shout out the answers and gives every student an equal chance to participate.
3. **Participation:** Improving interactivity in online lessons means thinking about how to organise student participation. A central criterion is whether the interaction is directed solely by the teacher, who therefore occupies a central position, or whether other modes of organisation are possible in terms of varying the learning opportunities. In other words, it is necessary to ask who the leaders and followers of the teaching/learning activity are during the construction of the object of learning (Lefebvre, 2019, 2022).
4. **Providing feedback:** The teacher could vary their feedback according to different activities (e.g. Simamora, 2020). Participants could be invited to use thumbs, up/down signs or chat to give feedback to others. They could give feedback orally or in written mode individually, in small groups or in the main lesson. To familiarise the participants with giving and receiving feedback, the teacher can use "I can" statements (CEFR, 2001) before and after the activities.
5. **Organising peer-support:** Small groups and informal activities have been recommended to increase interaction and peer support. The teacher can move from one group to another to check their output and discuss their choices before correcting them together with the whole classroom. The teacher can also increase the number of informal activities (e.g. use of digital games or applications) as part of homework. The participants can choose from a list offered by the teacher for some tasks to be completed pairwise, for instance, in two weeks' time.
6. **Teaching materials:** To make courses livelier, the teacher can use various kinds of interactive/collaborative walls (e.g. Flinga, Presemo) to collect the products that participants create during their interactions. The teacher can also use authentic

materials (e.g. pictures, comics, videos) or create role-play activities (e.g. Jauregi et al., 2012; Surkamp, 2014).

7. **Organisation of participation:** Preparation before an online interaction is crucial in terms of maximising interactive work. If the number of participants is high, to save some time, they can do preparatory work before the online interaction. In this case, the teacher's role is to manage the groups who prepare the teaching content. As the sharing of materials online might be challenging due to technological problems, the participants could download their presentation/group work on a platform or share it via a link.
8. **Digital skills:** Valuing the knowledge of senior and older learners is essential. It is also useful to ask them to share their earlier knowledge, strategies and life experiences in order to compensate for some lack of knowledge about digital tools. They are often highly motivated when participating in these kinds of activities but might need some extra encouragement to use new digital tools. To lower the threshold for participation, practical step-by-step instructions can be distributed on paper and/or via digital links. If learners have physical hindrances, the teacher can ensure that the materials are available in a suitable font size and that the audio is sufficiently loud. The teacher should also remember that older participants might take more time to complete and revise activities (Knowles, 1973, 1980; DeKeyser et al., 2010; DeKeyser, 2013; Donaghy, s.a.).

1.2.2. Solutions for generating interactivity in cultural mediation

The above presentation can easily be adapted to cultural mediation contexts as these target groups often consist of adult citizens of all ages and from diverse backgrounds.

1. **Participation:** To ensure equality in participation, turn-taking might have to be regulated. In online interactions, people might be less accustomed to listening and might tend to monopolise the conversation. As in a classroom environment, the moderator can create clear turn-taking instructions (e.g. name list on the chat, how to ask for the floor) at the beginning of the session to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to give their opinion and interact with others.
2. **Technical problems:** To support the improvement of digital skills and familiarise adults with digital tools, practical step-by-step instructions can be distributed on paper and/or via digital links. The moderator can organise personalised help sessions with the participants and/or create mixed-age teams to share their knowledge during the activities.
3. **Formality of the situation:** As in a classroom environment, a warm-up activity to start a new session can be used by the moderator to lower the level of anxiety between participants who may not know each other. It might also enhance the participants' readiness to familiarise themselves and interact with each other.

1.2.3. Solutions for generating interactivity in the sale/purchase of craft products

Sales-related solutions focus mainly on digital marketing and selling outside of traditional marketplaces and a range of fairs and artisanal events. A focus on learning e-commerce and digital skills can help bring clientele from remote areas and increase accessibility.

1. **Digital marketing:** Craftsmen and artisans could benefit from virtual sales and e-marketing. If they do not have enough time and knowledge, it is possible to hire someone or join an association that deals with content quality (e.g. high-resolution pictures, posting content on a regular basis). Craftsmen and artisans could also benefit from virtually organised e-marketing and virtual sales courses.

