



Methodology of the FutureLabAE workshop on change-oriented adult education and digitalisation

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INTRODUCTION

On the 11th of December 2019, a workshop on change-oriented adult education and digitalisation was held in Helsinki in the framework of the FutureLabAE project. The workshop was organised by the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (KVS) in cooperation with the FutureLabAE-project consortium.

FutureLabAE-project aims to inspire adult educators to take a more proactive role in solving modern day challenges. The workshop used interactive methods and digital tools to reflect upon how adult education can help to manage the challenges of digitalisation in a change-oriented way, and discuss how these practices can be transferred to participants' organisations and countries.

The aim of this methodology is to explain how this was done and thus on the one hand, to encourage participants to take up the outcomes and transfer them in their home organization and on the other hand to support other organisations to run similar workshops in their own contexts.

The FutureLabAE consortium invites readers to treasure the project experience, because even if the whole concept can't be applied, some of the methodologies could be useful.



WORKSHOP AIMS AND FLOW

Before organizing an event, it is important to clarify its objectives and target groups internally. It should be very clear in the organisers' mind, why the event takes place and which are the main questions the event wants to address.

The FutureLabAE consortium's goal was to provide participants with:

- an understanding of what is change-oriented adult education,
- some concrete examples of how change-oriented approach can be used in adult education and
- some insights on the challenges brought by digitalisation in our society.

The workshop was built around the following questions:

1. What kind of challenges and problems digitalisation causes for adults, communities and society?
2. What is change-oriented adult education?
3. What examples there are of change-oriented adult education?
4. How can we use change-oriented adult education as a tool to solve these challenges?

In the first part of the event, participants were invited to address the challenges and understand the concept of change-oriented education, in the second part, they were invited to get acquainted with good practices and in the third part of the workshop they discussed the possible solutions to the challenges.

The flow and setting of the event was carefully planned to support an enriching learning experience. Presentations and discussions moments were proposed alternately in order to allow people the possibility to both listen and actively contribute. The main room setting was arranged in small tables that could host up to six people, in order to foster debate, exchange of ideas and play the digital Seppo game in groups.

See Final Agenda for the digitalisation workshop (annex 1).

METHODS AND TOOLS USED IN THE WORKSHOP

The consortium decided to make the event as interactive as possible by using a combination of different methods.

1. Answergarden

Answergarden.ch is easy and free to use digital tool that can be used for digital brainstorming, collecting feedback or polling. The tool can be used both during and prior to an event.

In the FutureLabAE workshop on digitalization, Answergarden was used to collect challenges from the participants during the weeks before the workshop. Answergarden helped the consortium create a wordcloud to feed the group discussion in the first part of the day. The word cloud was printed and available at every table.

More about Answergarden: <https://answergarden.ch/>



2. Seppo digital game

Seppo is a pedagogical game that combines social learning and versatile ways of using mobile technology. Seppo main user creates a new game for their own purpose using the Seppo game platform. Seppo is used for teaching purposes in schools and for workshops and events by companies and associations in Finland.

Throughout the FutureLabAE workshop, participants were playing the digital game “Change-oriented adult educator” using their mobile phones to complete exercises relating to the topics of the workshop. Participants were divided into groups of four to six people and each group completed the tasks together. One member of the group input the completed task to the game platform. The tasks consisted of taking pictures, making drawings or videos, replying questions and looking for information in the gallery.

The game not only was a great tool to increase interactivity and fun among the participants, but also provided an example about how digital games could be used in adult education.

More about Seppo: <https://seppo.io/>

See description of the Seppo-game (annex 2)



3. Gallery walk

The aim of the gallery walk was to get visibility to different change-oriented approaches, and foster discussion among the participants and the presenters of the cases.

Gallery of change-oriented adult education projects, methods and cases were presented during the workshop breaks. These were selected from the project analysis report, because they represented different ways in solving digital challenges in change-oriented way. Organisers picked cases and projects that represented several countries and responded to various digital challenges.

