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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY GUIDELINES



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ABOUT THE PROJECT



It aims to improve the skills of practitioners involved in the development of social skills of young people with autism, through the use of virtual reality (VR)-based tools.

PROJECT TOPIC

Diversity



Autism



Digital Tools

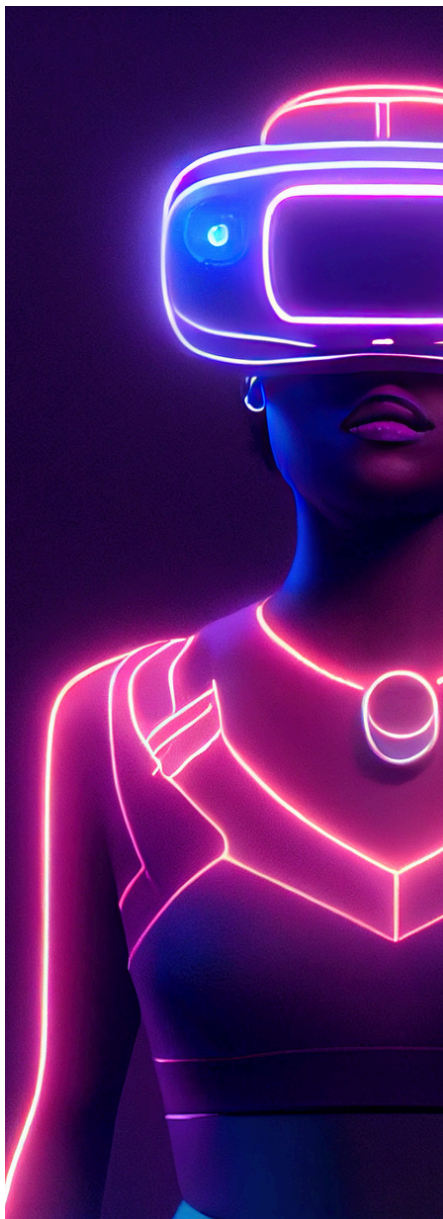


Inclusion



PREVIOUS ACTIVITY

Held in Granada in
October 2023



During the meeting, innovative training methodologies were developed in order to transfer skills in the use of VR tools to the operators that work with people with autism.

Four learning videos were developed

THEMES

- Digital Methods for Inclusion
- Guidelines to help autistic people develop communication and language skills
- How to help child with autism apply the skills learnt in the VR protected environment
- Risk Management

WHERE TO FIND VIDEOS

<https://www.bellezzadieci.it/digital-methods-for-inclusion/>

II INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY

These were three days of activities focused on implementing effective communication strategies to engage parents of autistic children in practices using virtual reality (VR).

WHAT WE DID

On the first day, the group focused on project presentation and analysis of training objectives, creating a sense of cohesion among participants. During the afternoon, virtual reality tools were explored, and outdoor activities were conducted to strengthen teamwork.

The second day delved into emotional communication strategies and empathy, with significant meetings with associations working with autistic children and their parents. Assertiveness and sensitive topic management were also addressed.



On the third day, guidelines for an effective communication strategy were developed, with particular attention to creating a digital manual. Teamwork was essential to define targeted strategies and create a comprehensive final product. The day concluded with result sharing and future activity planning.



OVERALL, THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THESE DAYS WAS TO PROMOTE THE INCLUSION AND WELL-BEING OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SENSITIVE AND EMPATHETIC COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

communicative strategies that encourage parents to entrust their children to professionals who apply new methodologies based on virtual reality

WHAT WILL WE SEE IN THESE GUIDELINES?

- Education and Awareness
- Practical Demonstrations
- Testimonials and Case Studies

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- Focus on Results
- Empathetic Communication
- Safety Focus

- Collaboration with Experts
- Adequate Communication Channels
- Personalization

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1. Education and Awareness:

- How can we educate parents about the new methodologies based on virtual reality and their benefits for children?
- What key information should we share with parents to help them understand the effectiveness of virtual reality in their children's education?

2. Practical Demonstrations:

- How can we organize demonstration sessions that involve parents and help them understand the virtual reality experience?
- What elements should we include in the demonstrations to ensure that parents fully experience the benefits of virtual reality for their children?

