E4ALL

More attractive and inclusive education for all generations

Recommendations for more inclusive intergenerational adult education, v1

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1. Learning with each other

- Create opportunities to encourage learning with each other by planning and designing learning processes to give time, and create a safe space and opportunity to use each other's experiences.

- Ensure equal participation: allowing everyone to be heard and challenging stereotypes and prejudice and, giving time and space for that, creating safe learning environments.

- Allow experimentation – allow failing, acknowledging that making mistakes is an important part of the learning process.

- Avoid unreflective censorship. Allow each type of idea and contribution – try to understand them. Later on – together with the learners – decide whether you want to keep/follow them or not, according to some clearly set, transparent criteria.

- Be flexible about the role of the facilitator: sometimes there is an uninvolved and unbiased facilitator needed (like during Structured Democratic Dialogues), and sometimes – playing an active role by the facilitator is essential (like during linguistic mediation).

- Well-planned and consciously designed intergenerational education can be very effective for bridging the gaps (cultural, ability, knowledge, etc.), and supporting inclusion.

- 'Role-play' techniques, 'role models' as an educational methodology, supporting the learners to put themselves into someone else's shoes are useful tools to learn with each other and from each other, to cooperate and include, challenging stereotypes, and fighting prejudices.

- Include learning about various cultures/contexts in the learning process to support inclusiveness. Activities related to national peculiarities and false stereotypes together with generational features to promote the self-knowledge of participants and deeper understanding and collaboration are also recommended. The latter is a very useful tool for multicultural and multigenerational mediation.

2. Learning from each other

- When learning from each other, it is important to overcome all kinds of challenges or initial expectations regarding different learning styles and preconceived ideas about assumed knowledge (senior students might be used to more teacher-centered approaches whereas younger learners might be more independent). Therefore, senior learners are more reliant on the teacher and more passive in their learning, while younger students expect more independence and active learning. So finding the right balance between both approaches is paramount to learning. It is important to explain to learners how the learning process is implemented and why this implementation has been selected from the beginning.

- Showing more reluctant learners the benefits of more active learning might help them to understand the proven benefits of more active approaches and build more trust in the group as a generator of knowledge.

- It is essential to address the issue of different levels of digital competencies among learners (younger generations might rely more on digital devices when learning compared to more adult learners). Encouraging group and pair work so that they can work together to help each other might reduce the gap.

- It is important to come up with activities and dynamics to break stereotypes and cultural barriers in order to enhance group cohesion. This might prove more difficult at first but only by building trust and relying on each other's prior knowledge learning will take place. It is important that people meet each other at eye level, with mutual respect.

3. Learning about each other

- As an educator of an intergenerational group of learners, do your best to learn as much as possible about your learners. Ask, what are their previous experiences with lifelong learning? How do they imagine the ideal learning environment? What are their concerns concerning common learning? It is worth devoting some time to address these kinds of questions in the first lessons/workshop together.

- Planning to work in a group of learners composed of 'the youth' and 'the seniors' - it may be a good idea to first ask those questions to the younger and older learners separately, before their first meeting together.

- It is worth planning and realise some team building exercises to prepare the intergenerational group to learn together. It is worth including cultural/artistic/creative activities here. Having some fun, co-creating, brings people together.

- Working with groups of learners mixed in age, various learning approaches, and teaching methodologies can be needed. Try to be flexible and to "hear" the needs and expectations of the group of learners. Personalise. Adapt. Engage.

- The "coffee breaks" time is an important part of the learning process. Ensure this time.

- Include elements of the cultural exchange to the learning process: the exchange on and sharing of traditions, food customs, habits, and background lets the people see themselves just as interesting people, not just the learners.

- Digital competencies are important for all generations, and it is worth to use also digital tools for the learning process. Still, various generations may be accustomed to using those tools differently. Do your best to find synergies here, creating opportunities and allowing learning from each other.

The E4All Project Partners

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