2. **Digital presence:** Creating one's own website has been recommended as enabling greater visibility in the market. If craftsmen and artisans do not know how to do this or do not have time, they might organize an internship and have someone help them. There are several tools to create one's own website or blog (e.g. WordPress, Wix) that make it easier to interact with potential clients.
3. **Sales opportunities:** Expanding one's network increases sales opportunities. Craftsmen and artisans could start the process of e-marketing by informing their clientele of their new website when visiting trade fairs and other events. When their network becomes larger, they might have to employ or hire someone to do the marketing.

2. MOTIVATION

Motivation guides behaviour and is usually considered the cause behind all intention. Motivation has been studied from many angles, and motivation theories are wide-ranging and can be adapted to various target groups. Before introducing the most common problems of our target groups and the solutions to them, this chapter briefly presents some of the main motivation theories related to learning. Noteworthy, these findings are applicable to other forms of motivation, such as motivation to interact informally with a group or participate in cultural mediation activities.

One of the most important cognitive theories about motivation is self-regulation theory (e.g. Noels et al., 2000), which posits two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation means that the reason for doing something is that it is regarded as enjoyable and inherently interesting, whereas in extrinsic motivation, the reason for doing something is that it leads to an external outcome (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Gardner and Lambert (1972) used the terms integrative (i.e. inner) and instrumental (i.e. task- or goal-oriented) motivation, with the difference between them being that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation form a continuum, unlike instrumental and integrative motivation (Pietilä, 2015). Nowadays, motivation is seen as dynamic and not as a stable, unchangeable phenomenon. It might change rapidly or slowly, even during a single lesson or meeting.

One of the notable dynamic models is the process model of motivation, developed by Zoltán Dörnyei and István Ottó (1998; Pietilä, 2015). Motivation can be divided into three stages: the *preactional stage*, the *actional stage* and the *postactional stage*, which are of equal importance. Before learning a new skill, the individual's motivation is affected by previous knowledge and attitudes about the topic. This phase is also known as choice motivation, for instance, why one starts an activity. During the second stage, motivation must be maintained. Teachers and mediators have a key role at this stage by helping participants maintain their motivation in different ways (e.g. positive feedback, autonomy, group management). However, fear, anxiety, learning space and other distractions could be harmful, thereby decreasing motivation. During the third stage, participants reflect on the reason for success or failure in learning. Furthermore, self-reflection affects later learning and future motivation (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998; Pietilä, 2015).

This leads to another important cognitive motivation theory, that is, attribution theory, whose aim is to explain how an individual's successes and failures while acquiring new things affect their motivation. For instance, if an individual believes that their success is dependent on their abilities, their motivation increases. There are several explanations, called attributes, which explain motivation. Attributes are divided into internal and external causes and stable and unstable causes (Pietilä, 2015; Weiner, 2005). An example authored by Arduini-Van Hoose (2020) is presented in Figure 2 below:

	Unstable cause	Stable cause
Internal cause	Effort Mood Fatigue	Ability Intelligence
External cause	Luck Chance Opportunity	Task difficulty

Figure 2. Attributes of motivation (Arduini-Van Hoose, 2020).

Individuals aim to find reasons for their successes or failures, and these reasons or attributes can affect their future behaviour. For instance, if a language learner gets a low test score, they might construct a range of explanations: Maybe the test was difficult (i.e. external reason, “not my fault”), or maybe they did not study enough (i.e. internal reason, “my fault”), or maybe they just got unlucky (i.e. situational external cause). Each of these explanations attributes the failure to a different reason, and the explanation might or might not be objectively accurate. The attribution chosen reflects personal beliefs about the sources or causes of success and failure, and they tend to affect motivation in different ways (Weiner, 2005). For instance, if an individual believes that they failed because they were bad at a certain activity, they might quit the activity altogether; if they believe that they did not work hard enough, they might find more motivation to try again.

2.1. Problems of motivation

Learning new skills and competences requires patience, time, persistence and a great deal of repetition. There are multiple theories on how to be successful in acquiring new knowledge; however, one of the most notable factors is motivation, which is a driving force in any situation (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998; Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001; Dörnyei, 2005, 2006).

