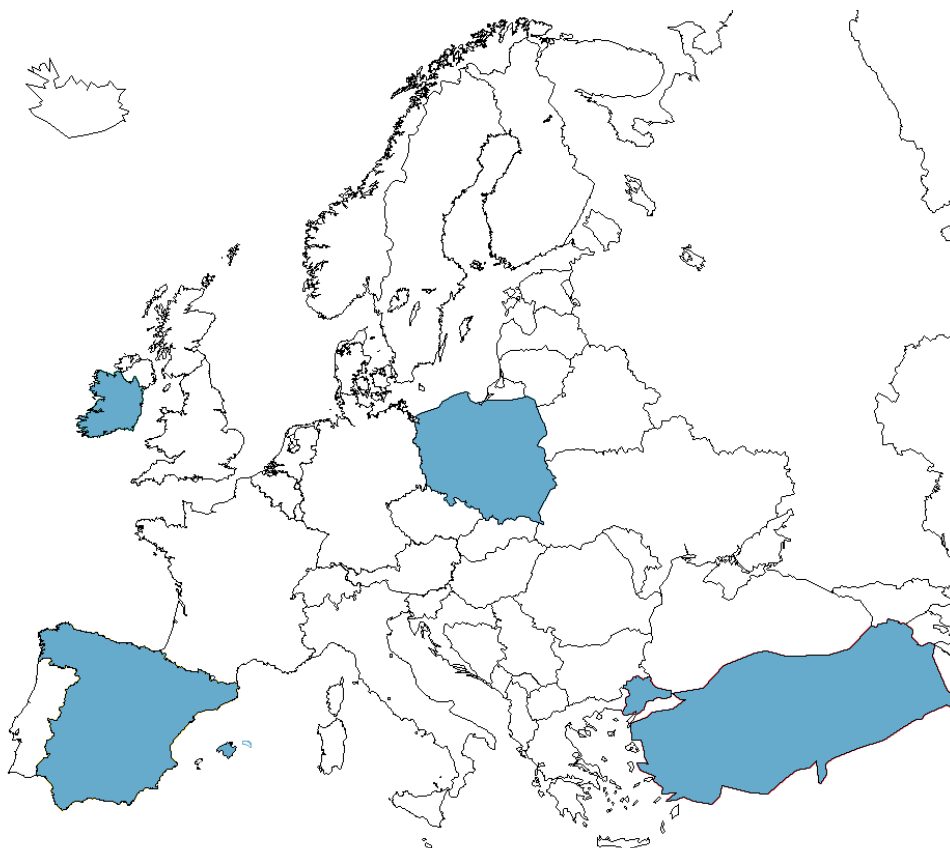Ireland
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GOOD PRACTICES MANUAL

NEW TEACHING METHODS FOR ADULTS

Grundtvig Learning Partnership

2013-1-ES1-GRU06-73708

"New Teaching Methods For Adults"

Good Practices Manual

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Introduction

This manual is the outcome of a Grundtvig partnership between the following institutions:

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In all these institutions we have adult students who come to our organizations to learn in order to obtain a qualification which will enable them to access the labour market or to obtain new skills for their current or future job. We need to find new teaching methods to encourage learners to engage with the education system, and give the learners the confidence to believe in their own learning potential.

Consequently, the main aim of this partnership has been to find and explore new methods for teaching adults, thus encouraging learners.

During the project period, the participating organizations have explored how to best utilize tools such as film, e-learning, mobility and team work, exploring the use of creative ways to present traditional content. We have dedicated time to examining each method and we have implemented the different methods in our classes.

The results have been in some cases "magical", in some others maybe not as good as expected, but they were all positive, because "trying" is already a good start. We encourage teachers to try some of the ideas proposed. Choose one of the methods according to your teaching style, you should adapt it to your students and school environment and bear in mind that some methods apply to some subjects better than others. Have fun!

Team Work

"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success" Henry Ford

Introduction

Teamwork is the process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal. It is usually a crucial part of a business because it means that people will try to cooperate using their individual skills and providing constructive feedback despite any personal conflict between individuals.

Apart from being a main aspect in any successful business or task, teamwork is also a process which happens naturally in any human life. That is, in any community like the members of a family, a group of friends, sport teams, etc.., people always need to have interaction with each other to perform any specific task. And these groups usually work well when their members feel equally responsible for the group, remain flexible to accomplish team tasks, promote communication, and exchange data. It is usual in these groups to value decisions for the benefit of the group which is deemed effective due to the mutual cooperation.

How and when did the human being turn into a social animal? Two million years ago the Homo erectus sets himself up as a successful predator thanks to the ability of becoming organized and therefore to take advantage of the power of the group. So it was then when cooperative hunting began and that required a careful planning for attacks on animals, and task specialization: some men were hunters, some prepared food, others made the hunting tools or the dressing from animals' skin, etc.,

In all this evolutionary process LANGUAGE plays a fundamental role. Language means sharing knowledge through a code of sounds which became little by little more sophisticated and accurate. The Homo sapiens will arise from this evolution. He was a new kind of man who learned behaviors rapidly to adapt himself to the environment, and for this purpose he started using language to evolve instead of just paying attention to inherited habits. This is how human culture was born.

Today, companies are using terms such: motivation, leadership, cooperation. It is a "new language" that confirms that team work is considered a key concept for any successful business. So economic rewards are directly related with nonmaterial aspects that also become rewarding. This new trend to foment teamwork in modern companies, is as successful now as it used to be in the past.

In a classroom, teamwork does not happen easily because it is not a natural environment, so some training is required in order to teach students to work cooperatively. Students will also have to change former working habits into new ones. So from being passive one must turn to be active, from taking isolated decisions one must adapt to the involvement of others, from

directing one must go to guiding, from competing to collaborating. Also, knowledge and processes must be shared.

Project group in Poland

As previously stated, teamwork has become an important part of the working culture and many businesses now look at teamwork skills when evaluating a person for employment. Therefore, it is important that students learn to function in a team environment so that they will have teamwork skills when they enter the workforce. Also, research tells us that students learn best from tasks that involve doing tasks and involve social interaction.

Collaborative learning should be in included in almost every classroom, but some teachers struggle with having students work cooperatively. There are a number of reasons for this struggle, which include the need to develop good team exercises and the added difficulty in assessing the individual performance of the team members, among others. This is where understanding how to teach effective teamwork becomes a crucial task for the teacher.

General Characteristics Present In Teamwork

These are the characteristics usually present in team work:

Cohesion and flexibility.
Team cohesion in a group refers to the personal attraction each member of the group has to the group and the task.
Flexibility is the ability to maintain an open attitude, to accommodate different personal values and to be receptive to the ideas of others.

Open communication.
Open communication is the ability to get access and shared information resources. For this to happen, it is necessary to work in a comfortable atmosphere.

Coordination.

Coordination is the skill to perform interpersonal actions in the right order to achieve complex tasks. Usually the team leader takes care of this.

Confidence

Confidence happens when everyone relies on the others.

Complementarity and interdependence.

Both terms refer to groups whose members regard each other´s skills as valuable contributions to complete the whole project.

Balance in members´ participation.

All members of a team will share tasks and will bring the group mutual support work to achieve the final objective.

Benefits

Team work enables the members of any group with a common goal to benefit in ways that otherwise would not be possible as individuals.

- To get better results.
- To learn to listen.
- Individual work quality improves.

This is all due to an improvement in communication with others.

Effective Communication

When working as a team, all members share the responsibility of communicating in the best possible way for the benefit of all. This means, that each member must be listened to and feel that his or her ideas are understood and respected. This is the only way communication can be effective.

No one is a perfect communicator. Throughout people´s lives, little patterns and habits are developed. Some of these habits are helpful, while some create challenges when working with others. In most cases, it is just little habits that get in the way of solid teamwork.

When communication among the members in a group is not so fluent, it is important to have in mind some ideas to develop good communication skills.

To start, it is important to have one conversation at a time. It is important to give the other person focused time. A good idea is to take turns or raise hands up to talk.
Secondly, it is necessary to develop effective listening skills. Not only should the members of a group be able to speak effectively, also they must listen to the other colleagues´ words and engage in communication, on what the others are speaking about.

It is also important to remain flexible to other´s opinions and accept critics. But what is also relevant is not to judge others, make fun of them or try to moralize. In order to listen, the first thing to do is to stop talking, show interest and ask questions. In addition, it is necessary not to jump immediately to conclusion and control anger. Moreover, any reaction should be to ideas and not to the speaker.

This all relates to the concept of "constructive feedback", which means to communicate regarding the effect that the message has on the other members of the group, that is, the response of the group to a message or an activity. Regarding this, a good way to show recognition and give a positive feedback is to thank people´s effort in public.

Thirdly, a core communication skill is assertiveness. Being assertive is the quality of being self-assured and confident without being aggressive. Some people seem to be naturally assertive but it is also a learnable skill and mode of communication. Because assertiveness is based on mutual respect, it is an effective and diplomatic communication style. On the other hand, aggressive communication is not effective and causes conflict and people´s rejection. Also, passive people may cause frustration and anxiety too.

Finally, it is also important to take into account that words are not the only elements present in communication. In fact, when we are talking face to face nonverbal elements such as the voice tone, intonation, body language, eye contact, etc, take a very important role. That is, whether somebody is listening or speaking, looking into the eyes of the receptor can make interaction more effective because eye contact conveys interest and encourages the other to be interested.

The Process Of Decision Making

Decision making is the study of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of the decision maker. It is one of the central activities of management and it is a huge part of any process of implementation.

Every group has to make decisions sooner or later. Many decision-making processes have been proposed. The one by Pam Brown of Singleton Hospital in Swansea, Wales, breaks decision-making down into seven steps:

1. Outline your goal and outcome
2. Gather data
3. Develop alternatives (i.e. brainstorming)
4. List pros and cons of each alternative
5. Make the decision
6. Immediately take action to implement it.
7. Learn from and reflect on the decision.

In all the process it is recommended to listen carefully before acting. It is necessary not to rush and to evaluate the different alternatives and their consequences before making the decision. It is advisable to speak in a friendly tone and be assertive, that is, having in mind the idea that my rights are as important as the others' rights. All this can contribute to attract others to our positions.

There are several group decision-making techniques, for instance: consensus, voting-based methods, the Delphi method, Dotmocracy, etc.

Consensus decision-making, which tries to avoid "winners" and "losers", is the most desirable technique but it is not always possible. Anyway, the group should also decide about this aspect taking into account that democratic voting schemes reduce the decision making time and limit interpersonal conflict at a cost of decreased acceptance and participation on the decision made. In contrast, when the team members are fully informed and participate actively in decisions, they are usually more committed and productive.

