

# UNIT 7. Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment



## Structure of the Stage

This stage consists of 9 parts:

- 1 Aim and Objectives
- 2 Outcomes
- 3 Introduction
- 4 Main CT principles applied during this lesson
- 5 Relationship with WP2 modules (theory)
- 6 Justification (why this stage is important);
- 7 3 Activities
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# UNIT 7. Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment



## Aim and Objectives

**The Aim** of the Unit 7 is To empower **adult trainers** to cultivate a psychologically safe and socially supportive environment that reduces digital anxiety and encourages learners to apply **computational thinking principles** to real-world challenges like **disinformation**.

### Objectives:

- To enable adult trainers to establish "Class Agreements" that foster trust when discussing sensitive topics like online truth and lies.
- To master the use of "Simple Language" to demystify technical CT concepts for seniors.
- To implement peer-support structures (Buddy Systems) specifically designed for collaborative disinformation verification.



## Outcomes

An adult trainer will be able to implement an inclusive and psychologically safe training environment that empowers learners to apply computational thinking principles—such as pattern recognition and evaluation—to identify and challenge disinformation without fear of making mistakes.



## Introduction

For many seniors and low-qualified adults, the digital world feels like a minefield of disinformation and technical jargon. Adult trainers must realize that inclusion is the foundation of learning; without psychological safety, the cognitive tools of computational thinking cannot be absorbed.

Social isolation and the "fear of breaking the computer" are significant barriers identified in our focus groups. By creating an inclusive environment, we move from "digital fear" to "digital curiosity." This stage is vital because it addresses the emotional "friction" that prevents learners from engaging with complex topics. It transforms the classroom into a community where lived experience is valued as much as technical skill.



## Main CT Principles Applied

- **Abstraction:** Focusing on the "core truth" of a news story rather than getting lost in technical website details.
- **Pattern Recognition:** Identifying the emotional triggers (fear, anger) that disinformation creators use to bypass our logic.
- **Decomposition:** Breaking down the feeling of "overwhelmed" into small, manageable questions about a source's credibility.



## Relationship with WP2 Modules

This unit operationalizes the WP2 **principles of Andragogy** and **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**.

While WP2 emphasizes that adults need to know why they are learning, Unit 7 provides the specific "Benefit Scripts" to tell them. It takes the UDL principle of "Multiple Means of Engagement" and turns it into a practical classroom culture of mutual respect.

Seniors are described in the guide as "naturally practical and goal-oriented," meaning they engage most when they see "immediate, real-life value". However, they often face "learning anxiety" or a lack of "self-trust" in digital spaces.

Benefit Scripts are trainers' tools to overcome this by:

### Translating Technical Jargon

Instead of explaining "Algorithms," a script might say, "This is like creating a personalized 'digital recipe' for your weekly shopping so you never forget an item".

### Validating Experience

Benefit Scripts move the conversation from "what you don't know" to "how this tool enhances what you already do".

### Connecting to the "Why"

They explicitly state the benefit (e.g., saving time, connecting with family, or maintaining independence) before asking the learner to perform a task.



## Justification

**Inclusion** is the one of the foundation principle for the learning process of adult learners. If a learner feels excluded or overwhelmed in the first hour, they are likely to drop out. For vulnerable groups, psychological safety is not a "soft skill"—it is a cognitive requirement.

The focus on a **culture of mutual respect, psychological safety, and active participation** is fundamental to building trust and engagement among vulnerable groups.

It's necessary for **to earn the trust of adults**: to talk in simple words, to inform them how they benefit, and what the results will be.

There is also important to create a positive, encouraging environment where **participants support each other** and see their progress. Emotional well-being and inclusion are essential foundations before introducing new content.