2.1.1. Problems of motivation in language learning and teaching

A motivated individual acquires new things more easily than an unmotivated one (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Pietilä, 2015). Therefore, language teachers should always consider motivation in their lesson planning and teaching. The problems regarding motivation can differ in distance learning compared to classroom teaching. Involuntary participation in distance learning can decrease motivation, and the ideal situation would be that students participate voluntarily. It is, therefore, important to question how to generate motivation. This was not an option during the pandemic in some countries, so the problem of motivation had to be addressed in other ways.

1. **Psychological issues:** Anxiety, fear and lack of concentration are un motivating factors for many language learners while studying on virtual platforms. In addition to the turn-taking dilemma mentioned earlier, uncertainty regarding digital skills and knowledge can cause anxiety and fear in learners. Virtual platforms can also cause overwhelming stimuli for neurodivergent people (cf. Boyd et al., 2018).
2. **Negative attitudes towards digital tools:** Negative attitudes can also cause anxiety among teachers. Teachers might not know how to use all the latest digital tools that can facilitate teaching and learning, or they might not know where to find them. Furthermore, they might avoid the use of digital tools during lessons as they might be fearful of the reactions from learners (cf. Lintunen et al., 2017).
3. **Mandatory participation:** If participation is required, it can cause demotivation for adult learners in small group discussion who believe in learning autonomy (cf. Knowles, 1973, 1980). In the classroom context, adult learners are typically allowed to choose their own groups and whether to participate, and for some reason, this does not seem to be the case in distance learning.
4. **Working from home:** It can be a challenge for both teachers and learners who are accustomed to classroom teaching to work from home. Their greatest struggles may be in the area of concentration issues relating to working from home and the lack of human connection brought on by distance learning and teaching.
5. **Traditional methods:** It can be challenging to motivate participants and follow their motivation levels during distance teaching, with many of the methods from the traditional classroom requiring modification.

2.1.2. Problems of motivation in cultural mediation

In the case of media library users or residents in remote areas participating in digital cultural events, the problem of motivation is one of representing the possibilities offered by media libraries. For the time being, the digital tools made available to users in media libraries concern the search for documents and are often not highly interactive. The development of virtual cultural events still seems to be underdeveloped, which makes it difficult to question the exact motivation of professionals and users (CORDIALIS, 2022).

1. **Problem of representation:** The development of digital cultural mediation activities in media libraries implies a change in the representation of what a media library is and, therefore, the development and implementation of new practices. As far as media libraries are concerned, we can talk about a problem of representation. For media librarians, however, the problem of motivation is related to their role and function in society and in the context of a social organisation that causes problems linked to organising digital cultural events. Media libraries are perceived as places where people can read and borrow documents. Therefore, it might be difficult to transform them into places where cultural events are organised, such as exhibitions and author presentations. Nevertheless, there is a constraint on the nature of the activities to be developed, which must be of a hybrid character. Media libraries are supposed to be places of conviviality and learning, distinct from both the home and school institutions, important meeting places for inhabitants and associations. This problem of the social function of media libraries may seem incompatible with the development of purely digital cultural events. There is also a demand from users of media libraries who want to be able to continue to physically visit the library.
2. **Participant engagement:** Another problem affecting the motivation of media library users is the sustainability of user involvement. This concerns maintaining users' motivation to participate in virtual cultural events over time. This problem can be particularly significant if users engage in organising events over several sessions.
3. **Technical difficulties:** Several senior citizens are adapting well to the use of digital tools, but for others, the task remains difficult. Older people (seniors) often have little motivation to use digital tools because they are new to them. Seniors do not always understand how they work and often do not see the value in them. Here, we can speak of a generational motivation problem (cf. Schiller et al., 2020).

2.1.3. Problems of motivation in the sale/purchase of craft products

Motivation drives all action and, therefore, also affects both the sale and purchase of craft products. Consequently, they should be regarded by sellers when creating different sales platforms. For both the craftsmen and buyer, digitalisation has brought on new kinds of issues regarding motivation.

1. **Lack of information:** Craftsmen's sales suffer due to lack of organisation, meaning that customers might not know how to reach the seller or where to buy their products. The lack of information on the part of craftsmen can cause customer demotivation, thereby leading to a lack of product purchases.
2. **Finances:** Low capital can prevent craftsmen from competing against bigger companies, which can be demotivating for the craftsmen as they might attribute their failure in sales to external reasons. Furthermore, lack of education and poor knowledge on how to use recent technologies might impede even the more economical ways of marketing for craftsmen with low capital.

