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TVET providers have faced a big challenge due to COVID-19. The need to provide online and distance learning possibilities at VET institutions has increased, but at the same time all teachers do not have the competence and skills to deliver quality online lessons. Teachers need training and new tools and especially peer network of trained mentors to support the work.

The aim of Smooth Hybrid and Online Working for VET-project is to increase teachers' competence on implementation of blended and distance teaching. The situation analysis survey of teachers' digital skills will be designed and conducted at the beginning of the project. Based on the survey results and the needs, a guide for teachers will be developed in the partner network. This guide serves as a basis for creating training material for teachers. Afterwards an impact survey will be carried out.

Project meeting in Alba, Italy

At the beginning of October, our fourth transnational project meeting for the SHOW-VET project was held in Alba (Italy). It was a great opportunity to catch up with the SHOW-VET team and plan the last steps together.

The hosting partner, [APRO](#), gave a short presentation on the school and its activities, with a specific focus on international projects and mobility. Each partner presented their E-learning Example. GENCAT, the lead partner, commented on each presentation with questions, suggestions, ideas, etc. First day was focus on impact survey results and mentoring process. JAMK presented the results of the impact survey for teachers #2 submitted in late August-early September. The overall results show a general improve on teachers' approach to digital teaching and use/utility of the Smooth Online Guide. Each partners gave their feedback and had given some time to discuss among colleagues and answers 3 questions that has been provided by JAMK. Later in the afternoon all partners were taken around APRO premises and introduced the different sectors and areas of activity.

The second day was focus on the pilot feedback. [FIRDA](#) and APRO Formazione (lead co-lead of STEP 7)

started by presenting their 2 finalized e-learning materials, one for each of the two sectors they selected at the beginning. Presentations included a digital/interactive part and were open to comments and suggestions.

The Model for VET providers. It includes all the methodology, trainings, surveys, templates, tools, etc. that were finalized by the SHOW-VET teams during project implementation and tested along the way. The model includes the description of the process, a teachers guide including pedagogical methods, teachers', training materials, and survey to determine the needs and evaluate the impact. Also, EfVET gave a presentation on the dissemination and communication activities. from now until the end of the project, partners will focus on website materials finalisation, and issuing for upcoming multiplier events.

Later in the afternoon, all partners enjoyed a pizza making and tasting session in APRO professional kitchen lab, guided by Master Chef Paolo.



Mentoring as a Tool for Developing Digital Skills

Mentoring as a pedagogical tool might be one of the oldest methods used in social learning contexts, where an experienced individual shares experiential knowledge and advice with a less experienced person. The ultimate aim is, in a trusting relationship, to support the professional development of the mentee. To work towards achieving the Show-VET project's aim in improving VET teachers' digital skills and competencies, mentoring was selected as a suitable tool for this task.

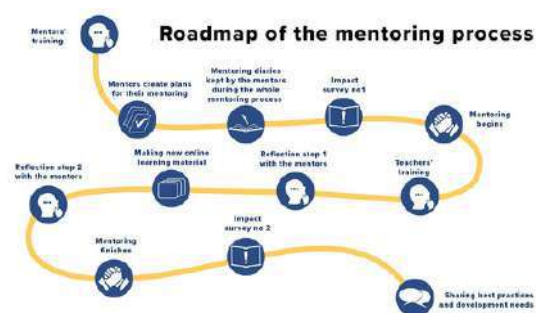
Mentoring can take different forms, and in the Show-VET project we chose peer mentoring as it has been found bringing numerous benefits in developing skills at work (Murrell et al., 2021). For instance, it can help share personal and tacit knowledge that formal training may not cover. Murrell and his associates also found that peer-mentoring can promote collaboration skills when mentors and mentees work together to reach their goals, and it can improve both their personal and professional growth by learning from each other (Murrell et al., 2021).



