DigiReact Training Backpack for Trainers

DigiREACT

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Contents

1. Introduction

Digitalisation and digital technologies have brought a long array of possibilities for all of the industries to explore and exploit them to their benefit. The process can cause transformations of key aspects of the industries involved, affecting products, processes, organisational structures and systems as organizsations need to adapt themselves to manage these complex transformations. Companies have the prerequisite to go digital so as to survive and get a competitive advantage (João Carlos Gonçalves dos Reis, et. Al., 2018). However, digital transformation is not a fixed destination but rather a journey toward becoming a digital enterprise, one which is constantly evolving, trying to deploy innovative technologies to upgrade what it offers, how it presents and delivers and how it performs. As such, also digital maturity is an ongoing process, to acquire the advantages of going digital (Ragu Gurumurthy, et. Al, Pivoting to digital maturity: 7 capabilities central to digital transformation, Deloitte, 2022). To undergo a successful digital transformation an organization is to develop a comprehensive capabilities and skills which may vary depending on the industry and the organisations' needs and expectations (Carcary, M., et. Al, A dynamic capability approach to digital, transformation; 2016). Digitally mature companies enjoy multiple subject and industry related advantages, including improved product and service quality and customer satisfaction, better financial performance and cost efficiency, reduced environmental impact, workforce diversity, etc. (Ragu Gurumurthy, et. Al. Uncovering the connection between digital maturity and financial performance; 2021, Deloitte Insights).

Yet, COVID-19 has shed light on business models' reshaping, bringing remote work and hybrid models to the front line, Europe urgently needs to digitize its industries (Hoojberg & Watkins, 2021). To that end, the European Commission has presented the 'Shaping Europe' s Digital Future' strategy, with the view, among others, to invest in digital skills so as to promote new opportunities for businesses (European Commission, 2020, Shaping Europe's Digital Future). In fact, the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) of the EC combines the development of a highly sustainable digital education framework with the increase in digital competences for digital transformation (European Commission 2020, Digital Education Plan 2021-2027). Rationally, the pandemic has put a dent on businesses' digital transition strategy. However, more than 70% of them are struggling with the lack of staff with digital skills, especially within the rise of hybrid working models (remote/in-office work), while 88% do not have the capacity to invest in the digital upskilling of their employees (European Commission, Digital skills and jobs, 2021). The pandemic was not just a test in fast-developing technology deployments, it was also a test revealing companies' ability to make employees and customers to integrate the new modes of business engagement and integration (Beth Stackpole, Management Sloan School, 2021, Digital transformation after the pandemic). It highlighted the need for digital transformation, making it integral for companies' survival (Digitalisation in Europe 2021-2022: Evidence from the EIB Investment Survey).

Digital transformation aims for end-to-end digitization of all physical assets and integration into digital ecosystems with value chain partners. Moreover, it seeks to put digital to the heart of business models which is pivotal for the success of any company and is a decisive management aspect. Thus, it is not enough to integrate IT to the culture of the company, the success depends on the processes and operations that management amends. For such a management model, people must be relevantly trained and acknowledge the challenges of the IT (Dremel, C., et. Al., How AUDI AG established big data analytics in its digital transformation. MIS Q. Executive 16(2), 81–100, 2017). As such, the digital

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transformation has also affected corporate training, since new ICTs emerge and occupational profiles need to change increasingly fast to survive (Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 2020). The share of workers with low or even no digital skills ranges from less than 20% (Bulgaria) to up to 40% in most EU countries (Germany, Ireland), while many countries stand between 20-30% (Greece, Italy, etc.), implying that employees are not yet comfortable with this new remote-work model (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2020). As L&D pushes up the corporate agenda, to engage employees in being more productive within hybrid workplaces, effective e-training demands exceptional digital competences and soft skills in order for VET & corporate trainers to efficiently operate in a virtual coordination mode (Hoojberg & Watkins, 2021). In the new realities where jobs, education, health, government services and even social interactions are prone to be dependent on digital technologies more than ever, failing to ensure comprehensive and trustworthy digital access and effective use may deepen inequalities as well as hinder countries' efforts to emerge stronger from the pandemic (OECD, Digital Transformation in the Age of COVID-19: building resilience and bridging divides, 2020,)

1.1. The Rationale and Purpose of the Handbook

Several actions towards supporting VET provision have been planned across the EU mostly to equip trainers with ICT tools (such as REALTO, ASOO, etc.) and deal with learners' readiness. However, there is a general concern among EU countries about VET learners possibly being disadvantaged as more initiatives are taken for school and adult education (European Commission, European Vocational Skills Week, Fight against COVID-19, 2020). Besides, all the actions taken for digital transformation forcing a rapid adoption of e-learning solutions by VET programs has not properly supported the acquisition of practical skills and organization of work-based learning, which are crucial elements for successful VET training (Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, 2020). On the other hand, the role of qualified trainers becomes even more vital, as the European labour market will need to replace less qualified or narrowly trained trainers with highly qualified professional experts.

Hence, it is pivotal for VET educators to be digitally competent and akin. This is especially imperative as future VET students are likely to have better digital skills than the VET teachers/trainers and as such they may also expect more digital trainers who are digitally competent to suggest flexible, interactive and innovative learning experiences. Moreover, „tied to the increasing need to use technologies in their teaching practice is the requirement to change pedagogy to ensure that digital tools are used effectively not only in teaching but also in course design and assessment "(NCVER, Teaching Digital Skills: Implications for VET Educators ", Australia, 2020).

In line with the above mentioned, the Training Backpack comes to bridge the gap between the needs that emerged in working environments and the skills that trainers had before the crisis outbreak. The Remote Worker Training Backpack aims to train VET and corporate trainers on the e-leaderships skills and digital competences required to effectively engage their audience especially in hybrid business models. It is an all-inclusive tool for those who want to enlarge their digital skills and profile in general, based on the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET, highlighting the demands in the labour market and the necessity of work based. It also acknowledges the fundamentals of the Osnabrück Declaration

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2020, highlighting the prerequisite of digital transformation. In line with these, the handbook refers to the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators, to empower the trainers with strategies and skills that can enhance and innovate education and training.

The Backpack will foster trainers' digital knowledge and skills, thus increasing their productivity and viability of their businesses in the context of a 'work from-anywhere' model. The Backpack provides knowledge, skills, methods and approaches to enjoy new digital developments, benefit from them and make use of them. It equips them with the basis to build on, gives them cursors and approaches how to move forward, provides understanding how to analyse and act. In other words, is is a comprehensive manual for the users to advance as digital trainers

1.2. Using the Handbook

When preparing the handbook, as an initial step the researchers have referred to multiple analyses and reports on VET and digital transformation to embrace all the relevant trends, transitions and needs in the field. Additionally, a survey was carried out in the 5 participating counties Germany, Greece Portugal, Ireland and Italy, aimed at getting more information about the employees' abilities, difficulties, challenges but also needs in digital competences especially in managing remote teams. The survey covered such aspects as information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety and problem solving. Additionally, questions discussing e-leadership and digital leadership skills were included in the questionnaire to have an all-inclusive picture and verify the needs that VET providers in all the participating five countries have to be more digital. Afterwards, needs analysis based on reports, green papers, research papers, industry articles and the survey was prepared. Based on the collected information, the Training Backpack was produced deploying the first-hand knowledge of the experts as well as desk research.

As a result, an integrated and sectoral handbook is prepared, comprising 5 modules:

- Module 1: e-Leadership skills: Working with hybrid and virtual teams
- Module 2: Digital design, data visualization and online safety in digital means
- Module 3: e-Communication & teamwork
- Module 4: Research & creativity skills with a focus on digital content
- Module 5: Problem solving & time management skills

Each Module has 3 dimensions/sections:

1. Theoretical

The section trains trainers on how to increase e-leaderships skills and digital competencies. E-leadership is examined from a micro (e-leader's skills and leading virtual teams) and macro (e-leadership & organizational skills) level perspective. The digital competencies that are promoted through the course include data literacy for digital design & data visualization, communication and teamwork skills through ICT tools, creative Digital content creation, problem solving skills and online

safety, basics of data-intensive technologies (aligned with the Digital Competence Framework 2.0 and EU legal framework to AI).

2. Practical

This section includes hands-on guidelines for corporate and VET trainers on how to actively implement the knowledge acquired in the theoretical part. Case studies and success stories are identified and promoted as examples of real-life situations.

3. Assessment

This part comprises well-structured lesson and training plans for trainers in order to be able to adjust their training in learners' needs. In addition, assignments and 'homework' activities are promoted aiming to empower trainers to self-reflect on their knowledge and assess their new level of skills acquisition.

Each training module is intended to ensure specific learning outcomes with knowledge, skills and competencies that enable the VET and corporate trainers to enlarge their professional spectra and digital expertise. Through its theoretical insight, practical strategies, on-hand examples, storytelling and real case studies, topped with mind-provoking exercises and activities the Training Backpack can be a good accompany for the VET and corporate trainers in their journey of going digital

1.3. Beyond the Handbook

To develop synergies of practice and ensure the sustainability of the Training Backpack, we offer an Employee Experience Platform which is an open software serving as an online learning environment facilitated by artificial intelligence mechanisms and gamification elements. The platform is customized to the needs of corporate trainers that need to increase their e-leadership and digital competences in order to efficiently manage hybrid teams and employees that are/will be forced to work remotely and are struggling to stay engaged in their activities. The online learning environment also utilizes social learning tools for VET training in order to motivate employees to learn how to achieve their organization's mission. For more details, visit: https://www.digireact-project.eu/

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2. Training Module [1] - E-Leadership skills: Working with hybrid and virtual teams

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1 Module Description

After the unprecedented lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the roll-out of vaccines, industries are beginning to form a future in which employees and employers' preferences and decisions are not accustomed by pandemics or any other force majeure conditions. The pandemic was a shock but also opened new opportunities, showing that workforces with appropriate jobs can proficiently and successfully work off-site, with no adverse consequences for their productivity or performance. Remote work has even revealed new working practises and procedures with the decisive outcome of increasing productivity. On the other hand, also the employees report to prefer off-site working style, at least partially, to fully on-site working. In light of these, more and more companies permanently shift to off-site or hybrid working modes. Yet, leading such teams are challenging and require new specific knowledge, skills and competences in order to ensure the company's productivity and performance, to safeguard employees' well-being and to establish an effective and well-organized merger of off- and on-site employees, with no differences in how they are treated or their career opportunities. To these end, the current module will present the specifications and features of leading a virtual team, particularly a hybrid team as it is a combination of off-site and on-site working environments.

Keywords: virtual teams, hybrid leader, communication, team performance, trust, organizational arrangement

2.1.2 Module Goals

As the technological development and particularly the COVID-19 pandemic have promptly enlarged the amount of remote and hybrid work, with the latter getting more and more widespread. Hence, the workforces have had to familiarize to different work settings, it is likewise essential that leadership is adjusted to the requirements of the remote environment. Only by addressing both, it can be ensured that the productivity and satisfaction of both sides do not suffer.

In line with this, this module aims at:

1. Referring to the Covid-19 pandemic and rapid shift to remote working and its impact on the role of the virtual team leader
2. presenting the role of virtual and hybrid team leaders and the essential e-leader skills needed to effectively lead such teams
3. explaining how leaders should leverage digital tools in virtual/hybrid leadership
4. detailing essential e-leadership skills for effectively leading remote or hybrid teams

2.1.3 Learning Objectives

At the end of the module, the learners will acknowledge

1. How to build successful hybrid team and lead employees effectively in a mix of remote and on-site work environments.
2. How to establish an adaptable team by developing skills such as flexibility, development, having a courageous mindset, critical thinking,
3. How to leverage virtual and hybrid teams for improved productivity by learning how to develop agile and resilient virtual teams
4. How to hold the team accountable by integrating trust, motivating high standards, and forming reliability for leaders for teams
5. How to support the team's well-being by examining the leader's role in employees' well-being and how to positively affect experiences at work; address, and prevent employee burnout.
6. How to improve the working processes.

2.1.4 Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, learners should be able to:

- Understand the difference between leadership and e-leadership
- Analyze the needs of remote working teams
- Identify different leading styles
- Develop a training plan based on learners' personalized needs
- Increase own self-motivation and adaptability skills to maximize training efficiency and productivity
- Implement skills in the long run within complex working environments

Knowledge	Skills	Application of knowledge & skills
appraise the fundamental concepts, principles, theories and terminology used in hybrid corporate training	collaborate effectively with hybrid and virtual teams of trainees	encourage and motivate virtual teams to increase productivity
assess digital needs of VET and corporate trainers as learners	conduct research about future gaps in the context of digital transformation	critically reflect on management skills incorporating knowledge in digital transformation
outline different practices to new hybrid environments	apply managerial and training skills to develop custom training plans	implement hybrid skills within complex environments and different contexts

2.1.5 Estimated seat time

The completion of the module along with the implementation of the knowledge provided will last **13.75** hours.

2.2. Main content

2.2.1 State of the Art: Challenges and Problems to Overcome

Before the Covid-19 pandemic most of the work was carried out in presence while remote work was rather unusual and rare. Covid-19 has transformed work culture, bringing record numbers of virtual teamwork, flexible work hours, and less time expended on travelling. (Hallenbeck, G., et. al., 2022). The mass implementation of **remote-work technology** during the Covid-19 pandemic enduringly **increased the productivity** of the off-site work compared to the on-site as well as reduced the demand for large office spaces and caused declines in office rents. Moreover, as studies show, the off-site employees agree on salary cut to keep the opportunity to work remotely (Davis, M. A., et. al., 2021). Remote work reduced commute times (Barrero, J. M., et al., 2020) and fewer sick days which can also be credited to enlarged flexibility. It has also allowed employees to control ambient workspace features such as clothing, layout, music, ventilation, etc. (Choudhury P., et. al., 2020).

Hence, nowadays more organizations invest in building and operation of virtual teams to boost their work processes, increase cost efficiency and to enlarge their talent attraction (Alward, E., et. al., 2019). Now, as vaccination levels raise and pandemic constraints have been lifting, leaders are to manage leading a virtual team. However, while due to the Covid-19 the transfer to virtual workforce was reactionary and emergency-driven, the new virtual workforce should be better-thought-out and more cautious.

Source: https://pixabay.com/photos/virtual-coworkers-virtual-friends-3382503/

Virtual teams have many modes. They **can be completely virtual,** where the team members exclusively work remotely and never meet, or in a **semi-virtual/hybrid form,** including both virtual and co-located employees. They can be formed on a short-term base, to complete a particular undertaking or task, or for a long-term, concentrating on daily tasks. VT members may be off-site employees, working from home or away from the office either some or all of the time, or they can work from offices in different places.

Thus**, the VT members can be separated physically, temporally and culturally.** The one feature common is that VT members interconnect mostly through technology, rather than face-to-face. However, given the increased use of technology by co-located teams, nearly all teams can be named at least partly virtual (Hughes, C., et. al., 2021), making a **hybrid model** for which there is no consensus on the best balance for on-site and off-site work days (PwC's Remote Work Survey, 2021). Consistent

with a study carried out by McKinsey, 9 out of 10 companies aim at combining off-site and on-site workforce. Though there is not a clear-cut approach to a hybrid workforce or team, it typically encompasses an environment where some workforces work distantly, some work on-site, and others combine both.

This new model can be **challenging as managers should consider divergent staff desires and needs and at the same time seek to increase productivity and cooperation**. Some employees would prefer to return offices, while others would like to work remotely. Hybrid workforce strategies and how efficiently and successfully leaders can manage virtual teams will be fundamental for inviting and keeping talent in many businesses (CCL, 2021).

The role of the leader for an organization cannot be overrated:

- The work of a leader includes building the image and vision of the organization, underpinning its standards and ethics. Doing these tasks electronically obliges more work and novel approaches. it is vital to apprehend how **technology influences leadership** and how **leadership is impacted by technology** (Gonaim, F. A., 2021)
- Leaders affect employees' behavior, inspire team members, lead conversions and adjustments and establish a motivated team which is one of the key features of an effective leadership.
- Moreover, they should help the employees reach organizational objectives, ensure its productivity as well as their own personal and career goals.
- A successful leader is also a motivator.

The new patterns and practices of communication and networking, the increasing need for flexibility in work and the growing rate of **remote-work pose new challenges to leaders**. Customary hierarchies, inflexible work organizations, and a physical presence in the workplace are getting increasingly less applicable and are being substituted by the needs conveyed by many employees for more stress-free time management, independent working, and generally more self-fulfillment. Hence, the e-leaders should have not only a high level of technical expertise, but also extensive social and emotional skills. This approach composes of more networking and trust rather than superiority and control. Leaders should not demand results but should rather offer alternatives. E-leaders should be facilitators, mediators, and networkers. While these modifications are progressive and helpful, workforces may feel unconfident, fear to lose their jobs, have discomfort to adapt to changes. Hence, a digital transformation can be difficult and the motivation of the leader can be decisive (Basu, R., 2022)

Virtual leaders-employees' communication and relations presuppose methods and policies divergent from those of the conventional leadership as e-leaders have to interact with workforce whom they have met face to face as well as those whom they have never met before (Schmidt, G. B., 2021). To this end, the management of virtual teams is more challenging than for traditional teams as in traditional teams where exchange of information is face-to-face. In a virtual team, **communication is mainly via technologies** which makes team coordination and management becomes much more complex and communication gets less fluid (Flavian, C., et. al., 2018). While due to multiple infrastructures, technologies and software, organisations easily form virtual working spaces, leadership in such a setting is a challenging role as **e-leader** cannot physically see the members and **has to be innovative to spot**

the opportunities virtually. E-leader should have a feeling to comprehend whether silence means agreement or distraction. S/he should be able to link staff to events and general atmosphere. S/he should **set the vision of the organization** and **make sure that all the activities are carefully planned** and justified and are consistent with the team's objectives.

Moreover, e-leader must be an operative manager for the identification of accurate resources and strategies for the solution to problems. Furthermore, s/he should be able **to motivate and inspire the team and reduce performance losse**s. While these actions are similar to those carried out by traditional leaders, e-leaders are to perform them **with limited and/or alternative means of communication**. Hence, the e-leader is to **establish coherence and integration** among the team members to reach the targeted objectives which is possible only when the leader is **team-oriented and motivational, applying a mutual goal setting principle, building encouraging environment and a positive working atmosphere**. In addition, the e-leader has also the challenge of **the team development and performance management**. Moreover, all types of leaders have problem-solving functions. As such, they are to present the vision of the team, spread it, plan its implementation and execute it. For these purpose, they should engage and encourage the relevant team members, set appropriate values and goals, motivate social events, create trust, prepare team members to manage various situations and communicate actively. In case of virtual leaders, problem solving should be innovative and novel (Khurram Mehtab, 2017).

Virtual leaders face both typical challenges of classical teams and those related to the virtual ones. In virtual teams, jobs and tasks are generally done through virtual channels, highlighting the significance of virtual teamwork, which denotes collective performances endorsed by team members for successful communication. Conflict resolution is even more difficult for virtual teams where some members partly depend on remote interaction, while others meet on-site (Sinda Ben Sedrine, 2020). This approach is hybrid model of leading presupposing that the leader does not have only fully off-site or on-site team but rather has to manage the needs, expectations, management and control of diverse workforces. Hybrid leader should manage a team where some of the workers work on site, some off-site and others combine the two. The vital duty of a hybrid leader is to establish an inclusive and motivated team with tailored support notwithstanding in which format the team members work and recognizing the distinctions of each team and adjusting leadership conferring to the variances in the workforce (Horton International, 2021). Such diverse communication forms may create different communication standards within a team and extend the split between on-site and off-site team members. The work of e-leaders is even more challenging as managing within teams, creating trust, establishing common values and goals, solving conflicts all need more efforts and innovative solutions than in conventional teams (Sinda Ben Sedrine, 2020).