3. **Marketing:** Artisans can also be demotivated from using digital tools to market their products due to lack of time. They might also lack sufficient support to create attractive content from the point of view of buyers (e.g. an appealing website) or knowledge of how to use an e-commerce platform. Product creation and sales can be seen as time consuming and, therefore, demotivating activities for one-person or small enterprises.
4. **Pricing:** The potential customers of artisans might not understand why artisanal products are more expensive than store-bought ones, and customers might opt to buy from cheaper sellers.
5. **Web design:** Poor user experience design (UX) on a web page might cause buyers to interrupt their purchase, even if they are interested in the product. Poor UX can cause frustration among clientele and demotivate them from buying the product.

2.2. Solutions for increasing motivation

Motivation in distance communication can be enhanced in many ways, but in accordance with the questionnaires and interviews conducted during this project, the most pressing concerns could be resolved by focusing on (1) decreasing anxiety, (2) promoting a knowledge-sharing environment and (3) offering diverse types of formal and informal activities that support individual learning styles and strategies.

2.2.1. Solutions for increasing motivation in language learning and teaching

The teacher can administer preliminary questionnaires and/or conduct face-to-face interviews with students at the beginning of the course to find out their objectives, desires and preferred learning methods. This can help the teacher understand the students' motivations beforehand, enabling them to plan the lessons accordingly.

1. **Psychological issues:** Internal and stable causes have a positive effect on motivation, and external and unstable causes have a negative effect on motivation. Teachers and mediators should regard the successes and failures of participants and try to positively affect motivation (Pietilä, 2015). They should also emphasise internal and controllable factors, such as effort, instead of uncontrollable factors. For instance, instead of just saying "*Good job, you are clever,*" one should say "*Good job, your effort really paid off!*" Furthermore, the teacher could create an activity where participants learn to give positive feedback to each other by using appropriate words suggested by the teacher and adding an explanation (e.g. *it was great, because...*).
2. **Negative attitudes towards digital tools:** The adoption of a knowledge-sharing culture in the classroom can contribute to overcoming teachers' and learners' eventual negative attitudes towards using digital tools (Ilomäki et al., 2012; Lintunen et al., 2017). For instance, if someone is good at using informal language learning applications (e.g. Duolingo, Busuu), they can teach others how to use them or make a short oral/written presentation. When all participants share their knowledge on the use of applications, tools and good practices, everyone's knowledge can potentially increase, their anxiety can decrease, thereby enabling an increase in motivation to engage in common tasks.
3. **Mandatory participation:** To tackle anxiety and the issue of mandatory participation, one can create voluntary break-out rooms in video platforms (e.g. Zoom). This means that students can choose the room they want to join, or they can decide not to join if they are not able or willing to participate. If possible, the decision regarding how participants would like to form groups can be made at the beginning of the session.
4. **Working from home:** To overcome issues of concentration, which decrease motivation to engage in activities, the teacher could use a variety of tasks, make them available

to different types of learners (e.g. visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and reading/writing) and use pictures and colours in materials. In addition, tasks and materials must be at the appropriate level of difficulty: neither too easy nor too difficult. Older learners benefit from explicit learning (i.e. rule-based), thanks to their cognitive maturity and language-analytic skills (DeKeyser, 2018).

5. **Traditional methods:** The activities in distance communication can be partly the same as in classroom sessions, but the teacher can add new activities and teaching practices. They can prepare video or audio materials beforehand and ask the participants to watch them and answer questions on a platform or discuss them together during the session (i.e. flipped classroom method). Many informal tools (e.g. games, online materials) can be distributed to learners (Reinders et al., 2022), but the teacher needs to have a good plan on how to follow learners' development and be ready to give enough feedback to support learning. They must also adjust their assessment system to guarantee an objective and criteria-based evaluation of activities. Teachers should not regard abilities as completely stable phenomena; instead, they should understand them as changeable over the long term. One should not expect a participant to speak fluent French in a week or be a perfect painter after one art class.

