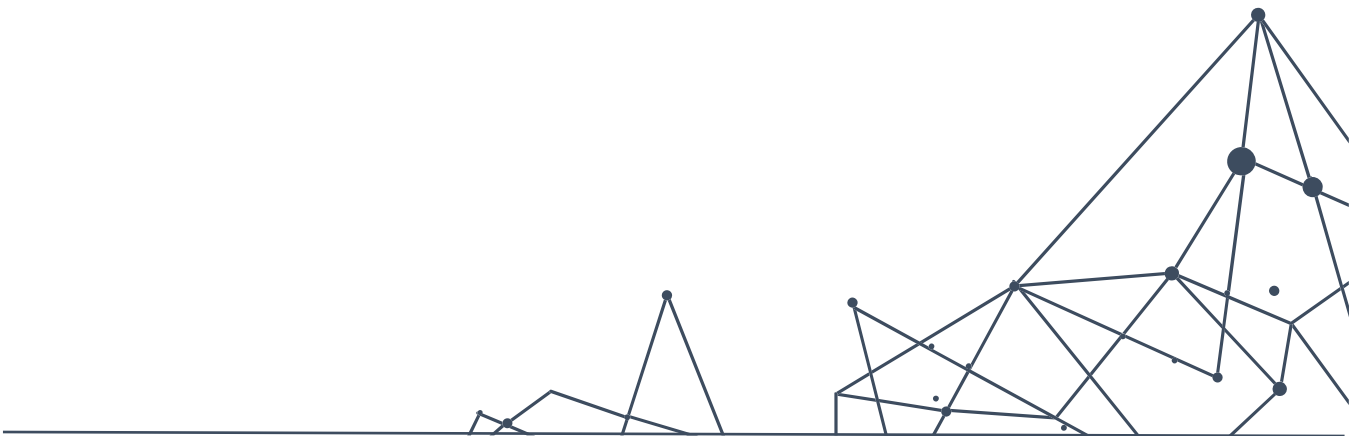


Case Example “Gerd”

Case example for the application of the CGC Roundabout for Digital Transformation as learning material for the preparatory webinar session 4 “Exemplary Application of CGC Roundabout for Digital Transformation”



Introduction

This case study forms the basis for the group work in the 4th unit "Exemplary application of CGC roundabouts for digital transformation" of the preparatory webinar on the application of CGC roundabouts for digital transformation. In this scenario, an employers' search for support in planning HR measures accompanying a digital transformation project in the company is the starting point of the multi-stakeholder guidance process. However, the case focuses on the situation of a learner who is employee at the company of the employer.

Task

Read the case study at your leisure and then discuss the questions on the worksheet with your group partners.

Case description "Gerd"

Gerd is 50 years old and has been working as a technician in a medium-sized printing company for 32 years. Over the years, the skills required for his job have changed little. New machines have been bought and some production steps have been automated, but Gerd's job profile has hardly changed. For many years, his daily routine consisted of preparing printing plates and paper or other materials for upcoming print jobs, manually calibrating the machines and performing maintenance tasks such as cleaning, lubricating and replacing worn parts.

One morning there is a meeting with all the production technicians, called by the management. During the meeting, Gerd hears some news that he doesn't like. The management presents its plans to change the production process to so-called CNC machines in order to remain competitive in the future. A representative of the company that will supply the new CNC machines is also present. In a short presentation, the representative explains how CNC machines work and how the technicians' work will change. Instead of working directly on the machines and skilfully using tools, the presentation includes phrases such as "using CAD/CAM software to program the CNC machines to carry out print jobs" or "monitoring real-time data from the machines via displays". The management then takes the helm and makes it clear that the upcoming changes will require different and new skills from the workforce. The plan is to offer employees training to learn how to use the new machines, and employees are expected to be open to the changes and motivated to take part in the training. The company is currently working on developing the new production process and adapting the job profiles. This will be used to identify the skills required and then to discuss with individual employees who needs what kind of training. He also explains that they will be using the support of an external CGC service. A counsellor will come to the company to help management create job profiles, assess employees' current skills and plan appropriate training courses.

Gerd feels very uneasy. He has been happy with his job so far, liked the established routine and actually hoped that things would continue like this until he retires. Gerd doesn't really want to learn anything new, especially when it comes to digital things. He is not particularly interested in digital devices and applications.