Thus, virtual environment transforms the traditional form of leadership. **Technologies shape the e-leadership style, team motivation and performance.** Moreover, the increase of communication tools and channels, the simplicity of interactions, as well as the challenge of communication excess presuppose that e-leadership brings up resources related to modification of managerial forms simplified by the digital transformation. The emergence of new types of teams, telework, and novel leadership patterns greatly depend on advanced e-communication which e-leaders must master, lead and manage. The **key constituents of e-leadership are communication and technology** with access to

computer-facilitated communication becoming progressively suitable and inexpensive. As technologies are rapidly developing in organisations and their international outreach is becoming more and more available, e-leadership is becoming more routine rather than the exception.

So, digital tools reform work patters and especially communication design. Digitalization creates new potentials such as e-teams and smart working, brings together new communication tools, rises rapidity and information access, effects controlling structures, and proliferates productivity and standardization (Ingrid Garcia Pablo Olavide, 2020)

Table 1: Basic Differences Between Leadership and Hybrid Leadership

Leader	Virtual/Hybrid Leader
Supervises and organizes personally and managing how to show up	Recognizes the distinctions in showing up when leading on-site, off-site and hybrid teams
Controls the team to produce efficiently and productively	Familiarizes leadership tactic dependent on how, where and when the team works most successfully, motivates and supports the team with trust, recognition and inclusivity
Communicates with the workforce	Identifies and acknowledges how each team member prefers to communicate and adjusts the questions and tasks to the hybrid style, e.g. evaluating their belongingness, information flows, situation analysis, and dynamism
Concentrates on results	Makes utmost clear prospects and expectations, deliverables and openness. With fewer unplanned and spontaneous communications, simplicity and transparency is essential

2.2.2 Practices to be followed

Leaders have a pivotal role in ensuring outstanding performance and committed team. leadership styles i.e. the form of behaviors used by leader when dealing with team members, can differ reliant on the organizational situation (Umaru Danladi Mohammed, 2014). There is no one-size-fit-all approach. The connection between the style of leaders and the environment in which they work should be considered (Victor Dulewicz, et. al., 2004). While digital transformation has enabled having remote as well as hybrid workers, it has still been challenging to establish solid teams.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic many organisations has had to shift to remote work and registered as a result growth in organizational performance and efficacy, making it obvious that providing the employees the option of where to work can increase productivity, resourcefulness as well as motivation.

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Leaders should adopt a hybrid style of leadership and promote it to ensure work flexibility as employees are more prone to master when they have the possibility to decide when, where and how to work. Accordingly, this needs of the team members should be the heart of hybrid leadership. Additionally, a hybrid leader should also motivate the team members and help them choose the places where they work best, feel most involved and dynamic (Horton International, 2021). **The hybrid leadership is created by several leadership styles** which are both inserted in and based on both international and individual cultural backgrounds. The hybridity indicates adapting the connection between two existing, typically contrasting, groups, merging and re-connecting their features, resulting in a hybrid method. Hybridization mixes leadership styles of accountabilities and relationships (Habiballah, S., et. al., 2021). There are some common features among successful remote leaders. They should engage team members and the team per se to do their best, as well as be good communicators and have decent soft skills to reinforce business goals. Nevertheless, not all leaders have the same traits, and organizations endorsing remote and hybrid work model need to identify among diverse remote leadership styles which ones work most efficiently for their specific industry and working model.

Below are some of the most successful virtual leadership styles:

1. **Participative Leadership**

The participative leadership style is also known as the democratic style. Participative leaders build a cooperative atmosphere where each opinion is considered and employees are welcome to make their contribution to goal setting, decision-making, planning, and other business undertakings. Participative remote leaders make sure every team member comes up with their feedback when making team goals and decisions. Participative virtual leaders also appreciate getting engaged in collective activities.

They lead by example and inspire creative solutions. They enjoy the trust of their teams, form confidence, and reduce unnecessary and destructive competition. Participative leaders are known for their commitment to teamwork, are enthusiastic, and motivate to achieve results (Kaya, I., 2021). Typical features of a participative distant leader are:

- Enthusiastic.
- Motivates group activities.
- welcome input from team members
- Reduces competition between personnel.
- Reduces the possibility of burn-out

Table 2. Tools to support participative leaders to keep their team engaged

HeyTaco! *[HeyTaco - Build stronger, happier, more engaged teams on Slack and Microsoft Teams](#)*	**HeyTaco is an entertaining way to keep a hybrid or virtual team engaged and reward the most active employees**

Chimp or Champ	Chimp or Champ is a weekly anonymous employee happiness meter to check the team pulse, improve employee well-being and achieve better results. The team receives a weekly check-in over email with 24h to express how they felt during the week, reflect on the reasons and write actionable feedback.
Where *[Meeting app for remote and distributed teams (where.team)](#)*	Where' makes it easy to decide when to head into the office, based on where your teammates are going to be and makes everyone's schedule transparent.

2. Transformational Leadership

Transformative leaders have a bigger capacity of purpose. They set the organisation's vision and its development frameworks. Transformational remote leaders motivate others by their own example and use their charisma to ensure a positive environment, motivate the company goals, and create an atmosphere of trust and drive for innovation. Transformational leaders seek to ensure that the team members have their perspective when making decisions; and most importantly, get the best work conditions and important information. They also lead organizations to making the required activities to accomplish the vision. Typical characteristics for transformational leaders are

- Sense of purpose.
- Big-picture thinker.
- Works together with the team.
- Inspires emotional openness.
- Has courage, empathy, and creativity.

Famous Transformational Leaders are for example Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Reed Hastings (Netflix) and Bill Gates (Microsoft) (Chan I., (2021)

3. Situational Leadership

Situational leaders succeed in off-site environment. A situational leader recognizes there's no single leadership style suitable for all employees and situations. Different leadership styles have different impact and effect on different employees. The leader is to adjust to the team s/he is leading with a sense of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and awareness that the reaction to instructions and coaching can differ.

Situational remote leadership entails flexibility to work with different personalities and cultures, and they are good at understanding people and how they work and get adapt to the changing requirements. For instance, as more industries transfer to a off-site working model, situational leaders are entitled to support individuals and teams to face the challenges of a new work setting and new communication means and this through flexibility. As such, they can endorse a style that implicates instructing the team

members what to do, how to do it, and outcomes are expected. On the other hand, they can also apply a more collaborative attitude. These are some of the features of a situational leader:

- deploys other remote leadership styles in combination with the situational style.
- Is good at procedures and means that might increase workflows.
- Outgoing, flexible and self-aware.
- Is a good communicator.

4. Servant Leadership

Servant leaders encourages enlargement and expansion. Virtual servant leaders often highlight the well-being of employees and encourage reciprocal esteem, decency and non-competitive teamwork. Servant leadership prioritizes on one-to-one discussions, enthusiasm, systematic feedback and leading by example. Servant leaders provide off-site employees the necessary tools and supervision to perform their tasks efficiently. They are good listeners and easily notice visual signals about their team members to find out possible difficulties and solve them. These are some of the features of a servant leader:

- Skilled of working with other team members as an equal.
- Active and open for group discussions.
- Empathetic, self-aware and caring.
- Active listener.
- Is committed to employee growth (Kaya, I., 2021)

Harmful Leadership Styles for Virtual Leaders

The pandemic has caused organizations worldwide to reinvent their workforce. The virtual leadership styles previously presented support organizations to reimagine their work. Yet, some leadership styles can be destructive, deject efficiency, make processes difficult, and cause stress in team. Such leadership styles for virtual leaders include authoritarian and laissez-faire.

1. Authoritarian Leadership

Authoritarian, or autocratic, leaders can clarify chaotic conditions, can reward employees who work under their leadership with honors, bonuses, and promotions. But, rewards are generally one-time and not workable, particularly in the virtual setting. Genuine authority denotes the influence that the manager might have on the team member and includes the principles, standards, influence, and ethics within the organization and the team leader-team member relationship. Coercive/punishment power is not a win-win possibility in any work environment.

However, authoritarian leaders tend to dominate and generally make all the decisions with inadequate team involvement, which limits prospects for creativity and teamwork. This can result in low self-

confidence and self-esteem, high turnover rates, and reduced employee satisfaction. An authoritarian leader can clash a virtual team with over-communication and control. In the virtual setting, there is no such thing as a real leader. The manager should turn into the leader by influence, not by power or inferred right.

2. Laissez-Faire Leadership

The term "laissez-faire" denotes letting employees to decide how they want to fulfill their tasks, without intervention or supervision from leadership. Laissez-faire leadership is the contrary to authoritarian leadership. Laissez-faire leaders favor a laid-back style to team leadership — a tactic that might help experienced, expert teams in on-site environment, but hold back virtual teams that need timely and regular feedback. Team members working in laissez-faire leadership environment can consider that their leaders are disinterested or dynamically discouraging them, resulting in low productivity. This style also does not provide sufficient potential for employee development (Maryville University (2021).

As can be seen there is no one-fit-for-all model for a virtual leadership. A successful style is influenced by the individual and what the team and industry require. For example, participative leadership cannot be what's looked-for for a team that doesn't require contribution from everybody on every resolution to drive the business. What's significant is acknowledging what functions and what doesn't for a team. It is also pivotal for leaders to consider that communication involves also listening to what a team has to say. At the end of the day, what matters is the wellbeing of both the business and the team. As such virtual leaders, among them also the **hybrid leaders** should enhance their leadership skills.

Among the **skills** that should be revised are:

- **Communication** - Working from home might give an impression of exclusion from decision-making. On the other hand, holding weekly or daily updates regarding the company's activities and strategies can raise awareness among the staff about the company's policies and the tasks and expectations that the personnel are to fulfill
- **Care** - it can be motivating to offer benefits to the team in form of wellness programmes and this especially after Covid-19 when the employees have to return to in presence work modus.
- **Appreciation and Recognition-** employees should be appreciated and acknowledged for their efficient work and this also publicly, otherwise, now when businesses have restarted hiring and approve of home-office and there is a shortage of skills, employees may quit their job unless managers acknowledge their accomplishments.
- **Flexibility**- in the new realities caused by Covid-19 people avoid crowded places and prefer hybrid work space, others still do home-office. However, nowadays flexibility goes far beyond home-office and should entail also providing resources, e.g. if needed noise cancelling headset at home or more flexible and even long working hours for a certain task.

Thus, the leaders should transform their leadership styles to motivate the employees and be human-centered (Srikant Chellappa, 2021).

Table 3. Key skills for a hybrid leader

1. **Construct Emotional Wellbeing - create atmosphere for hybrid teams to voice their difficulties and help one another**
2. **Advance Inclusivity - Use team attachment and individual experiences to build an inclusive team irrespective of site.**
3. **Coaching and Reaction - provide the team members caring and authentic career talks to support their career developments**
4. **Highlight Happiness and Sense of balance - Create systems and support that promotes healthy work-life balance and a chance to nurture other interests and passions.**
5. **Motivate - make discussions and contacts that generate contribution and innovativeness**
6. **Rise Emotional Intelligence – promote EQ as it facilitates that the team feel joined and sustained.**
7. **Optimally engage technologies- this can ensure equal access to the same prospects for everybody**
8. **Learn and familiarize – know the trends and technologies that promote efficiency without continuous control**
9. **Master Progress - provide the team the hard and soft skills they are essential for the growth and development**
10. **Communicate successfully – make use of virtual platforms to ensure regular communication**
Source: Horton International, Handbook For Hybrid Leaders)

2.2.3 Hands-on examples

Key factors directly influencing on the productivity of virtual teams are communication concerning the tasks, trust regarding leadership, empowerment and cohesion (Garro-Abarca, V., et al., 2021). Hybrid leaders can rise performance, commitment levels and loyalty, by encouraging development and expansion due to long-term decision-making, agility, ownership and responsibility, as well as creativity and connection.

To get best of the hybrid team the hybrid leader hence is to ensure the following features:

1. **Trust**

The virtual team members should trust their colleagues. The studies carried out during the Covid-19 have revealed that off-site work can damage trust within the team due to the insufficient communication. Moreover, there should be also trust between managers and remote workers (Horton International, 2021). Several aspects are to be ensured to establish trust

- Communication – the leader should establish transparency, enable formal and informal communication, be ready to listen. While in-person communication between leaders and team

members is not often, virtual teams have other tools available (e.g. chat, video conference, e-mail, etc) which leaders can deploy to network with their team and this in an individual-centric way, trying to understand the team members and their situation, showing engagement in the existing problems.

- Recognize the most optimal tools, technologies and practices to have transparent and easy workflow and workload.
- Result-oriented- team members should have the freedom to work independently to accomplish a common goal
- Whenever possible, enable face-to-face meetings between all team members to share visions, impressions, etc.
- Establish equality so that the team members are encouraged to do their best. Virtual team leaders can cultivate a sense of justice among their employees by deploying the values of organizational justice, treating team honestly and consistently, considering the position of the team members, remaining impartial and clarifying the decision-making process, as well as by conserving sufficient feedback rounds
- Research also shows that the more attractive leaders are the ones who create the most trust. Consequently, it is suggested that the virtual leader pay relevant attention to the visual signals they give to their employees through electronic media (e.g. profile images) so that the latter's perception of their leaders be attractive and rise their level of trust in them (Carlos Flavian, 2018).

2. Empathy

Inclusivity is an essential feature of leadership. In case of the hybrid team, the leader should invest extra effort and consider various circumstances that the team may encounter. Off-site employees may have the fear that they do not enjoy or are not presented the opportunities that on-site employees experience and vice versa. Hence, the hybrid leader is to be able to personalize the involvement and practices for the whole staff notwithstanding where they are located. Moreover, a hybrid leader is also pay extra effort for the inclusivity of a new member to the team. As such, s/he should make sure that the newcomer gets acquainted with the job but also feels themselves as a part of the team. Otherwise, the newcomer can be an outsider for a long time which can have an adverse result on the overall work performance and productivity. At the same time the leader should also respect and embrace various perspectives, styles, and cultures to build the best practice and have a diverse, considerate, and unified team. For the sake of a hybrid team, this assumes less criticism and more interested in personal experiences and outlooks from every team member

3. Motivate Accountability and Teamwork

The prominence of a hybrid staff is to enable best output. The hybrid team can fulfill the task in any way they consider is best to produce the paramount outcomes for the business and optimal efficiency. In line with this, it can be beneficial for the businesses, if the hybrid leaders support the team to find the

solutions themselves rather than instructing what to do. A hybrid leader can support to simplify the procedure of modelling the maximum of productivity, but it is more operative to allow the team decide what they need and how they want to work. Hybrid leader should aim to make agreements within the team to promote teamwork while considering the diverse work requirements of each team member. For example, some team members may require fixed working hours and stop communication outside this period. The task of a successful hybrid leader is to be open, flexible, supportive as well as team-oriented to provide the relationship that everyone in the team desires. The role of the hybrid leader in the success of the hybrid work cannot be overrated, with it being able to make a 70% difference in staff commitment and team productivity. On an individual level, hybrid leadership is about addressing private mindset and requirements as a leader to a hybrid staff, including attitudes, biases, practices, familiarities etc., which can be enabled by coaching. On a team-level; it's about determining what functions optimal for the team, facilitating self-organization in an agile manner. For that purpose, resonance is important. It advances leadership with self-organisation, the leader with the team, and offers a productive basis for diversity that ensures a personalized and empathic leadership, as well as a creative leadership. Thus hybrid leadership is a nonstop development and upgrading procedure, reflecting the continuous changes in the staff (Horton International, 2021).

Having the above mentioned basis the virtual/hybrid leader will be able to successfully lead the team.

For that purpose, the following **strategies** can make their work efficient:

1. **Ensuring clear requirements and rules** – before setting new processes and regulations concerning hybrid workforce, discuss them with the team to find out the optimal decisions. Make arrangements on the following issues:
   - Clear working hours
   - Communication – platforms, how, when and response times
   - Which team members should participate in meetings, decision-making and information flow
   - ensuring equal opportunities for the employees regardless of the working modus- on-site, off-site or hybrid
   - identifying the tools, technologies, and platforms the team members should use and/or need
   - strategies for evaluating/monitoring productivity, performance and accomplishments

2. **Establishing hybrid ecosystem**

hybrid leaders should be able to create successful ecosystem which will be a lifelong process to promote constant development and enhancement as well as a means to adjust to new realities. Issues to be considering when forming a hybrid ecosystem include:

   - Communication charts and networks
   - Inclusivity schemes
   - Encouraging small-talk, informal talks and team building
   - Registration set-ups, meeting practices and face-to-face meetings
   - Setting feedback rounds and support schemes

- Decide how to celebrate victories, overcome failures, obstructions or deal with any other significant or unexpected situation
- Defining priorities
- Having risk management plan for force majeure cases

3. Growing and improving the Team

Leaders will have better performance and outputs from their team in case they promote the expansion and improvement of the knowledge and skills of the team, which should be an on-going process. When the team is continually developing and upgrading their spectra, they get more flexible for overtaking various tasks, capable for knowledge exchange and skilled to produce better results. The challenge here is that in a hybrid team member are seen less than the ones working always on-site. As such, hybrid team members may get fewer opportunities for involvement, impact and development. To this end, constant sessions (2-3 times a year) for career development are essential to ensure that the team is developing professionally. During the check-ins the leader can try to find out

- what the team member learnt in the period after the last talk
- What the employee would like to learn/acquire for the upcoming periods
- What would foster their performance and/or goal achievement

Additionally, is important for the hybrid leader often have talks to the team and try to find out:

- The vision that the team has regarding their stance in the organization as well as their perspective regarding the work and the functions they fulfill
- What the employees consider to be the best way of achieving the optimal results
- What the employees perceive as a success of a certain task and the work per se
- What strategies, know-how or experience the employees can suggest to ensure better outputs

4. Manage Efficiency deliberately and tactically

Research suggests that off-site employees normally work longer hours than those working on-site

However, working longer is not equal to working productively and it is the task of the hybrid leader to foster productivity, by establishing a clear structure and arrangements that make the work more efficient, well-organised, operational and in line with business processes. Employees, and especially, off-site ones, tend to concentrate on the tasks that show more accomplishment and growth, even though the work might not be a priority. This can sometimes be because of the way the employees present what they have done to their hybrid leader, trying to demonstrate their productivity. On the other hand, the hybrid leader can prevent such a situation and promote productivity and efficiency by setting clear expectations and requirements for deliverables and establishing a classification of priority. While it may sometimes seem that everything is urgent,

having a priority system can ensure that the team is focused on the most imperatice and urgent issues and tasks and this will decrease the possibility of missing deadlines and keep the good atmosphere within the team (Horton International, 2021)

Thus, it is imperative to provide training to managers on how to manage hybrid teams effectively and support hybrid workers, including performance management, remote communication, collaboration and relationship-building. (CIPD, 2022)

Table 4. Practical arrangements for Hybrid work

Workspace flexibility -Minimum and/or maximum on-site days
Regulation whether off-site workplace may be located nationally or internationally
Work time flexibility -Minimum and/or maximum time spent during or outside of office hours.
Structures for fixing and tracking space and time flexibility.
Timeframes for computing the time spent working remotely or asynchronously (weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly),
Provisions for the remote workplace to ensure that the telework space is safe and healthy
Provisions for work-life balance to ensure that borders between work time and personal time are respected

2.2.4 Case studies & success stories

Both employers and employees are now showing a preference for a higher share of remote work compared to pre-pandemic levels. Employees have positive approaches regarding working from home two or three days a week and companies more and more shift to hybrid model of work (Christie, 2020). As such at JPMorgan Chase & Co., employees work on –site only two days while at Salesforce.com Inc. only one day (The Wall Street Journal, 2021). Below are presented different experiences of flexible and hybrid working across different sectors.