2.2.2. Solutions for increasing motivation in cultural mediation

The general principle of solutions aimed at generating motivation to participate in hybrid cultural activities is to build on participants' background and/or life experiences. The principle is to value the personal experience of participants as a basis for creating events and organising social interactions.

1. **Problem of representation:** For librarians and media library users, one solution to the problem of representation is to create hybrid events that can involve users and media librarians both face-to-face and online. The challenge is to design events that meet both the institutional requirements of the media library (e.g. to disseminate cultural works, allow meetings between residents, associations, school groups or learners and involve cultural professionals) and the social and cultural requirements of the residents (i.e. social interactions and interactions with cultural works and events). Another way to increase motivation to participate in online cultural events among people living in remote areas is to involve them through associations or institutions (especially educational ones) that they visit/belong to. In such cases, multimedia librarians can propose the co-creation of themed events, for example, a sport or cultural practice such as theatre. Environmental themes, such as permaculture, can also be a source of inspiration. The principle here to generate motivation is to solicit a group passion and, through this, engagement.
2. **Participant engagement:** To overcome the sustainability issue in relation to media libraries, another way to engage people in remote areas to participate in digital events is to invite them to choose the themes of the cultural activities in which they will participate. For example, in response to proposals from inhabitants, the media library of Muzillac (France) proposed developing a collaborative cookbook. This proposal could also facilitate intercultural encounters between European regions. For an institution such as a media library, the challenge is to be able to establish links with users who make it possible to mobilise this personal and social experience.
3. **Technical difficulties:** For residents of remote areas or senior citizens, one solution might be to encourage intergenerational meetings where participants of different age groups share their respective knowledge. Younger generations can share their skills in the use of recent technologies with older generations, and older people can share their

knowledge and experience of cultural heritage with younger people. This can lower the threshold for starting to use both private and public online services. Cultural mediators can also make adults aware of research and training opportunities and show that online activities can be especially useful to adults with established cultural and life experiences. Furthermore, mediators should promote a friendly and relaxed atmosphere by explaining that senior citizens do not have to follow every update but appreciate the specific novelties that can slow their cognitive ageing.

2.2.3. Solution for increasing motivation in the sale/purchase of craft products

To answer the dual problem of time and the training of craftsmen wishing to develop the sale of their products online or make their products known online, CORDIALIS can propose not only technical support but also models to present their products in an attractive way. More answers are provided in other materials from CORDIALIS (see www.cordialiserasmus.eu).

1. **Lack of information:** The first and most important thing that craftsmen should do to increase information flows to customers and be more organised is to create an appealing website and social media presence, for example, on Instagram or Facebook (depending on the target audience). The website should include e-commerce so that customers can buy their products directly from their page or at least a clear schedule of events and places where you can buy the products.
2. **Finances:** Craftsmen should learn digital marketing as selling exclusively from stands is no longer economically efficient. However, the mere presence of e-commerce and social media accounts is not sufficient. The content created should be of high quality, and digital marketing should be broad in scope (e.g. Google Search Ad, Google Display Ad). The content can be, for example, video models where each craftsman can present their products and the way in which they are made.
3. **Marketing:** To resolve the dual problem of lack of support and time consumption, artisans can create a community that focuses on digital marketing where they can share their knowledge about digital marketing platforms and offer support to one another. Through peer-support and new knowledge about digital marketing, the time consumed in their creation and administration decreases.
4. **Pricing:** The artisanal characteristics of the products should be endorsed by the seller to potential customers, for example, by declaring that the products are handmade, with quality raw materials, and that the products are more valuable because of their aesthetics and proximity to works of art. The necessary information about the product should be clearly visible to the customer. This information should also be available on the homepage of the artisan and used in marketing.
5. **Web design:** When creating the website and e-commerce platform, UX should be considered. Simply put, this means that the design should be user-friendly and that everything should be located with ease on the virtual platform being used. The UX of a page can be assessed by tracking conversion (e.g. if many people interrupt a purchase at the same point, there might be something wrong with the UX).

