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GenerationInfinity

**The Generation Infinity Project:
Enhancing digital skills,
competencies and safety
in European older adults and seniors!**

WP2 MODULE 1 :

**Teaching digital skills and abilities to seniors
and the elderly**



 **Bluechain**



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Module Overview

Estimated duration:

2-3 hours

Target group:

Adult educators, trainers, facilitators, volunteers and community-learning professionals working with senior learners

Module objectives:

At the end of this module, the trainer will be able to:

- Explain the fundamentals of teaching digital skills to older adults, including the foundations of adult learning, motivation, confidence building, cognitive accessibility, and the importance of relevance to everyday life.
- Design and facilitate short, hands-on digital learning activities for senior learners based on real-world, meaningful tasks, such as messaging, video calling, information searching, online booking, digital identity use, and accessing essential services.
- Teach digital skills in a way that reduces anxiety, supports self-efficacy, and respects the autonomy and dignity of older learners through clear language, slower pace, repetition, and gradual instruction.
- Apply senior-friendly teaching methodologies that break down complex actions into micro-steps, respond constructively to frustration, and help older adults move from guided participation to more independent use.
- Evaluate the learning outcomes of a digital skills session using simple and practical tools such as observation, completion of short tasks, reflective prompts, and trainer self-review.



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Section 1: Fundamentals of digital skills learning for seniors and adults

Section 1 Overview:

1.1 Why digital skills are important in everyday life	<i>Digital skills as a prerequisite for participation in contemporary social life. Why digital skills are important for communication, access to public services, healthcare, mobility, banking, information, and family ties. The difference between abstract technical learning and meaningful use in everyday life. Recognizing that the goal is not technology for its own sake, but autonomy, social participation, and quality of life.</i>	• Brief introduction by the trainer (5-7 min) presenting digital skills through familiar everyday examples, rather than just devices or apps. • Guided discussion (5 min) in which participants identify which digital tasks are most meaningful and urgent for seniors in their local context.
1.2 The elderly as learners	<i>A hieragogical perspective on learning in old age. The impact of retirement, health changes, social isolation, loss of routine, and reduced confidence on the willingness to learn. Digital self-efficacy as a key factor in participation. Active aging and digital learning as tools for maintaining autonomy and social belonging.</i>	<i>In</i> • Guided reflection activity (5-7 min) focusing on what makes learning easier or more difficult for older adults, beyond mere technical skill level. • Pair discussion in which trainers identify the emotional and contextual factors that influence how older adults approach digital learning.
1.3 Motivation, relevance and meaningful learning	<i>The role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in seniors' digital learning. Why meaningful and emotionally meaningful goals increase engagement. Connect digital tasks to concrete outcomes, such as viewing family photos, booking appointments, accessing services, or cultivating personal interests. Use a life-centered framework instead of a functionality-centered one.</i>	• Reframing exercise (8-10 min) in which trainers transform technical functions into meaningful, real-life benefits for seniors. • Short group discussion (3-5 min) on which concrete motivations generate greater engagement in training sessions.

1.4 Psychological and cognitive barriers	<i>Technology anxiety, fear of making mistakes, shame, and frustration.</i> <i>Cognitive load caused by multitasking, unclear icons, small text, and unfamiliar sequences.</i> <i>Preference for concrete, tactile, and gradual learning. Importance of reassurance, repetition, and emotionally safe instruction.</i>	• <i>Short role-play exercise (10 min) in pairs or triads in which trainers practice responding to the learner's anxiety during a first digital task.</i> • <i>Short debriefing (5 min) focused on which trainer behaviors reduced tension and which, instead, unintentionally increased pressure or confusion.</i>
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1.1 Why Digital Skills Matter in Everyday Life

Theoretical part

The trainer presents digital skills as everyday life tools rather than as an abstract technical field. The focus is placed on situations older adults already encounter, such as using messaging apps, making video calls, accessing public services, searching for health information, or booking appointments. The trainer explains that digital learning is closely linked to participation, autonomy, and connection with others.

Practical part

The trainer invites participants to map common digital situations in which seniors may feel excluded, hesitant, or dependent on others. In pairs or small groups, participants identify which daily tasks have the highest practical relevance and discuss how they would explain their usefulness in simple and motivating language.

1.2 The Older Adult as Learner

Theoretical part

The trainer explains that older adults learn within a specific life context shaped by retirement, health changes, fluctuating energy, isolation, and changing social roles. The focus should therefore not be only on content, but also on emotional readiness, confidence, learning pace, and relevance. Digital participation depends on feeling capable, respected, and supported.

Practical part



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Participants reflect on the most common learner attitudes they have observed among seniors, such as fear of failure, low confidence, dependence on relatives, or reluctance to try. They then discuss how these factors affect learning behaviour and which trainer responses can increase participation and trust.

