TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learning objectives:

Teacher is able to choose and apply digital tools

- according to the learning objectives
- according to the students and their competence level
- that support the learning
- that support the chosen pedagogical method.

Challenge 1:

Online learning and digital tools can't replace learning by doing

Challenge 2:

Working independently/online is not possible for the target group

Intro: Digital tools give variety

It is probably true that digital tools can't (yet) replace learning by doing. However, there are many ways how digital tools can support learning practical things, and they certainly give more possibilities for different learners. For example, learners with social anxiety may be able to join a digital classroom. Online learning allows flexibility and customisation in the learning environment. For example, students with disabilities can access materials in alternative formats, such as audio or large print, and use assistive technology to navigate the online learning platform. Additionally, online learning can also provide students with special needs the opportunity to work at their own pace and receive individualised instruction. This is helpful for students who need more time to understand a concept or need accommodations for physical or cognitive impairments.

It's important to note that online learning can pose challenges for students with special needs. For example, students with learning or attention disorders may have difficulty staying focused while working independently. Also, students with autism, ADHD or other neurodevelopmental disorders may struggle with the lack of structure and social interaction in an online learning environment. Therefore, it's important to ensure that online learning programs are designed with accessibility and accommodations in mind, and that support services are available to students with special needs

In VET and in special education learning by doing has been the most usual method of teaching because the learners want to gain mostly practical skills. Nevertheless, most learners benefit when the methods of teaching vary, and for many digitality is the only way to be able to experience certain topics. For example, learners with mobility impairments can visit places that they couldn't otherwise reach.

Different formats of teaching

Usually teaching happens in the classroom, but there are a lot of options to it. In best case different formats of teaching complete each other.

Distance teaching is a way of education where students receive instructions through online classes, video recordings, video conferencing etc. Blended learning (also known as hybrid learning) combines online educational material and possibilities to interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods. In this training module hybrid teaching means a situation, where a part of the learners is in the classroom and another part is learning from the distance. Teaching happens somewhat simultaneously. OJT, on-the-job training is learning at the workplace.

The teaching situation must be taken into account already in the early stage of planning, because it both limits and leads into certain ways of teaching. Teacher chooses the best format for their learners. The best option is based on the abilities and needs of the learners as well as the topic. Sometimes external conditions such as necessity to isolate yourself are guiding the choice, but also then it is possible to use digital tools in a way that helps the learners to thrive.

This part of the training module gives ideas of

- when to choose which format
- how to carry out teaching in different formats
- how to support learning practical things with digital methods.

Enjoy your journey!

Planning the learning process

Teaching should always start with planning the learning process. Ask yourself:

1. What are the learning group's special features? What is the student's prior knowledge, needs and interests?
2. What are the topics of the learning?
3. What are the objectives of the learning?
4. What kind of tasks and exercises help to reach the goals?
5. What kind of digital material is needed? Is provided material accessible enough?
6. What kind of digital platforms are needed? What is the homebase of the digital learning and which programmes support it?
7. What kind of devices are needed?
8. How to create a safe digital environment?
9. How to schedule the process and guide the learners through the process?

It is also important that there are different kinds of exercises, and the learners can show their skills in several ways (essays, group work, videos, discussions etc.). You may want to check the universal design of learning once again! When the learners can participate in their own way, they feel valued, respected and included. This helps to create a safe environment and allows learners to commit to the learning.

Theory: Principles of digital teaching

Solution 1:

Create a safe digital working environment

A safe digital learning environment promotes engagement and participation. When students feel safe and comfortable, they are more likely to actively engage in the learning process, ask questions and collaborate with their peers. This can enhance their overall educational experience and ensure the progress of studies.

A safe digital working environment consists of four sectors:

1. Physical learning environment
    a. Help your learners with good working ergonomics
    b. Teach the basic settings of the programs you are using to your learners (for example how to use camera and microphone in virtual meetings)
    c. Get to know the program you are using so that you can encourage your learners
2. Psychological learning environment
    a. Use enough time getting to know each other
    b. Plan ways that allow everybody to participate (quick votes, word clouds, quizzes, collaborative platforms for introducing yourself etc.)
    c. Create together common rules for the environment
3. Social learning environment
    a. Plan how the learners can communicate with each other
    b. Create together common rules for the communication
    c. Prepare for the problematic situations (how to close the discussion or mute the troublemaker etc.)
4. Pedagogical learning environment
    a. Use different exercises and different ways for learners to show their skills
    b. Utilise platforms where the learners can collaborate
    c. Plan alternative ways of learning so you can individualise if needed
    d. Let the learners see the structure and schedule of the lesson or course
    e. Teach and give instructions with a clear language and using multimodal ways

Top Tips to make social learning work

• Provide clear ground rules and remind the learners of these on a regular basis. If they have any difficulties with memory or planning, it may help them to have rules printed as a reminder during group teaching sessions.

