

EUROPEAN PROGRAMME

LLP - Leonardo da Vinci - Transfer for Innovation

“e-Commerce for traditional products - women 50+”

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INSTRUCTION TO PC TRAINERS



1. Introduction

The analysis of educational needs of women on the field of Information and communication technologies, carried out in the partners' countries of this project, has shown that some obstacles are existing and what are problems that decrease a success of the further education on ICT. They concern especially women with a lower level of the education and women that don't used to learn regularly more. For example, some employment offices don't give a chance to take part in some education to women with a lower level of education. There aren't any attempts to remove such discrimination.

This survey has emphasized some items that are elaborated to the products of the project e-commerce – women 50+ with a pre-training suitable before women start the ICT-course). We have found out what problems women without any piece of experience of the work with a PC have to face. We have discovered how trainers used to try solve such problems. It is necessary to stress especially the psychology of learning. The essential element is the removal of barriers developed due to a negative approach to a new, unknown technology, an empowering of a self-confidence, an achievement of the basic overview and last but not least such items like to know how to work with a mouse and with a keyboard.

Some differences have appeared – according to individual countries. They were obviously caused both by different technical conditions under them various educational institutions were operating and by a technical possibilities of interviewed women. These differences haven't got any crucial influence to a methodology of general use. Further, it has arisen from the answers that a new methodology of ICT-teaching and learning might not be suitable for all women. The percentage of those women who will use it will be, however, probably quite high. It is possible to suppose that ICT-trainers (beginners) will benefit from it very much. Experienced ICT-trainers can be inspired by this methodology to improve their ways of teaching.

The information from ICT teachers is very valuable, as well. Information resulting from the research and from the good practice examples indicates that the development of a special methodology for women is important. It doesn't simply occur to them how it is important. They unconsciously bring some substitutional conditions for sending women to ICT-courses (for example their education at least at the A-level, a possibility to be present at all the courses the chance to study at home after some hours of the introduction is underestimated. It is just the methodology that helps to remove such discriminations and it supports the equal approach to the education. A great number of women who have to manage ICT and who haven't any or only a minimal knowledge of them can benefit from this gender-oriented methodology.



We thank to all institutions that collaborated with us for implementing this research.
We wish to all users of the products of this project, to solve your learning problems.

The material contained in the booklet "Basic PC Training" will be used as a guide book, mainly, for trainees.

Every trainer should adapt its training method according to the content of the guide book and the needs of its own group of trainees and to allocate appropriate his teaching time.

Great emphasis should be given to the practical training and to the application and much less on the theoretical issues.

The trainers should encourage trainees to take initiatives and to practice as many hours as possible after the course.

The trainers must examine the level of knowledge acquired by each trainee and help them improve effectively their knowledge.

The best award for our work is the feeling that it is useful for other people.



2. Psychology of Women's perception and information processing for ICT trainers and counselors

Tagret group: counselors and trainers

Introduction:

(The introduction shall give an example of how important it is for a trainer or counselor to be gender sensitive, and aware of women's way of perception and information processing)

Gendered rights are tricky business, as the differential treatment of women has too often meant unequal treatment (generalized assumptions and culturally transmitted ideas). On the other hand, non-differential treatment often result to inequality, because women do have different cultural experiences than men, and, subsequently, different way of approach to learning and interaction. Eliminating inequality means ensuring that both sexes have equal access to education, work, etc. according to their capacities, and free of gender stereotyping. People need to be equipped with skills that will help them pursue life goals according to their potential, regardless of sex.

Psychology has a large body of research regarding children's socialization. This starts very early, at birth end even before. In most cultures girls and boys are treated differently from very early. School, later, intensifies even more this differential treatment. Whereas sex is biologically determined, gender roles are culturally transmitted. Little girls learn that women are emotional, non-aggressive, submissive, not good in mathematics and technology. People in general tend to believe in stereotypes. Hence, girls tend to conform in what is culturally expected, they tend for example to perform less in mathematics.

Today it is important for people to use technology. It has been noticed that there are deep gender imbalances in ICT sector and professions. The reason is not biological, but a derivative of cultural misconceptions and education.

As a trainer you will train adult women. These women may have many competing demands on their time, they may have been discouraged in the past to use technology, they may lose motivation easily, or they may need to see immediate outcomes from their learning in order to maintain enthusiasm. These factors need to be kept in mind while thinking of your approach to class.

Below there is material that will help you to approach teaching ICT to women.

Case study

A computer/information technology trainer has been assigned to train a group of middle- aged unemployed women in ICT. The trainer is a thirty year old, and he is an expert on his field. In addition to his work in computer programming (in cooperation with big companies) he has been teaching information technology to younger men



who apply to training centers asking to receive training on this field. However, it is the first time that he will teach women, and particularly middle-aged women, who have no (or little) previous experience on this field.

It occurs to him that there may be a need to adjust the way he is usually teaching. He asks for help in order to better help his trainees to meet their learning needs.

Question and suggestions to the trainers

The following questions will help you to explore your ideas and expectations. The first thing that you need to learn is to be aware of your own culturally transmitted preconceptions and stereotypes about women's relation to technology

• What do you think might be the expectations of these women from such a class? (cross one or more of the following,)

1. To learn how to use a PC
2. To become PC experts
3. To get an idea on how to use a PC
4. To be able to ask questions about PC's
5. Not much expectations

It is essential to know what you think that the women expect from your teaching. THESE ARE YOUR OWN EXPECTATIONS FROM THEM. Be aware of your expectations.