3. GROUP MANAGEMENT

Depending on the groups participating in CORDIALIS, the meaning and form of group management can be diverse (cf. Cekaite et al., 2022; Wood & Schweitzer, 2017). For example, managing a group of learners during a language course is quite different from managing a group participating in a cultural activity or the relationship between a tourism professional and their potential clients. Several criteria are involved in understanding these differences:

- The epistemic relationship between the participants within different target groups (e.g. knowledge gap between the teacher and students, between a salesperson and a customer, etc.).
- The nature of the activity (e.g. learning; creating an exhibition; buying/selling products)
- The social norms involved in that activity (e.g. power relationship between participants)
- The duration of the social relationship (from a few minutes in the case of a business relationship to several weeks during a language learning course).

In the case of teaching, group management translates to classroom management. For the teacher, establishing effective classroom management means creating a supportive classroom environment, providing learners with emotional support, upholding a positive student–teacher relationship and practising emphatic and harmonious communication. In particular, the creation of a strong group identity among learners is an important aspect of classroom management and fosters learning and growth (Ho & Lin, 2015). In the case of hybrid events and meetings, group management can signify conflict management, which is always an important skill to obtain in social situations. According to Cekaite et al. (2022), interactional approaches can help prevent and deal with conflicts. Some of these resources are presented in the table below along with short explanations:

Table 1. Ways to prevent conflict (Cekaite et al., 2022).

Avoidance	Avoid direct disagreement by seeking to understand the points of view of others
Reparation	Repair the emergent conflict (e.g. through apologies)
Third-party mediation	A third-party mediator can resolve the issue (e.g. teacher)
From disagreement to listening to others	Rely on turn-taking rules and listen to other participants instead of trying to win an argument
Relying on observable facts when arguing	Building the argument on observable facts and factual information
Disagreement management	Express disagreement in ways aimed at conflict prevention (i.e. using adequate justification and explanations)
Identifying common goals	Identify common goals during an argument and refocus the debate
Emotion regulation	Verbalise one's feelings in a positive way (e.g. avoid blaming and accusations)

Conflict is possible in hybrid events and meetings, as in all social situations, and it is important to try to prevent it. If prevention efforts fail, then there must be knowledge of resolution strategies. Amongst the resources presented above, third-party mediation is mostly designed for teachers, but the remaining resources can be applied to both teaching and hybrid events as well as meetings in cultural mediation and craft sales and purchases.

To sum up, each type of social activity involves vastly different modes of participation and, therefore, very different ways of managing a group. Conflict management is only one important part of group management, but with distance communication, there are new difficulties with group management among all target groups. Furthermore, as explained in earlier sections, interactivity and motivation issues are closely related to group management, some of which were discussed earlier.

3.1. Problems of group management

Group management is crucial in all interactions when various people gather together, with someone overseeing the activity coordination in a group. The leader of the group should carefully coordinate the session so that time is not wasted and that every activity goes smoothly. Moving to distance interaction has resulted in issues with time management, Internet connection and the monitoring of participants' work during these sessions.

3.1.1. Problems of group management in language learning and teaching

Group management requires extra work when teaching occurs in a distance interaction. Group work takes more time, and it might be difficult for the teacher to control the activities that learners perform when they are not in the same place (e.g. main room and break-out rooms in Zoom).

1. **Technical problems:** A central issue regarding technical problems is that time management problems may occur in lesson planning as one can never know whether they have enough time to teach what ought to be taught. Internet connection problems and other technical difficulties have become a major part of teaching. The link to enter the distance platform might not work, and learners may not be there when the lesson is supposed to start. Even the teacher might be thrown off the platform in the middle of the lesson, with learners being left alone with no guidance. If the platform is not protected, the lesson might suffer cyberattacks.
2. **Monitoring:** Student monitoring is another major problem. In the classroom, the teacher can make rounds to ensure that students know what they are supposed to be doing and that they have learned what they were supposed to learn. In distance teaching, the teacher can usually discuss with only one group at a time but cannot monitor, for instance, what learners are doing in other break-out rooms. This is not an ideal situation and can affect grading as participation is more difficult to consider.
3. **Learner engagement:** During group work, some learners might not actively engage in group work and might turn off their camera and microphone. This can also happen in the main room, and the teacher might not even know if the learner is truly present.
4. **Clarity of instruction:** Giving proper and clear instructions during the lesson is even more important than in a classroom setting because, in distance interaction, participants cannot always seek advice from the person sitting next to them, compared to the classroom context, if they do not understand the instructions. Accessibility is another issue that should be considered in distance teaching.
5. **Group cohesion:** Creating a strong group identity among learners is a challenge for many teachers in distance teaching because learners are not in the same space, and belonging can be more difficult to achieve without social contact.