• Make it clear how, where and when the learner can ask for help. Again, this information should be reinforced with reminders and even printed visual information depending on the learner's special needs.

• Alongside traditional teaching, try using smaller group discussions. Most online platforms allow break-out rooms to facilitate this. This will give learners the opportunity to collaborate with their peers.

- Create a sense of belonging for the learner with special needs: encourage social games such as scavenger hunts for younger learners or ice breakers/quizzes for older learners to get them interacting with one another and feeling positive about their learning environment

Solution 2:

Regular feedback, support and guidance

Guidance and feedback are an important part of effective teaching, regardless of whether the teaching happens in a classroom or online. When teaching online, guidance and feedback become even more important because there is less or not at all face-to-face interaction. Guidance is often something that applies to the whole learning group and helps them to understand the objectives and the learning process better. Feedback is addressed to individual learners and aids them to find their development areas. In a learning community guidance helps instructors facilitate discussions, group projects, and interactive activities. Feedback encourages students to discuss with their peers in a constructive way.

In online teaching, students often have varying levels of knowledge, different learning styles and different pace of learning. The teacher can give feedback to each learner on their areas of improvement, which makes learning motivating. Clear guidance helps learners to understand online course's or material's objectives, expectations and learning outcomes.

When studying online, learners can feel isolated and disengaged. Regular guidance and feedback show learners that their progress is being monitored and valued, which can motivate and encourage active participation. Online teaching can sometimes feel impersonal. Regular guidance and feedback also enable teachers to build a connection with their learners. Online learning material often requires self-discipline and time management skills. Guidance sets clear expectations, and feedback helps learners compare their progress with the expectations. Regular feedback also reminds the learners that they are held responsible for their learning.

Top Tips of Guidance

1) Give regular feedback, even when working online and with digital tools.
2) When having online sessions with the learners, give them the guidance they need.
3) Remember to give personalised feedback to learners' learning tasks.

Solution 3:

Activating teaching methods, real-life work exercises

Activating learners in a learning process creates an effective learning environment. When learners are actively engaged in the learning process, they stay focused and retain information better. Active learners are often motivated learners.

There are loads of activating methods that can be used both online and in face-to-face teaching. It is possible to have group discussions in chatrooms. Debates, group projects, peer teaching and case studies can be equally good in all kinds of environments. Problem-solving challenges and problem-based learning enliven studying also online. In problem-based learning you can present students with real-world problems or scenarios related to the topic. Challenge students to investigate,

analyse and give solutions. This promotes critical thinking and application of knowledge. In VET you can use real-life work scenarios, which the students often find very motivating.

Use real-life cases as examples, modify work-life exercises to students' environment, organise live demonstrations online, utilise virtual simulations. Study more in solutions 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14 and 15.

Solution 4:

Blended learning as a way to teach practical skills

Blended learning combines traditional classroom instruction with online learning. This can include a combination of in-person lessons, online activities and self-paced digital resources.

Blended learning is often an effective method in vocational education because it connects the flexibility and convenience of online resources with the hands-on practice and feedback of face-to-face instruction.

- **Identify the learning objectives** for the course or program. This will help you determine which parts of the content can be taught online and which parts require face-to-face instruction.
- **Choose appropriate online resources** such as videos, simulations and interactive activities to supplement face-to-face instruction. These resources should be engaging, interactive and aligned with the learning objectives.
- Plan **face-to-face instruction and the online resources to complete each other**. F2F instruction can include hands-on activities, group work, discussions etc.
- It is possible to utilise **flipped classroom**. Face-to-face instruction can build on what learners have learned online and provide opportunities for practice and application.
- **Provide feedback** and assessment throughout the course or program to help learners monitor their progress and identify areas for improvement.
- **Evaluate the effectiveness** of blended learning. Collect feedback from learners and instructors to determine what worked well and what could be improved. Use this feedback to refine the course or program for future learners.