He has a smartphone that he is at war with. He is always afraid of clicking the wrong thing and only really uses it because his social circle, including his volunteer work for a charity, uses messenger services to communicate with each other. His family have shown him how to use his smartphone to make calls and send messages so he doesn't lose touch. Recently, his daughter taught him how to use his smartphone for online banking and set up an email account for him to use on his smartphone. Other than that, he can't do much with it. When the charity recently had to switch to a different messenger service for privacy reasons, his daughter had to help him install and set it up.

A couple of days after the information about the planned changes in the production process Gerd, as all other employees, are invited for personal skill assessment sessions with a counsellor of a local CGC service.

During this first session, the CGC noted that Gerd:

- wants to keep his job, but is resistant to change: its hard for him to consider the possibility to be involved in different work activities or jobs and to adapt to the company's and printing sector changing;
- rejects the idea of investing time and energy in technical and training courses aimed at digital skills development, despite the fact that that he does currently not have the skills to work with the new digital machines.
- claims that he knows how to use essential digital tools and software (online banking, personal email management...) for daily life, but he does not see himself working with digital machines.

The CGC decides to investigate his general level of digital competence with the DISC project's online self assessment tool, how and how often he uses media and technology and his attitude towards technology using the MTUAS. From the MTUAS, the CGC selects specific subscales:

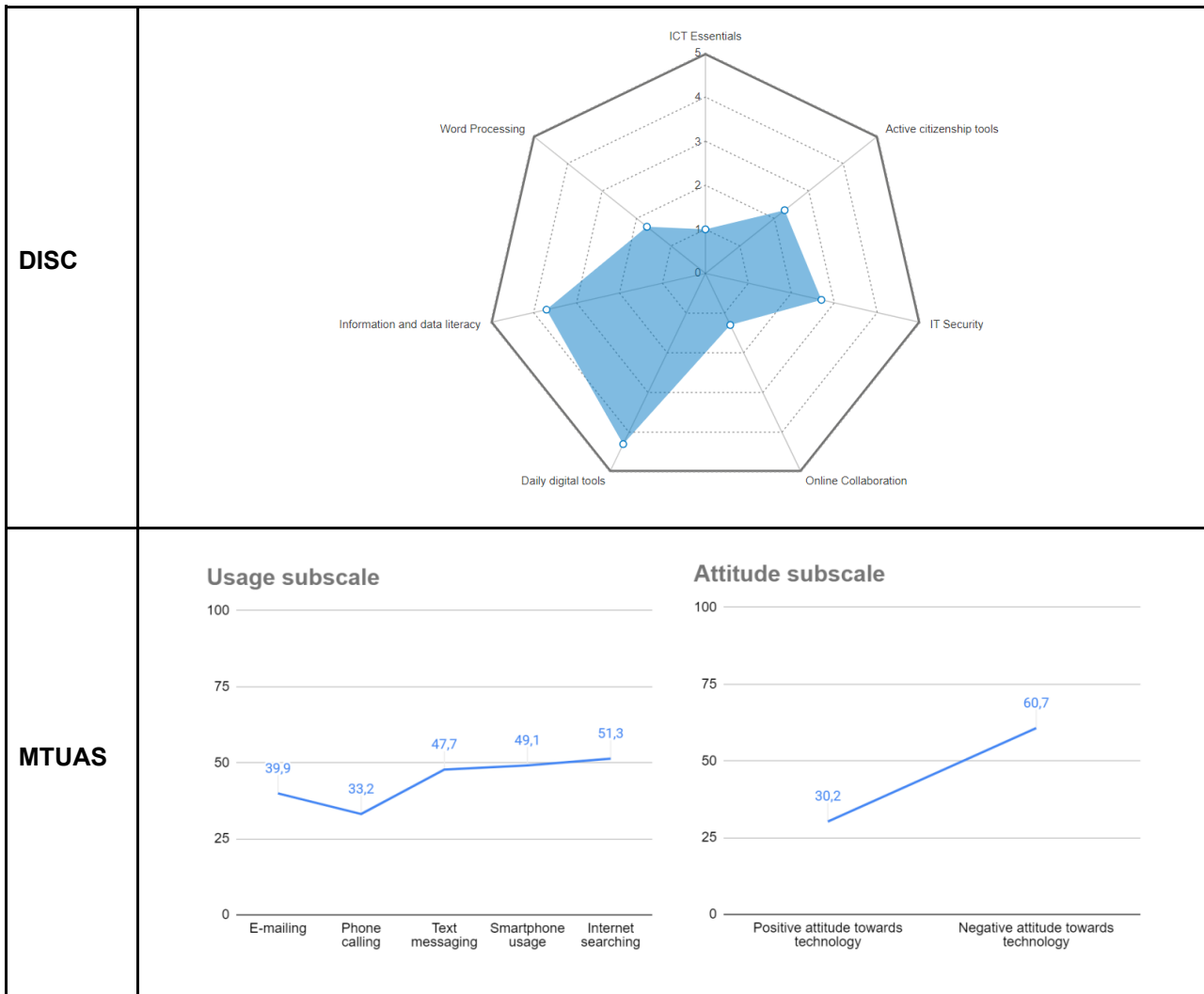
- Usage subscale: smartphone usage, internet searching, E-mailing, text messaging, phone calling;
- Attitude subscale: positive attitudes towards technology, negative attitudes towards technology.