Individual Commitment Level

In a group, not everybody does the same thing, there are roles: a meeting leader, a recorder, members… This works like a football or volleyball team in which some players defend and others attack. There are also tactics to be successful, so that the team can score a goal.

Each team member has specific talents and by combining individuals in a team all these talents are assembled and that may have an enormous impact on the group´s results.

Ideally, partners should be able to negotiate their roles to perform unique and meaningful tasks and team roles could be interchangeable because the first stages are dedicated to exploring and learning. Later on, roles should be kept.

These are some of the roles in a group:

- A **team leader** who coordinates and prepares the agenda, makes contact between the team and the instructor, takes care of administrative details, etc. A leader usually has energy, determination and initiative to overcome obstacles. They recognize the skills of each individual and how they can be used. They are outgoing people who have to be careful not to be domineering.
- **Team members** should consider their participation as a prior responsibility which must be chosen carefully. They are usually partners with complementing abilities who share information and contribute to the progress of the task.
- The **recorder** takes notes and makes sure the process is being documented. He can also encourage the silent members, maintaining a balanced level of participation for all the members. He can also measure individual performance and select tasks.
- The **evaluators** are the logical, analytical, objective people in the team and offer dispassionate critical analysis. They contribute when it is the time of crucial decision making. They may suggest alternative ideas.
- There may be other roles such as **a researcher, a specialist, the ideas person**…

Conflict

Although team work releases stress and improves the working environment, misunderstanding and conflict are possible and almost inevitable. Conflicts arise due to factors like seeking power in a group, poor communication, weak leadership, clashes due to behavioral style frustration, lack of motivation, lack of help by the team, etc.

When individuals do not get what they expect, there is always a certain degree of discomfort. Sometimes a member regards his tasks as too easy or too complex or feels he or she is being exploited while others are just going with the flow.

Holding different views is natural and healthy but not when it prevents the group from developing. The positive side about conflict is that it can help to clarify ideas and it gives an opportunity to change disturbing situations.

Some early indicators of conflict are body language, disagreements all the time regardless the issue, and comfortable environment and lack of motivation.

Conflict management

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim is to enhance learning and group outcomes. Properly managed conflict can improve group outcomes.

Conflicts are inevitable, but in a sense, conflicts also mean that people care enough to disagree strongly. They are usually likely to happen when new ideas or new commitments are introduced.

Conflicts must be handled as soon as possible because, with the passing of time, they only get worse. Unsolved problems make people unhappy while working in a team, resulting in antagonism and communication breaks down. Thus, the productivity of our team will be inefficient.

There are three key aspects to conflict management: awareness of the self, awareness of team dynamics and taking action.

Fortunately, there are various conflict resolution techniques that may be put into practice like competing, win-win, compromising, withdrawing, smoothing. And there are also methods such mediation, negotiation and arbitration. Usually, mediation and negotiation are the most common ones in the classroom.

Some basic tips to assure the good functioning of a team are:

First, simply asking nicely (and the word nicely is important) if somebody does not understand the other person's point of view can make a great difference. It should also be thought that maybe there is a good reason why a person acts in a particular way.

Second, it is necessary to forget about solving the problems in terms of winning or losing, because when a member of a group gets the outcome expected regardless of what the other person wants, the underlying issue has not been solved. Sooner or later it will reappear.

Third, it is important to see the problem in neutral objective terms: what is actually happening. And just talk about facts, without trying to guess others´ reasons or thoughts.

Fourth, speak calmly about the situation with the other person, a hurried conversation at your desk between emails and phone calls will not solve anything. It is desirable to be in a quiet place with enough time to address the issue.

Fifth, it is important to attend the meeting prepared to listen carefully to the other part, even if it is difficult to do so. By the same token, ask the other person to listen respectfully to what you have to say, without interrupting.

Sixth, to clarify the disagreement, a technique which may be used is to have the other part write a bulleted list on a white board of conflicts and issues. Sit quietly while the person explains each point. When the person finishes, go down the list, and restate the complaints in your own words, as accurately as possible. This way, the person knows that you have listened and understood. Then write down *your* list and reverse the process. Usually just being clear on the conflict makes it easier to find a mutual solution.

Seventh, the intersection between positions is what should be looked for. One should be able to see the issue from the others´ point of view as a first step to understand the conflict. Then it is necessary to identify positions´ overlap, and eventually select issues. First, those points of view close to the intersection and later, the more distant ones. Anyway, it is always a good idea to take the part of responsibility of the situation, because usually everyone has done something wrong helping the conflict to arise. A great way to move forward is saying why it is worth it to solve the conflict. Describing the consequences of the problem may help this process and it also helps members of the group to look beyond themselves and see the conflict "from the outside."

Eighth, you can propose a solution, or more than one, you can let it open. The type of sentences useful for this would be:
:
"What would be a good exit?"
"Would this solution be acceptable for both?"

Also, specific actions may proposed so that to be implemented right away. For example:

"I suggest that we introduce a new rule about disagreements, instead of arguing in front of the whole group, members should meet and talk about it in private, does it sound good to you?".

Ninth, inviting the other person to discuss the issue may be the hardest part of the whole process. It can be remarkably hard to take that first step. It is worth doing it, anyway!

Tenth, some conflicts cannot be solved by the participants alone, and mediators can help, a neutral person with some training in conflict solving, someone who is trusted by the people involved. That could be for example the teacher, the headmaster, another respected member, etc.

Finally, do not forget that being too rigid, self-centered, always angry… are dysfunctional behaviors we have to know how to deal with in advance. It is wise to develop a team agreement on how the group will resolve a conflict if it occurs (it will).

There is no guarantee that by doing all this, a conflict will be resolved. It may, or it may not. But even if it does not work, one has the satisfaction of knowing that everything has been tried to rise above the conflict for a while and try to address to it positively and constructively. No one can ask more from the situation.

No matter what happens, it always good to remain optimistic. It helps!

Stages in team building

Forming. A high degree of guidance is needed. Processes are still not well understood and individual roles and relationships are still to be set definitively. Members cautiously explore the boundaries of acceptable group behavior. They search for their position within the group and test the leader guidance.

Storming. It is probably the most difficult stage for the group. Conflicts among individuals can occur and little by little the atmosphere can deteriorate from a first willing friendly team to confrontation. It can vary from disagreements to open confrontation. Members become impatient about the lack of progress but are still inexperienced with working as a team. Much of the members´ energy is focused on each other instead of achieving a goal.

Norming. There is a growth in cohesiveness, less oversight is needed, the members develop their skills and the performance begins. Emotional conflict is reduced as relationships become more cooperative. The team is able to concentrate more on their work and start to make significant progress.

Performing. By this stage the team members have discovered and accepted each other´s strengths and weaknesses, and learned what their roles are. Members are open and trusting and many good ideas are produced because they are not afraid to offer ideas and suggestions. They are comfortable using decision making tools to evaluate the ideas, prioritize tasks and solve problems. Much is accomplished and team satisfaction and loyalty is high.

Building a team code

It is a good idea to develop a code, some kind of rules of behavior, which all members should adopt, maybe by signing. The main purpose of this is to prevent many possible conflicts which may arise among the group members. The code should be negotiated at early stages of team working and it should be visible for everyone.

This is an example for a **code** of cooperation:

1- Every member is responsible for team progress and team success.
2. Attend every meeting: Be on time.
3- Come prepared.
4- Carry out assignments on schedule.
5. Listen carefully and show respect for contributions of other members
6. Pay attention about disruptive behavior.
7. Criticize ideas not persons.
8. Only one person speaks at a time.
9. Everyone participates no one dominates.
10. Be short, avoid long anecdotes and examples.
11. Ask when you do not understand.
12. Have fun.

Conclusion

Nothing affects more the prosperity of an individual than a community around with whom one can cooperate peacefully.

One of the main basis of our society is free cooperation, that is, I do what I do best and I receive the best from others. In this way, everyone profits from others´ efforts. People´s lives can only develop fully among society. We choose to meet and exchange something (information, energy, matter, feelings, whatever) when we agree on that with somebody else, because we both think we get some kind of benefit.

Since working as part of a team can improve learning and is a much needed skill in today´s workplace, some team exercises should be included in the classroom. With well -planned out tasks, careful guidance, and close observation, instructors can make team exercises extremely valuable learning experiences.

Good Practices Involving Teamwork In The Classroom

Introduction

Ten years ago a group of Maths teachers working in a Secondary Education High School tried to find different methods and new techniques for teaching Maths due to the continuously poor results of students. Then, for the first time, this group became aware of teamwork teaching techniques, and from then on, this way of working has always been present in their classes.

Now, we want to put the teaching techniques and procedures coming from this group of teachers into practice so that more teachers may benefit from this former experience. Moreover, we want to implement this teamwork method experience in our classes for adult students.

We are choosing to work with two different methodologies, "Learning Together" (Johnson and Johnson, 1975) and "Jigsaw" (Aroson, 1978). We like the first one because it is very flexible and the teacher assumes a strong role as conductor of the groups. We also choose the second one for organizing the groupings.

It is necessary to point out that a teacher who wants to apply teamwork in the classroom does not have to read a lot of specialized bibliography to start. The most important aspects at the beginning will be common sense, the teacher´s experience and ability to observe.

First of all, some recommendations:

- Teamwork will not be the magic solution for all problems in the class and it should not be present in all the lessons of the school year.
- It is also important to have in mind that it is not always possible to implement teamwork in a class. And sometimes, even if possible, it cannot be implemented to the degree we would like to. The varied circumstances in a classroom may favor or be detrimental to develop teamwork tasks. And it is a teacher´s job to determine whether it is possible or not to apply this method.
- Working with groups of adults may be difficult because they already have a rigid idea about their own intellectual capacity, motivation and attitude. All this may lead them to rigid thoughts about their own limits, which may or may not be truth.
- Sometimes difficult students or circumstances may eventually work very well together despite the initial difficulties (storming period). It is recommended to give the class a chance even if the beginning is hard.
- Teamwork is an excellent method when the students in a class have the attitude to cooperate (empathy, cohesion, balance, open communication, etc.) together with a high academic motivation.
- It is necessary to bear in mind that students may also get tired. And sometimes, groups of students may start working not so well due to other academic circumstances. The pressure experienced due to final exams or graduation may break cooperative dynamics which will transform into others based on individualistic aims and competition. The teacher should know by observation when to stop team working.

Groupings

- Groups should be small, formed by three, four or exceptionally five students.

Procedure

Teachers form groups after a couple or three weeks of classes that allow them to get to know the students. Groups must be heterogeneous according to factors such success/failure, facility/difficulty, attitude towards studies, genre, conflicts, etc.

