



SLO Online learning

How to integrate senior citizens into lifelong learning via conventional and modern education

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All over the world we see that less senior citizens participate in further education projects than younger people – especially if no longer economically active.

This is an approach to overcome some acute obstacles separating adults from further education, we propose a media didactic solution and show examples of its implementation.

Learning obstacles for senior citizens

- *School frustration:*
We must take care that the learning options offered to senior citizens do not recall former *school frustration*, this means, it is necessary to develop open learning types that are closer to everyday life and real experience.
- *Instructions and hotlines:*
In order to get acquainted and confident with the use of new methods and technologies, it is necessary to provide *unequivocal, convenient and readily comprehensible* instructions as well as individual advice and *call centres to help solving problems (= hotlines)*.
- *Individual consulting service:*
For adults interested in further education a large number of *individual learning consulting services* must be offered without any controlling features so that information and help is available at any time (= just in time).
- *Learning media at home*
Learning should be made easier and supported via modern media, distance learning resources etc.

Hybrid learning

- *Mixed learning types:*
Hybrid learning and blended learning combines different didactical methods (lecture and discussion, inquiry based education, cooperative learning etc) with multi-media presentation and communication (face-to-face communication, publishing, sending etc). Some examples are:
 - *Lecture and discussion:*
Teacher facilitated learning in the classroom that can be recorded and retrieved as a video or is generally organised as a video conference.
 - *Self-study:*
Learning materials should be available as print, audio or video media on CD/DVD or as a download from a website.
 - *Cooperative learning:*
Working with partners or in a group can be organised using virtual classrooms (CENTRA) or group application (BSCW).



- Tutoring:
Assistance for learners is offered by coaches/tutors individually or to a group.
- Consulting service:
One-on-one interviews as well as information events may be supported via internet (WWW, E-Mail).
- *Active learning processes:*
The systematic activation of learning processes via *learning tasks* and *tutoring* is considered as the key for the success of these learning arrangements.
- *Planning:*
The planning of a media-didactic concept focuses on the claim to solve a *problem of education*. Thus the concept results from didactic analyses. In doing so the following didactic benchmarks must be observed:
 - Characteristics of the target group
 - Definition of learning contents and targets
 - Structure of the learning options
 - Characteristics of the learning organisation and definition of the learning organisation
 - Characteristics and function of media and resources
- *C3 model:*
Kerres & de Witt propose the following model to define the elements of a hybrid learning arrangement:

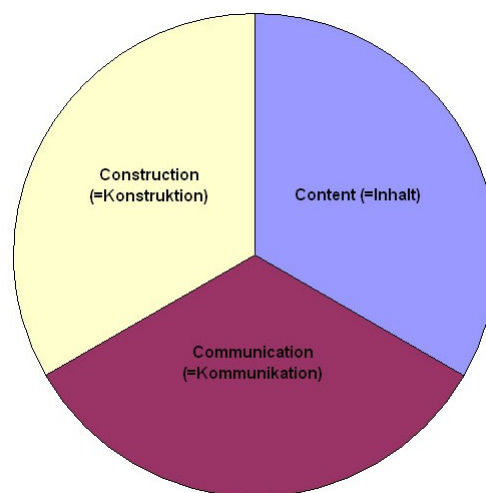


Figure 1 C3 model (Kerres & de Witt)

- *Content:*
Presentation of the learning contents, i. e. the medium, e. g. paper or data file, and the supply, i. e. call or distribution.
- *Communication:*
Communication between the parties, e. g. local or remote, participant to participant, or learner to tutor.
- *Construction:*
Individual or cooperative activities of the learners producing real results.