3.1.2. Problems of group management in cultural mediation

The cultural sector is wide, and therefore, it is quite difficult to provide an exhaustive list of the problems and their solutions. Nevertheless, the clientele and target groups are not homogeneous, both in terms of age and culture, which can create various kinds of management problems.

1. **Technical problem:** The digital equipment might be insufficient in some cultural sectors and in need of updating, which might be the result of insufficient funding or lack of knowledge regarding new digital tools.
2. **Participant engagement:** People participate in virtual meetings on a voluntary basis and may not be willing to follow the entire session, which might disrupt the meeting plan of the organiser.
3. **Clarity of content:** Some participants may not be able to follow the entire meeting carefully due to technical problems or distractions at home. For this and other reasons, the content of the meeting, for instance, the topics under discussion, may not be clear and well defined for everyone.

3.1.3. Problems of group management in the sale/purchase of craft products

Similar to the cultural sector, the various problems regarding the sale and purchase of craft products are difficult to distinguish. Some of the most common problems have been introduced in this chapter.

1. **Managing the stock of product:** The main problem with group management for artisans is that they often have only a limited amount of their offerings. If there is a great demand at any one time, not everyone will be able to buy the product they want. This can happen especially if the seller starts marketing online and there is a sudden increase in the number of buyers.
2. **Social media:** Another problem of group management in the sale of craft products is communication on social media. Many craftsmen (especially older ones) do not have enough knowledge of how to manage quality communication for a wide audience.
3. **Managing online feedback:** Product buyers might give public feedback on the product or seller online on different popular platforms (e.g. Facebook or chat forums), and some of the feedback might be negative, potentially affecting other buyers' opinions.

3.2. Solutions for group management

Dealing with group management issues concerning distance communication can be enhanced in many ways, but in terms of the questionnaires and interviews conducted during this project, the most pressing concerns could be resolved by focusing on (1) time management, (2) careful planning and giving clear instructions and (3) increasing group identity to avoid conflict.

3.2.1. Solutions for group management in language learning and teaching

Overall, for a teacher to be an effective classroom manager in distance teaching, they should keep in mind and apply the range of methods that they have used in the classroom. In addition, they should know how to prevent conflict and use the resources presented in Table 1 (see above).

1. **Technical problems:** Time management cannot be solved in its entirety as there will always be unforeseeable obstacles in distance teaching; however, some of the most

important things that the teacher can do are to make sure that they have reliable Internet and computer systems and prevent unwanted visitors from distance lessons. Online lessons can be protected with a password and waiting room.

2. **Monitoring:** Managing learners in distance teaching can be done with a range of digital tools. The teacher should try to learn new digital tools to help with monitoring. With a clicker application (available on mobile phones), the teacher can pose a question to the group, and all the participants have to answer the question. Only distinct kinds of multiple-choice questions (e.g. in a Spanish lesson, "Which determinant do you use with the subject or object in sentences with the verb 'haber'? A) definite B) indefinite") can be posed through clickers. The questions can be about anything from the content of the lesson to student opinions. By using clickers, teachers can get a better picture of how well learners know the taught subject and can adjust future lessons accordingly. The teacher can also use the chat and emoticons that many synchronous virtual platforms offer and ask for a reaction to a question so that the whole group can participate. This way, monitoring is made easier as the question is not answered by a single student. Other applications that might also help monitoring are Kahoot, Wordwall, Padlet, Flinga and Nearpod.
3. **Learner engagement:** When teaching adult learners, voluntary break-out rooms can resolve the issue of engagement as learners' self-direction and autonomy are emphasised. For groups where there is mandatory participation and lack of engagement (i.e. university courses), the teacher should require the use of cameras (the privacy issue is addressed in 1.2.1).
4. **Clarity of instruction:** The teacher should provide clear instructions for the lesson in a way that addresses accessibility. The instructions should be given verbally as well as in text format or even via short videos played in advance. The text format and/or video should be accessible to learners during the whole lesson so that it can be revisited when needed. There are several ways to do this, for instance, using a separate platform where the instructions are uploaded (e.g. Moodle, Itslearning), copying the instructions to the chat or using screen share and asking the participants to take a photo of them. For the text format, the teacher should use *easy read language* and visual aids (e.g. photos, tables, graphics).
5. **Group cohesion:** Teachers can create a strong group identity by emphasising communication and people skills in teaching as well as feedback skills. Warm-up tasks, the sharing of knowledge, connecting on a personal level and providing emotional support can help create social capital in the group, which can engender social belonging among participants. The teacher should create an atmosphere of fair and reciprocal exchange of social capital (Ho & Lin, 2015). In every lesson, there should be time for some light chit-chat, which could be managed through various warm-up tasks.

