LEARNING BOX OF UNPLUGGED ACTIVITIES

The Community Event Planner

This unplugged activity develops organizational, sequencing, and collaborative problem-solving skills by challenging participants to plan a local, zero-budget community event (like a neighborhood clothing swap or block party). Using paper-based tools like sticky notes and large posters, teams break down tasks, filter out non-essential ideas, and build a chronological timeline. The introduction of "Hurdle Cards" gamifies the experience, requiring dynamic adaptation and introducing core computational thinking concepts (like algorithm adjustment and decomposition) without the use of digital devices.

Target Group

- ☑ Low-skilled adults with low digital competences
- ☑ Low-skilled adults with limited formal education or qualifications
- ☑ Low-skilled adults with low participation in lifelong learning / training opportunities

Learning Objectives

- To develop organizational, sequencing, and collaborative problem-solving skills by planning a local,
- zero-budget community event.

Competence Areas

a) Innovation Competences

- ☑ Creativity
- ☐ Critical thinking
- ☐ Problem solving
- ☑ Communication
- ☑ Collaboration

b) Information Literacy Competences

- ☐ Ability to access, understand, and critically analyse information
- ☑ Interpretation of digital and visual content
- ☐ Awareness of media influence and biases

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Theme

Community engagement, project management, and resource organisation

Duration

120 min

Level

Intermediate

Computational Thinking Steps Used

- ☑ Decomposition
- ☑ Pattern recognition
- ☑ Abstraction
- ☑ Algorithmic thinking

Methodological Approach

- ☑ Gamification
- ☐ Challenge-Based Learning
- ☑ Collaborative learning
- ☑ Experiential learning

c) Life and Career Competences

- ☑ Flexibility and adaptability
- ☐ Initiative and autonomy
- ☑ Sociability and intercultural competence
- ☐ Productivity
- ☑ Leadership and responsibility

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Deconstruct a large, overwhelming project into a manageable task list.
- Create a functional, chronological timeline.
- Work collaboratively to pivot and adjust strategies when a plan goes wrong.

Notes

- Materials Needed: Sticky notes in different colors, large poster paper, markers, and "Hurdle Cards" (cards introducing random unexpected problems).
- Facilitator Notes: Use the sticky notes for the decomposition phase so participants can easily move tasks around on the timeline poster. Once they feel confident in their plan, randomly hand out "Hurdle Cards" (e.g., "It starts raining," or "Only two people show up in the first hour"). Guide them to adjust their timeline algorithm dynamically.

Introduction and The Challenge (15 minutes).

Introduce the core challenge: "Design a successful community swap event from scratch with zero budget." Explain the gamification mechanics—teams start with a set amount of "Community Trust Points" and can lose or gain points based on how effectively they handle planning and surprise hurdles.

COMPUTATIONAL SENIORS
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The Community Event Planner

Step 1: Decomposition - Brainstorming & Task Breakdown

Present the task of "hosting an event."

Ask participants to use colored sticky notes to break this large goal down into manageable chunks (e.g., finding a location, advertising, gathering tables, cleanup). Every small task gets its own sticky note.

Duration app. 25 minutes

Step 2: Pattern Recognition

In this step, participants analyze the brainstormed tasks to identify recurring connections and similarities among them. Instead of managing a chaotic list of individual actions, teams group related tasks into logical categories (patterns), such as "logistics," "promotion," or "event setup." Recognizing these patterns allows participants to identify repetitive actions and task dependencies (e.g., *"before we set up the tables, we must secure the venue"*). This framework helps them dynamically adapt to "Hurdle Cards" later on, as modifying one element within a pattern updates the entire timeline.

Duration app. 30 minutes

Step 3: Abstraction - Filtering Ideas

Review the generated sticky notes. Instruct the teams to filter out unnecessary or unrealistic ideas (e.g., hiring a DJ, buying expensive decorations) to focus strictly on the core, achievable requirements of a zero-budget event. Remove the non-essential notes from the workspace.

Duration app. 20 minutes

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Step 4: Algorithmic Thinking - Building the Timeline

Participants move to the large poster paper. They must place their decomposed tasks into a strict chronological timeline. Prompt them to think sequentially: What must happen first? What happens next? How do concurrent tasks align?

Duration app. 30 minutes

Step 5: The "Hurdle" Phase and Debrief

Once teams feel confident in their algorithm (timeline), randomly distribute "Hurdle Cards" (e.g., "The venue cancels," or "Your main volunteer gets sick"). Guide them to adjust their timeline and problem-solve dynamically without starting from scratch. Conclude by calculating final Community Trust Points and discussing how these planning and adapting skills apply to everyday life projects.

Duration app. 30 minutes