During the gallery walk, participants could play games, read posters, watch videos and listen to people representing their projects.

In order to make the Gallery walk integral part of the event, the participants had to complete one task in the Seppo game.



4. Fishbowl

Fishbowl is a more dialogical and democratic version of panel discussion. Instead of having named few people (experts, people in power positions) in front talking and rest of the audience listening, the Fishbowl method allow all to take part actively and contribute in the discussion.

In the open fishbowl, three participants sat in the middle discussing the topic given by the moderator and one seat was left empty. The rest of the group sat on outside the fishbowl following the discussion quietly.

At any time during the conversation someone from the audience could sit on the empty seat and join the fishbowl, and one of the previous fishbowl participants then moved to the audience.

In the FutureLabAE workshop, the Fishbowl was used in the afternoon, when the participants were divided into two large groups to discuss how can we use adult education to solve the challenges of digitalisation. Both groups discussed the topic: How can we use change-oriented adult education as a tool to solve the challenges of digitalisation?

More about the method: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishbowl_\(conversation\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishbowl_(conversation))



5. Timeout constructive dialogue method

Timeout is a way to generate and have constructive discussions. It is a way of engaging in constructive societal discussion so that people from different backgrounds can be equally involved and those who are often left out of discussions are included. Timeout method was developed by Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund in cooperation with various organisations and experts in 2017. It emerged from observing that societal discussion had become overheated and there was a growing need for dialogue in a complex world.

Timeout's goal is not to change anyone's mind; instead, it aims to create more constructive understanding between different perspectives. At best, it generates unpredictable insights and new thinking.

Timeout dialogue method was used in the afternoon, when the participants were divided into two large groups to discuss how can we use adult education to solve the challenges of digitalisation. Both groups discussed the topic: How can we use change-oriented adult education as a tool to solve the challenges of digitalisation?

More about the method: <https://www.sitra.fi/en/timeout/#dialogue-tools>

See Timeout discussion at FutureLabAE-workshop (annex 3.) and Timeout discussion method (annex 4.)



6. Playback Theatre

Playback Theatre was founded in 1975 by American theatre practitioners and social activists and was inspired by the work of Joseph Moreno and educator Paulo Freire. It is a form of improvisational theatre which can be used to enact stories on the spot. The performance can create surprising connections and help to see the topics from a new view point.

Kapriisi playback theatre performed at the end of the workshop to highlight the digitalisation challenges and the conclusions of the workshop. People participated by suggesting stories of challenges/change-oriented ways to tackle digitalisation. Kapriisi playback theatre consists of a group of amateur/hobby actors.

More about Playback Theatre method: <https://www.londonplayback.com/what-is-playback>
Kapriisi website: <http://tarinateatterikapriisi.fi/>



CONCLUSIONS

The workshop was highly appreciated by the participants and can be considered an innovative practice in merging non-formal approaches and digitalisation.

The interactive nature and the methods used in the workshop received very positive feedback from the participants. When we asked the participants, how the methods used contributed to their learning in the workshop, on scale 1-5 average scores given to the methods were 4 (Seppo-game and gallery walk) and 5 (Timeout and Fishbowl), when 4 meant “well” and 5 “very well”. Particularly Fishbowl and Timeout were regarded very good methods for a change-oriented workshop and also transferrable to other contexts.

The participants of the Fishbowl group remarked that the setting of the room is very important, and it’s important to have a moderator that is outside of the fishbowl discussion. The constructive dialogue rules displayed in the Timeout groups and the group facilitators helped to conduct a fruitful discussion.

Playback Theatre was an experimental way to liven up the challenges and experiences of digitalisation.

“The theatre show at the end was a great idea. It made the whole day feel very special and helped me think about what happened and what I had learned in a different light”, commented one participant.

FuturelabAE

change oriented adult education



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