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# LEARNING BOX OF UNPLUGGED ACTIVITIES

## Organizing Work in a Small Family Business

This unplugged activity introduces learners to organizing daily operations in a small family business such as a café, shop, guesthouse, or taverna. Participants work with realistic task cards (e.g., serving customers, managing stock, cleaning, handling orders) and simulate a working day. They prioritize tasks, identify busy periods, and design simple workflows. This activity enhances organizational and problem-solving skills using computational thinking concepts without digital tools.

### 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

### Theme

Business organization and workflow management

### Duration

90 minutes

### Level

Beginner

### Computational Thinking Steps Used

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

### Learning Objectives

- Understand how daily operations in a small business are structured
- Break down business tasks into manageable components
- Recognize peak hours and workload patterns
- Prioritize tasks that impact customer satisfaction and revenue
- Develop simple routines and procedures for efficient work organization

### Competence Areas

*a) Innovation Competences*

- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Critical thinking
- ☐ Problem solving

## Methodological Approach

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

☐ 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

*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:

- Break down daily business operations into key tasks
- Identify patterns in customer flow and workload (e.g., peak hours)
- Focus on high-priority tasks that influence business success
- Design simple step-by-step routines for daily operations
- Improve teamwork and decision-making in a work context

## Notes

- Use printed task cards representing typical business activities
- Create scenarios (e.g., busy summer day vs. quiet weekday)
- Encourage role-playing (e.g., cashier, server, manager)

Facilitators can increase complexity by adding unexpected events (e.g., supply shortage, sudden rush of customers)

## Step 1: Decomposition of Tasks

Participants are given a set of task cards representing daily business activities (e.g., opening the shop, preparing food, serving customers, managing stock, cleaning, handling payments).

They are asked to:

- Group tasks into categories such as customer service, preparation, maintenance, and administration
- Identify which tasks happen before opening, during working hours, and after closing
- Discuss which tasks are essential for the business to operate smoothly

Facilitator support:

- Ask guiding questions like: “Which tasks must be done first?”, “Which tasks can wait?”
- Encourage participants to think about dependencies between tasks (e.g., preparation before serving customers)

This step helps participants break down a complex workday into structured and manageable components.

## Step 2: Pattern Recognition

Participants are given different daily or weekly scenarios (e.g., busy summer day, quiet weekday, weekend rush).

They are asked to:

- Identify patterns in customer flow, such as peak hours (lunchtime, evenings, weekends)
- Recognize how workload changes depending on time, season, or type of business
- Discuss which tasks become more important during busy periods (e.g., faster service, restocking)

Facilitator support:

- Prompt reflection: “When is the business busiest?”, “What problems happen during peak hours?”

- Highlight recurring situations that require preparation

This step helps participants anticipate workload changes and recognize recurring operational patterns.

## Step 3: Abstraction – Focusing on High-Priority Tasks

Participants simplify the work organization process by focusing on the most important tasks.

They are asked to:

- Identify key tasks that directly affect customer satisfaction and revenue (e.g., serving customers, order handling)
- Distinguish between high-priority and lower-priority tasks
- Temporarily ignore less critical activities during busy periods to maintain efficiency
- Decide which tasks can be postponed or simplified when workload increases

Facilitator support:

- Ask questions like: “Which tasks are most important during peak hours?”, “What can be delayed without affecting the business?”
- Emphasize prioritization and decision-making under pressure

This step helps participants reduce complexity and focus on what matters most for effective business operation.

## Step 4: Workflow Design (Algorithmic Thinking)

Participants create a step-by-step routine (workflow) for organizing work efficiently during a typical day.

They should:

- Develop simple rules such as:
  - “Prepare key items before opening”
  - “Assign roles during busy hours”
  - “Restock during quiet periods”

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- Organize tasks into a clear sequence, for example:
  1. Opening routine (cleaning, preparation, setup)
  2. Service period (customer service, order handling)
  3. Peak-hour strategy (task sharing, prioritizing customers)
  4. Closing routine (cleaning, stock check, preparation for next day)

Finally, participants:

- Present their workflow to the group
- Explain how their plan improves efficiency and customer service
- Compare different approaches and discuss improvements

Facilitator support:

- Encourage practical thinking: “Would this work in a real business?”
- Introduce possible challenges (e.g., staff shortage, sudden rush) and ask how the workflow adapts

## Organizing Work in a Small Family Business

This step helps participants design structured, repeatable procedures to manage work effectively.

