



35. GROUP MANAGEMENT

How to deal with technological difficulties

CONTEXT

The general context is the teaching of digital technologies in adult education centres. In particular, the elderly and those who live in more remote areas would benefit from mastering the use of new digital tools. However, there are often problems with slow Internet connection, use of software, obsolete tools, or difficulties related to age (e.g. problems with vision, hearing, memory, etc.).

THEORETICAL BASIS

The sharing of materials online might be challenging due to technological problems. The group leader should address the problems in advance and offer a safe and supportive environment in which to learn about new sharing platforms and methods. Seniors might need some extra encouragement to use new digital tools. To lower the threshold, practical step-by-step instructions should be distributed on paper and/or via digital links.

ACTIVITY IN A NUTSHELL

“If I encounter problems with ...” Who will help me?” – Participants are invited to identify a technological problem and guided in its resolution through suggestions and instructions.

Activity/Solutions

CONTACT TYPE

Online, contact, hybrid

TIME NEEDED

1h

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

8-12

ACTIVITY TYPE

Pair work

TARGET GROUP

- Adult learners
- Senior learners

VARIATION OF THE ACTIVITY

The activity is easily adaptable to any kind of lesson and target group.

Goal

- To ease the use of digital tools.
- To support participation in group activities.
- To create a safe environment for adults, especially lonely people, and citizens of remote areas to learn the use of digital tools.

How to prepare

- Prepare a short written tutorial containing preliminary instructions and diversified for PC, smartphone, or tablet (PDF to download or deliver).
- Evaluate and select the simplest online communication software suitable for different activities (Skype, Zoom, Meet); ease of use allows you to focus better on content rather than on operating methods.
- Prepare a short written list of rules for chat in interaction.
- Prepare a survey on the equipment, basic digital resources, and skills (use of smartphones, tablets, and PCs), access to the Internet, and use of online communication software.
- Based on the results of the survey, possible preliminary personalised face-to-face meetings are foreseen for the acquisition of basic skills: knowing how to connect to the network, online communication software, and some basic functions such as using folders, emails, editing programmes, virus management, peripherals, etc.

Activity step by step

1. Invite the participants to identify one to two technological problems that they would like to solve urgently, and ask them to communicate them (oral or written communication via chat).
2. Based on the answers, divide the participants into pairs.
3. The pairs are then asked to look for information in the tutorial provided and on the web (the teacher/group leader points to the best sites).
4. After 10 minutes, ask the participants (a quick poll can be prepared for the purpose):
 - if they have found useful information
 - if the information collected is clear/sufficient to proceed independently to solve the problem or if they need external help.
5. Regardless of the answers obtained, guide the participants to install a software on their devices to access remote help (e.g. TeamViewer or AnyDesk).
6. Give each pair a simple exercise to do in about 10 min: e.g. if the problem was "How can I download photos from my mobile to a PC?" the task could be: "Download 10 photos from your mobile to PC and create an appropriate folder on the desktop."
7. Helping participants if they need: online help is given via the installed software (e.g. TeamViewer or AnyDesk).
8. Provide feedback on the tasks performed.
9. Finally, present step-by-step instructions on how to use a new digital tool, e.g. Google Ads.

During the activity, remember to emphasise that the participants can ask for help at any time, and make them feel supported.