

Animation

Internal good practice, Comparative Research Network e.V.

Viral Videos, what is it?

„Let's get digital!“ The whole group of trainer chuckles. *“Yeah let's do it!”* Laughter and jokes are exchanged before everybody departs. A month later a post-assessment form is send out and all participants of the train-the-trainer course did good jobs in adapting the new trained methods – just one thing did not happen: becoming digital. Digital devices are nowadays everywhere and the amount of audiovisual materials made is uncountable. Still most of the data is kept on the device and will never be touched again. Still video and audio can be used to express emotions and sharing stories. Taking a photo or a video is a so called “no-brainer” but when it comes to editing, fear and rejection are the predominant feelings.

Viral videos can be a solution for the dilemma. Viral videos are a specific and popular form of storytelling, which is shared on platforms as YouTube or vimeo, gaining popularity and impact on twitter and facebook. The videos are funny, produced with little and cheap equipment and usually need little editing and storyboarding, since they consists of three or four shots only. Popular formats are for example “Where is Matt?”, “Haarlem Shake” or “Flash mob”. For the trainings of CRN this videos help on

the one hand to increase the quality of the trainings and motivate the trainees and on the other hand to teach digital skill to the trainers almost incidentally.

Who makes it? What is done?

The videos are used for two different kinds of trainings. The first uses them as a tool for learning digital competences. The videos have in common that they are easy produced and do not require a deep knowledge of editing. At the same time they stimulate creativity and offer the trainees a successful increase of digital skills, while they might not even realize, that a video is produced.

The method is used as secondly in the setting of body movement and improvisation classes. Here the methods is helping to reflect the learning process and adds a new dimension to the learning content.

The training group is divided in sub-groups in which three different forms of viral videos are presented. The group choose one and start the creation of the story. They have to use intuitively all steps of storytelling, storyboarding, project planning and shooting. The videos are presented at the end of the day to all groups.

Since when?

The method is based on older tools, which have been tested during CRN's intercultural trainings between 2011 and 2014. Still in the early stage just the digital sensible satin had been used and viral videos had been left out. During 2014 and 2015 CRN started to use with huge success viral videos as tools.

Target groups, national, international or local focus?

The method can be used for various target groups. CRN tested it with learners who felt insecure with digital media and with trainers who work in helping professions.

The strong team building aspect helps to bring any groups together and allows to bridge intercultural differences.

Since viral videos are worldwide consumed and usually work non-verbally, they are suited for all kind of international groups. Still the training works in national and local context as good.

Digital aspects

The method consists out of an analog part, where storytelling technics and storyboarding is taught and a digital part, where the viral video is made.

In order to involve learners with fewer digital competences, the trainer should focus the attention of the trainees on the analog part where creative skills are needed to create the story. During the exercise the digital equipment is introduced and finds its way into the learning process intuitively. The trainer is using known, easy available tools, such as smart phones or digital cameras. The viral videos need rather a limited amount of shots and editing for producing stunning results. The Haarlem Shake consists out of two shots lasting roughly 20 seconds. The two shots have to be combined during the editing and have to be underplayed with one must track.

“Where is Matt?” consists out of a number of five second shots, which have to be merged. A flash mob needs with good planning no editing besides trimming.

The videos do not live from the technique but from creativity. Groups working on them don't have to discuss the editing process but the content – the use of digital devices is inherent.

Bernadett, one of CRNs trainers reported after one session: *“The trainees might not even feel the digital and editing work – the digital skills they learned, like editing, photo, video, audio – are revealed just at the end - during the reflection of the group.”*

Pedagogic/methodologic al aspects

Since the method is for teaching digital skills as a basic skill, it is using the concept of blended education.

Blended education is the combination of digital and analog learning, where knowledge is gathered in both spheres and the learning outcome is gained by the combination of both.

The pedagogic concept is based on the Kolb Circle. The Kolb circle is used especially in adult education for learning through experimentation and gaining practical experience.

