



D-TEACH: Digital Teaching Tools

2023-2-BG01-KA210-VET-000175078

COMMON EVALUATION REPORT

Focus Group

By Skill Up



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1. Introduction

The D-TEACH project aims to enhance trainers' skills in utilizing digital educational tools to foster interactive and meaningful learning experiences. To identify the most effective applications, focus groups were held in Spain, Italy, and Bulgaria, gathering practical insights from a total of 15 experienced trainers. These discussions serve to refine the project's approach and inform the development of an Experiential Learning Guide featuring the six most impactful educational applications.

The primary goal of these focus groups was to review educational tools identified in a national survey of trainers, refine the list, and discuss the importance, familiarity, and practicality of each tool for teaching and learning. Additionally, the groups explored the trainers' perspectives on digital teaching trends, particularly focusing on video tools, AI integration, and accessibility.

2. Methodology

Target Audience

The focus groups conducted in Spain, Italy, and Bulgaria included a total of 15 participants, all trainers with diverse educational and professional backgrounds. This diversity ensured a comprehensive discussion of the tools and their practical applications across different contexts. The composition of participants was as follows:

- **Spain:** Five trainers aged 21-28, with backgrounds in pedagogy, psychopedagogy, secondary education, and adult education. Some had prior international educational experience through Erasmus exchanges.
- **Italy:** Six trainers, including two specialists in technology and AI, and a professor of Digitalization and Technology at the University of Malta. This group brought a strong technological and academic perspective to the discussion.
- **Bulgaria:** Four trainers, two specializing in Information Technology and two working in non-formal education. This group provided insights into practical and technical aspects of educational tools.

Procedure

The focus groups were conducted in person in each country, lasting between one to one and a half hours. A standardized approach was used across all sessions to ensure consistency:

1. **Introduction:** Each session began with an introduction to the D-TEACH project, its objectives, and the purpose of the focus group. Participants were briefed on the categories of tools to be discussed.
2. **Guided Discussions:** Moderators facilitated structured discussions, encouraging participants to share their familiarity with and opinions about the tools. Key topics included the usability, accessibility, and potential of the tools for teaching and learning.
3. **Interactive Exchange:** Participants were encouraged to provide examples of how they had used these tools or how they envisioned their application in educational contexts. This interactive approach fostered practical insights and the sharing of best practices.
4. **Feedback Collection:** Moderators gathered feedback on each tool and its relevance to the project. This included suggestions for additional tools, such as AI applications, and recommendations to exclude tools, such as those related to augmented reality.

Tools and Materials

To facilitate the sessions, the following materials were used:

- **Presentation Slides:** Summarizing the survey results and providing an overview of each tool category.
- **Discussion Guides:** Standardized questions to ensure all relevant aspects of the tools were explored.

3. Comparative Analysis of Focus Group Findings

Familiarity and Usage of Educational Applications

Across all groups, certain applications emerged as commonly used and valued for their user-friendliness and interactive capabilities:

- **Canva, Genially, Mentimeter, Kahoot, and Padlet** were widely recognized and used across the three countries. These applications were praised for promoting engagement and creativity in content creation.

Each country's trainers showed slight variations in usage:

- **Spain:** Trainers highlighted **Canva** and **Genially** for gamification and content creation, and **Edpuzzle** for integrating assessments within video content.
- **Italy:** Trainers frequently used **Mentimeter, Kahoot, Canva, and Padlet** and recommended adding **CapCut** for video creation and **Podbean** for podcasts.
- **Bulgaria:** Trainers preferred **Miro** for concept mapping and **Genially** for quiz-based gamification.

Multimedia Tools and AI Integration

Video and podcast creation tools were strongly recommended:

- **CapCut** and **Flipgrid** were highlighted for video content, while Italy also suggested **Podbean** to incorporate podcasts, which aligns with modern trends in education.
- AI tools such as **ChatGPT** and **Gemini** were suggested across all countries to support content creation and enhance engagement. Trainers emphasized AI's potential in making presentations more dynamic by integrating AI-generated visuals and text.