The CGC discusses the results with Gerd during the second session. The CGC explains Gerd the purpose of the assessment process and how the results help the reflective process about planning his professional future.

Since the MTUAS is not an online tool, the CGC prepares an online survey (e.g., Google Forms) entering all the items of the subscales. Gerd answers the online questionnaires with the CGC's computer. In this regard, it should be noted that the counselor took into account Gerd's stated ability about using the PC expressed in the first session (no anxiety toward technology) and the possibility to support Gerd for technical issues, if necessary. After completing the questionnaires, the CGC examines the results described in the graph with Gerd (See tab 1).

Tab 1. Results of the Gerd's answers at the MTUAS

Tool	Results
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Together Gerd and the CGC take a look at the results. The CGC explains the different graphs and what they mean. The CGC explains that the results hint towards a medium level of usage of a smartphone, a rather negative attitude towards technology and a rather low self-assessment in the area of essential ICT competences.

Gerd comments on the results, claiming that he had to learn to use the smartphone due to force of circumstance, as he had to communicate via messaging apps with his daughters and volunteers at the charity in which he is involved. Learning to use the smartphone cost him a lot of effort and was only possible thanks to the support of his family. Given the difficulties he had and since he does not feel confident when it comes to technology, he never wanted to learn anything else.

Then the CGC asks the following questions to support the discussion:

- You said you spent a lot of time and energy learning how to use the smartphone. How do you feel now seeing the path you have taken and the results you reached?
- What do you think if to stay in your current company you have to attend a training course to develop digital skills?

Gerd replies that he is somewhat proud of himself that he managed to learn how to use the smart phone for different tasks. However, he also says that he feels only secure in these specific activities and tasks and that he is very insecure if something happens that is out of his routine use of the smart phone. He specifically mentions notifications that appear on his smartphone that often confuse him or that he simply doesn't understand.

He also emphasised again that he would like to stay in the company but doesn't feel very motivated for a training. Asked for the reason by the CGC, Gerd replies that he was never good at school and was very happy when he was out of school and just doing hands-on work.

The CGC explains to Gerd, that he will discuss the results of Gerd's and the other colleague's assessment sessions with the company management and that he will get back to him soon.

A couple of days later, Gerd is invited for a meeting with the CGC and the company manager. They have discussed the results of the employee assessments and looking at the results and the age of some of the employees, including Gerd, they think that the current digital skill level is too low for being able to train them as full CNC technicians. For instance, tasks in relation to CNC programming with CAD/CAM software demand high digital skills. They don't think that it is practicable to provide them with this kind of training because it would take them a lot of time to get to the required digital competence level and it would cost the company also too much money to provide such extensive training. Also, they say that for the training a positive attitude towards technology use is a requirement to be able to successfully complete the training.

Then the manager points out that he is very satisfied with Gerd's job performance and that he values his work motivation and his commitment for the company and that they were looking into different options on how to integrate Gerd and other colleagues with a low level of digital skills in the new production process.