3. Testimonials and Case Studies:

- What testimonials and case studies can we use to illustrate to parents the positive results achieved through the use of virtual reality in education?
- How can we present these testimonials convincingly to ensure that parents feel confident in entrusting their kids to professionals using virtual reality?

First of all, we should provide families with educational options: hub, documents, software that they can use, make time arrangements for the meetings, tutorials, etc.. An eventual timeframe for all proposed steps and activities can be a set of 4 two-hour sessions extended in a period of two months.

Then we can show them short videos with children with ASC using VR technologies/software, first to the parents alone and then together with their children. We should select examples of good practices that have been already used by similar groups of people.

Key information shared should be clear, understandable, with both benefits and critical issues addressed (what to pay attention to) and always transmitted with sincerity. Of course the technology proposed has to be really helpful for them in the everyday life and education of their children.

Practical demonstration can happen in two phases: one with the parents alone and a second where they use it with their children.

We create a game about the daily routine, concerning the ASC person's autonomy and self-care (i. e. wash my teeth, take a shower, prepare a snack on their own, take the bus/public transport, etc). Most transitions can be structured and help as scenarios for a VR simulation, as they are a part and often challenge for autistic children's everyday lives: with VR, possible solutions can be offered with gamifications elements.

To ensure that fully experience the benefits of virtual reality for their children we can use elements such as sound, colors, feel and allow for customization for every user in the software requirements and standards.

Most important is to ensure that all sessions, demonstrations and testimonials are attended and accompanied by professionals, both technical and therapists (psycho-motor, speech, occupational, psychologists, social operators, counselors) that support, help and guide the users in every step of the experience.

There are good practices (like the one presented to us by Dposa, the organisation of parents, concerning the use of VR in a scenario concerning waiting for the bus) that have been tried and used in the transfer of social skills through VR to real life situations and we should find them in people with similar concerns and issues as the population we are addressing. Their descriptions and presentation of these experiences are the best testimonies, because situations can be identical and challenges of autism are universal.

It is important to feel part of the same process, to do something together and parents will appreciate if they can be included in the setting, where they can play using the VR with their children. It's essential for them to have fun together and in company of their kids, maybe finding out that the fun is the same whether you are neurotypical or neurodiversive

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4. Focus on Results:

- What tangible results can we highlight to show parents how virtual reality can improve their children's learning and development?
- How can we effectively communicate the effectiveness of virtual reality in achieving these results?

5. Empathetic Communication:

- How can we demonstrate empathy towards parents' concerns about the use of virtual reality in their kids' education?
- What strategies can we adopt to respond empathetically to parents' questions and concerns?

6. Safety Focus:

- What safety and supervision protocols can we highlight to reassure parents about the safe use of virtual reality by their children?
- How can we effectively communicate our commitment to safety during virtual reality sessions?

Introduction:

Virtual reality (VR) technology has emerged as a promising tool in enhancing children's learning and development, particularly for those with unique needs such as autistic children. In this discourse, we delve into the tangible results, empathetic communication strategies, and safety protocols surrounding the use of VR in education.

Focus on Results:

Virtual reality offers tangible benefits for children's learning and development. By introducing parents to VR technology and highlighting its advantages, such as improved social interaction skills and increased engagement, we can effectively communicate its effectiveness. Real-life testimonials and practical guidance on integrating VR into children's learning routines can further reinforce these results.

Empathetic Communication:

Understanding parents' concerns about VR usage is crucial. By acknowledging their worries and emphasizing the evidence-backed advantages of VR, we demonstrate empathy towards their concerns. Collaborative efforts, active listening, and providing a supportive environment can help address parents' questions and fears, fostering a sense of trust and understanding.

Safety Focus:

Ensuring the safe use of VR by children is paramount. Highlighting safety and supervision protocols, such as selecting age-appropriate apps, setting time limits, and adult supervision, reassures parents about their children's well-being. Clear communication of safety measures, encouragement of compliance, and open channels for reporting concerns underscore our commitment to safety during VR sessions.