The method is explained by Martin, CRN's Head of Program: *“The trainer is introducing the method and the three different scenarios. Following the initial phase of the Kolb Circle, the trainees reflect on the scenario and focus on the planning of shots,*

gathering equipment and creating the story. They experiment here with the input of the trainer. This is the second step in Kolb's systematic. While shooting the trainees try out, vary, change and adapt the learned. They increase their knowledge on the input. After editing and presenting the results a reflection follows, where the Meta idea of digital sensibilisation is revealed."

The learning process is flowing self-reliant and the trainer is becoming rather a moderator and mentor, who is guiding the group after the input at the beginning.

The learners have generally afterward a stronger motivation to work with digital tools and create and genuine curiosity to experiment with other devices and

Facts of method

45 participants
Open for all target groups
10 times performed
4 staff involved
8 partners from 6 countries

techniques.

Strength, weakness and opportunities

Strength

We identified throughout our evaluation a couple of strength of the method:

- The method is easy implementable since it rely on resources the participants should already have.
- The method is creative, stimulating skills like team work, creativity, self-reliance and digital independence.
- The method is suitable for any target group with different level of experience, age or education.
- The method is teaching skills intuitively and lowers mental barriers of the learners towards digital tools.
- The method is empowering, providing learners with tools to tell their own stories.

Weakness

Alas identified as a good practice, the tool bears a few weaknesses, which each trainer has to take in account.

- The methods relies on the will of the trainer or teacher to step back or even take advice from the learners.
- The trainer should be aware of the digital devices. The trainer do not have to master them but should know how to use them competently.
- The trainer has to be prepared for frustration and doubts of the learners.

Opportunities

The strongest opportunity for organization using the method is to teach digital skills. Digital literacy was described by the European Commission as one basic skill

where most citizens have deficits. The method of viral videos is taking learners partly in learning spheres they are comfortable with and teaching the digital aspects as it should be taken – an aspect of everyday life. In this way mental barriers are overcome. Organizations using those methods prove to be innovative, increase their chances to acquire learners, motivate their staff and gain new sources for funding.

How clowns became digital – viral video in practice

The Erasmus Plus project the Artist Within was created in order to test creative methods for trainers. The workshop on humor strategies for trainers, which was held in 2015 in Leipzig brought together 24 participants from six countries. The training went smooth and slowly the participants discovered their inner clown. They dressed up, had public performances and discovered aspects of their personality they didn't know about.

The field was prepared for CRN trainers to perform an additional workshop day. Keeping in mind the exhausted days before, the day started with a lot of laughter, while the group learned about flash mobs or the Harlem Shake. They discussed other viral videos they knew and learned how to do them. The atmosphere was open, informal and the emotional stress disappeared. The go ups received easy cameras and got the task: prepare a video, which will be ready to upload within four hours.

It was the start for an intensive creative process. The participants from different countries, background, ages and digital knowledge went out to the main station – shooting videos, interact with strangers who were happy to participate in the videos, created smiles among the commuters and gained more and more confidence – on themselves and their creativity and capability to work with digital technique.

The next result are videos they uploaded, both not just copying seen materials, but creating their own touch. One of the two groups used an Italian child song, which they performed on the streets of Leipzig, creating a new kind of viral video by themselves.

After the evaluation of the weeklong workshop, it turned out that the video exercise left them the most touched and it turned out that it became one of the methods they wanted to implement the most likely into their own trainings.

Why are viral videos a good method?

The creativity, the stimulation of curiosity and the breakdown of mental barriers in a hands-on approach make the viral videos a good practice for teaching digital techniques. The easy implementation, openness for all target groups and low requirements on existing digital knowledge and equipment makes it as well perfect for organizations to use it.

This is why we say use the Harlem Shake not just to make people laugh – but to make

them digital. In this way after your next training the answer on the claim "let's get digital!" will be "Yes, we did!"