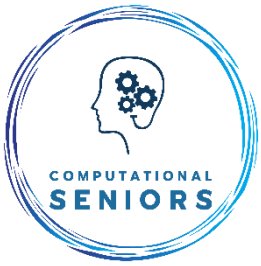
### Facilitator Guidance

### Before the activity

Introduce the activity by discussing common types of small family businesses, such as cafés, bakeries, grocery stores, guesthouses, or restaurants. Ask participants what daily tasks they believe are necessary to keep these businesses running efficiently. Explain that organizing work effectively improves both customer satisfaction and employee wellbeing.

### During the activity

Encourage participants to discuss why certain tasks should be prioritized over others. Use guiding questions such as: "What happens if this task is delayed?", "Which




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activities directly affect customers?", or "How would you reorganize work during busy periods?" If appropriate, introduce unexpected situations such as staff absences, supply shortages, or a sudden increase in customers, and encourage groups to modify their workflow accordingly.

## After the activity

Ask each group to present its workflow and explain how responsibilities were organized throughout the day. Encourage participants to compare different approaches and identify good practices that could improve efficiency. Emphasize that computational thinking supports workplace organization by helping people structure tasks, recognize recurring situations, and develop effective routines.

# TASK CARDS

*Organizing Work in a Small Family Business*

## Card Categories

- **Customer Service**
- **Preparation**
- **Maintenance**
- **Administration**
- **Peak Hours**

## Priority Levels

### Essential

Must be done - the business cannot run without it

### High

Important - directly affects customers or efficiency

### Medium

Helpful - can be delayed when the team is very busy

*Print and cut the cards on the following slides to use in the activity.*

## Open the Shop

PREPARATION

*When: Before opening*

Unlock the doors, turn on lights, set up the cash register, and prepare the workspace for the day.

Priority: Essential

## Prepare Food and Drinks

PREPARATION

*When: Before opening*

Prepare items on the menu, stock condiments, fill the refrigerator, and set up the kitchen.

Priority: Essential

## Set Up Tables

PREPARATION

*When: Before opening*

Arrange tables and chairs, place menus, set cutlery, and prepare the dining area for customers.

Priority: Essential

## Check Stock Levels

PREPARATION

*When: Before opening*

Check inventory of ingredients, supplies and products. Note what needs to be reordered.

Priority: High

## Welcome Customers

CUSTOMER SERVICE

*When: During working hours*

Greet arriving customers warmly, guide them to a table, offer menus, and make them feel welcome.

Priority: Essential

## Take Orders

CUSTOMER SERVICE

*When: During working hours*

Listen carefully to customer orders, write them down clearly, and pass them to the kitchen.

Priority: Essential

## Serve Food and Drinks

CUSTOMER SERVICE

*When: During working hours*

Bring orders to the correct table promptly, check satisfaction, and offer refills or extras.

Priority: Essential

## Handle Payments

ADMINISTRATION

*When: During working hours*

Process cash or card payments accurately, issue receipts, and manage the cash register.

Priority: Essential

## Manage Complaints

CUSTOMER SERVICE

*When: During working hours*

Listen to customer concerns, apologise calmly, and offer a solution such as a replacement or discount.

Priority: High

## Clean Tables

MAINTENANCE

*When: During and after hours*

Clear used plates and glasses, wipe tables after each customer, and reset for the next guest.

Priority: High

## Clean the Kitchen

MAINTENANCE

*When: After closing*

Wash dishes, clean cooking surfaces, sweep and mop the floor, and dispose of waste.

Priority: Essential

## Restock Supplies

MAINTENANCE

*When: Quiet periods or after closing*

Refill napkins, condiments and supplies. Move stock from storage to the service area.

Priority: Medium

## Place Supply Orders

ADMINISTRATION

*When: After closing*

Contact suppliers to order ingredients or products that are running low.

Priority: High

## Record Daily Sales

ADMINISTRATION

*When: After closing*

Write down total sales, cash in the register, and any expenses. Prepare the financial summary.

Priority: High

## Assign Staff Roles

ADMINISTRATION

*When: Before opening*

Decide who handles each task: cashier, server, kitchen, or manager duties for the day.

Priority: High

## Handle a Customer Rush

PEAK HOURS

*When: Peak hours*

Prioritise essential tasks only. Speed up service, communicate with your team, and stay calm.

Priority: Essential

## Emergency Restocking

PEAK HOURS

*When: Peak hours*

An ingredient has run out unexpectedly. Find a substitute quickly or update the menu.

Priority: Essential

## Staff Shortage

PEAK HOURS

*When: Any time*

A team member is absent. Redistribute tasks, focus on the most critical duties, and ask for help.

Priority: High