To use blended learning with students of special needs, consider the following strategies:

- Make online materials accessible to your students.
- Give clear instructions and make sure students understand the learning objectives - what they are supposed to do online and what face-to-face.
- Encourage students to work in small groups or pairs also during online activities, which can help to foster social and emotional development, as well as support learning.
- Use blended learning to differentiate instruction based on the needs of each student, such as providing extra support or more challenging activities.
- Regularly monitor and assess student progress.
- Ask for feedback and make adjustments to your teaching approach and online material as needed. Be flexible and adaptable!

Tools

Kahoot in Distance Learning

Solution 5:

Teaching handcraft skills online

Teaching handcraft professions online can be challenging, as you have to give instructions and feedback on physical skills and techniques. However, with the right approach and tools, it is possible to provide effective online instruction for handcraft professions.

- Use video tutorials to provide step-by-step instruction on handcraft techniques. These videos should be high-quality and show close-up shots of the hands and tools to help students see the techniques clearly.
- Organise live demonstrations through video conferencing tools. This allows students to ask questions in real-time and provides an opportunity for the instructor to provide feedback and support.
- Create online communities, such as forums or social media groups, where students can ask questions, share their work and receive feedback from the instructor and other students.
- Utilise virtual reality and simulations to give the students different possibilities to come closer authentic situations.
- Give assignments that allow students to practice and apply the skills they have learned. These assignments can include projects, quizzes and hands-on activities that require the use of handcraft techniques.
- Give feedback and assessment regularly to ensure that the students are learning the necessary skills and techniques.
- Make sure that the students have necessary materials and tools.

Usually, it is probably the best to teach practical skills face to face, but it is good to be prepared for different situations. Moreover, there are students who are not able to join the classroom because of physical constraints, social anxiety, quarantine etc. If they have sufficient digital skills, online courses give also them a possibility to proceed in their studies.

Tools

VR

Solution 6:

On-the-job learning and digital methods

Vocational education for students who require special support is typically practical-oriented. It aims to prepare students for real-life work situations and wants to provide them with necessary skills and competencies to everyday life. Therefore, on-the-job training is essential part of studies.

The training often emphasizes practical exercises, work-based learning and simulated tasks to help students develop the required abilities for their future jobs and apply their learning in practical

contexts. However, in some jobs digital tools are very important and learning to use them is a part of the on-the-job training. Usually the teacher needs to be in contact with the student during on-the-job period, and digital tools can be very helpful in this.

When you are planning using digital tools with the students that are learning on-the-job, think about the following questions:

- How am I going to be in contact with my students? Will there be enough face-to-face meetings, or do we need a digital tool?
- Does the student need to be able to report about their on-the-job period digitally? Is the report going to be text and/or photos? Does someone else besides you need to be able to see the report?
- Where is the student going to be working? Is it possible to use digital tools during the workday or do they have to use them after working hours?
- Are there digital tools that are already used at the working place?
- Which digital tool is natural for your student? Does your student need to learn to use a new digital tool?

Choose a tool that is best for your situation and your student. Maybe it is an instant message application, a blog or an Instagram account that concentrates on professional skills – your student, your choice!

Solution 7:

Distance teaching and teaching practical skills

Usually it is not ideal to teach practical skills online or as distance teaching, but it is definitely possible, and in some cases it can even be the best solution. During COVID-19 pandemic everybody was forced to do distance teaching, which was a shock both to teachers and students. However, the necessity taught many teachers to teach even from distance. Surprisingly, during the distance teaching period, it was noted that some of the students benefitted from the possibility to study at home without disturbance and even thrived in distance teaching.

The learners that might benefit from distance teaching:

- have good digital skills
- are independent and self-regulated in their studying
- may be persons that get easily distracted in school environment
- may have social anxiety
- may have health issues that inhibits them from coming to school.

So, follow the next ideas, if you have learners that benefit from studying from distance – or if the next pandemic strikes:

- Get to know the personality and the individual talents of your learners, so you know who might benefit from peaceful environment and self-regulated learning.
- Follow the novelties of digital teaching and get to know the tools and methods that interest you.

- Use digital tools with your learners also in classroom teaching, so that both you and the learners are familiar with digital tools.
- Combine both classroom teaching and distance teaching with those learners who profit of distance studying.