Mentoring process in the Show-VET project

In the Show-VET project, we used peer mentoring in one-to-one and in the group sessions, accommodating the existing organisational processes in each partner country. Before the country-based mentoring processes started, the project organised the training for the selected mentors, focusing on the nature of mentoring and using [the Smooth Online Guide for Teacher's](#). Each project organisation selected from two to four mentors and different number of mentees, totalling 16 mentors and 42 mentees in five different VET organisations. The local mentoring process plans with the appropriate timetable were created by the mentors. The mentors helped their mentees to create suitable online learning materials in their specific of professional fields.

The process included: keeping the mentoring diaries by the mentors, conducting the impact surveys, offering training to the teachers (i.e. mentees), creating online learning materials, having the reflection stops and sharing the best practices (see Picture 1 below). The mentoring processes lasted for about six months, resulting in many new online learning materials. (Visit the website to explore the materials created <https://showvetproject.eu/en/>)



Picture 1: Roadmap of the mentoring process

Positive impact of the mentoring

During the mentoring process, two impact surveys were conducted to evaluate the results. Based on the results of the surveys, the training and the mentoring had an overall positive impact on VET teachers' digital skills. There were some country-specific differences, which were greatly influenced by the starting level of the teachers' skills and abilities. In the cases where the self-assessed motivation and general digital knowledge levels of the teachers were already high, it was difficult to pinpoint big differences that resulted from the training. Also, some VET organisations already have support mechanisms to help such VET teachers to improve their online teaching skills continuously.

However, it seems that the training and the mentoring had a positive impact on supporting the VET teachers' self-esteem, motivation, and amount of knowledge on how to use digital tools in teaching. Thus, a well organised peer-tutoring could offer an option for VET teachers to further develop their pedagogical knowledge and skills in teaching in digital environments. The Show-VET project showed that peer mentoring can aid both VET teachers and organizations in digital transformation, however, it requires careful planning and implementation processes.

References:

Murrell, A. J, Blake-Beard, S.& Porter D.M. Jr. (2021). The Importance of peer mentoring, identity work and holding environments: A study of African American leadership development. International Journal of Environmental Research Public Health.18(9):4920. doi: [10.3390/ijerph18094920](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18094920)



Light the Spark! – Get excited and make students enthusiastic about online learning

Online learning has become a crucial part of education. Some students thrive, but others struggle. In the future, online learning will be emphasized, requiring special skills and better planning of the learning experience, learning design. Artificial intelligence brings opportunities for personalisation of learning and, on the other hand, challenges of plagiarism.

The Finnish partners will organise a national multiplier event on January 17. Kati Tiainen, an expert in digital pedagogy, focuses in her session on the importance of digital literacy, increasing students' cooperation skills and self-direction. How to light a spark and get new boost from online learning to learning personalisation.

During the hybrid multiplier event project partners will share the results and tools of the international SHOW-VET project. The goal of this event is to light the participants spark and give new ideas and tools for the development of online teaching.

Kati Tiainen is an expert in digital pedagogy. She has had a 20-year international career in digitalization of learning. She has led Microsoft's School of the Future program globally and educational institution operations in the EMEA region and has been in development Microsoft's Education Transformation Framework. Kati is also an expert in the use of learning analytics and artificial intelligence and an advocate for the responsible use of artificial intelligence.



Well-trained Teachers are the Key to Success in Online Learning

Online teaching is becoming more common, but not everyone has the same knowledge in how to do it well. Pairing experienced teachers with less confident peers can help narrow the gap and improve online teaching fluency.

Don't start from scratch—follow a mentoring model that works!

The Mentoring Model for Vocational Education is a roadmap, which VET providers can follow to create mentor programs for their own teachers. With examples and tools, it guides schools to:

- assess their staff's online teaching skills and identify gaps.
- plan, set up, and run a mentor program.
- use regular surveys to assess the program and make it better.
- give mentors and mentees the support they need.



Learn how other teachers succeed in online lessons

The model includes a step-by-step teacher's guide on how to create online teaching curriculum. It shares real life examples of what's working in online learning, including:

- sample e-lesson plans for different subjects
- how to use different e-learning apps and tools
- how to keep students engaged and interactive remotely





Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year ahead!

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