Each group will be assigned a "group of experts" according to different lessons. These experts will be students from each group who will explain certain contents to the rest of members of their group. In this case we do not apply completely the Jigsaw technique, because we recommend the group of experts to learn contents in a different classroom and directly from the teacher.

For instance: In a classroom with seven groups of **four** students each we would design **four** tasks to be worked and explained by the group of experts. We would choose one student from each group for each task so that all members of each group participate in teaching and learning.

Timing And Spatial Organisation

The group distribution must be in a way that it is easy for the teacher to walk around and it should also guarantee that each group can work independently from the rest.
In each group, proximity and comfort among members are also necessary.
It is also important to take into account that each group working with experts will need the time necessary to obtain good results. This difficulty leads us to two different solutions:

- We apply teamwork just for some contents and a shorter period of time so we can cover all the curriculum, or most of it.
- We select contents and procedures so that we cover the most important parts of the curriculum and 2/3rds of the contents may be taught team working.

Group Assessment

Apart from other assessment tools, direct observation assessment and interview of all the groups´ member is highly recommended.
Teachers should not only supervise and value the groups according to the acquired contents but they also they should value the skills developed by students to work in a group, that is, open communication without aggression, know and respect of the partners, the skill to listen, the ability to help to others when they need it, the ability to ask for help, the ability to solve conflicts, etc.

There are numerous observation guides and assessment material published. But we also recommend the use of a "Group Diary". The diary is used at the end of each session when a student, each session a different one, will explain to the rest of the class about the task accomplished by the group, doubts, difficulties they found and the number of times they required the teacher´s help due to the group lack of skills to act as a group. The teacher will assess not only the information given by the student but also the accuracy and neatness to elaborate the Diary reflect how well the group works.

Group Grading

Sometimes the exam may be the only grading tool. But it may also be interesting to pose group tests, raise the individual final mark when the group performs well (that is, the average mark of all the members of a group is passed).

Project Group in Ireland

Short Films

Introduction

A short film is any film not long enough to be considered a feature film. No consensus exists as to where that boundary is drawn: the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences defines a short film as "an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits".

Project Work

The term feature originally applied to a film longer than a short subject, but shorter than a standard feature film. The increasingly rare term short subject means approximately the same thing. An industry term, it carries more of an assumption that the film is shown as part of a presentation along with a feature film. Short is an abbreviation for either term. Short films can be professional or amateur productions. Short films are often screened at local, national, or international film festivals.

Short films are often made by independent filmmakers for non profit, either with a low budget, no budget at all, and in rare cases big budgets.Short films are usually funded by film grants, non profit organizations, sponsor, or out of pocket funds. These films are used by filmmakers to prove their talent in order to gain funding for future films from private investors, entertainment companies, or film studios.Longer and shorter films coexisted with similar popularity throughout the early days of film. Short comedies were especially popular, and typically came in a serial or series. Even though there was often no set release schedule, these series could be considered somewhat like a modern TV sitcom – lower in status than feature films but nevertheless very popular.

Animated cartoons came principally as short subjects, as did newsreels. Virtually all major film production companies had units assigned to develop and produce shorts, and many companies, especially in the silent and very early sound era, produced mostly or only short subjects.

Short films had become a medium for student, independent and specialty work. Cartoon shorts had a longer life, due in part to the implementation of lower-cost limited animation techniques, but also declined in this period.

Short Films In Education

We are now living in the age of the moving image. The advent of the digital revolution and the Internet, the proliferation of mobile devices, which allow us to easily and proficiently capture moving images; the introduction of inexpensive, accessible and user-friendly editing tools; and the emergence of distribution sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, have changed the way moving images relate to society, education and language learning forever. One very interesting development from all these technological advances has been the renaissance of the short film. Shorts films have traditionally been treated as the poor cousins to feature films at film festivals, but the ability to create and screen shorts easily and cheaply has spawned hundreds of dedicated film festivals throughout the world. The rise of the short film can be exploited in teaching.

Showing an entire feature film may lead to cognitive overload and is often not possible given timetable constraints. In contrast, a short film can be shown in its entirety easily within one class and they can have a great dramatic impact than feature films which often lose their impact by being viewed over a number of sessions. As most short films are under 10 minutes long (many are less than 5 minutes long) they can be shown several times in a single class and students are able to acquire detailed familiarity with the film which is important in enabling students to critically engage with the material on a meaningful level.

As most short films can be watched several times a different focus or activity can be used for each viewing which may help to develop integrated skills. Another reason why short films are particularly useful to exploit in a single lesson is that they offer a complete narrative in a short space of time, which captures and holds learners' attention quickly.

Students love stories and short films tell innovative and creative stories. Short films are not necessarily governed by the same conventions as feature length films. Short filmmakers, because they are normally independent and not tied to big film studios, often have greater scope for innovation and creativity which leads to more imaginative forms and narrative structures.

These departures from more familiar forms and narrative structures very often provoke stronger responses from students, than the more traditional narratives of feature length films. Another characteristic of many modern short films which can be exploited in teaching is that they are silent or quasi silent. These short films with little or no dialogue can be used for different language levels as the stories they tell are accessible and easy to. They also give students the opportunities to supply the language by creating their own written or spoken dialogues.

Most short films focus on a single idea or make a single statement which make them excellent prompts for oral communication. Many short films deal with contemporary subjects and issues such as bullying, racism, sexism, consumerism, and human rights which are very relevant to the lives of students who are perfectly capable of dealing with these subjects.
Short films which deal with these contemporary issues are excellent beginning points for engaging student in a wide range of conversational activity such as pairwork, group work, discussions, debates and roleplays stimulating an active engagement with language.

Short films are excellent prompts for writing activities such as writing an alternative ending, writing a prequel or a sequel, or writing from the perspective of one of the characters, which students find engaging and motivating.

Because of their accessibility, brevity, innovation, and creativity short films are the perfect vehicle for using moving images in learning classroom and for promoting both written and oral communication.

How To Use Short Films In The Classroom

Effective teachers understand that film demands disruption. Think of film (and video, its contemporary counterpart) as another form of text. No mathematics teacher would hand a student an algebra textbook and say, "Figure it out."

English classes are not booklists, with the teacher merely handing out a stack of books to be read for the year. But when we simply hit "play" and settle back for the next 90 minutes, meaning is left to the student to extract, and the teacher's role is reduced to that of projectionist.

Ironically, the rise of short videos is changing all that. YouTube, CitizenTube(YouTube's news and politics blog), and Google Videos, to name a few, have made video sharing easily available to teachers around the world. Almost daily, educators in any middle or high school can be found using news reports, documentary segments, and hard-to-find film clips from previous decades to infuse into their teaching.

These short videos are used to transport students to locations across the world and to demonstrate concepts that cannot otherwise be practically illustrated in the classroom. Film can be a powerful tool for meaningful learning. The key to using film effectively is preparation. Maximize learning opportunities by encouraging students to become active viewers.

Before Viewing

- Preview the film. Determine whether you will use the entire film or only relevant segments to illustrate objectives in your curriculum. Remember: There is no rule that requires you to use an entire program—even a few seconds of film can spark discussion.
- Prepare the classroom environment and film equipment. Choose lighting to enhance the learning experience. Low light increases the dramatic effect while brighter light may be helpful in eliminating distractions. Position yourself to maximize your "facilitator" role.
- Stimulate students' pre-existing knowledge. Have students write down what they are sure they know about the subject and what they think they know. After viewing the film, have students revise their lists based on what they have learned. Divide students into small groups. Have each group summarize what they know about the subject and identify questions they may have. After viewing the film have the groups answer questions, discuss new information, and formulate new questions.

During Viewing

- Give students a focused viewing assignment. Focused viewing questions can make viewing more meaningful by encouraging active viewing and evaluation of content. Give students a task, something they are responsible for remembering or writing down, such as interesting facts or personal responses.
- Show one short segment or story at a time and direct the learning experience. Focus clearly on a defined theme or topic. A short segment can be shown at the beginning, middle, or end of an activity. Analyze and discuss each segment thoroughly.
- Encourage student awareness of production values and techniques. Have students watch for elements of the production, such as camera angles, shot choices, and music. What effects do these techniques have on the viewing experience?
- Press "Pause" often. Take time to identify and clarify what the students are watching. Stop to consider answers whenever a question is asked. Clarify new vocabulary as it is used.

After Viewing

Draw on the following activities to extend and deepen the viewing experience.

Brainstorm

Present a key concept or vocabulary word from the film, such as "local food." Ask students to form small groups to generate related concepts, such as foodshed, seasonality, and farmers markets. Select one student in each group to record the ideas and present a summary of the responses to the entire class.

Categorize/Clarify

Divide students into groups to develop a conceptual word map. Begin by having students write a key word or concept from the film in the center of a blank "map" on chart paper. Have each group build the map by adding words related to the key word and arranging them in categories. Discuss each diagram and supply additional information to extend students' understanding of the concept.

Compare and Contrast

To encourage students to compare and contrast ideas, divide them into groups to make Similarities/Differences Charts. After presenting two ideas, have each group discuss similarities and record them on chart paper. Then have students discuss and record differences. Have students present their charts. Discuss each diagram and supply additional information to extend their understanding of the topic.

Four Corners

Choose four main concepts or topics in the film and label each corner of the room with one of the concepts. Ask the students to choose a corner of the room that matches the concept they wish to explore. Plan an activity for the students in each corner and have them share their findings with the class.

Jigsaw

Divide students into groups of four, assigning each student a number (from 1 to 4). While watching the film, assign each group member a different concept to understand or a question to answer. After viewing the program, have each group member teach what he or she has learned to the other members of the group. Have each student quiz the group members until everyone understands how the pieces of the "puzzle" fit together to make one "picture."

Think-Pair-Share

After asking a follow-up question to the film, have students pair with a neighbor to discuss their responses. Invite students to share their responses with the whole group.

Quick Write

In a personal journal or on paper, have students write quickly for two minutes to record any thought that comes to mind after viewing a segment or program.

Project Group in Spain

Benefits Of Using Short Films In The Classroom

Any company, organization, or individual hoping to take advantage of digital video to educate or entertain the populace or promote a product should have a video strategy in place before springing for the time and equipment involved. Educators, of course, are not exempt from the core tenets of solidifying a viable video strategy — especially when it comes to how exactly they plan to take advantage of everything the medium offers.

Online and open source

Because both the online and the open source movements within education have been enjoying steady growth, it behooves any adherents to fire up their cameras and film a few lectures or other helpful videos. Educators who upload for public consumption on a personal site, iTunes U, YouTube Education, or other hosting resource reach a range of students beyond their rosters. For plugged-in teachers hoping to extend their influence and bring knowledge to the world, or an exclusively digital classroom at the very least, videos add a more human element.