- Use video tutorials to provide and organise live demonstrations through video conferencing tools. Utilise virtual reality and simulations.
- Create online communities if you have several learners studying from distance.
- Give assignments that allow students to practice and apply the skills they have learned. These assignments can include projects, quizzes and hands-on activities. Make sure that the students have necessary materials and tools.

- Give feedback and assessment regularly to ensure that the students are learning the necessary skills and techniques.

Tools

Padlet

Videocall school

Solution 8:

Hybrid teaching as a way to teach practical skills

Hybrid teaching contains both digital and place-based activities. In this training module hybrid teaching means a situation where a part of the learners is in the classroom and another part is learning from a distance. Teaching happens somewhat simultaneously both in the classroom and through digital channels. It can vary which learners are learning in the classroom and which learners are learning online.

This may be a difficult method of teaching, because the teacher has to divide their attention into two very different approaches.

Utilise the best tips from blended learning and learning handcraft skills online:

- Identify the learning objectives – this helps both you and your learners.
- Give some parts of the lessons through video conferencing tools.
- Organise live demonstrations through video conferencing tools.
- Choose online resources that complete face-to-face instruction – don't forget video tutorials that can be watched both online and in the classroom.
- Create online communities, such as forums or social media groups, which both the learners online and the learners in the classroom can join.
- Provide regular help and feedback also to the learners who are working online.
- If possible, put hybrid teaching into practice with another teacher in the same classroom (two teachers, one group of learners).
- If possible, make the learners take turns in online and classroom learning (so that it is not always the same learners who are working online).
- If possible, teach those practical skills that need most practice as face-to-face teaching.

Praxis: Recommended teaching methods utilising digital technology

Solution 9:

Team building by using digital tools

Team building is the process of getting to know each other and creating a sense of unity among the members of a group. It creates a positive learning environment where learners can feel safe, supported and motivated. Especially in the new teaching groups, it must be ensured that students get to know each other.

However, team building is not a one-time event but an ongoing process that takes time. It requires commitment and support from teacher to help the group evolve and function effectively together. In case of distance learning, a positive and supportive learning environment maintain motivation. Therefore, creating social connections is a particularly important.

Why team building is important in special needs groups?

Social participation is an important part of learning for students with special educational needs. Students with learning challenges may experience increased anxiety, lack of self-confidence or social difficulties. Therefore, it is particularly important to create a safe space for learning. Team building and creating a sense of community helps students to feel accepted and supported, which can improve their social and emotional well-being.

Team building also helps to create a positive atmosphere and fosters collaboration in learning. By building trust and promoting cooperation, students with learning challenges can feel more comfortable expressing their ideas, asking for help and working together with their peers. This collaborative environment can enhance their learning experience and overall engagement on studies.

How to start using digital tools in team building?

1. Get to know different ice breaker exercises. Surprisingly, most of the exercises can be utilised both face-to-face and in distance learning. Virtual whiteboards, digital games and visual mood trackers are easy to apply in different teaching situations.
2. Choose the ice breaker. Start with easy tasks that are easy to join. Using digital platforms, it is possible to use even anonymous answers. Usually this is a good way to start with young students. Over time confidence grows and you can include activities that promote more collaboration, communication, problem-solving and creativity.
3. Select a digital tool that is suitable for chosen exercise. Opt for user-friendly and easy-to-use tools that don't require logging in. Prepare in advance and make sure that platform functions as you intended.
4. In case of a new digital tool, introduce tool and its features. Make sure everybody knows how to use it. In face-to-face teaching, ensure that every student has a suitable device or guide students to form small groups.
5. Communicate clear instructions and expectations for behaviour and participation.

Tools

Padlet: multimodal ways to take part

Kahoot and Chill Friday

Wordwall: wheel of fortune

Seppo.io

Solution 10:

Gamification as a way to teach practical skills

Gamification means using games and game-like elements as a method of learning and teaching. Digital platforms offer many ways to gamify and spice up teaching. Gamification covers various forms of instruction, such as simulations, tasks, quizzes and interactive exercises. Gamifying elements such as rewards, goals, levels and challenges can be used to make an ordinary learning task a bit more interesting.

You can find many ready-made learning games on different subjects on the internet. By modifying ready-made games, you can enrich the teaching with little effort.