In conclusion, virtual reality holds immense potential in enriching children's learning experiences. By focusing on tangible results, empathetic communication, and safety protocols, we can empower parents to embrace VR as a valuable tool in their children's education journey, ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all.



7. Collaboration with Experts:

- How can we involve experts in the field of education and psychology to validate the virtual reality-based approach in the eyes of parents?
- What experts should we involve to provide additional credibility to our communication strategies?

8. Adequate Communication Channels:

- What communication channels should we use to effectively reach parents and engage them in the conversation about virtual reality in education?
- How can we personalize our messages to adapt them to the different communication channels used by parents?

9. Personalization:

- How can we adapt our communication strategies to respond to the individual needs and interests of parents?
- What questions can we ask to better understand the specific concerns and motivations of parents regarding their children's education?

10. Follow-Up and Continuous Support:

- How can we provide continuous support to parents after they have decided to entrust their children to professionals using virtual reality?
- What measures can we take to maintain an open dialogue with parents and collect their feedback throughout the process?

Collaboration with Experts:

Incorporating expertise from the realms of education and psychology is essential to validate the use of virtual reality (VR) in education to parents. Here's how we can involve experts and enhance credibility:

Firstly, we need to actively listen to parents' concerns and aspirations regarding their children's education. By understanding their perspective, we can tailor our approach effectively. Engaging experts from diverse fields such as pedagogy, neuropsychiatry, psychology, and virtual reality technology will provide comprehensive validation. Collaboration with professionals like teachers, neuropsychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists, and VR experts ensures a multidisciplinary approach, bolstering credibility.

Adequate Communication Channels:

To effectively engage parents in conversations about VR in education, we must utilize various communication channels tailored to their preferences:

- Social media platforms offer a dynamic space for sharing information, including posts, photos, and videos, while also encouraging feedback.
- Demonstrations and trials allow parents to experience VR firsthand, fostering understanding and trust.
- Hosting interventions, talks, and conferences in educational settings and community associations widens the reach of our message.
- Leveraging word-of-mouth by ensuring parent satisfaction with our methodology promotes organic and positive dissemination of information.

Personalizing messages across these channels is key. Empathetic language on social media fosters emotional connection, while direct contact options such as phone and email cater to individual needs. Events provide opportunities for face-to-face interaction, enhancing rapport.

Personalization:

Understanding individual needs and interests is paramount. Conducting surveys enables us to identify specific concerns and tailor support accordingly. Personalized assistance, coupled with attentive listening, demonstrates our commitment to addressing parents' unique challenges.

Questions aimed at understanding concerns and motivations include:

- What are your current difficulties in educating your child?
- What short, medium, and long-term goals do you have for your child?
- How satisfied are you with your child's education on a scale of 1 to 5?
- How do you rate the effectiveness of current educational methodologies on a scale of 1 to 5?
- Do you believe improvements can be made? If so, what changes would you suggest?
- Do you feel educators require further training or new skills?
- Are your child's educational needs being met, along with your needs as parents?

Follow-Up and Continuous Support:

Maintaining ongoing support post-engagement is crucial. Regular progress reports every two months allow parents to track their child's development and provide feedback. A designated contact point ensures accessibility for addressing concerns or making adjustments as needed.

Additionally, conducting follow-up evaluations every six months via surveys enables us to assess progress and gather feedback for continuous improvement. This open dialogue fosters transparency and ensures parents remain engaged partners in their child's educational journey.

WHY ARE THESE GUIDELINES IMPORTANT?

These guidelines are crucial as they ensure a comprehensive and effective approach to introducing virtual reality into education. Involving experts, using appropriate communication channels, personalizing messages, and providing continuous support address parents' concerns, build trust, and maximize the benefits of virtual learning for kids.

DISTRIBUTION FORMATS



EBOOK



GUIDE



PRIVATE GROUP



PODCAST



VIDEO



LIVE

IT IS IMPORTANT TO ASK OURSELVES

- What strategies and resources are available to ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment for autistic children?
- How can we adapt educational programmes and extracurricular activities to meet the specific needs of autistic kids while promoting their social involvement and individual development?
- What measures can we take to raise awareness among members of the community and promote understanding and acceptance of autism?



THANKS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

Digital Methods for the inclusion