Accessibility:

Incorporating videos into lessons offers a viable method for students with special needs, such as ADD/ADHD or conditions requiring home-bound stints, to retain and remember information. The medium makes for one more way to ensure all learners enjoy access to educational materials that meet their specific requirements. Just make sure to remember subtitles or transcripts for hearing-impaired students.

Archiving:

Teachers who require their students to shoot videos might want to keep a digital archive of their work to show off to future classes. Or, of course, tracking their own creations for online, open source, or hybrid classrooms. For the older crowd needing to convert their educational VHS and DVD presentations to digital media, a video strategy ensures these materials make the transition from generation after generation of learners.

Visual learners:

Some students just learn better when viewing animated diagrams, step-by-step how-tos, and other video lessons. A well-balanced classroom spreads things out across different styles, and creating short movies and lectures reaches out to those with a more visual outlook. Cobbling together a video strategy addresses the inherently diverse nature of students' methods for soaking up information.

Greater classroom connectivity:

Video conferencing with Skype and other VOIP services entices educators who want their students to tackle collaborative projects with counterparts from around the world. In fact, Skype itself provides its own social media site for teachers wanting to connect and set up everything from foreign language exchanges to group poems. It's an engaging strategy opening up some amazing and unique opportunities that weren't available a decade ago.

Low-cost field trips:

Thanks to the recession, schools must watch on helplessly as their funding dissolves, which means their field trip budgets come up scant. But infusing video into the classroom transports students to notable sites around the world, with some museums even offering free virtual tours. All the benefits of exploring and experiencing sans the transportation and admissions fees! The principal will love you.

Video games:

Video games are not the scourge society seems to enjoy painting them as — in fact, they actually possess some incredible educational benefits when wielded correctly. Immersive environments particularly engage digital natives, but even the FBI takes advantage of the technology for training its agents. Not every video strategy necessarily needs to think about the whys of Wiis, of course. But instructors might want to research the positives behind serious gaming and strongly think about introducing it into the syllabus.

Addressing absences:

No matter who has to stay at home — teacher or student — pre-recording lectures, instructions, or assignments helps close up any gaps in lessons that result from absences. All video strategies, even the most rudimentary, should keep this not-so-little perk in mind. Learners experiencing prolonged illnesses or other situations requiring homebound education will especially appreciate not being left behind. Alternately, streaming video with Skype, Google Talk, or another VOIP provider works as a stellar alternative.

Supplementary materials:

Snag Films, Hulu, and Documentary Heaven all stream free documentaries. And, of course, the Internet overflows with open source lectures from some of the world's most prestigious institutions, like MIT, Stanford, and Yale. Take advantage of this rich bounty of educational delights to drive home points made in classroom lectures, or add to students' overall knowledge of the subject at hand.

Nurture creativity:

Long before digital video became a thing that existed, students shot videos as classroom assignments. There's no reason now why this can't continue! Rather than forcing paper after quiz after exam after worksheet, challenge them to share what they've learned creatively, through film they've shot and edited themselves. And with technology being what it is and everything, whipping up something awesome proves easier and faster than ever.

Digital literacy:

Both students and educators alike benefit from building their digital literacy skills, regardless of whether or not they hope to share their videos online. With a working knowledge of computers, the Internet, and peripherals — not to mention how to operate and navigate them all safely and responsibly — such a desirable suite of abilities in countless industries today, getting learners familiar with the core tenets as early as possible proves a fruitful endeavor. Even the older set looking to score new jobs or simply keep their mind occupied can pick up a few things through video and other digital resources."

Conclusion

Today, technology plays an important role in every part of our lives as in education. 21st century education requires effective student integration in the classes. To be able to support this, we, educators are searching and trying to apply different techinuqes to teach in an inductive way and to make teaching and learning process more effective and sustainable.

As we know, short films are very popular in our age and it gets people's attention. So, to use short film in classes helps teachers not teach in classical way, make the teaching-learning process effective and enjoyable, create modern teaching atmosphere in classes and so provide long term learning.

Learners cannot adapt to the lessons, get bored during the lessons so can not motivate because of the classical methods. Because of the facts mentioned above, educators are searching new teaching methods, approach and techniques to be able to keep learners in the classes, to get their interests longer and make teaching process more enjoyable.

Short films which is one of new methods mentioned above will be very useful and effective teaching way to the learners if they are used properly.

Mobility as a Learning Tool

Introduction

Mobility refers to any activity where students engage in a coordinated structured learning activity outside of the classroom environment and away from their area of residence / study. It usually refers to transnational activity but in certain cases may take place within the student's home country. However learning mobility is normally transnational, physical and for a broad range of learning purposes, be it in organised programmes or on the learners own initiative.

It is a crucial part of mobility that it serves a learning purpose, this is regardless of the mobility type. The mobility period can vary significantly but should be sufficient to serve the learning purpose and this purpose should be recognised and agreed by the parties concerned. The mobility can be organised either in a framework of an existing program (e.g. Erasmus+), or takes place upon the initiative of the learner or individual college.

Learning mobility normally involves physical travel but in some cases virtual mobility can be useful in promoting and complementing the physical mobility. The experience is of course a different one but virtual mobility could play an important role in the internationalisation strategy of an institution.

Mobility activities may also be applied to staff at all levels within an institution. As with student mobility the learning objectives of the mobility need to be clearly defined and understood. Staff mobility may include activities such as attending training courses, job shadowing and teacher exchange or work placement. In all cases the staff involved should have the opportunity to share their learning experience within their home institute and in so doing act as a multiplier for new ideas and best practice.

At a college level mobility activities can play a vital role in the internationalisation strategy of the institution. Progressive colleges should be outward looking, willing to take on areas of best practice from other institutions, show an awareness of labour market and educational needs not just in their home country but in neighbouring countries and seek to establish partnership networks to further these educational goals. Colleges within the EU need to be cognizant of EU educational policy and the shifts in national policy that will result from this.

Student Mobility

The first step in planning any student mobility must be to establish the learning aims. This in itself will dictate the type of mobility and the duration. At this early stage it is important to ask some basic questions:

- Why do we want to organise a mobility activity?
- What duration of mobility would be necessary to achieve our aims?
- Can the practical logistics of the mobility be met eg? Financial cost, time constraints?
- Do we have / need partners in this activity?
- Will the participant have a mentor / trainer?
- How can we ensure the quality of the mobility?
- What monitoring / evaluation procedures can we put in place?

A clear answer to all of these questions is a prerequisite for a successful mobility. The importance of preparation for the mobility candidate is also a key ingredient in achieving the mobility aims. Potential obstacles to a successful mobility should be identified and steps taken to minimize the impact of these obstacles. In the case of transnational mobility obstacles may include cultural differences, language difficulties, separation from friends and family etc. Of course in many instances overcoming these same challenges may represent the aim of the mobility.

At this point it might be prudent to explore some of the aims of mobility. These aims may include:
- Fieldwork
- Work Placement
- Vocational Training
- Cultural Learning
- Language Learning
- Achieving greater independence
- Improving self confidence
- Improving communications skills
- Increasing awareness of Job and training opportunities abroad.

Tourism Students on Mobility in Lanzarote

A question that needs to be addressed prior to any mobility activity is to what extent the aims of the activities above can be met. Which ones are deemed key to the success of a particular mobility? What duration of mobility will be necessary to meet these aims? And of course these questions must be asked based on the learning needs of the student, their current abilities and level of experience. For example sending a student to a country where a different language is spoken will be likely to improve a students language skills but the degree of improvement is likely to rest on the current language ability of the student, the duration of the mobility, the level of immersion into the target language and away from the mother tongue and the level of commitment of the student. Likewise with vocational training, a student who can bring substantial skills to the mobility experience, who shows a high degree of commitment to the learning process and who is open to embracing new methods or techniques employed in the partner country will gain most significantly from the time spent abroad.

Generally improvements in language ability, vocational skills and cultural learning are measurable. But other potential benefits are not easy to measure but may be clearly evident from the student after a period abroad. Teachers often report that students show a greater degree of enthusiasm for the vocational subject, an improvement in self confidence, greater levels of independence and improved communication skills. There can also be improvements in Information Technology skills as students often use modern communications media to keep in contact with family and friends while they are abroad.

Staff Mobility

As is the case for students there is a need to establish the aims of staff mobility. These can include:

- Accompanying and support activities for student mobility
- Preparatory visits, mobility management activities etc.
- Teacher training – training courses, seminars
- Teacher placement or exchange – Job Shadowing, learning new teaching methods etc.
- Management mobility – sharing of best practice

Staff mobility can be of key importance to student learning outcomes as staff can and should act as multipliers for the learning achieved during a mobility period. However the institutional attitude and approach to staff mobility is critical in gaining the maximum benefit from the staff member's experience. Staff members who engage in mobility activities need to be supported by their institution both in the preparatory activities necessary to

Teacher VET Quality Lifecycle Management Project

make any learning experience a success, through the mobility itself and crucially through the dissemination of the learning following the mobility phase. All too often staff who engage in mobility activities are left to carry out the planning and preparation in their own free time, obstacles are placed in the way of the actual mobility such as difficulties in covering their classes and other work while they are away and little thought is given to the dissemination activities that could be of benefit to the institute as a whole.

Successful staff mobility will bring new teaching and learning strategies to the sending institution, can lead to curricular change, a broader approach to subject delivery, increased awareness of the needs of industry and the wider community, an awareness of cultural differences in some subject areas and above all a fostering of an open minded approach to curricular content and subject delivery. At its best teacher mobility becomes an integral and indispensable part of the teachers Continued Professional Development. Or putting it another way, it is wise for every educational institution to embrace the concept that Lifelong learning is as much a key strategy for the teachers as for the students under their care.

Internationalisation strategy of an institution.

Student Mobility Project

The dominant culture of an educational institution can act as a catalyst to learning or a barrier to it. The culture of most educational institutions develops over a long period of time and often without clear planning or leadership. Changing the culture of an institution can be a slow process, but in examining the culture of an educational institute consideration should be given to an Internationalisation strategy. Educational institutes do not operate in isolation, while there is no denying the value of education for its own sake, the needs of the student to be educated to fulfil a meaningful role within society is of major importance.

An educational institute should strive to be outward looking as part of its culture, to be conscious of the needs of the labour market both nationally and at a European level, to be aware of developments within curricular policy, delivery strategies, educational credit transfer systems and other developments at a European Union level.

The European Union ECVET strategy is a good example of developments. A knowledge of the European qualifications levels, how credit transfers work within this system, the uses of memorandum of understanding between institutions, the need for quality assurance strategies, an understanding of competence based education systems and an understanding of how a students learning experience can be enriched by taking some of their modules in another country.