1. **An example of a shift to remote work is also CTrip**

CTrip is China's largest travel agency, with 16,000 employees and a market capitalization of about $US 5 billion. In 2010, it undertook a randomized experiment comparing the productivity of employees working on-site with those working off-site in one of its call centers. The results showed that off-site employees increased their productivity by 13%. Due to fewer breaks and sick days, off-site employees also raised the minutes they worked on each shift by 9.2%. the employees saved on average 80 minutes per day on commuting. Additionally, the employees credited their decrease in sick days to the fact that on some days they felt well enough to work at home but not well enough to commute. The off-site employees ascribed the improved performance to the quieter home environment. Work satisfaction also was higher for off-site workers, and burn-out was half that of on-site employees. CTrip finds that the advance in performance was about $375 per employee per year, that working from home reduced office

costs by $1250 per employee per year, and that reducing burn-out saved about $400 per employee per year in training costs and lost productivity. The only destructive outcome was that the number of promotion for remote workers were almost 50% lower, probably because they were not visible to office-based managers **(**Bloom, N., et. al., 2015)

2. Another case which is yet well thought is **Telenet**,

Telenet is Belgium's second-largest telecommunications company, employing over 3300 people. In 2021, it proclaimed a new post-pandemic hybrid work strategy and resolved a new cooperative work contract with the workforce. Employees can now spend up to 60% of their time for each quarter anyplace in the EU. The new contract enables:

- **Flexibility regarding the location but not timing**- Employees can work remotely 60% while the other 40% they must work on-site. Telenet does not let fully asynchronous work but requires that employees work within normal office hours.

- **Work organisation** - more activities are now carried out by teleworking, e.g. for call center agents who could previously work only in the office and the office is a place for face-to-face meetings and creativity, brainstorming or introductions of new employees take place at the office. Agreement regarding the 60/40 division within the quarter is done at the team level.

- **Corporate culture** - Training for leaders in emotional security and servant leadership where the leader helps the team s/he leads. There are Check-ins at the beginning of meetings and regular informal gatherings without an agenda.

- **The new workplace(**s) - converting the offices into a meeting place, with more space for safe workshops or brainstorming, outdoor meeting places and registration schemes. There is also fixed monthly payment notwithstanding on-site days for remote employees to make sure they have a lavish workplace and can work safely and ergonomically at home.

As a result of this model, the company has gain multiple benefits. As such, it is attractive for talents which are located in badly-connected places. Additionally, the company has cut the costs for its premises for 300-400 employees. Meetings have become much more efficient, the number of absences has plummeted, employees save time due to less commuting and have a better and clearer work-life balance (Grzegorczyk, M., et. al., 2021).

3. Another success story of a hybrid model is **Blood Cancer UK**

Blood Cancer UK is a charity devoted to beating blood cancer. The institution has 100 employees – mostly women and about half being parents and/or care-takers. The transition to hybrid workforce has

shifted the emphasis from presence to outcomes and the value of the well-being of the employees. Below are the aspects that they follow to make the model successful:

- **IT equipment and support** – HR department together with the IT support ensured that all the employees have laptops and any other technology/equipment they required, incorporated telephone system into the laptops and trained the employees in using Microsoft Teams

- **Agile working principles –** the company set principles aimed at making the work agile. The HR department provided trainings to embed the principles and the practice of agile working, including presenting the examples of several employees, together with senior executives. Additionally, an online Agile Resources Library was formed to support employees. It comprises information about the agile working strategy, hands-on guidelines and assistance, e.g. how to make workplaces remotely, how to running remote meetings, etc., an FAQ section, detailing e.g. how travel expenses work. Each team works together and on the basis of the guidelines given by the HR, establishes their own principles for agile working which are written down and saved in a central folder so that everybody in the team has access to it. As such, team members also get an opportunity to learn from one another. Team agile working principles are revised and updated every six months in a team meeting to review what works and what doesn't. For example, the company at first decided to have the meetings either in person or remotely. Later they have realized that it was not practical.

- **Support and training for managers –** the institution offers training for line managers on all aspects of agile working, among them leading and motivating remote teams, handling by results and outcomes, and making agile principles. The organization has also established network groups, including one for leaders, to provide peer support. They meet on a monthly basis to discuss particular issues, e.g. motivation. Leaders help each other and learn from each other.

- **Strong focus on wellbeing –** the organization highlights the value of wellbeing through training and regular communications about the type of support people can access. The company regularly presents practical methods to support people stop overworking and how to avoid burnout

Benefits - the increased flexibility through hybrid working enabled the organization to help more people because its support line is open 7 days a week. Another benefit is the increased level of employment engagement. Moreover, retention rate has raised from 70% in 2018 to 94%in 2021. Furthermore, due to agility there has been a noticeable raise in applications for positions and the company has received the chance to employ from a bigger talent pool. The strategy has also been positive in supporting wellbeing priorities. Sickness absence has fallen to an average of 1.3 days per employee. Trust has been another cornerstone for success.

Blood Cancer UK's recommendation for effective hybrid working:

- Be flexible. There are also no prerequisite artificial limitations, e.g. 3 days off-site, 2 days on-site
- Invest in technology to ensure everyone is included, irrespective their location.
- Encourage trust and liability. Being in front of a computer does not mean being productive
- Enable interactions between teams so that they can learn from each other and find joint solutions

4. The next success story is **Financial Services Compensation Scheme**.

FSCS is the UK's compensation scheme for financial services. It is an independent organization based in London with about 240 employees. They have set a working methods that meets the needs of the employees, enabling them to choose where they work, when they work and what they want to wear.

Office environment -The Facilities Team had a detailed talk with the employees to find out how the employees would like to use the office space and what can improve their working atmosphere. As they saw that most of the employees sat most of the time and that normally at one desk, they changed the office surrounding to encourage movement and areas for collaboration. They created a place for hot-desking, informal meetings and team working, and doubled the size of their informal event space, prepared a new room for private workshops.

Technology - Desktop computers were substituted by laptops for all the employees. The full suite of Microsoft Office 365 was installed. New audio-visual technologies were installed, so that the employees can easily make presentations on-site or off-site via Teams to support the hybrid working method.

Removing restrictions and fixed working hours - all the meetings are hybrid. The company is open from 7:00 to 19:00 and the employees are free to choose when to work within this time period. The company has established a toolkit explaining the working principles and how they can be applied.

The 40% principle – while some employees are glad to work permanently remotely, many miss the human contact and the opportunities for networks and teamwork that on-site work provides. Hence, the company has set out a principle that the employees should be in the office 40% of their work time.

Purposeful usage of time in the office – the idea behind is that the employees should be in the office for specific events, e.g. a workshop or team meeting. The team leader should use these days for face-to-face meetings, have another day where the whole team is there for a team meeting. The company also organizes a social event for all employees every month, whether that's breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Managing a hybrid team - The FSCS provides team leaders with formal training and materials and frequently makes discussions on how to support employees. The company invested significantly in establishing a high-trust environment as an integral element of its approach. Strong relationships are crucial so that the team members are confident to approach leaders openly both for wellbeing and work issues. The manager should regularly communicate and should not take the team-satisfaction for granted. For example, if a team-member has an issue or problem s/he doesn't not have to wait for a fixed meeting but can just call or text the team leader who will call back as soon as possible.The Analytics Manager of the company Arjian Punnialingam also highlights knowing his team on a personal level. As such during lockdown he used team meetings not just for work-related issues but also for informal talks with team members. He also initiated an online quiz once a week to cheer some fun. Because of the good atmosphere, the team members take it in turns to organize a social activity after work once a month, anything from escape rooms to electronic bingo. As a result, the employee satisfaction rate has widely improved, while engagement rose from 79% to 88%. Apart from these, the FSCS has registered its highest ever customer satisfaction score of 89%, and external recognition in

five national awards for their customer experience. Sickness absence has fallen. Hybrid has brought benefits also in terms of wellbeing and engagement. Commuting time has been saved.

The FSCS's recommendations for positive hybrid working:

- Cultivate your strategy in teamwork with employees to comprehend their requirements and support them to work at their best wherever they are.
- Form interactions and communicate on a regular basis so that people have trust toward the leader and are confident to raise questions or look for support when necessary.
- Incorporate fixed time for in person team meetings to discuss achievements, priorities and plans.
- Motivate employees to use their time in the office purposefully and make certain office design contributes to teamwork and connectivity (CIPD, 2022)

5. One more success case is the **Sovini Group**

Sovini Group provides quality construction, property and facilities services to the public, not-for-profit and private sectors. It is located in England and has over 800 employees. The company has shifted now to an agile model and focuses on outcomes and the needs rather than the working hours. The work can be fulfilled flexibly, including the 1. Timing - working hours which can be adjusted to working needs and individual preferences, 2. Location – working on- or offsite, 3. Role and function – e.g. desk-office can be shared. Team leaders are supposed to support and arrange the agile working approach as well as make protocols their team principles and agreements.

A rapid transition- The first challenge was equipping the staff with the necessary technologies and training them to the usage of online systems. Afterwards, the company started discussions with the employees to find out their preferences regarding agile working. The company also formed 3 teams for information technology, people and culture, and facilities and assets who met every month to analyze their current stance and discuss how to move forward. They found out that the employees are satisfied with the flexibility and work–life balance of agile working. Hence, the company considered switching to a fully agile working strategy to enhance performance and productivity. The CEO made presentations with the employees who could shift to the new agile working scheme, enabled them to ask questions and share their fears. Afterwards, the company shared their draft on agile working within the employees. Additionally, their employee app, OurSpace was used for communication and information. The company has made employer and employee principles defining the frameworks of the work. Though the company has been practicing agile working for already 2 years, the business transformation team still has monthly meetings to evaluate practices and possible development. Among the key challenges in the move are

1. **Implementation of technology** - The company improved the laptops of the employees, the company intranet and the employee app have been enriched with new functions and features, new project management tool was installed and even a digital post room was created. The employees have easy access to information, team leaders can set deadlines, checklists and tasks online and the ream can follow all the processes at real time. To promote team-building, the company also offers collaboration and social events, conducts monthly care surveys among the employees, also

allots a certain budget for team-building activities, makes wellbeing events, social events and away days to bring people from the wider organisation together. Jessica Cooney- the company's line manager considers she has a better understanding of her team since moving to agile.

2. **Moving from a focus on time management to performance outcomes** – before the pandemic the company had fixed working hours and the employees were supposed to clock-in and out. The company's HR Manager Steven Scott mentions that this became irrelevant with the introduction of the remote work as with the timing you measure how long you see an employee but not necessarily what s/he is doing. Abandoning time restrictions assumed mindshift both for the team members and leaders. The employees needed the leaders to know how much they worked and the team leaders need to adjust to the loss of control. The team leaders were challenged to look at what success is in a certain task. They had to review how performance and targets were measured as well as clearly define what performance indicators they require. The company offered numerous workshops and trainings to team leaders for them to adapt to productive agile working strategy.

Besides, constant support and interactions are enabled by the managers' hub on their employee app, allowing them to share challenges, ideas and support. For Jessica, leading by example is key to building mutual trust, i.e. you have to lead by example and demonstrate that you are doing the same, and not burning yourself out. Additionally, you should build mutual respect and understanding of each other's work preferences. As such, while one prefers to work in the evening, he does not expect to get answer from others also in the evening

Onboarding new colleagues- as a team they meet new recruits before they start, in person or through virtual meetings, get acquainted with one another and welcome the new team member. They also engage the new team member to their employee app. They have a new starter folder on their Google Drive so that they have easy access to all practices and technology as soon as they start.

Benefits - The organization can now save on spaces though it has enough spaces for employees if they gather for socializing or in-person meetings. Social events are held outside in other locations. The company has also increased its talent acquisition chances. Agile working has also improved the employee wellbeing and engagement. Employee sickness absenteeism rates have reduced, and turnover rates amended. The employee satisfaction with the company and retention rates have also increased. Jessica acknowledges that also performance is better than ever before. Steven states that this is due to empowerment and trust. As a result, the employees show engagement and performance.

The Sovini Group's **recommendations** for positive hybrid working:

- Consult about the alterations with employees at initial phases and listen to their views. It forms confidence. Admit that you might not have all the responses, but be dedicated to set them
- Try to engage with your team and build connections and trust.
- Lead by example.
- Concentrate on what you are trying to accomplish as an organisation and as a team and challenge existing systems that do not support this.
- Give the employees autonomy- an intensified feeling of ownership makes people more motivated about what they do (CIPD, 2022)

2.3. Assessment

The following sections aim to support you in the self-reflection process of your knowledge and skills. Answer the questions wisely based on what you have learned. Tips and feedback will be provided to motivate you learn more about the topic!

2.3.1 Knowledge Assessment

This part includes quiz-like questions for you to reflect on your knowledge! Take your time to answer the ten (10) following questions!

Question 1(multiple choice or true/false): A good leader always makes a good hybrid leader
[true]
[false]
[generic feedback]: a good leader is not necessarily a good hybrid leader as the challenges of the latter are wider and the s/he can be overwhelmed

Question 2 (multiple choice or true/false): Leaders and team members work most efficiently when they have the chance to decide their most productive setup
[true]
[false]
[generic feedback]: only when the team is satisfied, can they have a high performance. They should be able to choose to work whether on-site, off-site or hybrid

Question 3 (multiple choice or true/false): The shift to off-site working model was
[beneficial both for the employers and employees]
[beneficial for the employers as they increased productivity]
[a failure as the team leaders lost their control]
[generic feedback]: remote work was beneficial both for the employers and employees as the former increased their productivity, reduced rent prices, cut workspaces, simplified certain processes, standardized systems, increased cost efficiency, enlarged their talent attraction the latter have gained better work-life balance, improved their well-being, saved commuting time and costs, etc.

Question 4 (multiple answers correct): Why is it important to have ecosystems in hybrid teams
[for persistent progress]
[for peer learning]
[for enhanced supervision]
[for active socialisation]
[generic feedback]: hybrid teams require networking as it is a chance for development and expansion. It is an opportunity to become agile

Question 5 (multiple answers correct): What can build trust in a hybrid team
[active communication and empathy]

[rewarding and bonuses]

[regular control and criticism]

[equal treatment and fairness]

[generic feedback]: the answer 1 and 4 are correct because the team members need to be involved and engaged in team decisions and activities. They should be treated personally to be satisfied with the work and work atmosphere

Question 6 (multiple answers correct): How can the hybrid leader promote development and improvement of the team

[by organizing compulsory trainings once or twice a year for the team to acquire new skills and competences]

[by setting a remuneration system based on performance]

[by regular talks reflecting what skills/competences the team member acquired since the previous talk and what s/he still lacks]

[what the company vision is and what s/he considers as the work success]

[generic feedback]: answer 3 and 4 are correct because hybrid teams should be based on flexibility and trust. Extra competitive atmosphere can harm the performance and the overall productivity of the team.

Question 7 (multiple answers correct): What practical solutions can a hybrid leader suggest to organize a structured and efficient working processes?

[the team members should present daily or weekly reports on their activities]

[there is no need for regulations. The team members should have flexibility and freedom to decide themselves]

[minimum and/or maximum remote working days]

[regulations regarding work-time and private life]

Question 8 (multiple answers correct): Why is hybrid team beneficial to companies

[productivity and the performance increases]

[companies can optimize workforce]

[new recruits can start working with less effort]

[talent pool raises, while costs for premises decrease]

[generic feedback]: research shows that virtual work increases efficiency of the work, is cost efficient, furthermore, companies do not need extended workspaces.

Question 9 (matching): Match the terms with their definitions.

Term 1 servant leader: incline to control and normally make all the resolutions with insufficient team contribution

Term 2 participative leader: puts a special attention to the wellbeing of the team-members, is an active listener and treats to the team members as equals

Term 3 transformational leader: Is flexible and uses different leadership styles acknowledging that different leadership style can be suitable to different team members and cases

Term 4 Situational Leader: creates and spreads the mission of the company, inspires others, establishing a trustworthy and motivated team

Term 5 authoritarian leader: form a supportive environment, listens to each team member who make their input to goal setting, decision-making and other business activities
[generic feedback]:
1-2
2-5
3-4
4-3
5-1

Question 10 (matching): Match the problems with their solutions.
Problem 1 how can remote or hybrid team members follow information flow:
Solution: they should have opportunities for communication, and this also outside the business atmosphere
Problem 2 how to avoid burn-out: Solution: a general data file, an app, an online platform or any other general source can be created with open access for all of the team members
Problem 3 how to prepare the team to hybrid model: Solution: the team should have the flexibility to have the most suitable setting and timing for them to work at the same time be accountable to the leader
Problem 4 how can hybrid leader promote peer learning: the team and the leader should get training and explanation as well as principles defining the frames of the work. Additionally, all the team members should have the necessary technologies.
Problem 5 how can the hybrid team leader motivate the team: the team should get care, opportunities for welfare as well as socialization outside the office premises
[generic feedback]: text
1-2
2-5
3-4
4-1
5-3

2.3.2 Skills Assessment

This is the part where your knowledge is being put into action!
Train your brain with the skills you gained through this module and think through a possible answer to the following assignment!
1. Imagine there is a new member to the team. What are your steps to ensure s/he feels comfortable in the team and performs productively?
2. Imagine you have an aged but also experienced and skilled staff who is not willing to shift to hybrid or remote work. How can you manage the situation?
3. Imagine you have multicultural team with different background and also personality, among them being both introverts and extroverts. How will you consider different personality types when modelling hybrid work atmosphere to ensure their inclusivity taking into account their strengths and weaknesses

2.4. Module Summary

Remote and/or hybrid work model can enable and simplify new working processes and increase productivity. Furthermore, also employees prefer this approach to on-site work. However, this new model can be challenging as hybrid leaders should consider divergent staff desires and needs and at the same time seek to increase productivity and cooperation. Hence, the hybrid leaders are to be trained and skilled on how to manage hybrid teams effectively and support hybrid workers, including performance management, remote communication, collaboration and relationship-building.

3. Training Module [2] - Digital design, data visualization and online safety in digital means

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1 Module Description

Module 2 wishes to give a perspective on the new knowledge and skills the targeted trainers need to develop, to align with the new reality in the working environment where remote or hybrid work have become the new standard after the pandemic. The limited exposure and experience of the selected cohort in digital tools (at least in the areas surrounding digital learning) and the scope of the DigiREACT project, forces us to present a rather wide selection of topics (still not inclusive enough) that eventually limits the depth of the analysis every topic requires for someone to master it. It deals mainly with knowledge around digital design and digital learning to help trainers envision the new modality of training remote teams, with some additional info on the benefits of data visualization solutions. Since the new setting is online we also provide some directives to keep the procedures safe.

3.1.2 Module Goals

The goal of the module is that the learners should know and understand that the lack of personal presence of the trainer requires a higher level of preparation and new skills to design learning interventions as good or even better that those delivered in a classroom. They need to know also than being online poses new kind of threats that have to be addressed in a continuous manner.

3.1.3 Learning Objectives

The purpose of the learning activity is, by presenting the new concepts and theories to motivate the learners to research deeper and set themselves a roadmap for developing the new skills.

