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The ELA Blog

The power of interactive content and new technologies in the classroom

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In recent years the traditional educational method has been influenced by the new digital world, leaving more and more space for virtual lessons and online classes. The course **"Making the most of new technologies, apps and social media in the classroom"**is based on the idea that digital tools, interactive learning platforms and new technologies are good instruments for teachers who want to maintain an interactive and dynamic relationships with their students. This does not mean that we need to abandon the traditional teaching techniques. Instead, by promoting feedback, communication, and proactive learning in online classrooms with new technological tools, we are able to offer students engaging educational experiences regardless of where the learning takes place, whether it is a virtual classroom or it is a real classroom.

This session of the course took place in Palermo from 26/03/2023 to 01/04/2023. The group was quite large and the participants came from different parts of Europe, including Spain, Belgium, Romania, Lithuania and Poland. The group was made by Karen Mafrans and Hadewijch De Doncker from "**Odisee Vzw** "in Belgium; Monika Knap, Katarzyna Bielinska and Dorota Kaminska from "**Osrodek Szkolno-Wychowawczy** in Pol four Spanish teachers, Almudena Monica Fernández and Irene Martínez Castellò from"**CEIP Reyes Catol**
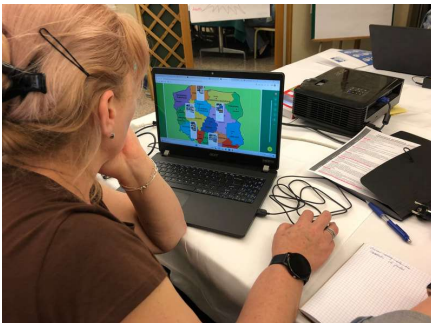
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Covasna , "Palatul Copiilor - Judetul Covasna " in Romania; two Lithuanians bteachers, Ingrida Valciene and Jurate Orloviene from "**TauragesVersmesGimnasium".**

During the week that saw them protagonists in experimenting this new approach, the participants had the opportunity to learn about new **digital tools** that they will be able to use both in face-to-face and online lessons.

First of all, they made a short digital presentation mixing up information about their work and their private life, with drawings, post-its, images and videos in order to create a **collaborative virtual space** in which everyone can share ideas with others in real time. The participants learnt how to exploit a digital workspace just like a physical whiteboard that let them add images, draw shapes, and insert content and notes from external sources onto a shared canvas. The programs used had the aim of creating a space in which they have to share the resources used for teaching such as documentation of experiences, presentation of topics, representation of thematic itineraries, creation of group work, and the participants, fully grasping the purpose, have made the most remarkable presentations in visual contents.

Another interactive learning method is the creation of lessons by inserting videos and other tools such as **quizzes, polls, and "word clouds"** in order to make the lesson not only interactive but also and above all participatory. In this way students can clarify their doubts and teachers can confirm whether it has been correctly understood by the class. Releasing the results in a few seconds, people participating in the lesson feel truly involved and an integral part of the group.

Another excellent tool that can recall any topic developed in class in a fun way is represented by the educational platforms that allow teachers and students to create **interactive games**. The participants were able to create quizzes for teams, with the possibility of adding images and inserting the relative marks in relation to the questions, or they can create other playful solutions such as crossword puzzles, time lines or sensitive maps. Game platforms are simple and intuitive tools that, on one hand, stimulate the attention and preparation of the student, who must know the subject in order to play, on the other it becomes a moment of verification of understanding in a funny context.

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The **gaming** world is huge and particularly versatile. One of the games educational platforms developed during the course allows the design of many types of educational games. It provides for example, specific templates for virtual **escape rooms** and, through the appropriate search tool, allowsthe participants to view products created by other users and, if the latter have made the work reusable, it is possible to "clone" and personalize courses already taken by Italian and foreign colleagues.

Moreover, the support of **educational videos** also becomes a fundamental tool for learning. Teachers can make the millions of videos available on the net educationally usable, building around them an educational context. In this way the limits of digital communication are filled, at least partially, and teachers are allowed to adapt the video to the specific didactic situation of their students, by offering them instruments that can orient the vision, stimulate discussion, provide a learning path and a context of meaning to the video content.

In conclusion, the participants had the opportunity to approach, study and deepen a wide range of tools and programs that can be very useful for their teaching method, in order to create an engaging, interactive and participatory learning context to apply in class. We strongly believe in the **potential of new digitaltools**, which, if used in the correct way, can significantly improve the participants' learning experiences. Interactive contents can offer possibilities for involvement and commitment, which can encourage a feeling of **community** and **cooperation** between students and, also, increase **motivation and enjoyment.**

Discover more about this course here.

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