

Increasing adult educators' competencies to encourage female employment in the digital sector of the labour market

No. 2019-1-LT01-KA204-060723



Crystal-Jade Lerios, Cyprus

Slogan: "You know, sometimes all you need is twenty seconds of insane courage. Just literally twenty seconds of just embarrassing bravery. And I promise you, something great will come of it." Benjamin Mee, We Bought a Zoo

Sector: Vocational Education & Training

Position: Learning & Education Consultant and Trainer

Take a risk for yourself and for greater good

About me

My name is Crystal-Jade Lerios. I completed my BSc in Mathematics and a MSc in Anthropology of Childhood, Youth and Education at Brunel University. Part of the MSc required conducting empirical fieldwork research in Cape Town.

My current situation

Currently I am the founder and managing director of VitaComm Education. VitaComm takes on social responsibility actions that help create and empower communities through knowledge and education. We are aware of the exponential potential of reaching children indirectly through the training and support of teachers, schools, and parents. Hence the way we do our part is by mainly investing in a training-based support system for community members and organisations that affect children directly. We also offer afterschool academic and non-academic programmes for children and teenagers. Working in the digital sector plays a huge role in achieving the above as it allows us to reach teachers, students, families and communities faster and more productively. To find out more visit our website at <https://vitacomm.education/>

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My way to the digital sector

Love for children was what motivated me to join the digital sector. During my MSc I was given the amazing opportunity to visit South Africa for my fieldwork research. There I got to work with an amazing project called the Nontsikelelo Arts Project. The target group was children in townships that either joined or were prone to joining gangs and the goal was to find a way to keep them busy and off the streets. While there the project was going well however, there came a point when I had to return to the UK to write up my thesis. Sadly, we lost touch. While my purpose there was not permanent, it is important to stress that in education and child-aid related programmes consistency in communication and support is key. Because my input at the time was limited to face-to-face actions, I was not able to help provide that much need consistency. When a few years later a similar problem occurred when I was teaching and mentoring children while travelling between Europe and Africa. I had to find a way to not give up my students and entering the digital sector via online / blended teaching was the perfect solution.

Moving forward, I saw the amazing benefits of Blended Teaching which is why I decided to become a trainer of Blended learning about 3 years ago so I can empower educators so that they can in turn empower their students. The beginning of online and blended teaching was a bit tricky because I only knew the basics. In practice that meant that 7 years ago I would use Skype and share my screen with my students. As the on the go flexibility of the whiteboard no longer existed, a lot of time was spent creating PowerPoint presentations before sessions so as to replicate the whiteboard experience as much as possible. A couple of years later however, as I continued teaching luckily my partner was experienced in online teaching and he showed me how to use a tablet that you could write on as if you would in a classroom and things would appear on my students' screen. I no longer had to spend countless hours preparing PowerPoints. Instead I could come up with equations on the go and write them on the board like I would in a traditional face-to-face classroom.

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As time went on, I wanted to explore online and Blended Learning further, so YouTube and open courses became my best friend as they helped me teach myself how to use Blended learning more productively. Now I continue my research but at the same time create packages to make the journey of other educators like myself a lot easier and faster.

My benefits in joining the digital job market

Working in the digital work market a lot of times and at least in my case, means remote work. With remote work comes amazing flexibility both in your personal and professional life that in many ways enables you to not limit yourself when it comes to work opportunities.

My advice for other women like me

- Do not wait for your work to be perfect before you showcase it.
- Write your goals on a piece of paper. Break down your goals into smaller subgoals and then start tackling them one step at a time.
- Follow the work of people you admire or perceive as successful in the line of work you want to be in. Study them and their work, analyse them and learn from their victories and mistakes but do not try to be them, try to be the best version of yourself.

To summarise, John C. Maxwell said it best when he said: “Small disciplines repeated with consistency everyday lead to great achievements gained slowly over time”. Take it one step at a time but stick to it. Greatness will not happen overnight, but you owe it to yourself to not give up and achieve a small victory one day at a time. If you think about it there is no other real choice. If you do not follow that approach then not only will you hurt yourself, but you will hurt the rest of the world as well. The reason is because unhappy people are not motivated to perform tasks well because they do not believe in them and tasks/services that are not performed well end up affecting clients/students /patients negatively. You see it is all linked. Therefore, take a risk for yourself by giving the digital sector a chance so that you can achieve goals you believe in so that you can help the greater good at the same time.



Questions for self-reflection

1. When is the time for change?



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2. Why has been so important to blend classic teaching with digital means?
3. Why digital transformation has been so important for Crystal?
4. What are the advantages of work remotely?
5. What does “being digital” mean if you are a trainer?