3.1.4 Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the learning activity, the learner will be able to outline new learning initiatives for the hybrid and virtual teams.

On successful completion of this module, learners should be able to:

Knowledge	Skills	Application of knowledge & skills
appraise the fundamental concepts, principles, theories and terminology used in hybrid corporate training	collaborate effectively with hybrid and virtual teams of trainees	encourage and motivate virtual teams to increase productivity
assess digital needs of VET and corporate trainers as learners	conduct research about future gaps in the context of digital transformation	critically reflect on management skills incorporating knowledge in digital transformation
outline different practices to new hybrid environments	apply managerial and training skills to develop custom training plans	implement hybrid skills within complex environments and different contexts

3.1.5 Estimated seat time

The completion of the module along with the implementation of the knowledge provided will last **13.75** hours.

3.2   Main content

3.2.1 Visual perception design principles

The shift to remote working and mixed environments is here to stay as research shows. This puts a constant pressure to workforce trainers who were focused and excelled in instructor lead training (ILT) only, to…convert to virtual ILT (vILT) and eLearning.

Thus, a re- and up-skilling effort must take place for those having low expertise in digital media products and digital learning. In the following chapters we will see an introduction to digital design principals and best practices, an introduction to e-Learning design principles and best practices and some ideas of where the learning technology is heading nowadays.

As this backpack is an introductory handbook that will, hopefully, motivate trainers to dig further in the proposed topics, the below content is more informative than a scientific approach to the described matter.

An example of what adapting good design principles/techniques can offer, is the exploitation of 'negative spaces'. In a simple form these may refer to just adding white space around objects to make them less crumbled and 'airy' but it's not always the case. Negative spaces are 'inner spaces' of a design e.g. of a logo, that are cleverly used to show an element that 'wasn't meant to be there'.

The most famous and awarded example of 'negative space' use is the FedEx logo and the hidden arrow that implies the delivery of an object from point A to point B, which is what the company does.

Figure 1. The famous FedEx logo

Regarding design principles (that include digital design media as well) there's plenty of debate over how many they are and what they are, but in this section we are going to refer to the Gestalt principles of design that focus on visual perception (similarity, continuation, closure, proximity, figure/ground, and symmetry & order), and later to 12 more 'practical' ones that are generally common to many documents around design (contrast, balance, emphasis, proportion, hierarchy, repetition, rhythm, pattern, white space, movement, variety, and unity).

The main goals in every design are good aesthetics, good functionality and user-friendliness and the implementation of the Gestalt principles around visual perception can help us achieve that.

Key to the principles is how the human brain works e.g. by filling in the blanks in an image and creating a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts like when we 'see' a face in a cloud formation. Generally, the human brain will attempt to simplify and organize complex images or designs that consist of many objects in its effort to see structure and patterns that will help us understand our surroundings.

The principle of similarity refers to the brain's 'habit' to visually group elements that are similar to each other e.g. by colour, shape, or size. Hence, in a page with a bulleted list of text (same bullets, colours, fonts etc.) the brain will see the list as one visual object, so if we need a call-to-action (like moving to the next slide) we must create a button with a different style and separate it from the list for it to stand out. In the same example if one of the lines of the list is more important than the others, we have to differentiate it by font, colour etc.

In the principle of continuation, we take advantage of the eyes' tendency to follow the simplest path when viewing lines so if we need to drive a viewer to a certain direction and to certain objects, we can e.g. put the objects in a series and in a line, then scattering them around.

The principle of closure demonstrates the ability of the brain to fill in the missing parts of an image and one of the classic examples is the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) logo where we immediately see a panda bear although some lines are missing (the illusion of completeness).

Figure 2: The WWF logo

In UX/UI we, many times, use the principle of closure <u>to avoid</u> the illusion of completeness and encourage interaction. In the following screen the partial images, words and the arrows are driving us to scroll to the right because we have more to see.
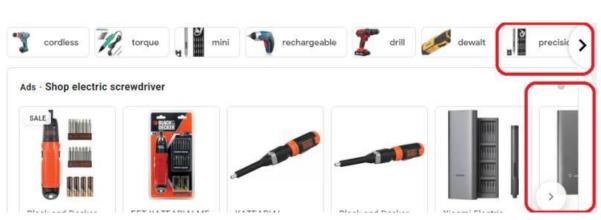
Figure 3: Encouraging interactivity in UX

The principle of proximity is what exactly the word means. Objects close to each other are 'automatically' related. Grouping relating elements together can make them more pleasing to the eye, and easier to read so we need to gather separate elements, that contextually can be grouped together of course, into closer visual units. On the other side we don't stick things in the middle or in corners, we avoid using uniform spacing, we avoid confusion over a headline, subhead, and text and mainly we don't put elements together that don't belong together.

Figure 4: The benefits of grouping, uneven spacing and headlines

In the above picture we see how grouping related things closer together, with space in between each group, can make the list readable and useful.

The figure/ground principle is referred to the brain functions that distinguishes objects it considers to be in the foreground (figure) and the (back)ground.

Danish psychologist Edgar Rubin created the famous illusion of two faces or a vase which illustrates how figures or images change depending on a viewpoint, perspective, background, generally a context.
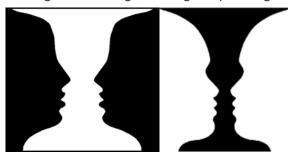
Figure 5: Edgar Rubin's famous illusion

To avoid such illusional situations when we need to highlight a certain part of the screen, and only that, we follow the opposite way. We can e.g., fade or blur the rest of the screen (ground) except the pop-up window (figure).

The law of prägnanz, ("good figure") or law of simplicity says that people interpret ambiguous or complex images as the simplest form(s) possible, because our brains simplify what we perceive and try to bring order to chaos (like seeing shapes or faces in the clouds).

Under this perspective, a monochrome version of the Olympic logo is seen as a series of overlapping circles rather than a collection of curved lines.
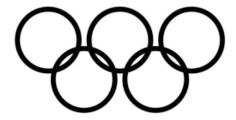
Figure 6: Monochrome Olympic logo

Still our brain will also try to make connections and find some meaning in what we see so in the standard version of the Olympic logo we don't perceive just a series of colourful incomplete circles but interlocking rings that represent the friendly competition of all continents.

Figure 7: Colourful Olympic logo

3.2.2 Practical design principles and suggestions

Beyond the Gestalt principles there are others (some related to the former) that when applied purposefully and successfully, help us create appealing and functional designs. These include contrast, balance, emphasis, proportion, hierarchy, repetition, rhythm, pattern, white space, movement, variety, and unity and can be combined to create the desired output.

A simple combination of the above for giving emphasis to an element (e.g. a piece of text) is to use a contrasting colour, like the 'reverse video text', or/and to use different proportions, like a larger font. Principles of design: contrast and emphasis.

Repetition of shapes in different sizes at the background can be used to create a rhythm on the page we design.
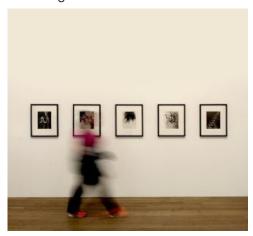
Figure 7: The Tate Gallery London UK (by Tasos Lekkas on Pixabay, '2684212')

White space helps the main element of a design (or a space like the gallery above) 'breath' and help us focus on the important information, but it doesn't really need to be literally white or have no pattern at all. The following faded picture can be used as a subtle pattern on a blockchain technology page.
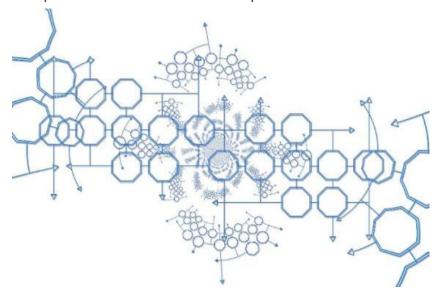
Figure 8: Blockchain pattern (Pixabay)

Variety can help create a sense of movement in a design, depending on how it's used and can disrupt monotony. Repetition on the other hand (same background, images of the same size on a grid and legends with same fonts etc.) create unity and consistency (if this is the required outcome).

But how all these principles can be combined in real life and real projects?

Experienced designers come to help us on that with their ideas.

A main suggestion is that we design having the end-goal and the customer/audience constantly in mind, together with the context in which the design will be received/consumed. Is the design related to the content, is it appropriate for digital devices, is the audience slow-paced or fast-paced and prepared to engage etc?

The described principles give us quite a handful of tools and approaches and some say that a successful design may incorporate six of them all the time. That shall not distract us from a very important strategy: to keep things simple, clear, and accurate.

A major step to implement this strategy is to use space correctly and avoid cluttered designs that for surely will distract our audience from the value or meaning we want them to focus on. We need to give room to our elements to breath and facilitate the viewer to concentrate on the important objects.

The correct use of space together with other attributes like typography, colours, images, shapes, patterns have also to result to balanced designs. As elements can attract human attention in varied intensity (have different 'visual weight') we must combine them in a way that does not stress the human brain which is hard-wired to notice things out of balance.

The classic example of that is the unevenly loaded seesaw where our brain says that it should tip to the left
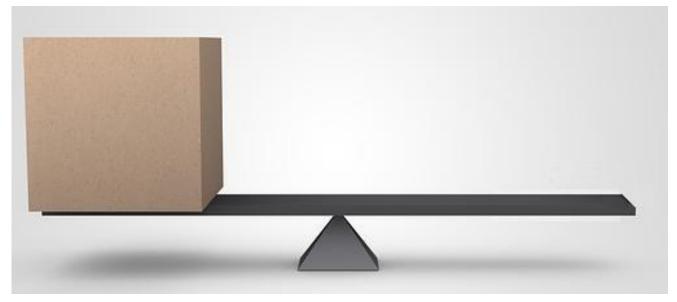
Figure 9: Seesaw (by Mediamodifier on Pixabay, "2108025")

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Since we have these basic strategies in place, we should think how to use contrast to our benefit: to drive attention to the key parts of the message (the goals we talked about). It also helps our creation to be visually appealing and engaging.

We can provide contrast by using colour, size (hierarchy), shape, texture, values/intensity and more.

Talking colour is about the use of the colour wheel (e.g. using colours that are opposite on the colour wheel).

We can use different geometrical shapes to give contrast or we may use the same ones but in different scale which implies a difference in importance.

The same goes with colour intensity. The aforementioned scaled shapes may share the 'same' colour but the bigger (more important ones) could also be darker.
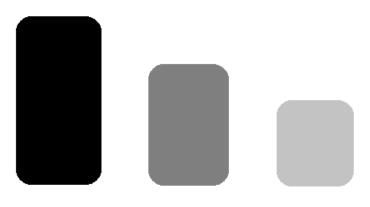
Figure 10: Scaled shapes

To play the contrast 'game' correctly:

- we need to familiarize with the colour wheel

- we can start by pairing soft and hard shapes (rectangles with circles)

- we should plan a visual hierarchy of scales (2-3 sizes max) and stay consistent with it (the most important are the bigger the less important the smaller etc)

Consistency is a general strategy for all our design effort. It can be a general layout (linear, angular etc) a colour scheme, a branding scheme, but also a way we have planned to 'tell our story'.

Let's close this section with some 'don't's' about text because eventually the training material will be around text content: Don't use more than two fonts maximum and more than two sizes. If you need to do so it's an indication that something else is lacking (contrast, space, accuracy on goals?). The same goes with bolds or other letter effects, if you need to use them something probably has gone wrong. Like the other design elements text needs also space to breathe (line spacing, character spacing…) so it will be easy to read.

3.2.3 A framework and methodology to build effective eLearning

In this section we will discuss a framework and the methodology to build training sessions, so our audience get the best possible learning experience from digital learning initiatives.

As with design what we always need to keep in mind is that our goal is to provide result-oriented eLearning, it's not a show-off of design skills or technology.

To start with, learning initiatives need instructional design and designers.

Instructional design is a process involving the analysis of learning needs and the use of theoretically based principles of learning for the systematic development of instruction.

Instructional designers specify a method which, if followed, will facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learner. They will then evaluate outcomes to make sure learning occurs.

Figure 11: What instructional design is about

The framework for designing learning objects is known to educators as it serves also in in traditional classroom teaching and its Robert Gagné's Nine Principles of Instruction.

Robert Gagné (1916-2002) was an American educational psychologist who contributed greatly to the development of the science of instruction.

Principle 1: Gain Attention (Reception)

It can be an introductive activity to drive learner's attention away from other tasks and thoughts and to engage in the learning session. The activity can be a passive one (show an impressive statistic, a short video) or an active one (run a short survey to the learners for what they believe about the matter of the session etc.)

Principle 2: Inform Learners of the Objectives (Retrieval)

It's very important and something we probably need to communicate (even in short) prior to a learning because it answers the vital question "what's in it for me?" (WIIFM). It should describe not only the final goal but also the steps to achieve that.

Principle 3: Stimulate Recall of Prior Learning (Expectancy)

Again, it can be a passive one e.g., assuming that the skills and levels of the learners are more or less known, we can summarize existing knowledge in a few screens, or an active one, like a short test.

Principle 4: Present New Content (Selective Perception)

This is the…main course where we provide the new knowledge to our audience that beyond being accurate it has to be well presented: logically sequenced, in proper sizing (we will see micro learning later) and in an engaging way. Visualization (images, graphs, tables, animations, short videos etc.) helps there a lot as well as interactivities, gamification etc.

Principle 5: Provide Learning Guidance (Semantic encoding)

Coaching, advice, job aids, additional resources…

Principle 6: Elicit Performance (Responsiveness)

Activities that will help learners to recall and apply knowledge in work-related scenarios.

Principle 7: Provide Feedback (Reinforcement)

Positive for reinforcement, polite and constructive counselling to help the learner identify misunderstandings and/or conquer difficult meanings.

Principle 8: Assess Learning Performance (Retrieval)

Exams, tests, quizzes are the standards at the conclusion of a course. Educational games can be an interesting option though they need certain level of expertise.

Principle 9: Enhance Retention and Transfer of Knowledge (Reinforcement)

Manuals, reference materials, additional content generally, but also a series of shorter courses to be consumed either at learners' pace or offered at certain intervals to enhance retention (space-learning effect).

ROBERT GAGNÉ'S 9 EVENTS OF INSTRUCTION

THIS IS NOT A STRICT ORDER

NOT EVERY LEARNING OBJECT NEEDS TO DO ALL 9 THINGS

SOME EVENTS MIGHT MERGE INTO ONE (E.G. FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT)

SOME EVENTS MIGHT HAPPEN MORE THAN ONCE

EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS MUST PERFORM ONE OF THESE FUNCTIONS!

GAIN ATTENTION

DEFINE OBJECTIVES

STIMULATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

PRESENT THE MATERIAL

OFFER CONTROLLED PRACTICE
GUIDANCE

OFFER FREE PRACTICE
PERFORMANCE

GIVE FEEDBACK

ASSESS

ENHANCE RETENTION

Figure 12: Robert Gagné's Nine Events of Instruction

If the above principals seem confusing to implement in an e-learning course, the following PPP model (Presentation, Practice and Production) for Language Teaching offers a glimpse of how these principles correlate and fall into place in the timeline of a real-word learning activity.
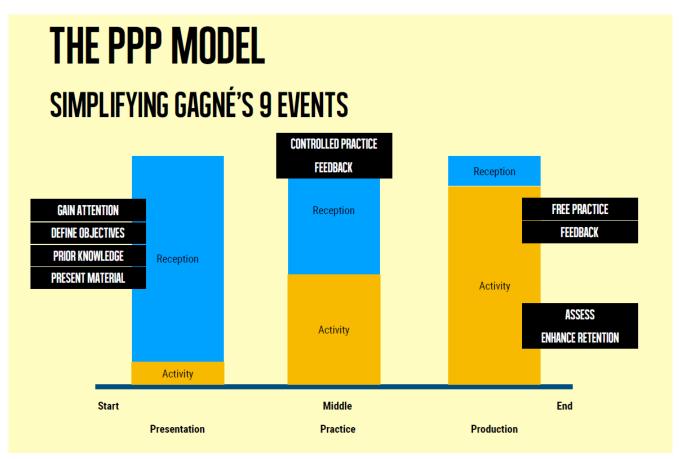
Figure 13: The PPP Model

3.2.4 Models for implementing eLearning projects

The two prevailing models currently are the 'traditional' ADDIE model (see below) and the more 'modern' Agile model (very well-known from the S/W development industry). Many researchers and market experts are now proposing the combination of the two.

A Analysis	D Design	D Development	I Implementation	E Evaluation
Define the problem	Author design doc (complete with description of instructional strategy and learning objectives)	Develop - install & test technologies	Create UX timeline	Collect user data
Identify learning gaps		Develop courseware	Train trainers / evaluators	Report results to stakeholders
Create high-level list of learning objectives and high-level course spec	Design user experience (more than just the UI!)	Develop content	Enroll trainees	Design program improvements
Design personas	Select technologies	Pilot content, collect feedback	Launch	Deliverables: evaluation report
Examine context	Develop a prototype	Deliverables: technology report, courseware, content, feedback report		
Evaluate existing content	Deliverables: Design doc, storyboards, prototype			
Deliverable: LNA report				

THE ADDIE MODEL

Figure 14: The ADDIE Model

3.2.5 Strategies for delivering e-learning

Are there 'modes' of delivering eLearning to make it more engaging and effective (depending on subject, audience, context etc)? Yes, there are.

Storytelling is the 'power tool', a gateway to transformational learning. Good stories include elements like: a relevant setting and environment (answers the 'what is your world' question), relatable characters (who are the players?), and a smooth narrative curve (usually including conflict, climax and resolution).

But why stories are so powerful?

Because:

- they are memorable (everyone remembers a good story).

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- they make people care (if you have your personas right, the story will 'speak' to learner's concerns, frustrations, and aspirations.

- they clear the mind (stories transport the trainees somewhere else, and ideal state to learn)/

- people take time for stories (even the busiest ones will stop to listen to a story).

- they give meaning to data (real data tell a story of their own, check https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbkSRLYSojo for data visualization)

Other strategies include:

- Guided learning, where coaches/mentors are guiding the learners through the e-learning course.
- Scenario-based (or branched) learning, where learners take decisions at the course of the lesson that drive to different results, a good tool when there are not definitely right or wrong outcomes in the topic.
- Simulations, that reproduce a real situation in a virtual world offering hands-on experience with safety and much fewer resources.
- Learning through exploration and discovery (LEAD), a main characteristic of all the modern learning platforms where users have access to the whole content and a can build their own learning journey, at their own pace ant time.
- Gamification and game-based learning, where through intrinsic motivation we engage users with the content.
- Immersive learning, where we exploit AR and VR technologies.
- Micro-learning (we will see it later).

3.2.5.1 The strategy of delivering knowledge through Microlearning

Microlearning proposes us to break learning content down into bite-sized pieces instead of large chunks (a typical microlearning intervention is between two and five minutes), to make the learning process more effective.

It's not actually something entirely new but it gained (justified) attention with the progress in eLearning, the internet, the prevalence of smart devices and the…uprise of mobile and 'just-in-time' learning.

With microlearning, new or existing content is broken down to focused learning goals. Typically, with microlearning we seek to achieve a single learning objective at a time.

Microlearning is also the main mean of delivery in spaced learning/spaced repetition where we try to address the Forgetting Curve issue (the theory suggesting that we can forget up to 90% of something we learned even in one week!). By 'feeding' learners with these 'learning nuggets' we are helping

active recall and improve memory retention.

By breaking content down into short and easily consumable 'nuggets' we engage learners better, reduce stress of having to 'consume' huge training content all at once, and eventually improve productivity.