## Activity 1

### The "Classroom Learning Agreement"

Creating a "Learning Agreement" with the group serves several critical purposes for adult learners, particularly seniors and low-skilled individuals:

- **Establishing Psychological Safety:** The primary aim is to cultivate a psychologically safe environment that fosters trust and reduces digital anxiety.
- **Ensuring Mutual Respect:** It establishes clear ground rules to ensure mutual respect and open sharing among participants.
- **Empowering the Learner:** Instead of the trainer imposing rules, the process empowers learners by asking them directly what they need to feel comfortable making mistakes.
- **Building a "Digital Safety Net":** It creates a shared culture where there are no "stupid" questions, everyone waits for others to finish, and "good" moments are celebrated.
- **Reducing the Fear of Failure:** By defining the environment collectively, it helps shift the learner's mindset from "fear" to a state of "curiosity and belonging," where mistakes are treated as valuable remarks rather than failures.





# Activity 1

## The "Classroom Learning Agreement"

Template: The Digital Safety Net Learning Agreement

### Trainer Introduction Script

"In this room, we are not just learning; we are building a community. To make sure everyone feels comfortable, let's agree on how we will treat each other. Instead of me giving you rules, I want to ask: What do you need from me and this group to feel comfortable making a mistake today?"

### Ways to Formalize the Agreement

To ensure this agreement is inclusive and accessible to all literacy levels, use one of the following methods:

1. **The Visual Wall:** Print the agreement and have every learner sign it or place a sticker next to it. Hang it prominently in the classroom.
2. **The Audio Safety Net:** Record the final agreed-upon points as an audio file or a short video. Share this in the group chat or platform so learners can "hear" the safety rules whenever they feel anxious at home.
3. **Digital Homepage:** Post the agreement on the main page of the digital learning platform used for the course.

### The Agreement Points

- **No "Stupid" Questions:** We recognize that every question helps the whole group learn. If you are thinking it, someone else probably is too.
- **The "Slow Down" Rule:** We wait for everyone to finish a task before moving to the next one. No one gets left behind.
- **Mistakes are Data:** We treat a "wrong" click not as a failure, but as a "data point" to help us understand how the system works.
- **Celebrate Moments:** When someone discovers something new or solves a problem, we take a moment to celebrate that success.
- **The Jargon-Free Zone:** We promise to use "Simple Language." If the trainer or a peer uses a word that sounds like "tech-talk," anyone can ask for a "Benefit Translation".



## Activity 2

### Computational Thinking (CT) in Daily Life

Topic: "Managing Health Appointments and Medication"

Creating a flexible scenario for the activities applicable for the older adult profile participants.

#### Stage 1 (Review):

Review how we "Decomposed" a grocery list last week.

#### Stage 3 (Accessibility):

Provide the schedule as a colorful printable chart (Visual/Offline) and a voice-recorded reminder template (Audio/Digital).

#### Stage 2 (Implementation):

Use a modular worksheet.

**Task A:** List all medications.

**Task B:** Identify the "Pattern" (which ones are taken in the morning?).

**Task C:** Create an "Algorithm" (step-by-step schedule).





## Activity 3

### The "Digital Safety-Net" Buddy System

This activity operationalizes the unit's objective to "implement peer-support structures" and build a socially supportive community.

- **Aim:** To reduce "digital fear" and move adult learners toward a state of "curiosity and belonging" by ensuring no one feels alone when facing a technical challenge.
- **Target Principles:** Pattern Recognition (identifying shared challenges) and Algorithms (creating a step-by-step support sequence).

#### Step-by-Step Implementation:

##### Step 1. The "Strength-Spotting" Match (10 Minutes):

Based on the "Life Experience Map" (from Unit 6), the trainer pairs learners with complementary strengths.

**Example:** Pair someone with high patience with someone who has a bit more technical confidence.

##### Step 3. The "Benefit Script" Exchange (5 Minutes):

Buddies practice telling each other the "Why" of the day's task using a Benefit Script.

Example Script: "We are learning to use folders (Task) so you can keep your grandchild's drawings organized and never lose them (Benefit)".

