

"It seems to me that the most important thing that came out of that first meeting was the personal engagement. We got to know each other, started to connect and started to share stories."

(from Lotta - Berlin kick-off workshop evaluation)

What is the main objective of the beyond fifty five project? During our initial planning discussions it quickly became clear what the key question of the project would be: "Is the content engaging?" The project is about life transitions: Where did I come from? Where am I now? Where do I want to go? Communicating with others about these thoughts and experiences will only develop if people connect with the ideas of the project and open up to each other to gain new understandings and insights.

The key ideas of beyond fifty five have been drawn from our collective, long-term experience of European media education projects. The core content is based on a learner-centred approach, where space and guidance are given to produce and reflect on digital photos and videos together. For this document we would like to focus on three areas of learning: curiosity-based learning, project-based learning, media production and supporting digital competence.

1. Getting curious

Curiosity is a natural inclination to seek out and learn new information, ideas and experiences. It is the desire to explore and understand the world around us, to ask questions and to engage with our environment. Curiosity drives us to seek out new knowledge and experiences and to engage with the world in meaningful ways. It can help us to develop critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills.

Curiosity-based learning is an approach to education that emphasises the exploration of topics that pique a learner's interest, rather than simply following a prescribed curriculum. In this approach, learners are encouraged to ask questions, make connections and follow their own lines of inquiry.

Key questions from beyond fifty five:

- What do "transitions" and "connections" mean to me?
- How can I express them in images?
- How can I capture them in a photo story?
- How can I combine biographical writing and photography?

Curiosity can be a leading motivator for personal change. A simple photograph brought in by a team member and shared in an open and friendly atmosphere can spark ideas that lead to further discussion. Curiosity-based learning is not about finding fixed answers, it is an exploratory process where one thought can lead to another.

2. Project-based learning

Within beyond fifty five adults work and learn through projects. The project-based approach emphasises the completion of a project as the central goal of the learning experience. People work on projects designed to help them learn important concepts and skills.

The project-based approach includes

1. Active learning: Learners are actively involved in the learning process, taking responsibility for the design, planning and implementation of their projects.
2. Real-world relevance: Tasks are designed to be relevant to the real world, using real-life situations (connecting with one's own "Lebenswelt").
3. Collaborative learning: Team work, encouraging collaboration and effective communication
4. Problem solving: Projects are designed to solve a specific problem or challenge, providing opportunities to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
5. Mastery: Learners are given the opportunity to master skills and concepts by working on projects that require them to apply what they have learned.

However, beyond fifty five projects are not necessarily straightforward - they may involve personal stories that are not just simply shared and published. There needs to be sensitivity to the introduction of the task and also to how personal stories are shared and published. There are a number of tasks that involve personal experiences.

Main tasks of beyond fifty five include:

- "Room with a view" - compare photographs taken from each other's homes
- "Matching photos" - add your own photos to existing photos from partners
- "Memory game" - create your own photo game
- "Lieblingsorte" - take and map photos from your favourite places
- "Mini video interviews" – present yourself through short video clips

Tasks are not designed to give grades, but to empower everyone involved in production. Everyone works together on the same level.

3. Media production and digital competence

All project work involves media production. It is about expressing ideas - thinking creatively and critically. Clear tasks are set to stimulate ideas and encourage learners to work with text, sound, photos and video. Creative learning emphasises the importance of play, exploration and

experimentation and encourages people to express themselves in a variety of ways. In the context of beyond fifty five, this includes:

In a positive and playful approach, people are given space to

- Work with existing photographs and take photographs themselves
- Explore photographic elements such as framing, positioning and lighting
- Use different technologies (analogue and digital, different equipment)
- Incorporate different formats (modify, combine, overlay, remix photos, but also different art forms).

and develop visual skills by "reading" and "writing" images

- Experiencing photos, connecting photos with memories
- Combining biographical writing and photography
- Telling stories with photos, exploring story structures, focusing on messages
- Reflecting and presenting stories in small and large groups

Digital competence is about the confident and critical use of digital technologies: "Being digitally competent is more than being able to use the latest smartphone or computer software — it is about being able to use such digital technologies in a critical, collaborative and creative way."¹

Work on inclusive and appropriate digital platforms

- Be aware of privacy: what to share and what not to share
- Work with digital platforms that are accessible without login (and therefore do not share private data with global platforms).

Learn digital skills to participate in the digital world:

- Use video conferencing tools to communicate in local teams and across Europe
- Use online translation tools to communicate in other languages
- Post and send photos on different platforms

"The most important thing about the day wasn't the digital and technical learning and product outcomes, but establishing relationships and trust."

(from Lotta - Berlin kick-off workshop evaluation)

¹ https://salto-et.net/events/show/EE01_0502_TSS_2022



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