The same time it plays well with other contemporary modalities like social learning, it is easier (and so cheaper) to develop and maintain and maximizes the shift to eLearning than the traditional ILT and the disadvantages the later it carries (expensive tutors, booking training rooms, hotels and travel costs for trainees, disruption of the flow of work etc).

3.2.5.2 Why to consider Gamification and Educational Games in your learning initiatives

First comes the question: What motivates people? Following Dan Pink's theory…
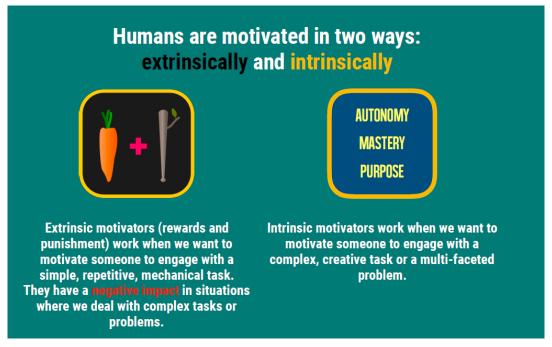
Figure 15: Dan Pink's theory on motivation

Gamification then is the idea of applying elements from game design to a non-game environment to increase autonomy, mastery and purpose, where:

- Autonomy is the sense that what I'm doing is not a strictly predetermined task, but rather something which I am in control of.
- Mastery is the sense that you're getting better at something and that makes people stick with difficult tasks.
- Purpose is the sense that we are involved in or working towards something larger and more important than ourselves
- Motivating learners to engage in the learning process has paramount effects on the learning outcomes and this is the target of gamification. Typical elements of gamification in eLearning are experience points, achievements, awards, badges, leaderboards etc but it is the underlining detailed gamification schema that makes the strategy work or not.
- Game-based learning refers to the development of a game or using/modifying an existing game to teach. While not an easy or cheap approach it provides high engagement, immersion, challenge and sense of achievement, it's a youthful approach, it provides high retention of learning content and it is particularly suitable for serving dry, technical content.

Finally, Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are new technologies that let us simulate the real world at work. These tools fall into a marketplace now called "Immersive Learning" that are transforming content development, learning experiences, gaming, and other forms of simulation.

Companies and solutions in VR to have a look at include, StriVR, ETU, Gleechi, Warp VR, Taqtile, TransFR and for simulation Mursion

3.2.6 Suggestions on eLearning

So, we have a framework of how people learn, a model to build learning and strategies to develop and offer it, but do we have any other tips to help us in the process? Well yes, many experts are offering their input and below are some common suggestions.

- Create a learner persona by knowing your audience and design accordingly (colours, animations, tone of voice, pace etc should differ if we train young programmers or senior financial consultants)
- With the help of the Subject Matter Expert (SME), have a basic understanding of the content
- Be consistent throughout the course especially with interactivity: users will not like if the square 'next' button at the low right of the screen will suddenly become an arrow in a circular button at the top left side of the screen. Keep it also simple e.g. reduce clicks is possible.
- If the course is lengthy, make breakpoints either to emphasize on parts that need special attention (e.g. by a questionnaire) or to relief the pressure on the learner (with a small video, an animation etc)
- As we saw in the design section, do not overload pages but give them space to 'breathe'. Here are couple of strategies regarding especially text:

MEASURING READABILITY

REQUIREMENT: A MINIMUM FLESCH-KINCAID SCORE OF 45

https://www.webfx.com/tools/read-able/check.php

WHAT IF A TEXT SCORES LESS THAN 45?

Shorten sentences.

Punctuate properly.

Simplify structure and syntax.

Replace connectors such as "however", "nevertheless" and "moreover" with "and" and "but".

Minimise use of passive voice.

Edit out structures that invert subject and auxiliary verb such as "Not only can time be saved, but…".

Figure 16: Suggestions on how to handle text

Outdated learning content, toxic classroom/office, poor student morale, failing tech infrastructure, lack of purpose, extraneous distractors, high-stress studying and poor instructional design cannot be saved by any technology however impressive it is.

For the newcomer in the eLearning technology space an upskilling of own digital competences is the road, first by involving in instructional design training (there are plenty of courses in the MOOCs) and then by getting trained in and use of modern authoring tools like Articulate, Captivate, iSpring, Elucidat, Easy Generator, Genially (to name a few).

3.2.7 Elements on Data Visualization

3.2.7.1 What is data visualization?

"Data visualization is the graphical representation of information and data. By using visual elements like charts, graphs, and maps, data visualization tools provide an accessible way to see and understand trends, outliers, and patterns in data. Additionally, it provides an excellent way for employees or business owners to present data to non-technical audiences without confusion.

In the world of Big Data, data visualization tools and technologies are essential to analyze massive amounts of information and make data-driven decisions." By Tableau analytics platform

3.2.7.2 Benefits of Data Visualization

Data visualization, a tool utilized by large scale companies such as Nike and Amazon, is emerging as a critical asset that has the power to transform the way data is accessed, presented, and used.

Although big player companies have been attracting the data visualization limelight, according to market reports by PR Newswire, small and medium-sized enterprises are now fueling the adoption of data visualization.

The reason for this is that, through its benefits, data visualization holds the potential to solve several pivotal business issues.

With the rise of big data, the importance of data visualization is growing at a compounding rate. To remain competitive in the future, businesses of all scales will likely need to incorporate the use of data visualization methods.

By taking advantage of data visualization, organizations stand to reap many transformative benefits, some of which could constitute a quantum leap in critical areas of operations.

1. It's the Key to Unlocking Big Data

With the advent of big data, more and more companies are collecting and storing vast amounts of data. The problem comes in analyzing this data.

From 2015 to 2017, the adoption of big data in enterprises accelerated from 17 percent to 59 percent. These statistics have left many companies with vast amounts of data at their fingertips. On the other hand, many companies are unable to make full use of their data thanks to cumbersome dashboards and retrieval methods.

Once data is retrieved, it's compiled and analyzed in reports that require hours of fine combing from leaders and decision-makers.

Data visualization can solve these inefficiencies. Visualization allows people to grasp vast amounts of data presented through particular formats instantaneously. As big data is becoming one of the most valuable resources for businesses to tap into, these capabilities of data visualization are becoming more and more essential.

2. Visualization Allows for near Instant Absorption of High Amounts of Data

One of the most significant advantages of data visualization is that it allows us to absorb large amounts of data at the literal glimpse of an eye.

Why would this be? Well, it is in part because humans can process visual images 60,000 times faster than text.

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Figure 17: Data visualization (by Wallusy on Pixabay '6246450')

One of the reasons for this is that the neural process for visualization requires more work from the brain than that of the processing seen images. Therefore, seeing a graph, chart, or other visual representation of data is more comfortable for the brain to process, than for it to read and comprehend text, and then convert this into a mental visualization (that likely will not be entirely accurate) of the data. Seeing as each experience we have with a book will be different based upon the individual who falls into a story.

Coupled with these two conditions is the fact that roughly 90 percent of information sent to the brain is visual.

Taken together, this means that we can digest visuals the speed of light and grasp the relationship between multiple points of data when doing so.

As an illustration, which is easier to take up, a pie chart, or a written out description of what it is portraying? Traditional data visualization techniques, such as bar graphs and pie charts, can already turn difficult-to-visualize data into something that is instantly understood, just like MasterCard's logo.

With the current and more evolved data visualization capabilities, users can also bring up more advanced visualizations. For example, an easy way to visualize some random data is to configure it into a bubble graph or a heat map. For more sophisticated analysis, you can choose to bring up displays such as frame diagrams (for hierarchical presentations) or Gantt charts (for project management type applications).

3. Data Visualization Speeds up the Decision Making Process

Because of our ability to rapidly comprehend data that is in a visual form, data visualization can materially increase the speed of decision-making processes.

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According to the Wharton School of Business, data visualization can shorten business meetings by up to 24 percent.

Faster decision-making is highly valuable to enterprises, and slowed decision-making can often be responsible for inefficiencies and even direct losses. With the ability to make quicker decisions, companies can take timeous action on trends, consistently outstrip competitors, avert losses, and capitalize on unexpected market conditions.

4. It Can Reveal Patterns and Trends

Data visualization is also a highly useful tool for identifying patterns and trends. Being aware of patterns and trends is crucial for the survival of organizations, and the internal trends that can be revealed by data visualization can spell the difference between increased losses, or maximized gains.

Without trend and pattern data, organizations operate metaphorically in the dark, making decisions based on assumptions rather than hard facts. In contrast, the use of data visualization, patterns, and trends that have been hiding in the shadows of untapped data, can be brought to the light of day and acted upon.

5. Data Visualization Quickly Shows Relationships Between Operations and Results

One of the reasons why data visualization is essential to almost any organization is that it can easily show relationships between operations and results.

With the use of data visualization, managers and decision-makers can quickly draw up and instantly digest critical metrics. And if there are anomalies in any of these metrics—ie. sales are noticeably down in one region—decision-makers can rapidly drill down into the data to reveal what operational conditions or decisions are at play and how these correlate to the encountered metrics.

This allows for fast analysis and action to be taken on issues, thanks to the fact that the data is so accessible and easily digestible.

6. It's Interactive and Can Go Deeper Than Traditionally Graphs and Charts

One of the most transformative aspects of data visualization is that unlike traditional data visualization methods (spreadsheets, powerpoint, etc.) it allows the user to delve deeper and transform data into many different types of visualizations.

These functions are also more intuitive than traditional methods, and users can quickly manipulate data into desired configurations.

7. With Visualization, Companies Are More Likely to Access Data

According to information gathered from an Aberdeen report, organizations that utilize data visualization are 28 percent more likely to be able to access timely information than others.

Having access to real-time information can give businesses an advantage over competitors and can significantly assist management functions.

According to further research by Aberdeen, 65 percent of business managers face a 'shrinking decision window.' The timeframe in which managers have to reach decisions is becoming shorter; however, in many organizations, managers do not have access to real-time, on-demand data.

Yet another reason why data visualization can be of great benefit in data-driven decision making.

Figure 18: Analytics (Pixabay '1368293')

8. Data Visualization Enhances Communication

Data visualization is a fast, useful communication tool that can bring employees, decision-makers, and other parties together on information and data in a much faster and sure way than previous methods such as reports and spreadsheets.

Clear and effective communication is proved to be highly relevant to companies as it can measurably improve productivity and increase the effectiveness of operations.

Additionally, clear communication with employees can enhance levels of job satisfaction and motivation, lowering levels of absenteeism, and employee turnover rates. For this reason, when leveraging data visualization, it can be of benefit to share regular and relevant data insights with not only decision-makers but employees as well.

9. It Also Saves on Measurable Amounts of Employee Time

As per the above-mentioned research conducted by Aberdeen, in the absence of data visualization, it is not uncommon for employees to spend material amounts of time modifying dashboards, tailoring reports, and responding to ad hoc data retrieval requests.

This inefficiency is a result of cumbersome retrieval systems and the fact that most of these systems can only be operated by employees trained specifically in that area.

New data visualization technology, on the other hand, cuts down on these issues. Data can be retrieved almost instantaneously and with little effort, and employee time can be optimized by more efficient use.

Key players in the Data Visualization market: SAS, Tableau, Qlik, SAP, Oracle, Microsoft, IBM and Salesforce.

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3.2.8 The era of cyber threats

Cyber threats change at a rapid pace. Tactics and attack methods are changing and improving daily.

Cyber criminals access a computer or network server to cause harm using several paths. The one path to that is taking advantage of our online behaviour but there are other ways for them to gain access to a computer or network like: Removable media such as flash drives, brute force attack using trial and error to decode encrypted data and passwords, web or email attacks, unauthorized use of an organization's system privileges and loss or theft of devices containing confidential information.

3.2.8.1 Types of cyber threats

The types of modern cyber threats we should be aware of include: Malware, Ransomware, Distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks, Spam and Phishing, and Corporate Account Takeover (CATO)

Malware

Malware is also known as malicious code or malicious software. Malware is a program inserted into a system to compromise the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of data. It is done secretly and can affect your data, applications, or operating system. Malware has become one of the most significant external threat to systems. Malware can cause widespread damage and disruption, and requires huge efforts in both organizations and individuals, especially now with the remote workforce.

Spyware, a malware intended to violate privacy, has also become a major concern to organizations. Although privacy-violating malware has been in use for many years, it has become much more common recently. Spyware invades many systems to track personal activities and conduct financial fraud.

Organizations also face similar threats from several forms of non-malware threats. These forms of cyber threats are often associated with malware. A more common form is phishing. Phishing involves tricking individuals into revealing sensitive or personal information.

Below are some tips for preventing malware:

- o Require e-mail file attachments to be scanned and saved to local drives or removable media.
- o Don't allow certain types of files (e.g., .exe files) to be sent or received by e-mail.
- o Restrict removable media, such as CDs or flash drives, on systems that are high risk.
- o Limit the number of users with administrator-level access or privileges.
- o Ensure systems are updated regularly with operating system and application upgrades and patches.

Ransomware

Ransomware prevents or limits users from accessing their system via malware. Ransomware asks you to pay a ransom using online payment methods to regain access to your system or data. Online payment methods usually include virtual currencies such as bitcoins. Ransomware is one of the most widely used methods of attacks.

Ransomware enters computer networks and encrypts files using public-key encryption. Unlike other malware, this encryption key stays on the cyber criminal's server. Cyber criminals will request ransom for this private key. Cyber criminals are using encryption as a weapon to hold the data hostage.

Ransomware is hard to detect before it's too late, and ransomware techniques continue to evolve.

Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) Attacks

DDoS attacks make an online service unavailable by overwhelming it with excessive traffic from many locations and sources. Website response time slows down, preventing access during a DDoS attack. Cyber criminals develop large networks of infected computers called Botnets by planting malware. A DDoS attack may not be the primary cybercrime. The attacks often create a distraction while other types of fraud and cyber intrusion are attempted.

Spam & Phishing

Spam includes unwanted, unsolicited, or undesirable messages and emails. Phishing is a form of social engineering, including attempts to get sensitive information. Phishing attempts will appear to be from a trustworthy person or business.

Cyber criminals pretend to be an official representative sending you an email or message with a warning related to your account information. The message will often ask for a response by following a link to a fake website or email address where you will provide confidential information. The format of the message will typically appear legitimate using proper logos and names. Any information entered into the fake link goes to the cybercriminal.

Figure 19: Phising (Pixabay '6573326')

Corporate Account Takeover (CATO)

CATO is a business entity theft where cyber thieves impersonate the business and do unauthorized transactions. The unauthorized funds are sent to accounts controlled by the cybercriminal.

Many businesses are vulnerable to a CATO attack. Institutions with weak computer safeguards and minimal controls over online banking systems are easy targets. This form of cybercrime can result in large losses. Cyber criminals use malware to infect a computer through e-mail, websites, or malware disguised as software.

3.2.8.2 Principles of online safety

Nowadays people (especially through smart devices) tend to use apps than websites to interact with, but the basic Internet safety rules are still valid. The dangers of online access and presence will be analysed further but the following rules (although looking simple) can save us from much trouble. An initial rule of thumb would be to act as we do in our everyday 'physical' life (assuming we are in a proper state of mind). So, we don't open our door to strangers, we don't like to answer to unknown phone numbers etc. and for that reasons we don't also share our address or our phone number to unknown people we meet on the street. It's good then to keep these habits in our online presence.

1. Keep Personal Information Professional and Limited

Most of us have presence in platforms (like LinkedIn) solely for professional reasons e.g. for promoting the business we work for or ourselves as potential employees to companies and recruiters. Our data then are accessible from millions of online users that don't need or should not know our personal relationship status and, how much more, home addresses, personal phones etc. They need to see a proper professional profile and have a way to contact us, and platforms like the aforementioned can do this without even providing the other part with our personal email.

2. Keep Your Privacy Settings On

Our searches, browsing, likes, any online activity and habits (even open microphones) are food to marketers and hackers as well. Hopefully all web browsers, mobile operating systems and major apps have settings that when enabled protect our privacy online, so we need to locate them, activate and keep them activated. We also need to follow the (rather frustrating) guidelines these organizations provide from time to time around privacy/security issues and changes.

3. Practice Safe Browsing

It's again the real-life analogy. If not obliged, do we generally travel to dangerous countries or visit dangerous neighbourhoods, alone, on foot, at night? So, resist the urge of visiting sites that use exaggerated claims as bait or if they have questionable reliability. The lesser harm is to involve in a marketing journey of over-promising "literature" that leads to a useless "guide" of generally available knowledge you always need to pay for. But it can also be a site that cybercriminals are waiting for us to make a wrong tick in a box or click on a button to obtain personal data or infect our device with malware.

4. Make Sure Your Internet Connection is Secure. Use a Secure VPN Connection

When we use a public Wi-Fi connection, we lose control over our device's and communication security. So, we may think to limit the information we may transmit at that time (personal data, bank accounts, credit cards etc.). We should also evaluate the investment in secure VPN connections so others cannot monitor or access our exchanging data.

5. Be Careful What You Download

Like purchases that we will see later, we need to be very careful in downloading apps which is the standard trick into downloading malware. Be sure that you are visiting a trusted provider and site (because fraudsters will even create look-alike sites) and use at least the official app stores of major manufacturers like Google and Apple and follow their guidance

6. Choose Strong Passwords

Passwords were and still are one of the biggest weak spots in the whole process of online presence. A password manager software can help us manage the multiple and difficult passwords we should use to keep us safe (those 15 characters long, mixing <u>unpredictably</u> letters, numbers and special characters).

7. Make Online Purchases from Secure Sites

A good general practice is to visit secure sites only that support encrypted connections (those with http**s** or a padlock on their URL), even if you are just looking for information or an op-ed piece. This is an **absolute must** then when we make a purchase online and provide credit card or banking data.

Figure 20: Hacker (Pixabay '6573326')

8. Be Careful What You Post

Once posted it's actually impossible to delete it because someone may have already copied it (and for an eternity). A comment that today and to your friends will looks appropriate, in another time and another audience can look…strange, how much more for embarrassing photos. It's a cliché but *"Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your mom or a prospective employer to see"*.

9. Be Careful Who You Meet Online

The illusive security or anonymity of the internet can drive us to meet people online that we were not going to do in-person. Fake social media profiles are a standard for hackers who want us to trust them, lower our defences and hurts us financially or even personally.

10. Keep Your Antivirus Program Up to Date

It goes to all security-related S/W as well, like OS updates and patches, application updates that cover vulnerabilities etc. They may not protect us 100% but can stop known attacks and malware and is a first and good line of defence, if we maintain it.

3.3   Assessment

The following sections aim to support you in the self-reflection process of your knowledge and skills. Answer the questions wisely based on what you have learned. Tips and feedback will be provided to motivate you learn more about the topic!

3.3.1 Knowledge Assessment

This part includes quiz-like questions for you to reflect on your knowledge! Take your time to answer the ten (10) following questions!