In essence a learning institute that engages with student and teacher mobility will already have taken large strides towards an Internationalisation strategy. It is also wise to remember that incoming mobility is a vital component of an institutions Internationalisation strategy as incoming students and teachers bring their experiences with them, can interact with large segments of the student and teacher population within the host institute and their very presence can create an atmosphere of belonging to a larger multicultural educational family.

Strategies and tools for successful mobility

As we have already stated a successful mobility activity is founded on careful planning. Once the initial aims of the mobility are identified the process of planning for the mobility activity should begin. The planning will involve the selection of participants, the selection of a host partner, agreement as to the activity to be undertaken, strategy for the preparation of mobility candidates, agreement on practical aspects of the mobility such as travel arrangements, insurance, accommodation, and procedures for monitoring, mentoring and evaluation of the mobility activity.

Teacher Mobility Project

The selection of a partner is a very significant step and of course very much depends on the aim of the mobility and the type of participating student. In most cases a partner who has experience in working with students at a similar level and of a matching vocational area will produce the best results as a partner of this type will already possess a high level of understanding of the needs of the students, their existing competences

and the strategies that might be employed to help them progress further along the learning pathway. The presence of a dedicated coordinator within the partner institute is also of key importance as this will lead to clear lines of communication and a high level of understanding between the institutes as to what the needs of the students may be. In many cases student needs can go beyond the narrow confines of vocational learning as for some students there may be limited or no previous experience of living in another country. Indeed in some cases the student may be away from family for the first time and the experience of having to look after themselves may be a key element of the mobility experience. It is important that the host institute has a clear picture of the students who will be coming to them both in terms of their vocational ability but also in terms of their likely personal needs.

The choice of participant is also very important. It is always the case in education that you need to start from the position the student is currently at and help them to progress on from there. There is nothing to be gained by setting unrealistic expectations for a student. In some cases there may be significant vocational learning during mobility but for some students the improvement in self confidence, awareness that they can survive in another country, or improved awareness of cultural difference can all be legitimate learning goals. Of course the commitment of the student to the mobility activity is very important and the earlier the student can engage with the process the better. The use of a formal application and selection procedure is desirable as it creates an early engagement with the student and also creates a sense of achievement in being selected to participate in the mobility activity and from the institutions point of view the expectation that this sense of achievement will lead to a high degree of student commitment to the mobility. Where students travel as a group the balance within the group is also of key importance. The old adage that one bad apple can spoil the barrel is certainly true of student groups on mobility activity.

Preparation for mobility falls into three distinct categories. The first of these can broadly be described as cultural preparation. This involves making the student aware of what to expect while they are abroad. It may include such basic practical information as the currency used in another country, how to buy travel tickets, attitudes to punctuality and absence from work, which side of the road to drive on etc. In fact anything that may be helpful in allowing the student to integrate successfully into the life of their host area. Cultural preparation should also allow the student to examine more complex aspects of culture, it should make them aware of any interesting facts about their host area, for example important local historical events, interesting buildings, contribution of the area to art or music, in fact anything that can led to a higher level of learning during the mobility. Cultural preparation can be carried out through formal classes but also by encouraging the student to undertake their own research, perhaps meeting with visiting students from the region in question or talking to students of their own institute who may have travelled to the host area in the past.

The second category is language preparation. Clearly the degree to which language learning can be achieved prior to mobility will depend on the student's previous knowledge of the

language, the time available and the commitment of the individual student to engage with the process. In an ideal situation the student would already have a good working knowledge of the language of their host. In this instance the period abroad would act as a catalyst towards achieving a high level of fluency. The language preparation could concentrate on vocationally orientated language learning, where the student will be introduced to complex technical terms from their vocational area and can strive to add these terms to the vocabulary that they already possess. However in many cases the student's prior knowledge of the language of their host is limited or non existent. In this instance the first priority is to give the student the necessary skills to cope with their language limitation. They should be taught a vocabulary which allows them to be polite and respectful to their host, that can assist them to order food from a basic menu and which will allow them to recognise basic signs or safety information. For example the words for "stop", "exit", "danger" etc. are important in every vocational area.

Vocational preparation is perhaps the most neglected in the period leading up to mobility. Of course the student is already engaged in learning within their chosen vocational area and so a large amount of preparation is taking place, but in order to help the student towards gaining the most from their mobility experience it would be useful if vocational preparation specifically geared towards the mobility work placement or training could be given. This of course requires a prior knowledge of what activities the student will carry out during the mobility but this information should be apparent from the training agreements and from contact with the host institute. A good foundation can provide a solid base upon which the students vocational learning abroad can be built. It is also important that the student learning is valued and that the student is given the opportunity when they return to class to share the learning experience with others. This has the dual benefit of allowing the student to act as a multiplier for the learning acquired and also helps to reinforce the learning for the student themselves.

When arranging mobility activity with a partner institute it is important that there is clarity as to what role each partner should play. This is essential both for the fostering of a good relationship between the partner institutes and a guarantee of quality for the mobility participants. The use of tools such as training agreements or memorandum of understanding can be very useful in this task. A training agreement should outline

Students on Mobility in Sweden

clearly the tasks that the host partner will undertake in respect of the specific student and applies whether the student is training inside of their institute or has been

allocated to a work placement. The agreement should outline the tasks the student will be required to do, how these task will be mentored and how any necessary evaluation will take place. In circumstances where the student may be completing one or more modules of their study abroad and where the host institute is responsible for the provision of and marking of assessment material then a more detailed agreement is necessary. This usually is presented as a memorandum of understanding between the institutes. In this case there is a need to ensure that quality standards and levels of study are clearly understood between the partners so that a module of study completed at the partner institute can be accepted as being of the same standard as one being offered at the sending institute. Cooperation at this level requires very good lines of communication between the partners and a mobility flow of teaching and management staff between the institutions is very desirable in order to ensure that quality standards and curricular levels are well understood.

In all cases of mobility a well defined system of mentoring, monitoring and evaluation of the students is essential for a successful learning outcome. Within the partner institute it is likely that such a system already exists for their own students and it is usually not difficult to incorporate visiting students into the existing system. Where students are on work placement a system will often need to be put in place. This should involve the mentoring of the student by an experienced staff member in the same vocational area, a monitoring of the student progress by the employer and a regular process of communication between the employer and the host institute to ensure that the placement period is achieving its goals and to take timely action where things are not progressing as expected.

Of course the duration of the mobility will have a significant impact on the amount of preparation that it is practical to provide. A short mobility of perhaps a few days may simply require a clear statement of aims, a small amount of vocational preparation and a work-plan and evaluation mechanism for the students, where as a mobility of a number of months would require extensive planning and preparation, memorandum of understanding between the partners, mentoring, monitoring and evaluation strategies and dissemination strategies.

Dissemination

Once mobility is completed it is wise to look at the dissemination strategies that may be employed in respect of that mobility. Dissemination serves a number of functions including:
Promotion of the Internationalisation strategy of an institution
Creating a positive image of the institute in the media
Encouraging other students or teachers to participate in mobility
Promote the use of those who have participated on mobility as multipliers for the skills and knowledge acquired
Promote a sense of achievement for students and teachers who have participated on mobility
Reaffirm the value gained from funding of mobility activity

Dissemination can be formal or informal, internal to the institute or public. At its simplest it may involve creating a forum for students and teachers who have been on mobility to share their experiences with their colleagues. It may mean informing all staff and students of an institute as to the benefits of mobility activity, or it may mean publically promoting the mobility activities of an institute through the local newspapers, through the use of posters,

Student Mobility in Turkey

through local television or radio or to other educational providers in the region of the sending or host partner.

Through the whole process sight should never be lost of the fact that mobility activity and the Internationalisation strategy of an institution is present first and foremost to serve the educational needs of the student. To ensure that they can gain the very best vocational skills, that they have an awareness of the opportunities available to them in other countries and that they acquire an open mind when confronted by others in their vocational area who come from areas where there is a different language and culture.

Case Study 1

A group of four students are to travel to the Netherlands on a Leonardo da Vinci funded mobility project. The students will stay three weeks with our partner institute and during that time will take part in fifteen days of work placement related to their vocational area of study, animal care. The initial activity in preparing for this mobility is in two parts. Firstly students are informed of the opportunity available and application forms are made available to them, once the applications have been submitted a selection process in initiated to choose the students most suitable to participate on the mobility. Attendance, academic record, language skills, willingness to learn and take direction, team working skills are amongst the criteria used in the selection process. Secondly, and in parallel to the selection process, agreement is reached with the host institution regarding the dates of mobility, type of work placement, mentoring and monitoring provision and accommodation arrangements. As these students will use their period abroad as part of their overall course certification an evaluation procedure and quality control is also agreed. This is formalised through a memorandum of understanding between the partners.

Having completed student selection the participating students begin a series of Cultural preparation and language classes. As the students have not studied Dutch in the past the language classes concentrate on basic phrases and vocabulary. Some vocationally orientated language learning is also included with a particular emphasis on issues related to the safety of the students and the animals they will be working with. During this period the coordinator in the college makes final travel, accommodation and insurance arrangements for the group.

In this instance the students were accompanied to The Netherlands by a teacher. This teacher checked to make sure that the accommodation was of a good standard and visited each of the employers to get a first hand experience of the students work placements. The students arrived on a Saturday and had time on that day and also on the Sunday to settle in and enjoy their new surroundings. They all began work on Monday. No problems were encountered with this group of students but if issues had appeared a process was in place between the host institute and our college to deal with them. Issues that have arisen in the past with other mobility groups have included, homesickness, lack of punctuality, students being unhappy with the work they were asked to do, minor injuries at work, communication / language difficulties, issues with food etc. It is important that procedures to deal with these are in place. Students work with a mentor and an evaluation of their progress took place at the end of each week. A more formal evaluation was completed on their final day in the workplace when formal evaluation documents were completed by the employer.

Upon their return home each student produced a report about their experience and this helps to inform the college about good and bad features of the mobility with the aim of improving future student experience. Students reported significant improvement in their vocational skills, improvements in self-confidence, better language skills and a willingness to seek

further work abroad in the future. Many students also reported good social activity and friendships that will last well beyond the projects duration.

Case Study 2

A group of 12 students participated on a Comenius bilateral project to Kusadasi, Turkey. The students were mainly drawn from our Tourism and Travel course and the main aim of the project was to make students aware of the benefits and practicalities involved in Cultural tourism. The mobility was to last for 12 days and there would be two accompanying teachers for the projects duration. The selection process for this mobility was carried out in a similar manner to case study 1, the student's ability to work as part of a team taking on a slightly greater significance in the selection criteria.