Game Element	Description
Goals	Clear objectives that students strive to achieve.
Rewards	Incentives such as points or achievements that motivate students.
Progress Tracking	Visual indicators to track students' progress.
Competition	Opportunities for students to compete with each other.
Challenges	Challenging tasks or problems that require learning and skill application.
Collaboration	Opportunities for students to work together with their peers.
Player Choices	Ability to make decisions that impact the learning experience and outcomes.

Benefits of gamification – proven benefits in vocational special education

- It is easier to get students to participate in group activities, engage students actively in the learning process
- Supports learning social and emotional skills
- Gives feelings of achievement and competence, which can reinforce the joy of learning and the desire to achieve goals
- Enhances motivation
- Provides a safe environment for making mistakes and learning from them
- Permits immediate feedback and tracking of progress. Young studenst are used to fast feedback in social media and online games, so they prefer immediate feedback in their studies as well.

How to start gamifying the teaching of practical work tasks?

1. Choose a topic. Which subject is the one that students find boring or difficult? What is a learning topic that you would like to facilitate or lift up? Could it be for example
    - getting to know a new place or a workspace
    - learning vocational vocabulary
    - identifying and naming the suitable work tools
    - safety and health in various work tasks
    - the correct sequence of work steps, planning of work phases?
2. Choose a phase. Are you going to use the game/quizz when introducing a new work task? Or do you want to use the game repeating and verifying learning after practical period?
3. Search for ready-made material. Search for game-based quizzes related to chosen topic. For example you can use community galleries of Kahoot, Wordwall or Quizzis.
4. Adapt the quizz. Usually ready-made teaching material must be modified to suit one's own teaching needs. Clarify the structure and simplify the vocabulary, if necessary. Keep the learning objectives in mind and focus on the most important themes. Personalise the content and question patterns for different levels if needed.
5. Have fun! Observe and collect feedback that allows you to develop the game further.

Tools

Kahoot: easy to use, almost every student is used to use it

Wordwall: easy to use, many different exercise types

Seppo.io: mobile mode, team game and creative tasks

Solution 11:

Hands-on learning combining digital methods

Vocational education for SNE students is very practical-oriented. It prepares students for real-life work situations and gives them skills and competencies to everyday life. Practical exercises, work-based learning and simulated tasks give students abilities for the job market.

Digital technology can be used, even if you are teaching practical skills. Some of the methods can be used as well in face-to-face and distance teaching.

Practical projects and activities

Every student-activating-method is beneficial during distance teaching periods. They facilitate and engage students to learn. Of course, learning hands-on skills in distance teaching presents unique challenges, but it is certainly possible with some creativity and the use of available technology.

Try to assign practical projects that students can work on at home. In preparatory education, everyday skills are naturally practiced at home environment. For example, personal care skills, food preparation, making the bed and vacuuming are activities that can be practiced at home regularly. The teacher creates a structured daily program in which everyday skills are included.

In education leading to a degree, every field of study provides different opportunities for practical projects. For example, cleaning and restaurant services include hands-on activities that can be applied at home. Of course, conditions are different and there is no possibility to use professional machines or tools at home. On the other hand, there are fields (for example media or information technology) where many practical projects are done digitally by computer.

How is hands-on learning supported by digital methods?

While practical activities are kinesthetic, digital technology can support learning through multimodal means.

Documentation: One useful method that supports practical skills learning is documenting the process. This can be made by taking short videos or photos. Hands-on learning and practical activities usually take place in different locations or even at home. The teacher and supervisor cannot be at every workstation at the same time. Hence, the documents might be valuable material when verifying, reflecting and deepening the learning together.

Collaboration: Videos or photos give the possibility to revisit the learning situation afterwards. Usually, it is good to attach the documents on digital platform. This is a good way to repeat the learning topics, reflect the learning outcomes collaboratively and give feedback to other learners.

QR codes: When learning practical skills, it is possible to use QR codes. QR codes can store a lot of data, and when every learner has their own telephone with a QR code reader, it is possible to utilise the QR codes as storages for information about the learning topics. For example, when using different tools and machines, it is possible to have the instructions for the tool in a QR code. In a same way it is possible to store information about the different working phases. It might also be a good idea to create an adventure track, where instructions to each task or exercise can be opened through a QR code.

Applications supporting hands-on working: Several applications can make practical working easier. For example, there are digital checklists that can help to demonstrate the work phases. Some people find it useful to use timers on their phones, and there are applications that make the timing even more exciting, for example there is a timer for pomodoro technique. Applications can support the executive function skills, that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions and manage multiple tasks at the same time.