Learning tasks

- *Homework:*
We know *homework* from school. It is useful for memorizing facts, practising procedures explained in class, using what has been learned or checking the learning progress.
- *Learning tasks:*
Tasks in connection with media-supported learning have an early starting point in the learning process. They aim at activating the learning process itself via suitable tasks and shall include the following three components.
 - **Head:**
These learning tasks are to activate the cognitive operations first, e. g. the consideration of the learning contents.
 - **Heart:**
Additionally they are to take effect in emotional and motivational respect (e. g. via a reference to the learner's living environment). Finally the learning tasks can also activate social interactions (e. g. if the task is to make up an own opinion).
 - **Hand:**
In practical exercises, the learned contents are also documented by real results.
- *Forms:*
With automated learning tasks (e. g. multiple choice tasks) an activation is absolutely possible provided that the questions are well designed. However, activation will be more successful with more complex tasks (e. g. finding solutions of problems).
- *Organisation:*
When the learners are working on the learning tasks, tutoring will certainly promote the learning success. It is also useful to integrate learning tasks into the cooperative processes of group work.

Tutoring

- In addition to the learning tasks tutoring essentially accounts for the learning success. The tasks of tutors can be defined as tutoring referring to *subjects* and to *persons*.
 - Tutoring referring to persons:
This tutoring type ensures that the learners understand and can apply the learning contents. To achieve this, materials may be chosen, examples and tasks be developed, further hints be given and the learning tasks be checked/corrected/evaluated.
 - Tutoring referring to groups:
This tutoring type creates social presence and solidarity. Tutoring also encourages discussion, gives feedback, motivates the learners to active participation and helps to solve conflicts if these occur.
- For the development of tutoring concepts the activity of tutors can be designed in different ways. The *"ideal"* tutor would achieve high values for the two dimensions. If this is not possible due to the organisation type, a solution will be to distinguish between *faculty tutor* and *group tutor*. In any case a *base support* must be ensured as a minimum!



Literature

- Dohmen, (2001), Einbeziehung älterer Erwachsener in das lebenslange Lernen (Expertenbericht 9 Forum Bildung)
- Kerres (2005), Didaktisches Design und eLearning: Zur didaktischen Transformation von Wissen in mediengestützten Lernangeboten



Example: SLO Picture Editing Course

- *Picture Editing for Senior Citizens* is one of the courses SLO offers following a hybrid learning concept. Since 2002 the tutor has gradually developed this three-month course and has taught it three times until now.

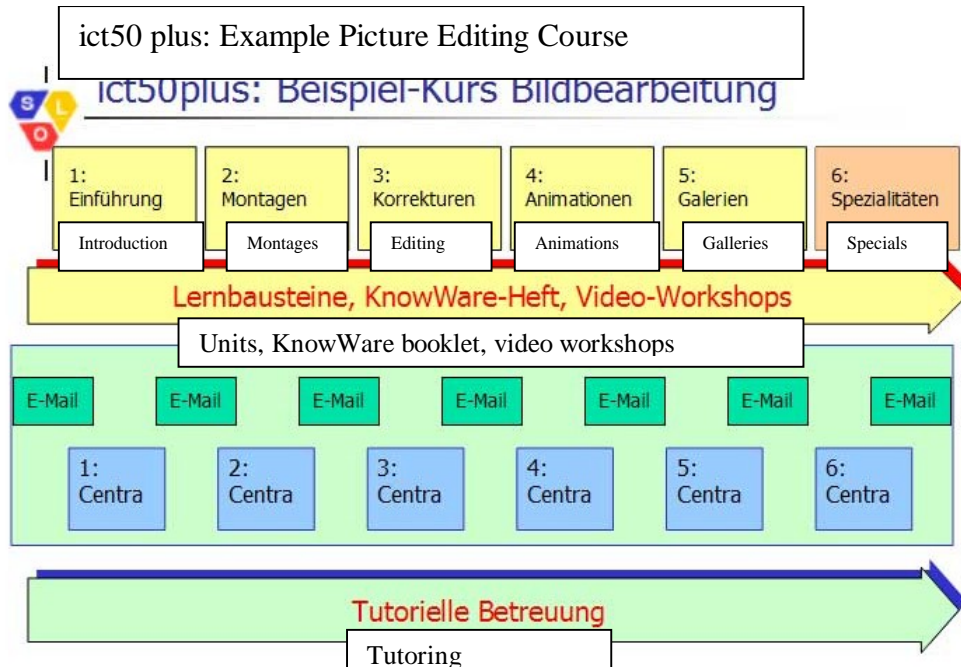


Figure 2 Scheme of SLO Picture Editing Course

- **Planning:**
 - *Target group:*

The target group is made up of senior citizens who (should) have already gained some experience with a PC, e. g. Windows basics, Internet browser or email. The participants look for a course that offers training also in their private rooms and in the evening.