They drew up a plan with new job profiles. Prior to this, the management's idea was that every employee should be able to operate the machines independently, i.e. from programming CNC programmes with CAD/CAM software to setting up the machines (importing programmes into the equipment, setting parameters) using digital interfaces, diagnosing problems using digital interfaces, and mechanically repairing and maintaining machine parts. In view of the existing skills of the employees, it was decided to develop two complementary job profiles, despite the relatively small total number of employees. In the future, there will be two types of technicians. CNC programmers - they will be responsible for programming and improving CNC programmes, as well as managing the maintenance of the software environment, i.e. installing new updates for the various software programmes. There will also be CNC machine operators and maintenance technicians. Their role includes all mechanical work and repairs on the machines. Activities that require digital skills are limited and mainly relate to importing various CNC programmes that have already been created in line with current print jobs and reading data and error messages from the displays of diagnostic devices.

The management explains to Gerd that, based on the assessment, he will be expected to work as a CNC machine operator and service technician in the future, and whether he can see himself doing this.

Gerd is unsure how to react. On the one hand, he is pleased that his employer is investing energy in finding a solution to how Gerd can be used in the new production environment. However, some elements of the job profile, such as importing CNC programmes or reading data and error codes using digital diagnostic equipment, make him feel insecure.

He expresses his uncertainty and says that he is afraid that he won't be able to do this either. The CGC tells Gerd that it is perfectly understandable that the changes make him feel insecure. He asks Gerd if he thinks it is possible for him to get so good at using his own smartphone that he can use it independently and confidently. Gerd is a little surprised by the question, but replies that he can well imagine it. Since so many people can do it, he is convinced that he can too.

The CGC replies that the activities that Gerd would be expected to do in the new role are not very different from what you would need to do to be able to use a smartphone independently and confidently. From his point of view, it would be a good idea for Gerd to take a short course first to strengthen his basic digital skills, especially in using a smartphone, but also a desktop PC. This should give him confidence in the basic use of digital devices and applications, and also boost his self-confidence. He will then attend a training course offered by the company supplying the new machines, which will be tailored to his future role.

The CGC also explains to Gerd that the two training courses cannot be compared to his school experience. For the basic digital skills training, a provider has been chosen that is tailored to people like Gerd. There are no theoretical lectures, just hands-on practice with the smartphone and the PC. The CGC also assures Gerd that the provider has a lot of experience with this people with low digital competences, and that the training is primarily about gaining security and self-confidence.

Gerd is also reassured about the training on the CNC machines. He is only there with his colleagues from work, all of whom have a similar level of expertise, and the supplier has assured him that it is part of their daily business to familiarise technicians who have never worked with CNC machines before with the new and unfamiliar machines. The training is also carried out on site - in the company, directly on the machines. The company has also talked to employees with better digital skills. In the future, they will be available as mentors when problems arise in the work process that Gerd cannot solve on his own.

Gerd feels well understood in his situation. He is motivated by the fact that they want to keep him as an employee, and the descriptions of the training courses have allayed many of his fears, so he agrees to the proposed plan.

A few weeks later, Gerd starts his first training programme to strengthen his basic digital skills with his smartphone and PC. He notices that it makes a difference whether a family member or friend shows him something on his phone or whether it is done by a trained trainer. He can follow along much better and understand what he is actually doing. He also likes the fact that everyone in the group is at a similar level to him. Before the training, the CGC gave him their contact details in case there were any problems during the training. Fortunately, there were none.

At the end of the training, Gerd receives a certificate of attendance, which he hands in to the HR department as proof that he has completed the training. Although there was no exam at the end of the course, Gerd felt that he had learned a lot and, most importantly, gained a little more confidence in using digital devices and applications.

As a result, he was now looking forward to training on the CNC machines with curiosity rather than apprehension. Although the training itself was a little tighter than the previous basic training, he felt he was in good hands here too. At the end there was a test of sorts, where each colleague had to carry out a specific job on the CNC machines independently. Gerd did extremely well and is very proud of the certificate he received confirming that he had successfully completed the training.

Once all the employees had completed their training, they were all invited to a meeting with the company manager and the CGC. They discussed how the completed training programmes had gone and where the employees and management felt further training would be useful. The CGC also asked the participants to give him feedback on how they felt about his involvement in the process.



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The creation of these resources has been (partially) funded by the ERASMUS+ grant program of the European Union under grant no. 2022-1-DE01-KA220-HED-000089003. Neither the European Commission nor the project's national funding agency DAAD are responsible for the content or liable for any losses or damage resulting of the use of these resources.