1.3 Motivation, Relevance and Meaningful Learning

Theoretical part

The trainer explains that motivation is stronger when digital learning is connected to something that matters in real life. Seniors engage more when a task responds to a personal goal, emotional need, or immediate practical benefit. Teaching should therefore begin from meaningful outcomes, not from software functions in isolation.

Practical part

Participants take common technical tasks and reframe them as life-centred benefits, for example turning “learn WhatsApp” into “send a voice message to a grandchild” or “use maps” into “find the easiest route to a clinic”. The trainer guides a short discussion on how relevance shapes persistence and reduces resistance.

1.4 Psychological and Cognitive Barriers

Theoretical part

The trainer explains that many learning difficulties are linked to anxiety, cognitive overload, shame, or fear of making irreversible mistakes. Plain language, visible pacing, repetition, and emotional reassurance are therefore essential. It is equally important to avoid rushed explanations, judgmental corrections, and tasks that present too many steps at once.

Practical part

In pairs or triads, participants role-play a short trainer-learner interaction involving anxiety during a first digital task. The objective is to practise calm support, slower pacing, and constructive guidance. The activity ends with a brief debrief on which words or behaviours reduced anxiety and which may have increased frustration.



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Section 2: Teaching Methodologies for Digital Learning for Seniors

Section 2 Overview:

2.1 Problem-based learning for older adults	Start with a real need rather than an abstract explanation. Build lessons around a "task of the day," such as sending a text message, finding a bus route, or scheduling a doctor's appointment. Introduce technical steps only when necessary to complete the task. Help learners understand the "why" behind each action.	• Scenario-based learning using practical missions drawn from the daily lives of seniors. • Guided lesson design activity in which trainers develop a 10-15 minute micro-lesson around a specific need.
2.2 Scaffolding, fading, and step-by-step instructions	Break down digital tasks into micro-skills. Use scaffolding as temporary support through prompts, notes, visual aids, or guided demonstrations. Use fading to gradually reduce support as the learner gains confidence. Emphasize the importance of one-step progression.	• Step-by-step demonstration by the trainer (5-7 min) showing how a complex task can be broken down into manageable actions. • Practical exercise (10 min) in which participants create a short, senior-friendly guide to a digital action, with clear sequence and visual simplicity.
2.3 Communication, feedback and non-paternalistic support	Use simple, respectful language instead of jargon or childish tones. Value commitment, perseverance, and strategy, not just the correct result. Manage errors as part of the learning process. Support autonomy without replacing the learner in completing the task.	• Feedback reframing exercise in which trainers transform ineffective corrective statements into encouraging and constructive responses. • Pair activity in which one participant plays the learner and the other practices respectful support without performing the task for them.
2.4 Learning environment, accessibility	The importance of visual accessibility, acoustic clarity, ergonomic comfort, and cognitive rhythm. The need for breaks, repetition, and a non-judgmental atmosphere. The advantages and	• Practical activity with a checklist using a training room preparation assessment sheet. • Small-group discussion

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<i>and group management</i>	<i>limitations of group work, pair work, and individual support. Creating a "no-go-wrong" climate.</i>	<i>in which trainers identify how to adapt space, materials, and pace to different senior profiles.</i>
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2.1 Problem-Based Teaching for Older Adults

Theoretical part

The trainer presents problem-based teaching as a practical approach centred on meaningful goals. Rather than starting with abstract theory, the session begins with a concrete mission that matters to the learner. Technical steps are introduced only as they become necessary to complete that mission.

Practical part

Participants work on short teaching scenarios such as sending a message, booking an appointment, or checking opening hours online. They identify how to structure a mini-lesson around one problem and how to keep the explanation focused on what the learner needs at that moment.

2.2 Scaffolding, Fading and Step-by-Step Instruction

Theoretical part

The trainer explains that many digital tasks become manageable when they are broken into micro-steps. Scaffolding offers temporary support through prompts, demonstration, visual aids, and guided repetition. Fading helps the learner move gradually from supported action to greater autonomy.

Practical part

Participants break down a common digital action into small, ordered steps and prepare a short senior-friendly guide. The trainer models how to demonstrate one step at a time and how to reduce support once the learner shows understanding.

2.3 Communication, Feedback and Non-Paternalistic Support

Theoretical part

The trainer explains that communication style influences dignity, motivation, and willingness to continue. Support should be respectful, adult-to-adult, and focused on



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empowering the learner rather than correcting them harshly or taking over the task. Feedback should reinforce effort, strategy, and progress.

Practical part

Participants transform corrective or discouraging phrases into constructive alternatives. In role-play, they practise guiding a learner through difficulty without rushing, judging, or acting in their place. The trainer highlights how respectful feedback supports autonomy and self-efficacy.

2.4 Learning Environment, Accessibility and Group Management

Theoretical part

The trainer presents the learning environment as an active part of the methodology. Light, sound, seating, pace, breaks, visual clarity, and group atmosphere all affect learning quality. A calm and accessible setting reduces fatigue and supports attention.