Generally, the target group will be rather heterogeneous, as senior citizens not only have gained varying experience with the use of a computer, but also their living environments will differ very much from each other (extending from “I could not learn/need not to learn in my job” as far as “I had to learn from the start several times”).
 - *Learning targets:*

For the learning targets and learning contents it is important that the participants have a digital camera (digicam) at their disposal for some time and that they intend to organise the photos on the computer. They will also want to improve and edit these using a picture editing programme.
 - *Structure:*

The structure of the learning options follows digicam and PC operation: thus it starts with downloading the data files to the PC and ends with making up presentations.



- *Learning organisation*
It is important that the learning organisation is adapted to the varying participants' experience. Additionally, the participants will have very different types of digicams and will even work with different programmes. The tutor must be prepared for the problems thus resulting from the course organisation and compensate them by acting in accordance with the individual demands.
- *Learning tasks:*
The tutor must adjust the examples and the planned real results of the learning tasks to the living environment of the participants. Due to the variety of digicams an individual help can only be provided by the tutor himself. A help for the various programme types will be provided by means of audio/video CDs.
- Content:
 - *Learning tasks*
The six tasks (Introduction, Photomontage, Corrections, Animations, Galleries, Specials) are provided as a pdf download.
 - *Videos:*
The solutions of essential learning tasks for Photoshop Elements, Paint Shop Pro and Photoimpact are also available via an audio/video CD.
 - *Literature:*
A large number of the learning tasks is supported by the KnowWare booklet 16 "Bildbearbeitung für Einsteiger" (www.knowware.de). SLO recommends this booklet.
 - *Supplementary tasks:*
During the course the tutors offer supplementary tasks.
- Communication:
 - *Virtual classroom:*
On the occasion of six online sessions via the CENTRA platform the tutor explains the essential parts of the respective learning tasks. The participants can ask questions and give an account of their own experience.
 - *E-Mail:*
Before and after the online sessions the tutor prepares the sessions via email and encourages the participants to act on their own. In doing so he refers to the learning tasks or reacts on current events by creating new tasks.
 - *E-Mail and forum:*
The participants communicate with the tutor via email or exchange questions/problems in a discussion forum. This forum area is moderated by the tutor.
- Construction:
 - Each learning task includes a practical task which can be realized with own pictures or with data files taken from the learning material.
 - In Unit 1, for example, the task is to tell the resolution, file format and file size of the pictures.



- In Unit 2 a photomontage must be made out of several pictures to get acquainted with levels.
- Unit 3 implies the editing of an old photo that has been scanned in order to show some ways to correct picture defects.
- In Unit 4 a GIF animation must be created to use it for an own website at a later time.



Picture 3 Unit 2 Photomontage Exercise

- For Unit 5, "Galleries", a slide show must be prepared and transferred to the other participants via the memory of an email provider, thus leading to a group discussion.



Example: SLO CENTRA Moderation Course

- In reference to the ict50plus project SLO offers a qualification course for presenters using the classroom application CENTRA Communicator for Online Courses.