Student Mobility in Turkey

In this instance the students were to play a lead role in the project management so they were involved from a very early stage in communicating with students in Turkey in order to schedule a work-plan and general itinerary. This communication was mainly by email but was also carried out using Facebook and WhatsApp. Students were fully aware of the objectives of the project and were to arrange the mobility schedule so that these objectives could be achieved. Teachers in both countries played a monitoring role in this process.

During the mobility phase students continued to play a lead role in the organisation of activites. They were responsible for the collection of data, for making presentations, for organising guided tours (and acting as guides for the visiting group), organising meals and other practical arrangements. In this way students were given "ownership" of the mobility activity. A similar pattern was followed when the Turkish students came on mobility to Ireland.

As part of their work-plan students were to integrate project evaluation and steps were to be taken if necessary to keep the project work on schedule. Because students have such a level of ownership of the mobility activity issues around discipline, sharing of workload, meeting targets etc. do not arise.

Upon completion of the mobility students had not only gained additional knowledge in the Tourism vocational area but also in areas of management. As they worked closely with the

Turkish students close friendships were formed and through these students experienced a much greater understanding of the culture of their host region. The enthusiasm generated by the project also had positive effects once the students returned to normal classes.

Student and Teacher comments after a mobility activity

"It was the best three weeks of my life" (Student following a Leonardo Da Vinci project)

"I met so many people and made friends. It really helped me to improve my German language, I am so much more confident speaking it now" (Student following a Leonardo Da Vinci project)

"Can I go again" (Student following a Leonardo Da Vinci project)

"I was work shadowing in Sweden and was so surprised at the different methods they use there to deliver my vocational subject" (Teacher following a Leonardo Da Vinci project)

"I loved the culture of the place, there was so much to see and do" (Student following a Comenius Bilateral project)

"I did a complete training course in plastic welding and am now properly certified in this. This is a great addition to my CV" (Student following a Leonardo Da Vinci project)

"Working for a newspaper office in Germany really gave me a great insight into the work of a professional photojournalist" (Student following a Leonardo Da Vinci project)

"The teachers here were so welcoming, I was able to spend a lot of time inntheir classes and they were very generous in sharing curricular information" (Teacher following a Grundtvig project)

"There was so much I didn't know about Turkey, I only thought of it in terms of my previous holiday experience, but I have learned so much on this trip" (Student following a Youth project)

"I was offered a full time job by my work placement employer and plan go back once I finish my course" (Student following a Leonardo Da Vinci project)

"My language skills were poor and the mobility trip really made me aware of this. I have just signed up for Spanish classes and will return to Spain again once I have a better grasp of the language" (Student following a Leonardo Da Vinci project)
"It was great to work with teachers from other countries on so interesting a project" (Teacher following a Grundtvig project)

E-learning and blended learning

Introduction

Learning is a means to the goal, not the goal in itself. Adult learning has become more important in today's knowledge era because lifelong learning is a necessity in all venues. Adults seek out learning experiences in order to cope with specific life-change events. Although adult learners have been found to engage in learning for a variety of reasons: job advancement, pleasure, love of learning etc., it is equally true that for most adults, learning is not its own reward. Learning has become integrated with working. Adults need to be able to integrate new knowledge with what they already know, that means active learner participation. There is also a need, in the area of Adult Education, to develop and use more flexible teaching methods (e.g e-learning, blended learning) that reach out to the target groups. Delivering teaching and learning remotely became much more easier thanks to technology. In recent decades, the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for educational purposes has increased, and the spread of network technologies has caused e-learning practices to evolve significantly.

The evolution of distance education, as a result of new technologies and the contributions of computer scientists to the field of education along with the conceptualisation of education as a lifelong process, poses a major challenge for educational institutions: how to integrate these technologies into their organisation and, especially, into their teaching. From simple occasional use of ICT to reinforce face-to-face teaching and learning to the use of virtual environments for courses conducted completely online. E-learning could be considered a natural evolution of distance learning, which has always taken advantage of the latest tools to emerge in the context of technologies for structuring education.

General characteristics

E-learning
There are many different definitions for the term:
- E-Learning can be defined as learning facilitated and supported through the use of information and communications technology. It can cover a spectrum of activities from the use of technology to support learning as part of a blended approach (a combination of traditional and e-learning approaches), to learning that is delivered entirely online. **Whatever the technology, however, learning is the vital element.**
- E-learning is electronic learning, and typically this means using a computer to deliver part, or all of a course whether it's in a school, part of your mandatory business training or a full distance learning course.

- E-learning includes numerous types of media that deliver text, audio, images, animation, and streaming video, and includes technology applications and processes such as audio or video tape, satellite TV, CD-ROM, and computer-based learning, as well as local intranet/extranet and web-based learning.

In the early days it received a bad press, as many people thought bringing computers into the classroom would remove that human element that some learners need, but as time has progressed technology has developed, and now we embrace smartphones and tablets in the classroom and office, as well as using a wealth of interactive designs that makes distance learning not only engaging for the users, but valuable as a lesson delivery medium. Like society, the concept of e-learning is subject to constant change. In addition, it is difficult to come up with a single definition of e-learning that would be accepted by the majority of the scientific community. The different understandings of e-learning are conditioned by particular professional approaches and interests.

M-Learning (Mobile learning)

M-Learning means using mobile devices including mobile phones and other handheld devices to facilitate teaching and learning. m-Learning is one of the latest developments in e-Learning, which takes advantage of mobile devices for learning on accessible portable platforms, ideal for people on the go or for taking your training away when you can't access a regular computer. The term has more recently been adopted for the use of e-learning on mobile device platforms, meaning smartphones and tablets like the iPad or Samsung Galaxy. In particular, younger generations are growing up using mobile devices to access the Internet and complete tasks as part of their school and college work. Using a mobile device to deliver training means that learners can learn anywhere they have their phone available, so they're not restricted to an office computer if resources are tight.

Blended learning

A method of delivering teaching and learning that involves both face-to-face teaching and the use of technology together at the same time. For example the internet may be used to support a session that includes interactive tasks for the learner. Generally speaking, blended learning means a course or subject in which students have required face-to-face learning sessions with their teacher of record and then are free to complete their remaining coursework remote from the face-to-face teacher. Online learning is the backbone of student learning when the students are located remotely. The same person usually serves as both the online and face-to-face teacher.

Actually, no single, reliable definition of blended learning exists. Many use terms like hybrid, mixed, or integrative to describe the same trend. There is a general consensus among education innovators that blended learning has three primary components:

- In-person classroom activities facilitated by a teacher,
- Online learning materials, often including pre-recorded lectures given by that same teacher,
- Structured independent study time guided by the material in the lectures and skills developed during the classroom experience.

In some situations, the move to blended learning has inspired educators to redefine traditional roles. The word **facilitator** has emerged as an alternative to **teacher**, bringing with it a slightly different focus. The facilitator places an emphasis on empowering students with the skills and knowledge required to make the most of the online material and independent study time, guiding students toward the most meaningful experience possible. Facilitators focus on four key areas:

- Development of online and offline course content.
- Facilitation of communication with and among students, including the pedagogy of communicating content online without the contextual clues students would get in person.
- Guiding the learning experience of individual students, and customizing material wherever possible to strengthen the learning experience.
- Assessment and grading, not unlike the expectations for teachers within the traditional framework.

Blended-learning experiences may vary widely in design and execution from school to school. For example, blended learning may be provided in an existing school by only a few teachers or it may be the dominant learning-delivery model around which a school's academic program is designed. Online learning may be a minor component part of a classroom-based course, or video-recorded lectures, live video and text chats, and other digitally enabled learning activities may be a student's primary instructional interactions with a teacher. In some cases, students may work independently on online lessons, projects, and assignments at home or elsewhere, only periodically meeting with teachers to review their learning progress, discuss their work, ask questions, or receive assistance with difficult concepts. In other cases, students may spend their entire day in a traditional school building, but they will spend more time working online and independently than they do receiving instruction from a teacher. Again, the potential variations are numerous.

Over the past decade, digital- and online-learning options have become more popular and more widely used in public schools, although many schools have been slow or reluctant to adopt new technologies for number of complex reasons, ranging from inadequate funding, technologies, and computing networks to general organizational recalcitrance and resistance to change. Given the fact that the internet and most digital learning technologies are still relatively new, instructional alternatives such as blended learning could be seen as de facto

reform strategies. For example, if students begin learning both in-person and online, it might lead schools to reexamine their traditional school schedule and rethink how the typical school day is structured. In many cases, blended learning is one component of a larger reform initiative in a school or district.

Generally speaking, blended learning offers many potential advantages and disadvantages that will largely depend on the quality of the design and execution of a given blended-learning model. Advocates may argue that blended learning gives students the benefits of both online learning and in-person instruction. For example, students can work independently and at their own pace online, but still have access to the personal attention of a teacher and all the assistance, knowledge, and resources such an educator provides. At the same time, teachers can structure courses and deliver instruction more flexibly or creatively than in a traditional classroom setting. That said, advocates of blended learning may also argue that online learning, on its own, is insufficient without in-person or one-on-one interactions with a teacher.

Blended learning may also allow teachers to spend less time giving whole-class lessons, and more time meeting with students individually or in small groups to help them with specific concepts, skills, questions, or learning problems. Blended learning may also allow schools to teach more students more efficiently at a lower cost to the school and because students are required to use digital and online technologies in blended-learning situations, they naturally acquire more technological literacy and greater confidence using new technologies.

However, critics of blended-learning experiences may question whether the practice can provide students with enough personal attention, guidance, and assistance from teachers, especially for learners who may not be self-directed, self-disciplined, or organized enough to learn effectively without regular supervision from teachers and adults. Without in-person supervision, for example, students could easily spend more of their study time using social media and chatting with friends than doing their schoolwork. We, teachers, should be aware of this obstacles when organising educational process with e-learning tools.

Benefits Of Using E-Learning Methods In The Classroom

An immediate potential benefit of considering to implement e-learning in the classroom is that it can be seen as an additional avenue which can support teaching and learning practice. E-learning covers such a wide sphere that it is difficult to point out any benefit as a given, so any benefits should initially be termed „potential" benefits. However, many teachers point the following as broad benefits that e-learning supports:

- the ability to provide distance learning (learning not at school or training centre),
- a blended learning/teaching approach (using face-to-face and technology),
- the use of technology to support a wide range of educational activities.

Advantages

Learning 24/7, anywhere: Many face to face courses only operate within normal school/training centre hours. Allowing learners to complete the course when and where they like makes the process of learning more flexible. This also means that learners will be happier because they don't need to travel to specific training centres.