Solution 12:

Learning portfolio

Digital portfolio can be used for students to reflect on their work and showcase what they have done throughout the studies. Portfolio is a collection of student's work, experiences and learning activities. The main idea is that a student collects different samples of activities and tasks on the same digital platform.

Digital tools as mobile phones and digital platforms enable photographing and recording while working, wherever the work tasks are carried out. When this is continued regularly, learning and

development will gradually become visible. That helps the students to see their own professional growth during the studies.

In vocational special education, portfolio-based learning can be implemented in many ways. The content and format of the notes and learning samples varies in different fields and phases of studies. Methods are modified to suit each field of study, each student group and each student. Probably a common feature of all fields is that there are only few written tasks and instead the portfolio focuses on describing practical activities and working. Naturally, each student's portfolio will be a unique collection of learning activities. Portfolio-based learning is suitable for face-to-face teaching, distance learning and on-the-job learning.

Portfolio gives a lot of skills and advantages

Making a portfolio increases many useful skills:

- Learning to describe and verbalise one´s own activities and work
- Possibility to demonstrate competence through multiple channels
- Learning digital skills, using computers and various software (searching for images, adding text and designing layout)
- Strengthening self-expression skills
- Enhancing the skills of learning to learn.

Portfolio reveals progress and demonstrates the learning journey:

- A good way to make know-how visible
- Revealing hidden skills
- Tracking the progress of the studies and recognising learning
- Recognising and evaluating one's own competence
- Clarifying one's strengths and goals
- Improving the understanding of the studies as the whole.

Alongside the studies, portfolio can be useful in the next phases of life as well:

- Memory support when need to showcase the skills and functional capacity
- Assisting in employability, providing concrete evidence of competence.

There are a lot of advantages in portfolio working:

- Skill development: Creating a portfolio involves a range of skills such as verbalisation and multimedia skills. Regularly updating the portfolio develops computer and digital skills.

- Presenting competence: Learning to recognise and describe one's own competence is an important skill. Many students find this difficult, so it is a skill that needs to be practiced. A learning portfolio provides a concrete way to demonstrate one's skills and achievements. It can include samples of work, projects or other learning outcomes. This helps to showcase one´s abilities and accomplishments to teachers or employers.

- Self-monitoring of learning: A portfolio serves as a tool for self-monitoring and evaluation of learning. Student can record different learning tasks, report of the on-the-job learning, make

self-reflections and self-assessments in the portfolio. This helps to track the progress, recognise competence and identify strengths and areas for improvement. It has been found that this helps students also understand the structure of the studies.

- Self-reflection and goal setting: Building a portfolio requires self-reflection on your own learning. You need to reflect on what you have learned, the skills you have developed, and how you have progressed towards your goals. This helps you to clarify your strengths and goals, and plan future learning pathways.

- Support for employability: A portfolio can also be a good support for employment purposes. With the help of portfolio, student has practiced to describe skills and strenghts which is an important ability in job seeking. In a good case, a portfolio may be suitable and good evidence of competence when applying for a job.

How to start using the learning portfolio in practice?

1. Presentation: When a student starts his studies, he also starts a portfolio. First, the student can briefly tell about himself, for example what he is studying and where he would like to work. This can be in any format (audio, text, video). It is a good idea to take a profile picture of the student wearing work clothes.
2. Choice of platform: Next, choose a digital platform suitable for the field of education and the student. Find out which platforms are familiar to students. Maybe one of them is suitable for the purpose.
3. Sign in to the platform: Guide students to choose correct usernames. Help students define secure settings and publicity level for the account. Make sure they share the view access to your account.
4. First note: Attach a small presentation and a profile picture to the porfolio.
5. Job description: During the studies, guide students to photograph daily work tasks. What tasks did I do on the first week of studies? What steps did it involve? What tools did I learn to use today? These small notes and documentation are the most importat part of the portfolio.
6. Reflect: When it's time to evaluate learning and competence, use the portfolio as help. Look at the student's portfolio together. Where can the development be seen? How can you notice it? With the help of notes and pictures it is easier for the students to remember what they have done and to verbalise what they have learned. The main content of the reflection should of course be included as a part of the portfolio.

Some digital platforms (=tools) to be used for portfolio in vocational special education

- Web pages as Google Sites
- Instagram
- Blog
- Virtual boards as Padlet
- Digital document as Google Slides
- Digital books as Book Creator and Papuri (These are easy to use and often multimodal.)