##### Step 2. Creating the Buddy Agreement (10 Minutes):

- Pairs discuss: "What is one thing that makes you nervous about today's lesson?" and "How can I help you when that happens?"
- They agree on a "Buddy Signal" (e.g., placing a specific colored card on the desk) to indicate they need a 2-minute peer consultation before asking the trainer for help.





## Trainer Tips

When working with diverse learners—particularly seniors or vulnerable groups—the goal isn't just to transmit information, but to reduce the "digital friction" that often leads to frustration. These Practical Shortcuts focus on empathy, accessibility, and immediate feedback to ensure every participant feels capable and heard.

### How to ask vulnerable groups?

Use "Open-Ended Benefit Questions": "If this digital task was as easy as making coffee, how would your daily routine change?"

### Assessment

#### Recommendation:

Use "Emoji-Polls" for quick emotional checks (How do you feel about this task?

😊 😐 😞). It is inclusive of all literacy levels.

### Simple Audio/Video Conversion:

Use the "Record & Reflect" method. Use your smartphone's voice memo app to record the lesson summary. This allows seniors to listen while at home without needing to read complex manuals.





## What is the value of this stage?

The value is **Empowerment**. This stage transforms the training from a technical chore into a social community. By prioritizing emotional well-being and plain language, the trainer removes the "exclusion barrier." The learner stops seeing CT as "something for young people" and starts seeing it as a tool they are entitled to use, backed by a group that supports their progress

### Real-Life Case Example: "Silver Gaming"

**The Silvergaming** initiative uses digital games (**Digital Games Based Learning**) to familiarize seniors with new technologies.

The Silvergaming perfectly illustrates how to create an inclusive and stress-free learning environment.

- **Principle:** Gamification instead of lectures.
- **Application:** Instead of a traditional "Introduction to Computers" course, seniors learn how to use a mouse, keyboard, and navigate menus through engaging games.
- **Effect:** Fear of technology ("I'll break something") is replaced by curiosity and a desire to compete ("I want to move on to the next level").

**Tip for the trainer:** Use simple browser games as "icebreakers" at the beginning of the class to create a relaxed atmosphere before moving on to more difficult topics.



Recourses:

<https://gaming.fundacjamiis.org.pl/>

### Silver Gaming-inspired activity idea:

#### Name: "The 5-Minute Gamer"

- **Objective:** To show that mistakes in the digital world don't hurt (building mental resilience).
- **Activity:** The trainer launches a simple, safe game (e.g., online solitaire or a simple arcade game). Seniors play in pairs.
- **Key moment:** When a senior "loses" (e.g., time runs out), the trainer and the group reward them with applause for trying. This teaches that "Game Over" is not the end of the world, but an opportunity to press "Try Again" – just like learning banking or email.



SILVER GAMIFICATION 2.0  
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL COMPETENCES  
OF OLDER PEOPLE



## Additional Recourses

To support Unit 7: Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment, here are some resources designed to help trainers build psychological safety, peer support, and cultural relevance in their digital skills workshops for adult learners, e specially seniors.

### Video Resources

This video demonstrate how to create an inclusive atmosphere and reduce anxiety.

**"Managing Anxiety in a Digital World":** [Read/Watch Concepts](#) – Although general, the strategies (Setting Boundaries, Digital Detox) are perfect "Benefit Scripts" for seniors overwhelmed by 24/7 connectivity.

### Downloadable Activity Templates

#### "Jargon Buster" Flashcards:

Create a simple template where one side has the technical term (e.g., "Browser") and the other has the "Benefit Script" translation (e.g., "The window to the world").

### Real-Life Case Examples

- **Connect Hackney** (@online clubs): A project that replaced "training" with "social clubs." They found that tea, biscuits, and unstructured social time were just as important as the tablet instruction for reducing isolation.
- **Digital Mentors (Be Connected):** Uses a "train-the-trainer" model where older citizens teach their peers. This removes the power dynamic of a "young expert" teaching an "old novice".