3.2.2. Solutions for group management in cultural mediation

This chapter offers solutions to potential problems in cultural mediation in the context of distance communication. However, the mediators and leaders of distance meetings can also find apt information from the previous chapter on teacher-based solutions.

1. **Technical problem:** The cultural sector, which is characterised by insufficient digital equipment and lack of knowledge regarding their use, should first start by initiating communication with similar institutions for the purpose of knowledge-sharing. This way, they can find the right equipment to pursue and learn new information about digital tools. Some institutions also offer funding for new digital tools (depending on the country), and administrators should procure information about different funding possibilities.

2. **Participant engagement:** The mediator should consider the fact that not everyone can participate during the entire session and plan the meeting accordingly. This can be done, for instance, by creating voluntary break-out rooms instead of assigning them beforehand. In addition, a meeting plan and clear timetable should be presented at the beginning so that everyone knows what to expect.
3. **Clarity of content:** The mediator of the meeting can share the content of the meeting (e.g. sharing the PowerPoint beforehand or following an email request). This way, the participants can follow the meeting even if they are distracted or get thrown off the platform. The mediator can also generate a report or recording of the meeting to allow the participants to rewatch it. This will also allow absentees to watch it afterwards.

3.2.3. Solutions for group management in the sale/purchase of craft products

In general, one important solution to group management is enhancing communication. It is important to respond to the needs and questions of customers as quickly as possible and generate a positive atmosphere with potential buyers whose desire is to buy handmade products. Avoiding conflict with buyers should be one of the main goals of communication.

1. **Managing the product stock:** An increase in demand is a challenging obstacle for small entrepreneurs, but the solution can be found in effective communication. If the seller is unable to offer the product, it should be made clear on the e-commerce, web page and social media channel. There should be a clear date indicating when the product will next be available or an option to order the product with a longer delivery time. The reason for the delay should also be visible to customers.
2. **Social media:** Creating a community where knowledge and information about successful communication strategies is shared between participants could benefit entrepreneurs who do not have enough knowledge about successful distance communication. In a community with strong group identity, the motivation to learn new skills increases.
3. **Managing online feedback:** The seller of craft products should review the feedback regarding their products online by regularly reading their social media comments and googling their product and business names from time to time. Negative feedback should be acknowledged and responded to accordingly. Also, when necessary, artisans can offer a discount, for example, to cover the shipping costs for the next order.

CONCLUSION

The CORDIALIS project aims to contribute to the development of digital skills in remote areas of Europe. This publication focuses on various groups of citizens for whom digital exchanges are either a reality or a new opportunity whose modalities are not yet well established. For example, for users of media libraries or some inhabitants of remote areas who would like to participate in social or cultural events, distance communication is still in very early stages, although language learners at universities have been experimenting with distance learning on an almost daily basis. Furthermore, multigenerational associations mobilise digital resources to organise cultural events with their members, whether they are retired, students or working people. Finally, for craftsmen who maintain ancestral know-how in remote areas of Europe, digital resources offer a resource through which to interact with their customers or people interested in this aspect of European culture. This publication, with its accompanying 36 Q&A cards, provides an overview of the digital practices of these groups, the challenges they face and the possible solutions. In the next steps of the project, CORDIALIS will provide art-based activities to promote local and rural cultural heritage (pedagogical tools) as well as evaluation and training for distance communication and digital competences (training tools).

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