Accessibility Challenges

Participants across the focus groups acknowledged challenges regarding access to certain tools:

- **Augmented Reality:** Trainers across all groups found these applications underutilized due to resource limitations. They recommended deprioritizing AR, reserving it for specialized contexts where training and resources are available.
- **Premium Features:** Trainers in Spain noted that access to premium features poses a barrier, as not all educational institutions can afford subscriptions. This was a shared concern, with trainers suggesting prioritizing tools that offer extensive free features.

Country-Specific Insights

Each country brought unique perspectives to the focus group discussions:

- **Spain:** Trainers advocated for continuous training and highlighted the need to address accessibility in VET. They emphasized the role of simple, widely available tools for broader adoption in diverse educational settings.
- **Italy:** Italian trainers were highly familiar with core applications, suggesting additions such as **CapCut** and **Podbean**. They recommended excluding augmented reality due to low usability and suggested removing obsolete applications like Aumentaty.
- **Bulgaria:** Bulgarian trainers had a strong preference for **Miro** in concept mapping and **Genially** for gamification. They valued **Flipgrid** for interactive video discussions, noting its appeal to students due to its social media-style interface.

4. Selected Applications for the Experiential Learning Guide

Based on the consolidated feedback from the three national focus groups, the following applications are recommended as the most useful tools, one per category, for inclusion in the Experiential Learning Guide. These tools were chosen for their effectiveness, accessibility, and alignment with trainers' needs and preferences.

1. Assessment Questionnaires: Kahoot

Kahoot stood out across all focus groups as an engaging and widely familiar tool for creating interactive quizzes and self-assessments. Its gamified approach makes it effective to increase student participation and engagement, making it an ideal choice for this category.

2. AI Integration (Replacing Augmented Reality): ChatGPT

Given the low usage and practicality of augmented reality tools, AI tools like ChatGPT are included instead. ChatGPT was highly recommended for its ability to assist trainers in generating content, answering queries, and enhancing interactivity in teaching.

3. Content Creation: Canva

Canva emerged as a universal favorite for its versatility and ease of use. Trainers highlighted its ability to create visually appealing materials, such as presentations, posters, and social media graphics, making it an essential tool for content creation.

4. Concept Maps: Miro

Miro was the preferred tool for concept mapping, particularly in Bulgaria and among trainers with IT backgrounds. Its collaborative features and flexibility for brainstorming and organizing ideas make it an excellent choice for visual learning.

5. Video Creation: Capcut

Initially, Flipgrid was included as the recommended tool for video creation due to its popularity in fostering interactive and creative learning experiences. However, upon discovering that Flipgrid is no longer available, CapCut was chosen as a last-minute replacement. CapCut offers an intuitive interface, advanced editing features, and accessibility for educators and learners alike, making it an excellent alternative for creating engaging video content.

6. Gamification: Genially

Genially was the standout application for gamification, valued for its ability to create interactive quizzes, presentations, and gamified learning experiences. Trainers across all focus groups recognized its effectiveness in capturing and maintaining student attention.

5. Conclusion

The D-TEACH focus groups across Spain, Italy, and Bulgaria highlighted a strong preference for tools that are accessible, user-friendly, and versatile in fostering engaging learning environments. Applications such as **Canva**, **Genially**, **Mentimeter**, and **Kahoot** emerged as core resources across all groups, valued for their ability to adapt to various educational needs and enhance student interaction. This alignment across countries reinforces these tools as foundational choices for the Experiential Learning Guide.

Additionally, trainers showed enthusiasm for integrating **AI tools** like **ChatGPT** and **Gemini**, seeing their potential to simplify content creation and add a dynamic element to teaching. The consistent call for AI integration across all groups suggests that these tools will play a critical role in the future of digital education by helping trainers create engaging and interactive content.

However, trainers pointed to some challenges, notably around **accessibility** to premium features in certain applications, and limited use of **augmented reality (AR)** tools due to resource constraints. Based on this feedback, prioritizing applications with extensive free versions and deprioritizing AR ensures the guide remains practical and widely usable. Overall, the insights from these focus groups underscore the importance of equipping trainers with tools that are both impactful and accessible. By focusing on widely used applications, supporting multimedia content, and incorporating AI, the D-TEACH project is well-positioned to meet the evolving needs of digital educators across diverse settings.



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