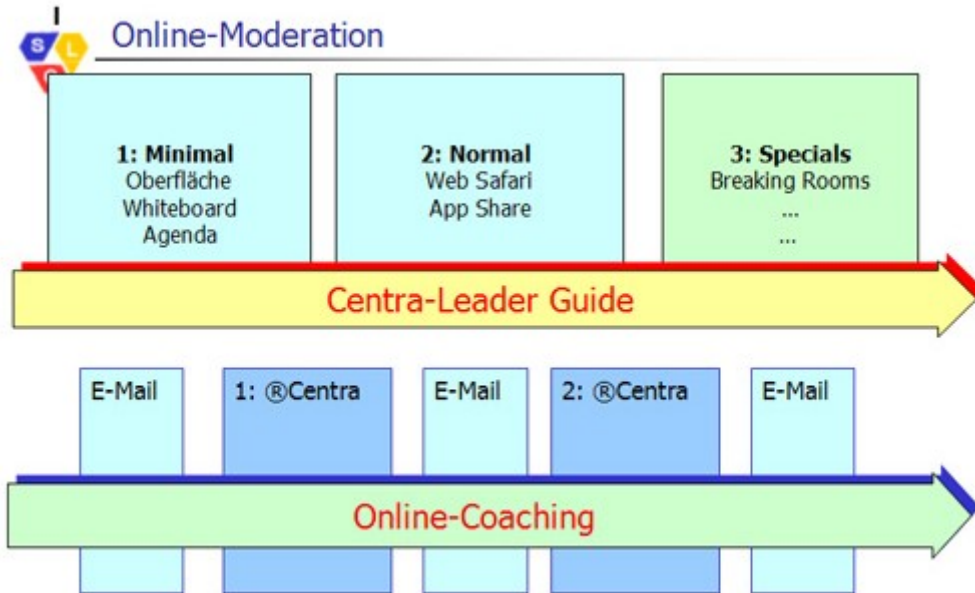


Figure 4 Scheme of SLO CENTRA Moderation Course

- Planning
 - *Target group:*
This course focuses on younger and senior citizens with a good computer knowledge that have already organized courses on their own. The participants are interested in this course, however, they will not always use all elements and functions of the application. The target group is very heterogeneous.
 - *Learning targets:*
The learning targets and learning contents result from the CENTRA Leader Guide. Due to the heterogeneous target group, however, the tutor should define minimum targets, normal targets and targets which will be taught only on demand.
 - *Structure:*
The structure of the learning options follows the software operation for online sessions.
 - *Learning organisation*
Due to the heterogeneous target group the participants should be coached individually.
 - *Learning tasks:*
The information and exercises of the learning tasks must on the one hand ensure the minimum targets, on the other hand they should leave enough time for other targets. The tutor will choose the examples and the real results to be obtained from the learning tasks according to the participants' interests.



- Content
 - *Learning tasks*

The tasks are available as a pdf download in 3 modules.

 - *Module 1: Minimum (Leader Interface, Whiteboard, Agenda)*
 - *Module 2: Normal (Web Safari, AppShare)*
 - *Module 3: Specials (Surveys, Breaking Rooms etc.)*
 - *Literature:*

The course is based on the CENTRA Leader Guide which is available as a download.
 - *Supplementary tasks:*

If applicable, the tutor prepares supplementary tasks during the course.
- Communication
 - *Virtual classroom:*

In 2 online sessions via the CENTRA platform the tutor explains the essential parts of the respective learning tasks. The participants can ask questions and give an account of their own experience.
 - *E-Mail:*

Before and after the online sessions the tutor prepares the sessions via emails to the participants encouraging them to own activities. In doing so he refers to the learning tasks or reacts on current events by giving new tasks.
- Construction
 - To achieve the minimum targets the participants should be able to practise the interaction with participants (Beginning a Session, Managing Microphone Control, Audio Options, Text Chat) and the use of the Whiteboard (tools etc).
 - The use of a PowerPoint Presentation as an online session agenda should be in the focus of a special exercise. For participants who plan to use CENTRA to organise online sessions within the ict50plus project it can be useful to test the agenda scheduled for this session.
 - Supplementary exercises should be integrated for the Web Safari and Application Sharing functions.



