adile
Accessible Distance Learning

GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATORS

**Project: ADILE - Promoting Accessible Distance Learning for people with intellectual disabilities
Nr. 2021-1-IT02-KA220-ADU-000033434**

TRAINING TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATORS

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INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD

As stated in the "Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030," there are still many barriers for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in terms of access to health care, education, employment, recreation, as well as in participation in political life, which limit their participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The Covid-19 pandemic has amplified barriers and inequalities (UN Resources on Persons with Disabilities and COVID-19). People with disabilities have suffered from loneliness due to social distancing rules, while limited accessibility of ICT tools, distance learning, and access to information related to COVID-19 have led to a deterioration in their quality of life. Based on our experience as educators of adults with intellectual disabilities, as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, PWIDs have particularly suffered from the disruption of educational activities since the first lockdown in March 2020.

In addition, the health emergency has highlighted several gaps in the social, political, and geographical knowledge of PWDs, which may hinder their understanding of the global situation, jeopardise their health and autonomy, and hinder the exercise of their rights as (European) citizens.

FOREWORD

The use of distance learning tools to address these gaps has proven to be a viable solution, but several problems have emerged regarding the accessibility of the currently available virtual platforms for PWIDs.

As pointed out by the report, "Pivoting to Inclusion: Leveraging Lessons from the COVID-19 Crisis for Learners with Disabilities," (World Bank, 2020), with the pandemic crisis came numerous social and educational barriers for learners with disabilities. This problem, which has also emerged at the local level within partner organisations, is not new. According to the Communication on the European Education Area 2025, systems at all levels should comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

As also highlighted in the "Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030", there has, so far, been insufficient systematic research on the conditions necessary for learners with disabilities to succeed in education.

Confinement measures during the COVID-19 pandemic have added to the urgency of developing measures to make inclusive and accessible distance learning an option for all: accessibility is critical to ensuring the full participation of people with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The **general objective** of the ADILE project is to promote the empowerment and social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities (PWIDs) by promoting the accessibility of ICT tools for distance learning. ADILE also wants to contribute to the removal of social barriers and obstacles through learning activities aimed at promoting civic education in a logic of inclusion for PWIDs.


The **specific objectives** will be:

➤ **SO1:** Define an online educational pathway for PWIDs, specifically focused on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities aimed at improving autonomy within the field of active citizenship, media literacy, democratic values, and exercising one's rights.

➤ **SO2**: Develop an accessible online educational platform dedicated to PWIDs in easy-to-read language, in order to foster equal opportunities for distance learning.

➤ **SO3:** Define a European distance learning model for PWIDs.

FROM THE RESEARCH TO THE TOOLKIT

The results emerging from both the desk and field research have stressed the widening gaps on the accessibility of digital tools and materials that should be better adapted for PWIDs. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how serious this problem is and how much inequity there is in the system of online learning for people with disabilities. From this, we know that the journey towards an accessible digital learning environment for PWIDs is still long.
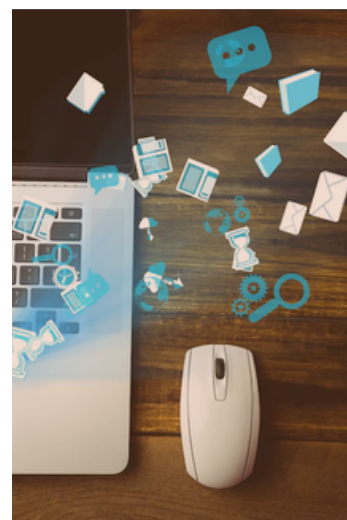
Moreover, these circumstances have worsened for families who do not have access to ICT tools due to either a lack of digital skills or necessary support products. People with disabilities have suffered from loneliness due to social distancing rules, while limited accessibility of ICT tools, distance learning, and access to information related to COVID-19 have led to a deterioration in their quality of life.

The use of distance learning tools to address these gaps has proven to be a viable solution, but several problems have emerged regarding the accessibility of the currently available virtual platforms for PWIDs.

FROM THE RESEARCH TO THE TOOLKIT

The analysis made with the focus groups (those with PWIDs and those with educators, caregivers, and families), seemed to confirm the preliminary findings on the desk research, stressing the necessity of digital compentences, emerged as well other needs and gaps.