It's discreet: Not everybody feels comfortable learning in a large group, especially if they find something hard to understand that co-learners have no problem with. E-learning allows each individual to tackle the subject at their own pace, with interactive tasks being set in place to ensure a thorough understanding throughout each module.

It saves time: By reducing the time taken away from the work/family life, removing travel costs and doing away with online learning helps adult learners to save their time and money.

Disadvantages

Key disadvantages of e-learning include:
- Lack of social interaction between teacher and students,
- Lack of direct and immediate feedback from teachers,
- Asynchronic communication hinders fast exchange of question,
- Teachers' lack of knowledge and experience to manage virtual teacher-student interaction,
- Danger of postponing (the tasks, the study duties etc.). Sometimes happens that learners spend more of their study time using social media and chatting with friends than doing their study-work, which may couse some problems.

To sum up, for many students, e-learning is the most convenient way to learn and study. A lot of learners are attracted to a flexible, self-paced method of education to attain their degree. However, many teachers have a harder time keeping their students engaged in e-learning class. A disengaged student is usually an unmotivated student, and an engaged student is a motivated student. One reason why students are more likely to be disengaged is that the lack of face-to-face contact makes it difficult for teachers to read their students' nonverbal cues, including confusion, boredom or frustration. If a student is confused, bored or frustrated, he or she is unlikely to be motivated to succeed in that kind of class.

Conclusion

Today, the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in our life and for educational purposes has increased, and the spread of network technologies has caused e-learning and blended learning practices to evolve significantly. There is a need, in the area of Adult Education, to use this flexible teaching methods that reach out to the target groups.

Adults learners often find it difficult to study because they have to work and take care of their families. E-learning is a perfect opportunity to complete their educational process and it enables them to minimize time they spend on learning, so that they can pay more attention to work and family.

Of course, e-learning and/or blended learning methods are recommended for teaching both: adults and young people. The knowledge can be passed on to students in many ways (e.g.: by online lectures/courses, videoconferences, electronic mailing lists). Adult learners usually prefer the simplest forms of e-learning. They expect teachers to send them texts and lectures or exercises to do by email. The materials need to be short and brief and clear, easy to understand. But that is just very small aspect of e-learning method. Some of the learners and students take advantage of greater possibilities, which e-learning can give, eg. online courses and resources available online at the e-learning platform.

Thanks to supporting traditional education by e-learning methods, learners:

- have access to the materials that were discussed during lessons they did not attend,
- have ability to use materials which enables them to extend or improve their knowledge,
- have direct contact with the teacher (because of continuous access to internet forum),
- all tests that learners submit are automaticaly checked and marked,
- learners can send the same homework many times and each time they receive tips from the teacher,
- learners can work in groups on internet forum.

Good Practices Involving Uses Of E-Learning In Teaching

First of all, teacher's involvement and teachers' ability are key factors when first considering the use of e-learning or blended learning methods in teaching.
That is the reason that examples described below, concerns mostly training of teachers.

Case study 1

"How to prepare and run an e-learning course with using of Moodle platform" (Jak przygotować i prowadzić kurs e-learningowy z wykorzystaniem platformy moodle). It is an online course for teachers of various professions who wish to prepare and run an e-learning course and make it available to their students via Internet.

The main theme of this course is actually Moodle platform in use. The course shows teachers how to prepare and run an e-learning course through the use of the Moodle platform and then, how to create their own e-learning courses using the skills they have acquired. The online course helps teachers to acquire the basis of digital literacy necessary and sufficient to develop their own web based course and web training materials for their individual learners.

The starting point was experience of educators (teachers, tutors, authors of the courses, other educationalists) who already developed and implemented the blended learning courses in the process of education of students from the teenage schools and learners of the adult schools at the post-secondary level. Thus the developed and executed teaching innovations may be considered the basis of knowledge and skills necessary to prepare, implement and execute e-learning courses. The good practices concerning creation of educational courses in the relationship of a teacher (a course creator, a consultant and an educator) and a learner became a set of experiences that may be shared with other educators who want to develop their competences in in this area. Thanks to this the good practice gained by teachers already engaged in e-learning was shared with other educators.

Methodology

In the consequence of the idea of helping future creators of e-learning courses the idea of creating the exclusively Internet course for teachers themselves has arisen. The experience and the already proven methods have formed the basis for creation of the innovative course-guide for educators entitled "How to prepare and conduct an e-learning course with using of Moodle platform". The form of the online course was applied, without the option of so-called "blended learning", to enable newly created tool to become an universal, independent of extrinsic factors (time, place, economy among other things) improvement in the educator's work.

Innovative Character of the Content

- introduction of new problems,
- individually considered recipient orientation of the content,
- transfer of the content, making use of multimedia techniques.

The Course prepared by Teachers for Teachers

The guide has been prepared by teachers and its recipients were to be other educators, future creators of e-learning courses. It aims at facilitating and improving work of a teacher having the idea for an Internet course and the necessary preparation and providing the sufficient and adequate content-related materials. The guide takes a form of a short study that includes indispensable directions, advices and practical suggestions how to work step by step, making use of the moodle platform.

The Structure of the Course

The course was built on a thematic framework, where individual modules are prepared at explaining the key issues of creating new online courses with Moodle. The titles of each block explain the scope of the course.

The Goals of the Course

It's worth noting that the name itself. How to prepare and conduct an e-learning course with using of moodle platform – does the job of conveying the goals, and the type of information the course focuses on. Course has a clear presentation and form (e.g. the titles of individual modules), so the view of the center panel is a good substitute for the course plan. The intention was to simplify the tools and make Moodle's interface easy to use for a beginner.

The Course Form

The course for teachers provided the capabilities offered by the moodle educational platform – the authors decided to choose it because of its availability (moodle is free of charge) and functionality (simplicity of the moodle operation). In effect the formal priority became its easiness and clarity because its users were the persons who did not have the advanced competence in using a computer. Thus it was not necessary for the users to have any skills to use HTML, to create web pages and to write computer programs, etc.. It was enough to have basic computer literacy, skill of working with texts and graphic materials and mailing messages together with enclosures, and, of course, passion and commitment.

Therefore the transferred subject-related content covered exclusively the necessary range, and its layout was to improve a future course creator's systematic increase in competence, to facilitate navigation and quick search and usage of the resources. The subject-oriented arrangement of the modules, the order of the discussed resources and the activities according to their degree of difficulty resulted from that aim.

The practical aim of the exercises was to improve the recipients' self-assurance

and satisfaction having resulted from the fact that knowledge was assimilated and the competences were appropriately applied.

The Content of the Course

Informative part - include some assumptions, targets and specification of the course form. Next, there appeared simple advices referring to the preparatory phase and the subsequent work comfort in the phase of the e-learning course execution.

Two sorts of resources were used there and they included, as follows:

- the theoretical part (lectures, charts, lessons, books) and
- the practical part (various types of exercises to check the acquired competences).

It should be stressed that both parts are closely interrelated and the originators first of all cared about the course participants' own work.
The subject area of the particular parts (chapters of the course-guide) was subordinated to the following modules that contained both, as follows:

- the condensed knowledge of the possibilities of application of the next 'moodle' tool in the situation of creating and conducting an e-learning course, and
- the manners of its application.

Usability

In accordance with the made assumptions the course is an useful tool that improves activity of the educators who cooperate with adult students. Its advantages are of two types:

- it strengthens the competence and skill development and it simultaneously increases experience of the teachers themselves,
- it prepares in a precursory manner the basis for future e-learning activities oriented to
   - efficient cooperation between the educator and the educated,
   - usage of the proven and available teaching tools.

Such form of the course enables getting familiar with the general requirements concerning application of the primary tools and the auxiliary tools; it enables one to indicate what tools should be used and which should be avoided, and it enables making the teacher's competence more coherent in the scope of preparation of his/her own courses. These competences would enable educators to act with greater flexibly in their curriculum delivery and served to increase the level of interest amongst adult learners in the subject being covered by the course.
Remark: the course is available in Polish language.

Case study 2

"How to Build a Website With WordPress"

It is an online, step by step, course which teaches the course participants how to create their own website or blog with using the WordPress CMS system. This course may be useful not only for ordinary students but also **for teachers or educators who wish to use WordPress system and to exploit the website this way created in their educational practice.**

Introduction - What WordPress is?

In short, WordPress is an open source web software application that you can use to create and maintain a modern website, even if you don't have any technical expertise. Since it is a web application, WordPress does not need to be installed on your home computer, or any other machine under your control. It can live on the server (a kind of computer) that belongs to your website hosting company. **WordPress is free, easy to use**, and packed with excellent features.

Originally, WordPress was an application meant to run a blog website, but it has now evolved into a fully-featured Content Management System (CMS). Actually, at the time of writing, WordPress powers over 4.5 percent of the entire internet. And if that's not enough, the newest version of the platform gets downloaded 1 million times every two days.

Even though WordPress was originally a blog engine – used primarily to run blogs – it's now being used by a number of big (by today's standards) online agencies to run their sites. Outlets such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, and Reuters all use WordPress as the base of their web publishing platforms.

Undoubtedly, the platform has evolved a lot over the years, and, even though a massive amount of new functionality got introduced, WordPress still remains one of the easiest to use web publishing platforms out there.

Why using WordPress to build a website is one of the best available solutions these days?
- Have you ever wanted to have your own website, at low cost, without the need to hire a team of developers and designers, without learning advanced programming languages, and with almost unlimited extension possibilities? If that's a yes, WordPress is likely the platform you should look into
- These days, everyone has a good reason to get a website. It's not just large companies anymore. Individuals, families, and small or independent businesses all need to have one. Some individuals simply don't have the financial resources to hire a website

development company or a freelance web developer to create a website for them. This is where WordPress comes into play.

- In short, WordPress is an open source web software application that you can use to create and maintain a website on your own, even if you have the minimum of technical expertise.
- This course will take you through the complete process of building a fully functional WordPress site from scratch. The journey goes all the way from teaching you how to install WordPress, start publishing content, pick the right design, and add some extra functionality through plugins.
- The best part is that you can do all this without losing your shirt along the way. Moreover, once you get some practice, you will be able to launch new WordPress sites within minutes (not a metaphor, by the way; this is as true as it gets)
- This course guides you along the way in a step-by-step manner to explain everything there is to know about WordPress.
- We'll start with downloading and installing the core of WordPress, where you will learn how to choose the correct settings in order to guarantee a smooth experience for yourself and for your visitors.
- After that, I'll teach you all about content management functionality for your site, from posts and pages to categories and tags, all the way to links, media, menus, images, galleries, administration, user profiles, and more.
- Next, you will find out what plugins and themes are, and how to use them effectively.

Once you complete this course, you'll have all the knowledge required to build a professional WordPress site from scratch and use it for whatever project you have in mind.