Question 1(multiple choice or true/false): Selecting colours from the opposite site of the colour wheel creates

[harmony] **[contrast]** [interest]

[Colours from the opposite site of the wheel are contrasting ones]: text

Question 2 (true/false): Instructor Lead Training is more effective and so cheaper than eLearning

[false] [true]

[ILT is costly but can be more effective. eLearning can be made effective too, can be complementary to ILT, but has lower costs]: text

Question 3 (multiple choice or true/false): When on a public Wi-Fi we'd better:

[avoid money transactions] [watch our back] [use secure VPN]

[generic feedback]: text

Question 4 (multiple answers correct):

Human brain likes: **[to organize objects and find patterns] [to see balance]** [tricky situations] [all of the above]

[Human brain doesn't like tricky situations and overloaded images, it's trying to simplify, organize and find patterns and it is 'programmed' to look for balance]: text

Question 5 (multiple answers correct): Same shapes of different scale may indicate **[Hierarchy]** [**Importance Levels**] [Contrasting Values] **[Value Levels]**

[Contrast is better served by different shapes of same proportions]: text

Question 6 (multiple answers correct): text

[answer 1] [answer 2] **[correct answer] [correct answer]**

Question 7 (multiple answers correct): text

[answer 1] [answer 2] **[correct answer] [correct answer]**

[generic feedback]: text

Question 8 (matching): Match the terms with their definitions.

Term 1 Malware: Malicious software

Term 2 ADDIE: Model to create learning

Term 3 VPN: Virtual Private Network

Term 4 Phishing: Revealing confidential info

Term 5 Gestalt: Visual perception principles

[generic feedback]: text

Question 9 (matching): Match the concepts with their explanations.

Concept 1 Gamification: Game mechanics in courses

Concept 2 Educational Game: The game is the course

Concept 3 In Ransomware: attackers are keeping our data locked

Concept 4 In phasing: we offer our data to the attackers

Concept 5 With VPNs: we encrypt the data we transfer

[generic feedback]: text

Question 10 (matching): Match the problems with their solutions.

Problem 1 name: Solution

Problem 2 name: Solution

Problem 3 name: Solution

Problem 4 name: Solution

Problem 5 name: Solution

[generic feedback]: text

3.3.2 Skills Assessment

This is the part where your knowledge is being put into action!

Train your brain with the skills you gained through this module and think through a possible answer to the following assignment!

Your organization wants to communicate effectively two new and short information packs: a new security directive and a new product. Provide a stepped description of your approach to deliver the task successfully.

Possible outcomes:

- Evaluate PPP for the course structure
- Select micro learning for fast delivery, low cost, effectivity etc.
- Imagine/select personas/audience (security concerns all the company, new product the sales department)
- Set design principles accordingly (more "serious" for the security pack, more playful, enthusiastic, colourful, 'go-for-it' for the salespeople).
- May consider story-telling for the security pack (an attacker tried somewhere this, had these implications …, then a list of "DON'T" s)
- Enforce spaced learning for security only preparing additional nuggets.
- Design assessments.

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3.4   Module Summary

In Module 2 we delivered some introductory but useful information on four digital skills/areas that trainers need to develop to address the shift of the workforce to full or partial remote working.

- Section 1 covers Digital Design: some basic theory plus more practical principles
- Section 2 covers Digital Learning: A theoretical framework, a model for development and strategies for delivery accompanied by practical suggestions
- Section 3 on Cybersecurity and Online Safety: The basic threats and some guidelines on how to tackle them
- Section 4 on Data Visualization: Why it is important and how to start dealing with it

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4. Training Module 3 - e-Communication & teamwork

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Module Description

This module of "The Remote Worker Training Backpack: An inclusive guide for corporate trainers" offers some tools to VET providers to improve their communication and teamwork.

During the pandemic, schools had to face changes in teaching on every front in a very short time.

Professional schools, that must teach in laboratories where manual skills are essential, struggled a lot, perhaps more than other institutions, to adapt to the new situations imposed by COVID19.

These changes, however, have given the opportunity to discover a multitude of tools and ways of teaching "lessons" that would never have been imagined.

Keywords: teaching tools, hybrid ways of teaching, communication, teamwork, problem solving

4.1.2 Module Goals

In line with this, this module aims at:

- Appreciation of the advantages of remote teaching
- Assessment of the digital needs of VET teachers to improve their digital skills
- Definition of good practices to communicate in hybrid environments and teach professional subjects

4.1.3 Learning Objectives

At the end of the module, the learners will know:

- How to use online tools to teach and communicate within their organization
- How to assess their digital level to find the right digital tool to use
- How to improve manual skills with the e-communication

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4.1.4 Learning Outcomes

On the successful completion of this module, learners should be able to:

- Identify the needs of remote teaching
- Analyse different teaching online tools
- Develop a training plan based on the learners' personalized needs
- Increase the teachers' motivation
- Implement their skills in online working environments

Knowledge	Skills
Define the advantages of remote teaching	Use online tools to teach and communicate
Assess the digital needs of VET teachers to improve their digital skills	Assess our own digital level to find the right digital tool to use
Define good practices to communicate in hybrid environments	Organize communication between colleagues and the organization

4.1.5 Estimated module time

The completion of the module along with the implementation of the knowledge provided will need **10.00** hours.

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4.2 Main content

4.2.1 E-communication

The "e" in "e-communication" stands for "electronic". Essentially, the term "e-communication" refers to any form of computer-mediated communication and to more traditional forms of electronic communication, such as telephone communication (since the telephone is also an electronic device). The term e-communication includes computer-mediated communication over the Internet as well as over other computer network infrastructures. Thus, it includes computer-mediated communications that take place through group decision support systems and local area network-based communication tools.

E-communication started in the 1960s, when the first email systems emerged, largely running on mainframe computers. In those early days, only a tiny minority used computers for communication, mostly people who spent their working days in front of a computer screen (Sproull and Kiesler, 1991). For the majority, face-to-face conversation, telephone calls, and paper-based documents were the communication media of choice. The interconnection of the first mainframes, and then desktop computers, through networks and the Internet changed the picture significantly, making e-communication an alternative choice for many businesses and social interactions. Important technological innovations made this choice even more attractive, such as the "group" sense fostered by features of computer conferencing systems, the synchronicity and facilitation features of group decision support systems, and "virtual presence" features of video-enhanced media spaces.

These interactions were made feasible by extensive applied research and the advent of cheaper technology and increasing bandwidth and connectivity. An increased use of e-communication media has led to intensive empirical and theoretical research in the 1980s and 1990s. Several theories were developed and they can be classified into two main groups, the technological and the social. These theories have been essentially in conflict for many years. Technological theories are traditionally deterministic, in the sense that they try to provide a basis for predicting e-communication behaviours based on a finite number of variables. In many cases, social theories were developed to overcome supposed oversimplifications of technological theories.

Nevertheless, social theories more often than not have been unable to provide a useful basis on which to predict e-communication behaviours. Technological theories provide a simplified view of e-communication, usually focusing on communication media and collaborative tasks as predictive factors. Social theories try to understand e-communication as a social and very complex phenomenon and often end up being more "explanatory" and "descriptive" than predictive.

66

4.2.2 Teamwork

Teamwork is "The process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal. Teamwork is often a crucial part of a business, as it is often necessary for colleagues to work well together, trying their best in any circumstance. Teamwork means that people will try to cooperate, using their individual skills and providing constructive feedback, despite any personal conflict between individuals." (Source: BusinessDictionary.com)

Also for VET companies, Teamwork is "unselfish". It focuses on the end goal. Teamwork runs on the concept that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It's the classic "one plus one equals three" idea. Personalities and skillsets differ and this can create personal conflicts. When the entire team focuses on doing great work, however, the team members' differences turn into strengths, goals are met and even exceeded.

4.2.3 Online tools

4.2.3.1 Gsuite

During the pandemic period, a lot of schools relied on the Gsuite platform and its applications that Google had made available for free.
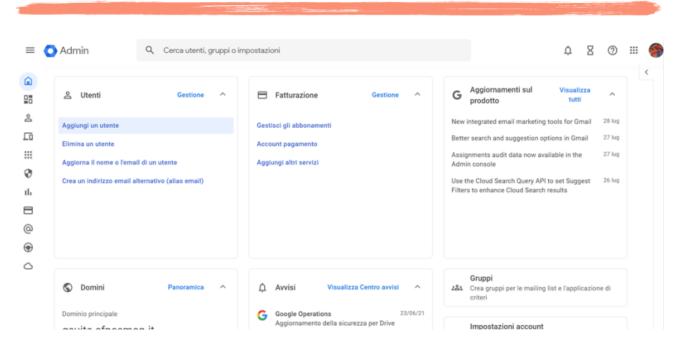
Gsuite allowed schools to manage remote devices with the Android operating system. This option greatly simplified the job of the technicians that had to assist teachers during the organization of the videolessons. Furthermore, Gsuite has allowed schools to provide each student with an account that is fully manageable depending on their educational needs and, last but not least, security.

A very important factor to keep in mind when a school has to organize distance learning is to find a reporting platform that can guarantee the traceability of lessons, connections and attendance of teachers and students. Under this point of view, Gsuite is a bit limited especially for the way it changes the policies without exhaustive communication to the administrators.
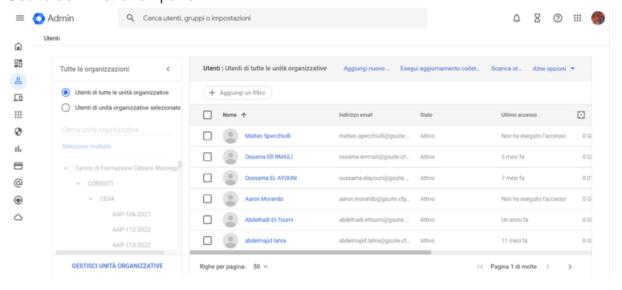
Gsuite administration panel

User management panel
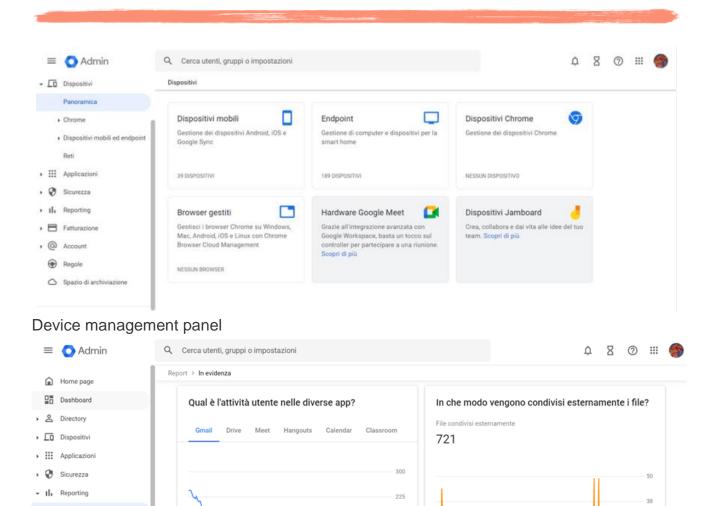
Device management panel

Report

Regarding the maintenance of the relationships and the institutional communications with the class group, schools can use different tools:

1- WA groups
2- Mail
3- Specific software (for the management of calendars, votes and absences)
4- Classroom (used in particular by individual teachers who managed the class group under the supervision of a classroom tutor for individual subjects)
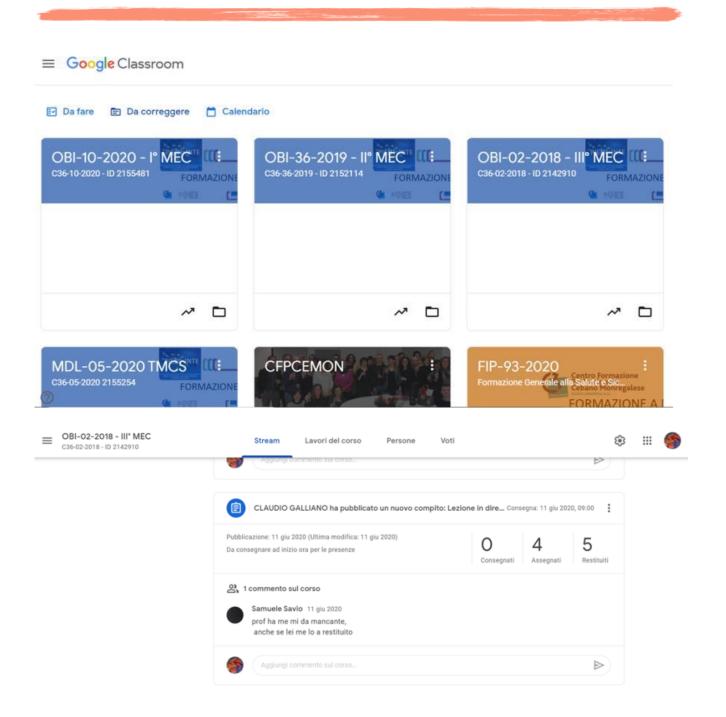
≡ **Google** Classroom

▤ Da fare   ▤ Da correggere   ▤ Calendario

OBI-10-2020 - I° MEC
C36-10-2020 - ID 2155481
FORMAZIONE

OBI-36-2019 - II° MEC
C36-36-2019 - ID 2152114
FORMAZIONE

OBI-02-2018 - III° MEC
C36-02-2018 - ID 2142910
FORMAZIONE

MDL-05-2020 TMCS
C36-05-2020 2155254
FORMAZIONE

CFPCEMON

FIP-93-2020
Formazione Generale alla Salute e Sic...
Centro Formazione Cebano Monregalese
FORMAZIONE A I

≡ **OBI-02-2018 - III° MEC**
C36-02-2018 - ID 2142910

Stream   Lavori del corso   Persone   Voti   ⚙ ⠿

Aggiungi commento sul corso...

▤ CLAUDIO GALLIANO ha pubblicato un nuovo compito: Lezione in dire... Consegna: 11 giu 2020, 09:00   ⋮

Pubblicazione: 11 giu 2020 (Ultima modifica: 11 giu 2020)
Da consegnare ad inizio ora per le presenze

0	4	5
Consegnati	Assegnati	Restituiti

👥 1 commento sul corso

⚫ **Samuele Savio** 11 giu 2020
prof ha me mi da mancante,
anche se lei me lo a restituito

Aggiungi commento sul corso...

4.2.3.2 Classroom

Lessons on Calendar Tools

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4.2.4 Hands-on teaching

4.2.4.1 How to teach professional subjects

Practice teachers have had to devise ways to keep their students practically practicing. In certain subjects, manual skills are fundamental and students cannot learn without practising certain movements that must become automatic.

On these occasions, the only possible solution is to provide the kids with kits invented on purpose to allow them to practise from home.

In this way, schools could witness the birth of wonderful works.

The example of the ballpoint welding torch:

In order to learn the necessary movements for a good welding, teachers can invent a kind of torch with a ballpoint pen inserted inside. In this way, the students can train welding indoors.

The notions in how to create the tool can be provided through videos made in the laboratory by the teachers.

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Real welding

Simulated welding

Example of Remote control of the anthropomorphic Robotic Arm.

If the students cannot access physically to the lab, teachers have to explain how to program the Robotic Arm remotely. This give the opportunity to teach them some basic concepts about internet networks that would not have been part of the topics covered by the classic didactical program. The graphic interface can be designed remotely with for example, the Processing (Java) software. This made it possible to send commands to java based tools, like for example the Arduino UNO board, connected to the teacher's PC and the webcam. In this way you can restart the robotic arm in the School computer lab.

4.2.4.2 How to develop manual skills with the e-communication: The Prototyping

When students during the course, have to face a period of internship in the company without working in presence activities schools can find different solutions. Internship is essential for their growth and often turns into an employment contract at the end of their studies.

During the pandemic, this opportunity was denied to numerous young people who were unable to carry out the classic internship.

In order to simulate an internship as much as possible, one solution is to give them complex jobs to carry out independently that concerned several subjects. It is important, regularly, schedule meetings with the teachers concerned to evaluate and facilitate the continuation of the work.

Example of a best practice:

At the CFP Cemon we gave a work to the student: the construction of an arm moved by hydraulic pistons, with easily available objects.

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The teachers gave to the students 1: 1 scale drawings to print on A4 sheets and construction instructions. Finding materials was one of their tasks. There were those who used cardboard, some thin wood sheets, some recycled plastics, etc. Syringes were used for the pistons and rubber hoses for the hydraulic circuit.

4.2.5 Case studies & success stories

CFPCemon experience

Gsuite

Given the emergency and the impossibility of exploring other platforms in good time, we used it for the entire lockdown period anyway.

Face-to-face lessons

The face-to-face lessons have been transformed into remote lessons through "Meet", the Gsuite application. For each course, a room was created where students and teachers were

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invited to participate. In the case of students with difficulties, a tutor was always present, ready to take action both from a technical point of view and in relation with the family / teachers.

During the pandemic, we provided PCs and tablets to those who were not equipped.

The lessons worked, even if the problems related to poor connectivity were continuing: some participants had to turn off the cameras to save the bandwidth and the audio was not always perfect. It is therefore essential to have a platform with a good tracking, easy to consult in order to validate presences.

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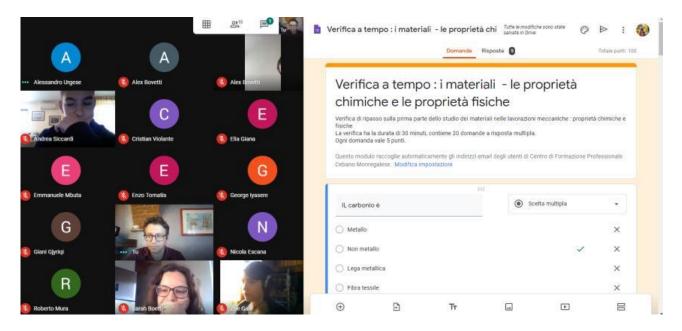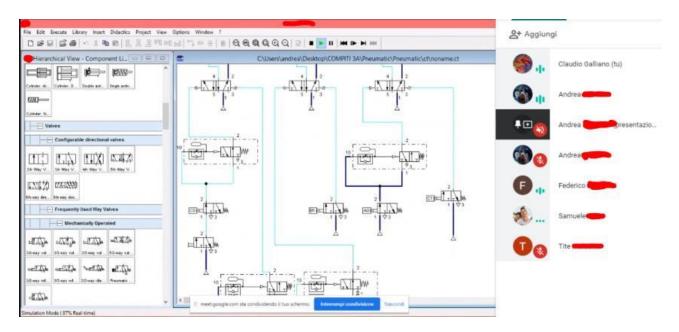
How can we get the learners to participate remotely?