The most widely used digital tools for distance learning are Zoom and Google Meet.

More specifically, the **needs** in terms of the accessibility of digital tools, mainly refer to the following:

➤   Easier ways to access meetings and online courses (shorter joining links, avoiding the use of passwords).

➤ Use of more pictograms.

➤ Simplified platform language.

➤ Elements of interaction online during meetings and the courses.

➤ Dexterity issues need to be taken very seriously in designing tools.

The **difficulties** that PWIDs faced the most in relation to their skills in using digital learning tools are the following:

➤   Not having email accounts set up for different apps, difficulties creating an email account, and sending emails.

FROM THE RESEARCH TO THE TOOLKIT

➤ Joining meetings in Zoom and Google Meet due to the complexity of the links and passwords

➤Adaptation to the new technologies and new way of learning with interactive activities, they could interact verbally but for the PWID that need to interact also in other ways these tools are not super accessible.

Many people for their austistic profile, can have some obsessive ideas and interests so the difficulty is related to the self-control for the good use of digital tools and understanding the language used or the way things were described.

During the study of the focus groups, it became clear that PWIDs are interested in learning activities, in which they can develop their creativity and learn about employability.

Moving from the research, it was vital to implement the research results into the design of the toolkit. Key elements of accessibility, which were detected in the needs analysis, were taken into serious consideration when creating the toolkit.

FROM THE RESEARCH TO THE TOOLKIT

Taking into account the needs in terms of accessibility, the modules correspond to the key competences that PWIDs tend to struggle with the most gaps in their knowledge of.

Competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes for each specific context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employment.

The main gaps recognised in trainings are connected to the following **4 key competences:**

1 Digital competence.

2 Learning to learn.

3 Social and civic competence.

4 Cultural awareness and expressions.

HOW TO USE
THE TOOLKIT

Each key competence will correspond to an area. There will therefore be **4 areas.** Each area will contain 3 modules, so there will be **12 modules** in total. These 12 modules can be adapted, as every student and person with disabillities is different. What works for one individual may not work for another.

All students tend to learn in different ways and they may prefer to use different teaching resources as well. Learning materials should be designed for all kinds of students and all types of learning styles, which was at the centre of our thinking when designing the modules.

The modules have been developed in a way so that they can be adapted for personalised approaches. They can therefore be adjusted depending on the level and necessity of the learners. Moreover, the modules can be used individually so that the learning itinerary is more tailored to the learner's specific needs and topics of interest.

The modules will contain the learning objectives, as well as a theoretical section to introduce each module's concept. Additionally, there will be a few exercises to help consolidate the material covered in the modules.

AREA 1

DIGITAL COMPETENCES

MODULE 1.1

E-mail.

MODULE 1.2

Zoom meetings.

MODULE 1.3

Google Meet meetings.

AREA 1
DIGITAL COMPETENCES

Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, as well as to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.

MODULE 1.1

E-mail

This module teaches the importance of having an email and the origins of it as an introduction. The majority of the module consists of setting up a Gmail account. For example, creating a username and following password requirements.

MODULE 1.2

Zoom meetings

In this module the student will learn how to enter and exit a Zoom meeting, activate and deactivate their microphone and camera, share their screen, and use emoticons, etc.

MODULE 1.3

Google Meet

This module consists of knowing what Google Meet is, how to enter and exit a meeting and the basics functions of it, such as joining and leaving a meeting, blurring the background or replacing it with other images, raising the hand, and inviting people, etc.

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

❯   The ideal way to work with this module is that every student has a computer with internet connection.

❯   We recommend showing the module on an interactive whiteboard if the classroom has it, and learners to be using Gmail, Zoom or Google Meet.

❯   Working with computers, especially if the students are not familiar with them, is tiring. We recommend each module is done in one session that does not last more than one hour.

❯   If possible, repeating the lessons will help consolidate the knowledge adquired.

EXTRA RESOURCES

● The Framework Catalogue of digital competences

● Google For Education

● Digital Accessibility: Challenges and oportunities

● What are Digital Competences?

● Literacy Instruction with Digital and Media Tecnologies

AREA 2

LEARNING
TO LEARN

MODULE 2.1

Understanding a text.

MODULE 2.2

Understanding the news.

MODULE 2.3

Memories techniques.