• What do you imagine about the obstacles that the women might face in perceiving the content of your training? (cross one or more of the following),

1. They are beginners, or they are not familiar with technology (if you cross this one, it may means that a culturally transmitted idea you may have ask your self where it comes from)
2. They have no capacity to perceive technology related issues (if you cross this one, it may means that a culturally transmitted idea you may have ask your self where it comes from)
3. They think slow when comes to technology (if you cross this one, remember that culture often teach us to expect certain performances from people according to their gender, ask yourself how you came to this belief)
4. They face no obstacles at all (if you cross this one, it may means that women may have learnt, growing up, that they are not good in mathematics and technology because of their gender-this may be an obstacle, because many of them may feel discouraged and inadequate-it is essential to know that this is a culturally transmitted attitude, not a biologically determined fact)
5. They are as able as men are (this may be true, but women, from childhood, have received different messages about this, they have been informed that there are areas where men are more capable than them, and technology is, in many cultures, one of these areas)



Ask yourself, where did you get these ideas from? There are not "good" or "bad" answers to the above questions. The questions have been designed to help you expand your self awareness on culturally transmitted preconceptions. Self awareness will help you in the class.

- How do you think the cultural upbringing might affect your students' approach to your teaching? (cross one or more of the following)
 1. They will pay not much attention to the content (if you cross this one it may means that if this happens, it is because they have been discouraged and you need to inform them that the content is designed to help them acquire skills that will be important for their life in the future)
 2. They will be prejudiced against technology (if you cross this one it may means that all people grow with bias, that biases are culturally transmitted. This is to help you explore what your own thinking is. You have received the same cultural upbringing. Women need to get familiar with technology. You need to encourage them. In reality, some of these women may be very sharp and talented.
 3. They will be curious and eager to learn (if you cross this one it may means that this may be true, and may be not true-it has to do with individual differences and attitudes. Some women may be curious, others may be reluctant)

Children's socialization starts early on. Girls and boys are treated differently in most cultures, one sex in some cultures may be treated better than the other, may receive better food and care, and may be stimulated differently at school. Both sexes are expected to carry different tasks at household. School perpetuates the stereotyping at home and in the society. It is essential to be aware of the assumptions and stereotypes that you built on your upbringing, then to be aware that others hold similar generalizations. You need to learn to explore what the other feels and needs. The women of your class are the specialists on their learning needs. You will need to encourage them to talk about their learning needs, and to reflect on how the stereotypes may affect their approach to technology.

- How can you explore the learning needs? (There are two methods, that are explained below)
 1. Small questionnaire (The trainer will distribute in the class a small questionnaire on the learning needs. The questionnaire contains the questions (a) why you need to learn ICT? (b) in what do you expect that the course will help you? (give 5 minutes to the students to answer the questions)
 2. Discussion in class regarding the answers in the questionnaire.



This technique will (a) help you get an idea of what your students think and expect, (b) help the climate in the class-women have been brought up to be more interactive-the questionnaire and the discussion will help them feel confidence on your interest in them, and will facilitate the subsequent learning. It is in itself one of the empowerment tools.

- Are there any differences between men and women in learning styles regarding technology?

The notion that girls are not good in mathematics, science and technology is one the most common stereotypes. This way, girls may conform to negative stereotypes. Studies in the US have shown that some girls perform deliberately less well in mathematics. This shows that the difference in learning is not biologically determined, but it is introduced by culture. People tend to believe in the stereotypes, and this way stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies. Women may need empowerment and encouragement in the class. They will also need to feel the freedom to ask questions and the class can be more interactive. Communication will be important.

- Are there any differences between peoples' learning styles in general?
(yes/no)
(correct answer is yes)

-the trainer must to ask women for their individual learning styles, through a small questionnaire (5 minutes in first class):

What facilitated your learning?

- 1. I prefer to experiment myself and then ask for instructions and information*
- 2. Reading first is essential, then I need to experiment myself and ask questions*
- 3. I prefer to study and work alone*
- 4. Other*

Then, a discussion in the class on how the group might want to proceed. This will help build confidence, and it will also facilitate trust, communication, and interaction.



3. Do not Forget

You must not forget following objectives:

a) Objectives for the trainers

- To develop the interactive training course for ICT-trainers with the aim to strength gender aspects in the pedagogical approach to women, to their ICT-training for the orientation at the labour market
- To promote the involvement of partners to the development of this so far missing type of training
- To elaborate findings of the survey, reminders and recommendations of members of local networks and external experts to the construction of the training for ICT-trainers.
- To promote the use of gender aspects in a pedagogical approach for people who must better understand the kind of elaboration information by women, respect different learning styles and keep well-balanced equal opportunities in the preparation for ICT-training

b) Objectives for the trainees

- To develop the training programme for women with the aim to encourage them to learn ICT and to improve their communication skills
- To promote the involvement of partners to the development of the training to support the gender aspects in the communication between women and ICT-trainers and among women themselves (collaboration in courses, discussion, self-learning)
- To elaborate findings of the survey, reminders and recommendations of members of local networks and external experts to the construction of the training programme.
- To promote the use of gender aspects in learning ICT and the methodology of lifelong learning for middle-aged women.



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“e-Commerce for traditional products – women 50+”



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