The course is available in both: English and Polish languages.
The English version of this course was prepared and implemented during the year 2014.

Case study 3

Moodle e-learning Platform at the Gliwice Methodical Centre for Teachers

Gliwice Methodical Centre for Teachers (Gliwicki Ośrodek Metodyczny) is a public institute which uses different forms and techniques of e-learning to support the educational process.

Description Of The Method

Methodical Centre for Teachers (Gliwicki Ośrodek Metodyczny) is an educational institution dedicated to improve the qualifications and professional skills of the teachers. The Centre, founded in 2002, is a public institution conducted and funded by the City of Gliwice. The Centre carries out tasks in the field of the continuing education and in-service training for teachers and covers the operation of all teachers in Gliwice schools, both public and private. On the base of the agreement concluded by the city hall, also teachers working in schools in the district of Gliwice can participate in activities conducted by the Centre.
The Centre employs several consultants – specialists, who support teachers in their work and help to solve didactical and educational problems.
The Centre collaborates with counselors - they are teacher working in schools, professionals in the field they teach. Counselors have individual consultations with teachers, they conduct open classes (every teacher can participate in them), organize various courses and workshops. Methodical Centre arranges various conferences and thematic seminars for the directors and teachers, develops and implements the EU projects related to educational programs. The Centre stays in contact with teachers and provides updating information about its activities.

In order to facilitate the organization of work and the intensification of its activities Methodical Centre for Teachers has applied the method of contact with colleagues and beneficiaries of activities through the following tools:

- Website
- Newsletter
- Moodle platform.

Implementation

Moodle platform is an e-learning tool used by Gliwice Methodical Centre for Teachers to support the process of learning and sharing the teaching experiences. Network is useful for a wider group of users who want to enjoy not only traditional forms of communication. The platform is a useful tool for the coordination of methodological advisors. Counselors create teacher networks, manage them and coordinate all the activities implemented in the network, e.g. they are also moderators of the thematic discussions.

For the purposes of methodological advisors "advisors' zone" was created. It is available only to employees of the Centre and methodological advisors (access key in necessary to enter). This is the area of communication and information exchange between employees and teachers-colleagues of Gliwice Methodological Centre. In the "Advisers' zone" there are the most important documents about the work of the Centre (e.g. Constitutive Act, the Statutes of the Centre).

There are forms/templates of documents related to the organization of training: attendance list, surveys, logs, certificates. These are edited documents; their inclusion was to facilitate the activities of the organizational advisors.

The "Advisers' zone" also contains forms like documents, work plans and reports. These are documents which are obligatory to fill by every counselor. Information about deadlines and rules of preparing the documentation are provided there.

For the purposes of advisors, there are articles which contain concepts of work of the Centre and state educational policies. Functioning of this zone is to provide advisors knowledge necessary to perform their work and inspire teachers to boost skills. Within this area teachers-counselors have the opportunity to create their own blogs, enroll on available courses, create their own courses and exchange their experience and points of view at the Internet forum, which is a part of the Moodle Platform.

Project Group in Turkey

Short film as a part of an online course

Since the school year 2013-2014 (1-st phase of project implementation) was dedicated to research, finding information and developing ideas related to the different didactic methods, during the next year all methods and ideas presented by the project partners were being discussed analysed in deep, and then, each institute choose one method in order to adapt and implement it within their own organisation.

Within the project, Polish institute described and presented "E-learning and blended learning" method but for testing stage choose also another method, i.e. using short films for didactic purposes. We decided to enrich one of our online courses about films as well as to add into the course one more module where we explained how to insert video directly into the contents of the course.

First of all, an English language version of an online course available earlier in Polish "Jak utworzyć stronę internetową opartą na WordPress" was designed and implemented into the Moodle platform during the year 2014. The name of the course in English: "How to Build a Website With WordPress". It is an online, step by step, course which teaches the course participants how to create their own website or blog with using the WordPress CMS system. This course is useful not only for ordinary students but also for teachers or educators who wish to use WordPress system and to exploit the website this way created in their educational practice.

Some didactic units with short films, as informative support, have been designed and implemented within this course. Moreover, one more module with detail explanation how to insert video into online course was added. Thanks to this improvement the content of the course was enriched which makes the modules more valuable for educational use.

The online **"How to Build a Website With WordPress"** course was presented and disseminated during international project conferences where foreign participants were given login names and passwords.

Recommendations and advice for teachers

First of all – it is always a good idea for teacher to join a few online courses as a learner before starting to act as an online course creator.

- Plan carefully what subject matter your online course should cover,
- When planning, have in mind your learners, their needs, preferences, obstacles etc.,
- Guide the learning experience of individual students, and customize material wherever possible to strengthen the learning experience,
- Plan carefully the structure of the course in order to lead the user, step-by-step, through the contents of the course in a very accessible way,
- Elaborate the content,
- Create /adapt the content suitable for the level, expectations and competence of your recipients,
- Try to discover how your intended audience wants to interact with that content and choose the media (eg. text, articles, tutorials, audio, images, animation, webinars, films, some combination thereof),
- Try to simplify the tools and make course's interface easier to use for a beginner. Adult learners usually prefer the simplest forms of e-learning. The resources available online and teaching material need to be brief and clear, easy to understand. However, some of the students take advantage of greater possibilities, which e-learning and its tools can give,
- The good point of the course can be the presentation of additional resources and types of information that the user would find valuable. This includes eg. web links and various multimedia presentations. It is good solution when presentations provided do not require any additional (third-party) software or drivers to work,
- Engage in some pilot testing before you make the course available to your learners, eg. hold a few sessions where your colleagues or your internal team thinks about potential futures for your e-learning course even though you've done your research, and you know a lot about what your recipients want.

Moodle - Introducing a common learning platform (An Irish Experience)

The need to provide an online learning platform for students to add to the experience of the classroom and provide support material for private study was becoming more and more evident within our college. A percentage of teachers had started to use a variety of platforms to achieve this. Some had created course websites or Facebook pages, others were using google docs or Dropbox. This left is with two immediate decisions, which platform to use and how to implement the introduction of the platform within the college.

Following from the experience of our partner colleges in Poland we decided that Moodle would best suite our needs. We were fortunate in having a number of staff members with the technical knowledge to set up this platform in the manner required by the college. We also took the decision that the Moodle platform would be made available to all students and should replace all other platforms currently in use by teachers. This decision was taken for a number of practical reasons including:

- Teachers would all learn to use Moodle together and so a support network would exist
- Students would use the same platform for all classes / modules and as such would become familiar with its use and avoid the confusion of multiple platforms
- The Moodle platform could also be used to distribute general information such as careers seminars, application forms, newsletters to the whole student body. This is something that would only work if everyone was on the same system.

Prior to the introduction of Moodle students had individual user names and passwords to access our IT system. It seemed logical that these individual identifiers would also be used in accessing Moodle. This also allowed for a customised homepage to be displayed to each student upon entering the system. So a student would see a list of the courses they were taking along with some general additions to the list such as European Projects, Careers service etc. Clicking on any entry in this list will take them to the information that the teacher of that subject has made available. This may include a whole course or selected notes. Assignment briefs and other information can also be made available in this way.
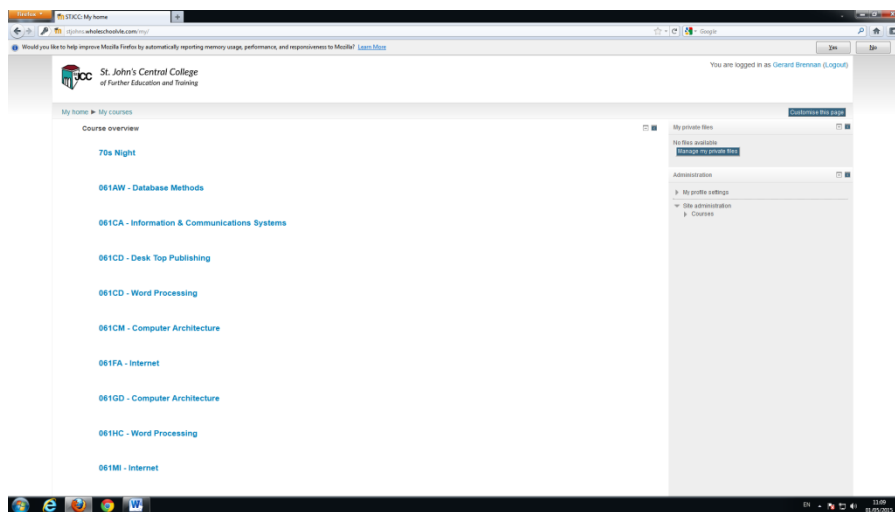
Example of teacher homepage

One of the great benefits of this system is that the notes and other material are available to students at all times. Within the college access to Moodle is available from all computers and also through WiFi. A link to Moodle was also placed on the college website so that students can access the information from home or indeed from any other location. The system works well on mobile devices so that students can even study while they travel home using mobile technology.

Teachers have a similar experience to students with a homepage showing only the classes that they currently teach. Course work can be put up on the system at any time and hidden until students are ready to receive that work. To date the vast majority of teachers have embraced the use of the Moodle platform and reports from the first periods of use have been very positive.
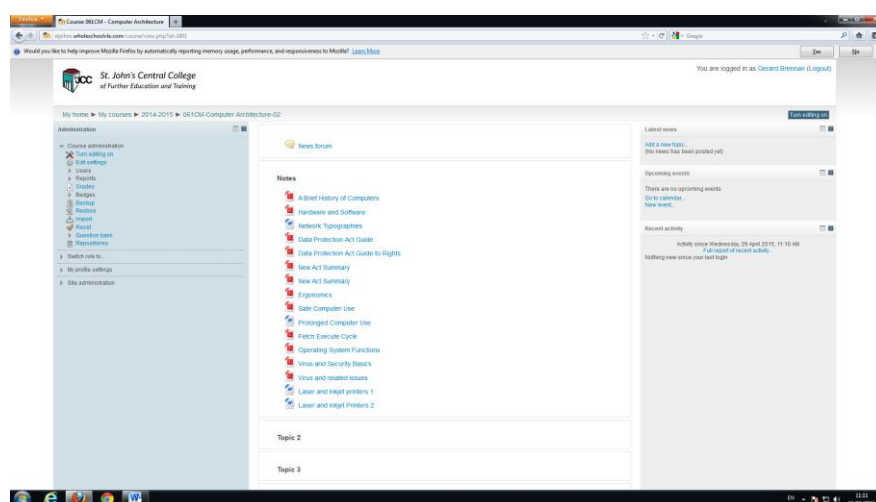
Example of basic course notes page