AREA 2
LEARN TO LEARN

'Learning to learn' is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, and to organise all that you have to study, through effective time and information management. Learning means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills. The objectives of this module are to enable students with intellectual disabilities to develop critical thinking skills, and to ensure they understand not only what they read, but also fully process what they hear in the news.

MODULE 2.1
Understanding a text

This module gives students the tools to understand words, sentences, the topic of a text, and the type of text: informative, descriptive, or narrative, etc. The student will also learn about the Wh-Questions.

MODULE 2.2
Understanding the news

In this module, the student will be given the tools to increase their knowledge of specific terms that are often used on the news. Students will also increase their understanding of the daily news, so they can understand / be more aware of what is being talked about on the radio, television, and in the newspaper.

MODULE 2.3
Memories tecniques

The module will teach the students different methods to do mental calculation, and to recognise different coins and banknotes. Learning this will help the student gain independence, as it will allow them to make purchases on their own.

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

➤ This area is dense. We recommend doing each module across two sessions (one hour for each session).

➤ Module three would be perfect to work with paper coins and banknotes, which can either be printed from templates found on the internet or purchased.

➤ After completing the first two modules, it would be ideal to elaborate, and work further, on the concepts, using ideas from the extra resources provided.

EXTRA RESOURCES

● Open source to rewardify text in a easier way

● Seven Strategies to Teach Students Text Comprehension

● Learn the Art of Memory

● WH Question Words

● How to Truly Understand a Text- The Reading Process

SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCE

MODULE 3.1

Democracy and voting.

MODULE 3.2

Rights and civic conduct.

MODULE 3.3

Active citizenship and participation.

AREA 3
SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCE

Social and civic competences include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life. Civic education teaches about human rights, and also provides the knowledge, skills and understanding that can empower learners to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life, such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of opinion.

MODULE 3.1
Democracy and voting

This module gives students the knowledge to learn the different government systems, how a democracy works, the importance of voting, and why everybody should exercise their right to vote in a democratic country.

MODULE 3.2
Rights and civic conduct

In this module, students will develop an understanding of what human rights are and appreciate the relationship between rights and responsabilities. They will also increase their understanding of civic conduct for the common good: how to be an active citizen and how to fully participate in the society.

MODULE 3.3
Active citizenship and participation

The module will develop the students' understanding of active citizenship. Students will also acquire the competences that citizens need to reach a high level of integration within society and how to achieve this participation.

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

➤   This area is abstract. We recommend putting a lot of tangible examples that students with intellectual disabilities will be able to see in their daily life.

➤   To help students understand this module, use real-life local, or well-known, examples that they may have already heard about.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- *"A guide to the human Rights Act. A booklet for People with Learning Disabilities".*

- *"We have human rights. A human rights handbook for people with developmental disabilities"* by Hardvard Project on Disabitlity

- The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities published in the fall of 2016 a document called: *"WE THE PEOPLE. Preparing students with disabilites for civic engagement".*

AREA 4

AWARENESS AND EXPRESSION

MODULE 4.1

European geography.

MODULE 4.2

European heritage and identity.

MODULE 4.3

Culture of work.

AREA 4
CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXPRESSION

This area revolves around Europe and the European Union, including its heritage and traditions. It is important to know where one lives and be aware of what is around us. In the first module, the approach is geographical, whereas the second module is about cutural awarenness. The third one is about the culture of work, average working hours, important values, and inclusion in the workplace.

MODULE 4.1
European geography

This module gives students the knowledge of the European continent, such as the countries it consists of, the seas and oceans surrounding it, their flags, and how many of them form the European Union.

MODULE 4.2
European heritage and identity

In this module the student will learn about the history of Europe, how old it is, about the European union, how old the European union is, and the heritage and culture about nine countries in Europe.

MODULE 4.3
Culture of work

In this module, the student will learn the average working hours in Europe, what values are important and encouraged in the workplace, and how employment can help improve the quality of life, such as mental health, social networks, and inclusion.

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

> We recommend doing each module in one sesion.

> In some European countries, students learn five continents and, in some others, seven. So, this must be taken into account when teaching this module.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- Easy to read - The European Union

- Inclusion Europe

- *ABBA - Audience Blending by Arts*

- *Tools for Inclusion in Arts Education*

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