Module 1 – Minimum Leader Interface, Whiteboard, Agenda

Learning targets

- By the completion of this module the users should feel comfortable with the most important components of the *Leader Interface* as a minimum and should be able to use the *Whiteboard* and to import *PowerPoint Presentations* for an agenda on their own.

Information

- **Leader Guide:**
An extensive documentation of Centra 7.5 is available as a download from the CENTRA classroom.
- **Chapter 4 Leader Interface (page 33):**
A description of the Centra interface with detailed information on Title Bar, Menu Bar, Toolbar, Audio Area, Participant List and Agenda Area.
- **Chapter 10 Whiteboard (page 82):**
The Whiteboard is one of the essential components of Centra offering a large number of options for markups on blanks or slides, a.o.
- **Chapter 6 Using Agendas (page 45)**
The basic structure of an online session can easily be organised via a PowerPoint Presentation (page 49) which can be imported to Centra using slides for presentation and for markups. Often, it is also useful to just import a file (page 50).
- **Chapter 7 Audio Options (page 57)**
The audio communication features depend on the participants' network bandwidth. Thus the limit is defined by the participant with the weakest access. The leader can modify the corresponding settings.
- **Chapter 9 Text Chat (page 71)**
For large groups and in case audio communication does not work, it is also possible to communicate via a text chat.

Exercises

- Practise together with an online partner how to begin a session and how to grant microphones.
- Divide the empty space on the Whiteboard into 3 or 4 parts using the Line tool!
 - Test the options of the Select Font tool in one field (size, colour)
 - Test the form tools (Rectangle, Filled oval) in another field
 - Use the various Markup Tools.



- Prepare a short presentation, e. g. “This is me”, importing it as an agenda for your session.
 - For preparing the presentation, for example, use the template and the map you find in the learning material.
 - For importing choose „JPG pictures“ and „800 x 600 pixels“.
 - Then test the markup options on the slides.



Module 2 – Normal Web Safari, AppShare

Learning targets

- In addition to the targets of Module 1 the participants should know the *Web Safari* features on completion of this module and should be able to use them on their own.
- Via this module the participants also learn how they can simultaneously work with an application using *Application Sharing*.

Information

- Chapter 15 Web Safari (page 129):
This option is a comfortable way to simultaneously share and display Web sites with all participants. Generally, this solution is more useful than the insertion of a URL into the agenda.
- Chapter 14 Application Sharing (page 117):
Via the AppShare option all participants can share an application that is best started on the presenter's computer. Thus the participants do not have to install the application on their computers.
- Chapter 12 Session Feedback (page 101)
During the session the participants can send feedback on the session pacing to the presenter.

Exercises

- Practise the Web Safari option.
 - Make up a small plan with websites that you want to visit together with your participants.
 - Then test the Web Safari option using also the option for individual participants to call a web site spontaneously.
- Practise the AppShare option, if applicable.
 - Start Excel on your computer and make up a short spreadsheet.
 - Then open Word and write a text into which you import the Excel spreadsheet.
 - In Centra start the AppShare option and show the other participants how to import the spreadsheet into the Word document.



Module 3 – Specials Surveys, Breaking Rooms etc.

Learning targets

- In the case of a demand for other Centra features these can be practised via this module.

Information

- Chapter 5 Co-Presenter (page 43)
At any time of the session one of the participants can be designated Co-Presenter who then independently runs parts of the online session.
- Chapter 8 Broadcasting Video (page 65)
If the leader or participants have installed a video conferencing camera, the video recording of up to 4 participants can be displayed at the same time. This feature, however, depends on the network bandwidth.
- Chapter 11 Surveys and Evaluations (page 89)
Via the survey tool the presenter is able to create surveys before or after the beginning of a session. In this case the presenter can choose whether the results are displayed only to him or to all participants.
- Chapter 13 Breakout Rooms (page 107)
Large groups can be divided into smaller ones to work on specific topics under the guidance of a breakout presenter.

Exercises

- If applicable, the exercises are adjusted to the participants' demands and are discussed with the participants.

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