Practical part

Participants use a simple checklist to review whether a learning space is ready for older adults. They then discuss how to adapt room setup, materials, and group dynamics for learners with different confidence levels, sensory needs, or learning speeds.

Section 3: Trust, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Section 3 Overview:

3.1 Building trust and autonomy	<i>Confidence grows through repetition, small successes, and visible progress. Recognize that dependence on others often reduces motivation. Help learners move from hesitation to independent action. Encourage the transfer of skills from one context to another.</i>	• Guided reflection (5 min) on how building trust changes learning outcomes. • Short peer exchange in which trainers identify a routine they will use to build autonomy in future sessions.
3.2 Assessing learning outcomes in	<i>Practical assessment focus: verify whether the student can complete a task, explain a step, and act with greater confidence. Simple assessment tools: observation checklist, short practical task, self-reflection</i>	• Short trainer oral exercise (5 min) presenting practical and reflective assessment options.

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digital skills training	<i>prompts, and a final discussion. Balance skill acquisition and emotional availability/confidence. Use assessment realistically and supportively.</i>	• Mini exercise in which trainers choose a method for evaluating a short digital learning session.
3.3 Trainer reflection and continuous improvement	<i>The importance of trainer reflection after each session.</i> <i>Use learner reactions, repeated questions, errors, and moments of hesitation to improve examples, pacing, and materials. Identify what causes overload or disengagement. Build a reusable kit of examples, worksheets, and explanations.</i>	• Guided reflection (5 min) in which trainers identify an improvement to apply to the next session on digital skills for seniors. • Short plenary closing focused on practical adaptations and sustainability of materials.

3.1 Building Confidence and Autonomy

Theoretical part

The trainer explains that confidence develops through repetition, visible progress, and successful completion of meaningful tasks. Many seniors avoid technology not because they cannot learn, but because they fear dependence, embarrassment, or failure. Good teaching reduces dependence and strengthens autonomous action.

Practical part

Participants identify confidence-building routines they can integrate into future sessions, such as celebrating small progress, repeating success patterns, or ending with one independently completed task. They exchange ideas on how to help learners move from hesitation to self-directed action.

3.2 Evaluating Learning Outcomes in Digital Skills Training

Theoretical part

The trainer presents evaluation as a practical and supportive process. What matters most is whether the learner can complete a task, explain what they are doing, and

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approach future tasks with greater confidence. Evaluation should remain light, realistic, and linked to observable actions.

Practical part

Participants review simple evaluation tools such as observation, a short practical task, and a self-reflection prompt. They then select one practical and one reflective method for a digital skills activity and briefly explain why these tools suit older learners.

3.3 Trainer Reflection and Continuous Improvement

Theoretical part

The trainer explains that reflection after each session helps improve examples, pacing, instructions, and materials. Repeated learner difficulties often reveal where an explanation is unclear, where more reassurance is needed, or where a task should be simplified. Reflection is therefore part of quality assurance.

Practical part

Participants complete a short reflection prompt on what worked well, what caused difficulty, and what they would improve next time. The activity ends with a brief sharing of one concrete methodological adjustment each participant would carry into future sessions.



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Additional materials for participants

PowerPoint presentation

Additional trainer support material - Worksheets:

1. Session Readiness Sheet for Teaching Digital Skills to Older Adults
2. Confidence-Building Opening Notes for Trainers
3. Trainer Guidance for Managing Anxiety and Frustration in Learning Situations
4. Post-Activity Review Template: Clarity, Pace and Learner Comfort
5. Workshop Flow Design Exercise for a Short Senior Digital Skills Session
6. Assessment Planning Table: Simple Learning Check Methods
7. Trainer Guidance Notes for Motivational and Problem-Based Teaching
8. Reflective Follow-Up Sheet for Session Improvement



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Module Evaluation

Please rate the following statements based on your experience of this module.

(1 = Strongly disagree | 5 = Strongly agree)

1. Learning Objectives

The module clearly explained the most relevant principles for teaching digital skills and competences to older adults, including motivation, self-efficacy, cognitive accessibility, and step-by-step methodology.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. Practical Applicability

I feel confident designing short, practical digital learning activities based on everyday situations relevant to senior learners.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

3. Facilitation & Communication

The module improved my ability to teach digital skills using calm, inclusive, respectful, and senior-friendly communication.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

4. Motivation and Confidence-Building

I gained clearer methods for increasing engagement, reducing anxiety, and supporting confidence in older adult learners.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

5. Methodology and Structure

The module strengthened my ability to use problem-based teaching, scaffolding, fading, and micro-step instruction in a practical and accessible way.



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☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. Evaluation & Quality Assurance

The evaluation tools presented in this module are simple, realistic, and useful for assessing learning outcomes in digital skills training.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

7. Overall Value

Overall, this module was relevant to my professional role and provided methods I can realistically apply in my work with older adults.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

8. Reflective Question

What is one concrete teaching strategy, activity, or communication approach you plan to apply in your future work with senior learners?

Any additional comments or suggestions for improving the module:

(Optional)



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