This is the most difficult question we have had to find a solution to. During the lessons, timed tests were often given in the form of quizzes or open answer exercises.
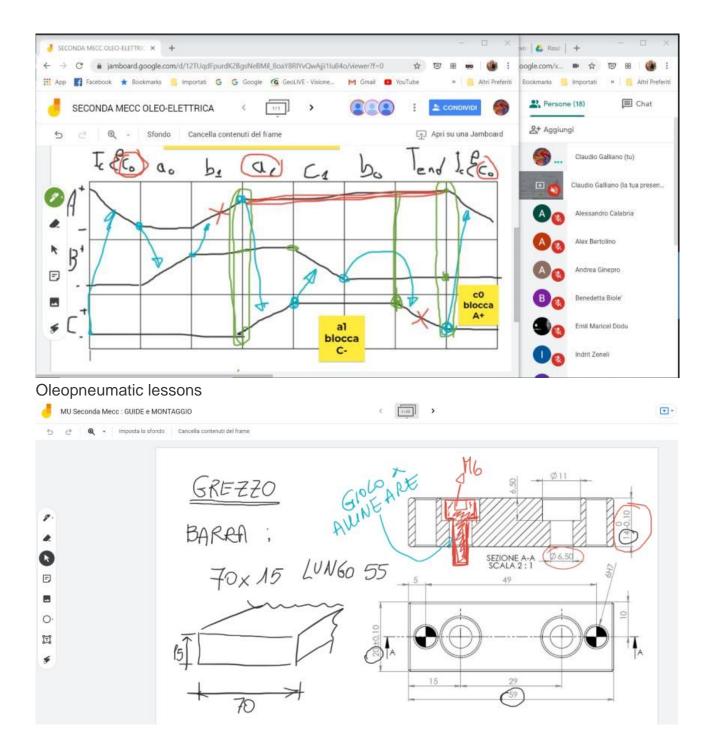
 In other cases, as the image below shows, free design softwares offered by the suppliers were used and the projection of the lesson was left directly to the students (peer education). In this case, the shared monitor belongs to Andrea, a student who finished the three-year period of studies in 2020/21.
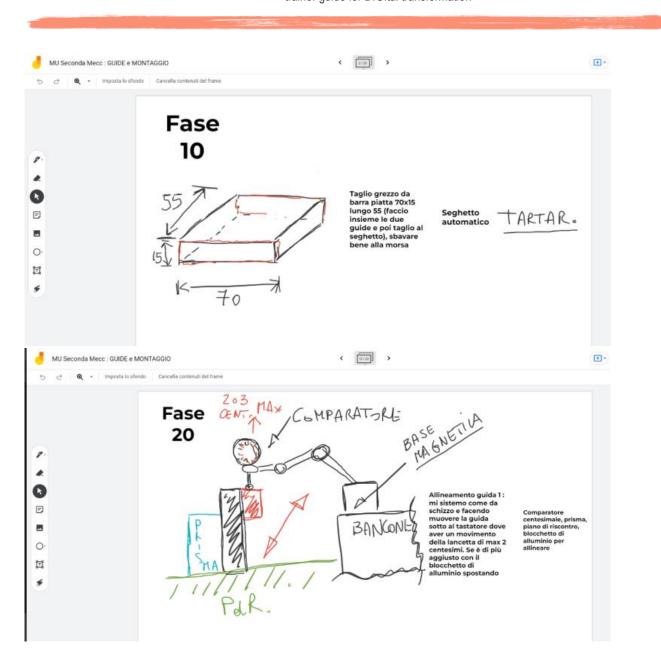
We used JamBoard digital whiteboards which could be shared with the students, allowing them to take part to the lesson as if they were in the classroom. Digital whiteboards also allow you to share photos, audio and videos.

Oleopneumatic lessons
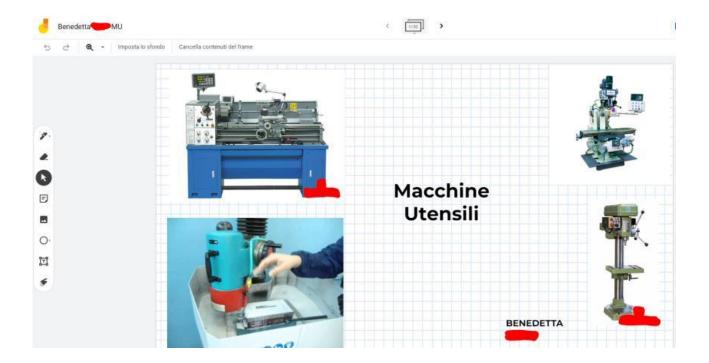
Mechanic lessons
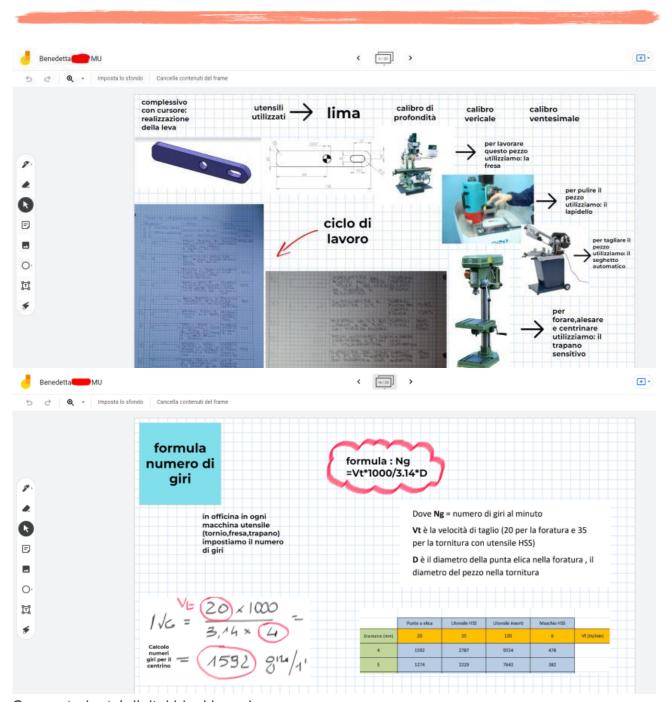
In some cases, the teachers have asked the students to use digital blackboards; in others the notebook in order to take notes directly on that platform. At the end of the lesson an opinion was given on the activity done. As it can be seen from the example below, noteworthy works have been produced.
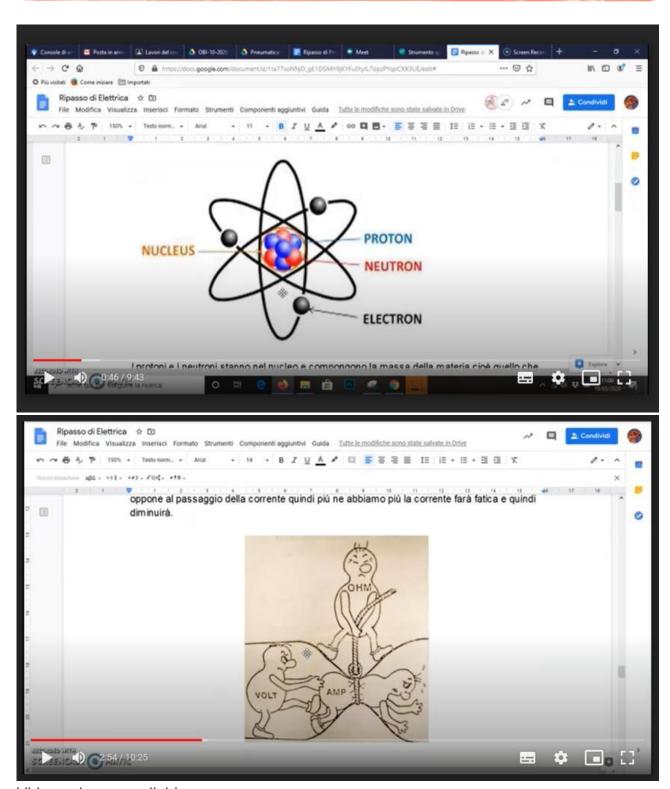
![DigiREACT] expeRience brEwing Assistant for voCational Training: the ultimate e-VET-trainer guide for DIGItal transformation

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Some students' digital blackboards

To support the students, we created short tutorials that are always available on the platforms mentioned before. In some cases, they were refresher lessons, in others they were about how to download a useful program for the next lesson, or even about how to participate correctly in the activities. In the next lesson the tutorial is used to see what has been learned from the video and the topics are discussed.

Videos always available

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4.3. Assessment

The following sections aim to support you in the personal reflection process concerning your knowledge and skills. Answer the questions wisely based on what you have learned. Tips and feedback will be provided to motivate you to learn more about the topic! We also provide some exercise in order to improve your communication skills.

4.3.1 Knowledge Assessment

This part includes quiz-like questions for you to reflect on your knowledge! Take your time to answer the following questions!

Question 1: Remote teaching can be good for theoretical matters.
[true]
[false]

Question 2: VET Teachers can use the prototyping method to teach digital skills
[true]
[false]

Question 3: Manual Skills can be teached with the e-communication
[true]
[false]

Question 4 (multiple correct answers): What can build trust in a hybrid team?
[active communication and empathy]
[rewards and bonuses]
[regular control and criticism]
[equal treatment and fairness]

[generic feedback]: the answers 1 and 4 are correct because the team members need to be involved and engaged in team decisions and activities. They should be treated personally to be satisfied with the work and the work atmosphere

Now you find useful exercises, try them with a VET Teachers, colleagues that can give you useful tips.

Exercise 1: Back to Back Drawing

This exercise is about listening, clarity and developing potential strategies when we communicate. In communicating expectations, needs, and more, it helps to clarify and create common ground. This can show what happens when we don't…

For this activity, you'll need an even number of participants so everybody can have a partner. Once people have paired off, they sit back-to-back with a paper and pencil each. One member takes on the role of a speaker, and the other plays the part of the listener.

Over five to ten minutes, the speaker describes a geometric image from a prepared set, and the listener tries to turn this description into a drawing without looking at the image.

Then, they talk about the experience, using several of the following example questions:

Speaker Questions

- What steps did you take to ensure your instructions were clear? How could these be applied in real-life interactions?

- Our intended messages aren't always interpreted as we mean them to be. While speaking, what could you do to decrease the chance of miscommunication in real-life dialogue?

Exercices 2: Let's Face It

This exercise from *The Big Book of Conflict-Resolution Games* is about self-awareness. How large of a role does it really play, and how does it influence our communication?

There is no limit to the group size for this game, which requires only enough pens and paper for everybody. It doesn't take very long, either, and can be played in as little as ten to twenty minutes—perfect for breaking up the day.

Start with groups (or sub-groups) of between four and ten players; in each of these, someone will need to volunteer as a facilitator. This facilitator simply keeps the game on track and gets the discussion going afterward.

Each player writes down a feeling on a small piece of paper, folds it, then passes it to the volunteer facilitator. From him or her, they take another piece that someone else has written, and tries to act out that feeling to the rest of their group—using only their facial expressions. The other participants try to guess that emotion and this should lead to a talk about the role of expressions. Useful discussion points include:

- What feelings do we understand the easiest, when only facial expressions are used? Why might that be?

- Describe some contexts where facial expressions play a particularly important role in communication?

- In what ways can facial expressions influence our ability to deal with misunderstandings?

4.3.2 Skill Assessment

This is the part where your knowledge is put into action! Train your brain with the skills you gained through this module and think about a possible answer to the following assignments!

1. Imagine there is a new member in the team. What are your steps to ensure he/she feels comfortable in the team and performs productively?

2. Imagine you have an aged but also experienced and skilled staff who is not willing to shift to hybrid or remote work. How can you manage the situation?

3. Imagine you have a multicultural team with different backgrounds and also personalities, some of them being introverts and some extroverts. How will you consider the different personality types when modelling hybrid work atmosphere to ensure their inclusivity, taking their strengths and weaknesses into account?

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4.4 Module Summary

Remote and/or hybrid work models can enable and simplify new working processes and increase productivity. Furthermore, employees prefer this approach to on-site work, too. However, this new model can be challenging as hybrid leaders should consider divergent staff desires and needs and at the same time seek to increase productivity and cooperation.

Hence, the hybrid leaders are to be trained and taught on how to manage hybrid teams effectively and support hybrid workers, including performance management, remote communication, collaboration and relationship-building. With hybrid work we can achieve the goal to share information remotely and build some action to be sure that the information shared are successfully in the head of our learners.

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5. Training Module [4] - Research & Creativity Skills with a Focus on Digital Content

5.1. Introduction

5.1.1 Module Description

This module will increase learners' digital literacy by promoting critical thinking in the research, use, and creation of digital content for the purposes of hybrid business environments. It will cover effective research strategies for finding, evaluating, and using digital content, as well as ways of creating, curating, and responsibly using digital content for the benefit of digitally transformed businesses.

5.1.2 Module Goals

The constantly evolving business environments demand strenuous adjustments and continuous upskilling for all stakeholders. To support the respective digital transformation, VET training providers, managers and employees must increase their digital and hybrid skills to manage newly established parameters like hybrid teams. This module will enhance all stakeholders' capacity to research and creatively produce digital content in order to thrive in hybrid/remote working environments.

In this context, learners are expected to understand basic principles for productive research and digital content creation through their familiarization with theoretical and practical frameworks.

5.1.3 Learning Objectives

This module will help VET training providers, managers and employees increase their research and creativity skills when creating digital content in complex working environments. More specifically, the module will guide them through the process of:

- Understanding the basic principles for creative digital content
- Analysing the different resources to be used for conducting appropriate research
- Identifying the most appropriate resources to create original digital content
- Conducting research and combine different resources of knowledge to cover training needs
- Increasing own research and creativity skills to provide unique learning experiences
- Implementing skills in the long run within complex working environments

5.1.4 Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, learners should be able to:

Knowledge	Skills	Application of knowledge & skills

Understand and appreciate the fundamental concepts and processes behind creating quality content.	Research and use sources based on specific needs.	Benefit respective audiences by helping them capitalize on your shared knowledge.
Assess digital sources and content based on your audience's needs.	Plan and conduct research adjusted to specific goals.	Critically reflect on the internet's abundance of sources and content.
Outline different practices to new hybrid environments	Use digital content and creative thinking in a way to promote efficiency in hybrid environments.	Capitalize on tools and apps that can help you manage digital workforces.

5.1.5 Estimated seat time

The completion of the module along with the implementation of the knowledge provided will last **13.75** hours.

5.2. Main content

5.2.1 State of the Art: Challenges and Problems to Overcome

Developing research and creativity skills is essential in modern societies and especially in hybrid workplaces. As research shows, both ***critical and creative thinking*** are capacities that one needs when faced with complex challenges and when looking to ***solve problems, communicate effectively, and take leadership*** (Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Research deepens knowledge and boosts creativity; creativity, in its turn, ***drives innovation, increases productivity, allows for adaptability***, **and is** ***essential for growth***, and that is why it is high in demand in most industries (Boyles, 2022).

As in design thinking, research and creativity require structured stages to guide their process and lead to success. As per digital transformation, these capacities are expected to intertwine with interdisciplinary efforts to empower employees, engage customers, optimize operations, and improve a company's services and products (Digital Adoption Team, 2022).

> **Digital literacy** is one of the main skills required to drive digital transformation (DMI, 2022).

"Digital literacy requires a variety of strategies and skills, including:

- **critical thinking** — questioning how authentic, valid and useful digital information is;

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- **communicating and collaborating** with others in the digital space;

- using **digital tools to design and create** compelling original content;

- using digital tools to **access, use and share** information**".**
  (Natlib, 2021).

Title: Transformation/Source: Pixabay.com

5.2.2 Practices to be followed

How to find quality content?

1. Planning

Before you begin your research, **think about**:

- the **question** you are trying to answer/ the **topic** that you are exploring/ the information you need
- the **purpose** of your search, e.g., learning/teaching needs
- the **resources** or information that you already **have**
- the **quantity/quality** of information that you **need** (with regards to your desired outcome)
  (Natlib, 2021)

TIP: Practice being **selective** in *what* digital content to use *for what* purpose.

2. Finding quality content

Once you have a clearer view of what you are looking for, apply the following strategies:

- Depending on your topic/question, choose the **most relevant source** for your research -e.g., search engine, database, etc.
  Examples: Google, Bing, DuckDuckGo, Startpage, Qwant.
- Use **filters**. For example, if you are looking for press releases, choose the *News* filter to refrain from irrelevant results.
- Use **keywords** (search terms, focus questions, phrases) that are relevant to your topic/question and be sure to include synonyms or paraphrases (if applicable).
- **Broaden or narrow your research** by using a multitude of keywords or by excluding those that seem irrelevant.

A wide variety of **effective search strategies** is provided by Google on its *Refine web searches* page (Google, 2022).

Example: To look for an exact match, put a word or phrase inside quotes (e.g., "faster translator").

3. Evaluating digital content

Evaluating online information can be tricky, as open access digital content can contain **misinformation**, like inaccuracies, biases, etc. To avoid gathering wrong or unreliable information, users must be able to **evaluate** the digital content's **quality**.

When faced with a multitude of search results, try to:

- critically assess the information's *relevance, suitability, and reliability*

TIP: Apply the *Evaluation Criteria* as described in the *CRAAP Test* (CSU, 2010):

Currency: The timeliness of the information

Relevance: The importance of the information for your needs

Authority: The source of the information

Accuracy: The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content

Purpose: The reason the information exists

- look for **authenticity** and **credibility** in your sources

- double-check for **accuracy, validity, and currency** to make sure that you have information of high quality (Natlib, 2021).
- Look for **specific details** to determine a website's **usefulness:**

What are the details?	How are they useful?
Site Map	Navigation and scope
Page Organization: titles, headings and subtitles	Navigation and evidence of quality construction
Works cited pages	Credit to information sources used
External links	Additional information sources
Internal search engine	Quick information retrieval
Interactive, graphic elements	Visual aids and interface interaction
Design appeal	Easy and pleasant to use

Source: Radcab, 2022

Title: Website/ Source: Pixabay.com

How to create digital content

You can create digital content in various **formats,** depending on the **audience engagement** that you are looking for**.** For **example**: blog posts, articles, original research/ case studies, slide presentations, podcasts, webinars, video, images, infographics, e-books, guides, checklists, quizzes/polls, newsletters, etc.

Digital content is **essential** for:

- collaboration and information-sharing,
- problem-solving/evaluation/analysis,
- knowledge development and productive information use.

For digital content to be **successful**, you need to:

- know *who* you are addressing and *why* (their needs and how to address them)
- use a variety of technical/digital tools for effectiveness
- be creative and critical in your content's production, with respect to your audience's needs and requirements
- respect creative commons and use shared content responsibly (Natlib, 2021).

Various products and software are designed to "*support creative services and streamline workflow processes"* (BYNDER, 2022).

Tools for content creation

Depending on your goals and audience, a large variety of tools can help you create the content that you need.

Some examples:

1. Social media platforms (LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
2. Online editors/correctors (Grammarly, Hemingway Editor, etc.)
3. Project management tools (Trello, Monday, etc.)
4. Photo editing and design tools (Pixlr, Giphy, etc.)
5. Educational tools (e.g., Edshelf)
6. **Online tools and Web 2.0 Applications Guides (e.g., Schrockguide)**
7. Lesson creation/customization tools (e.g., TED-Ed Lessons)
8. Tools and apps for creating Content Resource Centres (e.g., HubSpot) https://www.simplilearn.com/tips-for-building-content-resource-center-article

Remember: Your goal is to create **simple, clear, accessible, and easy to use** content that will enable users/learners to capitalize on your work.

94

Digital Materials

When looking to enrich your digital content, online search tools can help you trace digital materials in various formats. You can search for databases in the private (if you have access) or the public web and find sources like articles, images, e-books, etc. **For instance:**

- Google
- Google Book Search (A comprehensive index for full-text books)
- Google Scholar (Scholarly articles)
- Google Image Search (database containing images)
- Advanced Image Search (Google) (Search by types of images, colours, usage rights, etc.)
- Google News Archive (Scanned articles of newspapers, links to other newspaper archives, etc.)
- Google Social Search (Search social media for publicly posted information)
- Google Videos
- Google Advanced Search

Efficient content based on instructional design principles

An easy solution to better understand what kind of content can be successfully shared in hybrid business environments is to study some *instructional design principles,* as these can apply in most fields of knowledge sharing and communication:

1. *Multimedia Principle*: "*text and relevant images are superior to just text or graphics in isolation*";
2. *Modality Principle*: the *"need for narration when presenting important information related to a displayed graphic";*
3. *Redundancy Principle*: *on-screen text and audio narration about a graphic should not be the same, or else cognitive overload may occur;*
4. *Coherence Principle*: words, audio and graphics that do not support the distinct purpose of the content must be removed, or they will overload users' working memory.
5. *Segmenting Principle*: complex content should be broken down or segmented into smaller pieces to help users manage the complexity of the content
6. *Pre-Training Principle*: key terms and concepts should be introduced before asking users to engage with the content to avoid cognitive overload;
7. *Practice and collaboration Principles*: Incorporated interactions through questions as well as collaborative processes can be envisioned to help with retention of knowledge and overall engagement (Participants in EDUC5104G, 2020).