Tools

Padlet

Solution 13:

Guidance and feedback using digital channels

There are several digital channels you can use to communicate with your students. The choice of channels depends on factors such as the nature of the feedback, the preferences of your students, the level of interactivity required and the tools available to you. When choosing the right channels for giving feedback, consider the following factors:

- Is the feedback short or detailed? Does it involve visual elements or complex explanations? Choose a channel that aligns with the nature of the feedback. Give brief feedback in instant messages, chat or voice messages. If you are giving feedback on written documents, use comments and annotations.
- If the feedback requires immediate attention, go for real-time communication channels like chat or video calls.
- If you want to encourage discussions and interactivity, platforms with discussion forums or group chat features might be preferable.
- Make sure that the chosen channels are accessible to all learners and compatible with the devices and technologies they use.
- Remember to think about the privacy of student information and ensure that the chosen channels comply with privacy and security standards. If you are using channels approved by your organisation, the security is probably good. Online learning platforms often provide features for giving feedback.
- Choose channels that both you and your students are comfortable using. Using too complex tools might create unnecessary challenges.
- Think about which channels are likely to engage your students and keep them actively participating in the learning process.

Use digital channels for feedback when it helps the communication. Face-to-face feedback is important, but if the students are studying online, the feedback that is given online reaches them fast. Sometimes a digital channel is the best way to reach the student, for example when they are on-the-job learning and cannot be in contact with the teacher during most of the working day. Digital feedback can also complete classroom teaching. Sometimes it may be easier for the learner to receive feedback through a digital channel. If you are using digital platforms in face-to-face teaching, it is logical to have some of the feedback (e.g. suggestions for improvement, grades) on the digital platform, even though the same matters would be discussed face-to-face.

Tools

Google Classroom in Common Units

Solution 14:

Visiting different places online

There are several ways to utilise internet in visiting places that are hard to reach in real life. Many public places offer virtual tours which allow visiting the place from all around the world at any time. For example, Louvre offers virtual tours that are free of charge. In most of the European countries there are similar virtual tours of museums, towns, castles etc. Some are free of charge; some have small admission fees. Many learning institutions have made virtual tours of their premises – this can be a good way to get to know the school before studies start or also when you already are studying.

Virtual demonstrations can be used if the learners cannot participate in teaching on the spot. Use video conferencing tools to demonstrate hands-on activities. Show step-by-step instructions, provide explanations, and highlight key points as you would in an in-person setting. You can ask learners to actively participate by asking questions or suggesting alternative approaches. Virtual demonstrations can complete teaching in classroom, or occasionally even replace some parts of teaching on the spot.

Top Tips for VIrtual Tours

Finnish museums which you can visit virtually: https://museot.fi/vieraile-virtuaalimuseoissa

Virtual tour in Finland's Government House: https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/tiedotteet/Sivut/170420-virtuaalikierros-eduskuntatalossa.aspx

Virtual tour in Finnish Presidential Palace: https://www.presidentti.fi/ahtisaari/linna/knaviga.htm

Online visit to Louvre: https://www.youvisit.com/tour/louvremuseum

Virtual tours all over the world: https://www.youvisit.com/

Solution 15:

Simulations and virtual learning

Different kind of simulations allow students to rehearse skills at their own pace and in an environment that is safe and/or familiar to them. It is possible to repeat every-day situations in virtual simulations. For some learners these every-day situations can be difficult, but after repeating them enough in a virtual environment, the learners have the courage to do the same thing in real life. There are also situations that may be hard, even hazard, to reproduce in real life. Virtual environments offer an easy and safe place to go through different situations.

Video tutorials: Create and share instructional videos that demonstrate the hands-on skills step by step. Use close-up shots, clear explanations, and visual aids to ensure learners can follow along effectively. Videos give the learners the possibility to repeat and rehearse at their own pace.
Online simulations: Explore virtual simulations or interactive software that replicate hands-on experiences. These platforms allow learners to practice skills in a simulated environment and can

give learning opportunities in situations where it is not possible to practice in real-life situations (e.g. distance teaching, situations that happen rarely or are difficult or even dangerous to create).
Simulations and virtual labs: Explore online simulations or virtual lab environments that mimic real-life scenarios. Also, these platforms provide interactive experiences where students can practice hands-on skills in a virtual setting.

Tools

VR