The *Seductive Detail* Effect

According to research, instructional content can cause **working memory overload**, **attention distraction**, **schema interference** (interference of prior knowledge to the ability of learning new

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information), or **coherence disruption** (Rey, 2012). **Knowledge acquisition** and **knowledge transfer** are affected by various elements incorporated in the content that is meant to have instructional objectives. Some of these elements are called "seductive details": seductive details "constitute **interesting but irrelevant** information that are not necessary to achieve the instructional objective" (ibid.).

Tip: Excluding these details from your content may offer your users a **deeper learning** experience and prevent from attention distraction.

Curating content

"*Content curation is the process of selecting, sorting and arranging content on a specific topic or theme, adding value and meaning to what has been curated for your users*" (Natlib, 2021).

Curation basics:

- Select the *best quality* digital content for your *intended audience;*

Digital resources and content should of the highest standard and aligned with your audience's needs.

- Organise and display it on a curation *tool* your users can *access*;

Resources and content should be grouped and available in accessible tools/apps/portals so that users can capitalize on shared knowledge.

- Add value to the curated content through selecting, arranging, and providing *insights;* -e.g., by providing annotations and/or giving context to the information.

Title: Adobe/ Source: Pixabay.com

Creative commons and responsible use

Using digital content requires knowledge of **copyright** and **usage restrictions**. To use digital content responsibly, you should acknowledge or attribute someone else's work when you incorporate it in your own.

Tips:

- Look for **guidelines** depending on your line of work
- Get **permission** to use copyright materials
- **Acknowledge/cite** your sources
- Learn about how to **legally share, remix, and reuse** digital content, e.g. by studying Creative Commons (CC) licenses and tools (See, for example: https://copyrightalliance.org/faqs/what-is-creative-commons-license/)

Creativity in hybrid business environments

The business world is increasingly acknowledging the importance of creativity and creative problem-solving, with managerial practices rapidly incorporating ways to foster new ways of thinking and enhance subordinates' creativity (see, for example, Williams, 2019).

Creativity is important because:

1) **It Accompanies Innovation**
2) **It Increases Productivity**
3) **It Allows for Adaptability**
4) **It's Necessary for Growth**
5) **It's an In-Demand Skill**
(Boyles, 2022).

Since creativity is an abstract notion, it needs a **structured process** to connect **the operational world with the innovation world** -in other words: the structured side of business with its experimental and creative one. To achieve this, it is advisable to use a solutions-based approach like **Design Thinking** (ibid.).

Design Thinking proposes four stages in thought and action:

1. **Clarify** (Understand the situation and the people impacted)
2. **Ideate** (Brainstorm and think solutions through)
3. **Develop** (Experiment and test solutions)

4. ***Implement*** (Reject unsuccessful ideas and communicate the chosen solution's value)

The Design approach can also be described as one following these steps:

1. Gathering ***data*** (qualitative/quantitative)
2. Looking for ***insights*** based on the gathered data
3. Creating new ***opportunities*** based on the insights gained
4. Experimenting with ***solutions***.
    (Both, 2018)

For this process to be fruitful and, indeed, encourage creativity and innovation, the following elements are crucial:

- **Risk-taking**
- **Considering failure as an opportunity for better results in the future**
- **Investing in resources that a team may need**
- **Looking for positive outcomes beyond strict deadlines**
- **Keeping an open mind**
- **Fostering collaboration**
- **Encouraging diversity**

Title: Webinar/ Source: Pixabay.com

5.2.3 Complementing digitalisation and productivity

Fostering creativity in hybrid business environments also means finding ways to complement digitalisation and productivity to reach "an *efficient and inclusive digital transformation*" (OECD, 2022). This entails:

1. **Policy implications** that will upgrade the workforce's digital skills and modernize the business environment.
2. **Strategic integration and management of automation processes** and collaboration tools.

To achieve this, hybrid business environments need to embrace *Digital Workforce Management* to "*break down traditional barriers and transform employee experience, promoting efficiency, growth, and innovation*" (Synoptek, 2022).

Digital Workforce Management can:

1. Create more *impactful digital workforce automation opportunities* by eliminating silos.
2. *Unify processes*, thus increasing pace and efficiency.
3. *Improve visibility* of operations and, therefore, provide valuable insights.
4. *Mitigate risk* by minimizing disruptions etc.
5. *Enhance compliance* through effective implementation of policies.
(ibid.)

Title: Analysis/ Source: Pixabay.com

5.3   Assessment

The following sections aim to support you in the self-reflection process of your knowledge and skills. Answer the questions wisely based on what you have learned. Tips and feedback will be provided to motivate you learn more about the topic!

5.3.1 Knowledge Assessment

This part includes quiz-like questions for you to reflect on your knowledge! Take your time to answer the ten (10) following questions!

Question 1(multiple choice or true/false): Finding quality content requires:
[luck] **[planning]** [financial investment]
[generic feedback]: The learner recognises stages in critical thinking.

Question 2 (multiple choice or true/false): Digital content must be evaluated for:
[relevance, suitability, reliability] [relevance] [reliability]
[generic feedback]: The learner understands the complexity of evaluation.

Question 3 (multiple choice or true/false): Digital content can be created in various formats depending on:
[the audience engagement you are looking for] [the means available during your research] [your personal preferences]
[generic feedback]: The learner appreciates the importance of the audience's needs.

Question 4 (multiple answers correct): The tools that you use for content creation must be:
[simple and clear] [accessible] [fun] [expensive]
[generic feedback]: The learner understands the basics of communication.

Question 5 (multiple answers correct): When you combine texts and relevant images, you:
[apply the Multimedia Principle] [apply the Segmenting Principle] [apply the Modality Principle] **[create context that is superior to plain text]**
[generic feedback]: The learner understands combination techniques.

Question 6 (multiple answers correct): You can create deeper learning experiences for your audience:
[increasing the audience's participation] [constantly critiquing the audience's actions] **[avoiding working memory overload] [preventing attention distraction]**

Question 7 (multiple answers correct): Content curation is the process of:
[researching] [selecting tools] **[selecting, sorting, arranging content] [adding value to your content]**
[generic feedback]: The learner understands all stages of content curation.

Question 8 (matching): Match the terms with their definitions.

Term 1 **Multimedia Principle:** *Text and relevant images are superior to just text or graphics in isolation.*

Term 2 **Coherence Principle:** *Words, audio and graphics that do not support the distinct purpose of the content must be removed, or they will overload users' working memory.*

Term 3 **Digital Materials: Online results and sources that can help you enrich your content.**

Term 4 *Digital Workforce Management*: **Applying automated management processes that can help you manage hybrid workforces and mitigate risks on various levels.**

Term 5 **Creative Content: Different types of media that companies can/should use to communicate and promote their products and services, as well as the brand itself.**

[generic feedback]: The learner understands the basic principles for creating digital content and appreciates the complexity of hybrid working environments.

Question 9 (matching): Match the concepts with their explanations.

Concept 1 **Planning: The thought you put on your project before beginning your research**.

Concept 2 **Quality content: The content that is relevant to your goals and your audience's needs.**

Concept 3 **Evaluation of digital content: Critical assessment of the information's relevance, suitability, and reliability.**

Concept 4 **Relevance: The importance of the information for your needs (and the needs of your audience).**

Concept 5 **Purpose: The reason the information exists/ The reason for which you choose to share the precise information.**

[generic feedback]: The learner understands how quality content is created and why it is important.

Question 10 (matching): Match the problems with their solutions.

Problem 1 **How to use the Design approach: Gather data, look for insights, create new opportunities, experiment with solutions.**

Problem 2 **How to encourage creativity and innovation: Be prepared to take risks, keep an open mind, invest in resources, encourage collaboration, encourage diversity.**

Problem 3 **How to achieve efficient and inclusive digital transformation**: **Implement policies that will upgrade the workforce's digital skills and modernize the business environment, strategically integrate and manage automation processes and collaboration tools.**

Problem 4 **How to responsibly use/share digital content: Look for guidelines, get permission to use copyright materials, acknowledge/cite your sources**.

Problem 5 **How to follow a structured process when dealing with the abstract notion of creativity: Connect the operational world with the innovation world by following steps in your thoughts and actions.**

[generic feedback]: The learner appreciates the complexity of theory and practice pertaining the creation and usage of digital content.

5.3.2 Skills Assessment

This is the part where your knowledge is being put into action! Train your brain with the skills you gained through this module and think through a possible answer to the following assignment!

Your line of work demands that you find and share digital resources to offer your colleagues a deep learning experience. How do you create appealing digital content that includes the responsible use of your resources?

Solution: After assessing your **audience's needs** and **sufficient planning**, you look for **quality content** and you assess it accordingly. Next, you follow the content curation basics and follow the rules for responsible use. You embellish your content with needed elements (e.g., images/graphics, narration, etc.) depending on your desired outcome and line of work.

5.4. Module Summary

This module is about promoting creative and critical thinking when looking to research, create and curate digital content. By understanding the basic principles for creative digital content and for conducting appropriate research, learners will increase their capacity in producing and sharing valuable knowledge in complex working environments.

6. Training Module [5] - Problem Solving and Time Management Skills

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Module Description

The Covid-19 pandemic brought many changes to the world. One of them was associated with how people worked as they were obligated to do it from home and rely on previously learned digital skills. Turning a personal space environment into a workspace environment is not easy; if not done successfully, employees can lower productivity and increase their stress levels, decreasing overall health. With this in mind, this module intends to help employees positively adapt to remote/hybrid work modes.

Keywords: Time management; Problem-Solving; Remote work; Personal Skills.

6.1.2 Module Goals

The Trainer can efficiently solve complex problems and ensure on-time completion of all activities and productivity within a virtual/hybrid workplace.

In line with this, this module aims at:

- Understanding how the new remote work paradigm came to change the way people work
- Implementing time management techniques/skills
- Understanding time and its limitedness
- Enhancing the Problem-solving techniques/sills

6.1.3 Learning Objectives

At the end of the module, the learners will acknowledge:

1) How to associate problem-solving and time management skills to remote work
2) How to identify, accordingly, the most proper solution and how to adjust the time of activities
3) How to analyze the list of problems that might occur within hybrid/remote teams
4) How to increase personal problem-solving and time-management skills to maximize own productivity
5) How to develop training plans and activities in order to support efficient time management
6) How to implement skills, in the long run, within complex working environments

6.1.4 Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, learners should be able to:

- Understand the new work paradigm brought up by Covid-19 pandemic
- Analyze time-management needs
- Identify which method/technique is more appropriate to each individual
- Develop a training plans and activities to support efficient time management
- Increase own productivity
- Enhancement of problem-solving skills

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCES
a. Understand how problem-solving and time management skills are related to remote work	a. Analyze the list of problems that might occur within hybrid/remote teams	a. Develop training plans and activities to support efficient time management
b. Identify the most proper solution and adjust the time of activities accordingly	b. Increase own problem-solving and time management skills to maximize productivity	b. Implement skills in the long run within complex working environments

6.1.5 Estimated seat time

The completion of the module along with the implementation of the knowledge provided will last **13.75** hours.

6.2   Problem solving & Time management skills

6.2.1   Remote work: a new work paradigm

The Covid-19 pandemic brought a rapid increase in people working remotely from the comfort of their houses as a way to prevent the further spreading of this new unknown virus that hit the whole world (Ozimek, 2020). Considering these conditions, employees and employers had to adjust themselves to this new way of work.

> *Due to the pandemic, many workers and employees had to switch, quite suddenly, to remote work for the first time and without any preparation.* **GALANTI, ET AL (2020, P. 1)**

Working from home was considered as having both positive and negative impacts. When working remotely, you can benefit from comfortably staying at home and not having to commute every day, saving time and money. However, when you work from a place that is not designed to be an office - or an overall workplace - you may come across some technical and physical issues that can be caused by improper work conditions – such as nonergonomic chairs, incorrect use of office material or lack of skills and competences on how to deal with technology (Ozimek, 2020).

According to the **Job Demands-Resources** (JD-R) model, proposed by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti in 2006, work conditions can be categorized into job demands and job resources, as shown below:
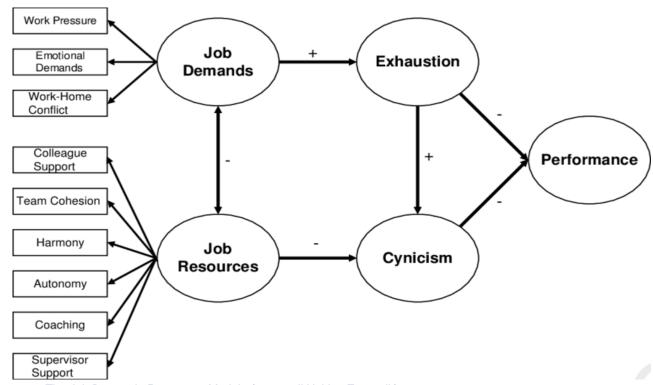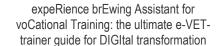

Figure 1 - The Job Demands-Resources Module (source: Ij.H. Van Emmerik)

As explained in Figure 1, both Job Demands and Job Resources directly affect work performance. The JD-R model helps reduce stress and, as a consequence, increases work engagement and job productivity, as it will allow a clearer separation between work and leisure time.

Another conflict created by the rapid increase of remote working is the ability (or lack of) to separate working hours from family/relaxing/leisure hours. As everything is done within the same physical space (e.g.: home), conciliating working hours when surrounded by what used to be only associated with relaxation can get harder and, without that fundamental separation, work performance and productivity will decrease and the levels of stress will, not only affect the employee, but also those that surround them. Because of these conflicts, Parker (2016) came up with **Work Design** which refers to the content and organization of activities, responsibilities and tasks associated with work, which intends to motivate a "different organization" of tasks compared to the time distribution that would be done if working at an office.

Humphrey et al (2007) would identify a set of motivational, knowledge, social and physical characteristics that represented the predictable and desired outcomes from all employees (e.g.: job satisfaction, positive psychological states, better performance and well-being, etc).

With the goal of "straddling a bridge between yesterday, (…), today, (…) and tomorrow" Hilberath et al (2020) proposes four building blocks as a way to support new work models for a more hybrid[1] future:

- Leadership, culture, and purpose;
- Structure and roles;
- Ways of working;
- and Systems and Spaces.

Even if the technical issues can be mitigated with experience, time-management and problem-solving skills should be trained and improved to provide a healthier remote work environment.

6.2.2 Time management implementation

Time management can be the key to increasing productivity and accomplishing the perfect balance between work and leisure hours. To learn how we can successfully implement time management methods and techniques, it is necessary to understand what time is:

Source	Definition
Dictionary.com	*The system of those sequential relations that any event has to any other, as past, present, or future; indefinite and continuous duration regarded as that in which events succeed one another;* *Duration is regarded as belonging to the present life to come or from eternity.*

---

[1] In the context, *hybrid* is used as a way to describe a work pattern that consists on a shared workspace between working from home (WFH) and physical work.

Cambridge Dictionary	The part of existence that is measured in minutes, days, years, etc… or this process considered as a whole.
Merriam-Webster	The measured or measurable period during which an action, process, or condition exists or continues (DURATION); The point or period when something occurs (OCCASION); A historical period (AGE).

Table 1 - Many Definitions of Time

6.2.2.1 Time as a limited resource

Uppertools (2016) explained that *time* is the only resource that is the same for everyone independently of age, gender, colour, place of birth, education or financial conditions. Everyone has a limited time. It is impossible to buy, steal, exchange, sell, borrow or lent extra time. A day has 24 hours for the whole world and what it's done during those can affect work productivity, which is why is so important to organize the day according to necessities (Oliveira, 2019).

According to Helena Oliveira (2019), people feel pressured by time or feel like they are running out of it. As for the world we live in, work is the source of money, which can pressure people into working more hours to earn more money and have a better lifestyle. The question is: if we spend so much time at work to earn money, do we even have time to enjoy what we buy with said money? And this is why managing time is so important.

Many skills, techniques and methods can help an employee or worker manage time and increase productivity.

6.2.2.2 Skills for Time Management

Before addressing techniques or methods that help productivity and time management, it is important to understand that some skills are necessary to apply the designed methods and techniques for time management (Juneja, n. d.). First of all, it is important to **stay organized**. An organized desk can stimulate productivity; however, it is also important to be organized when it comes to tasks, assignments and responsibilities. Having these organized can help **set priorities** when it comes to what it's urgent or can be done after.

When working from home, procrastination can be one of the main issues that workers come across, which is why is so important to **be punctual and disciplined** to follow a timetable that was previously settled. **Taking ownership of work** is essential, not only in face-to-face workspaces but also when working from home. This way, you can set deadlines and tasks to motivate you to complete them in the designed work slot.

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At home, as it was said, it's important to **avoid distractions** and remain focused on what you are doing, as it archives more work in less time. In conclusion, these skills will allow you to apply time management techniques and methods, overall teaching you to **be reasonable** and realistic.

6.2.2.3 Laws and Principles for Time Management

After improving the necessary skills, it is time to implement mechanisms that can increase productivity, and decrease time wasting and disorganisation. There have been produced many methods – here called "Laws and Principles" – that introduce techniques to organize and manage time. Some are simpler and straightforward, others appear more complex, but all are useful. The first is called "Biological Rhythms" and it prevails in listening to the human body. When are you most productive? During the morning or right after lunch? This method encourages choosing the working hours considering your multiple biological cycles.

Very similar to this one is "Parkinson's Law":

Figure 2 - Parkinson's Law (source: Devolutions Inc. & Patrick Désilets)

As is explained in the comic strip above (Figure 2), Parkinson (1942) explains that, when planning work distribution, it should be organized around the time available and not the time needed. If we think about it, we tend to procrastinate less if the deadline is closer, as pressure is upon us to follow through with our compromises.

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Pareto's Law could also be known as "80/20 Law". Juran (1892) suggested that we should divide work the following way:
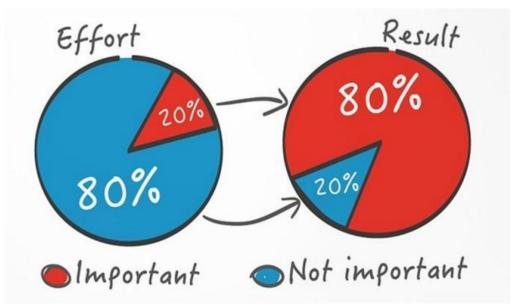

Figure 3 - Pareto's Law (source: psycho-test.com)

Joseph Moses Juran (1904 – 2008) explained that 80% of the total events come from 20% of the causes. In time management, this means that 80% of our results can be obtained with 20% of our efforts if we focus on the essentials.

The "Homogeneous Work Sequences" principle revolves around the necessity to reduce distractions and to work continuously to work faster and productively. If we follow a homogeneous sequence, we avoid unnecessary breaks and work flows smoothly. Related to this method, the "Productiveness' Law" explains that if we work beyond a certain amount of time, work stops being productive and time is wasted.

With organized tasks, it is essential to establish separate time slots for the different tasks, allowing one to completely focus only on one thing at a time. This is called "Alternance Law". When we have to distribute time slots to each task, we tend to attribute an objective and a subjective dimension to time. The subjective dimension takes us to attribute more time/priority to an activity we enjoy doing.

When working with two or more people, the "Diluted Responsibility Law" tends to explain that, when working in a group, no one feels responsible for the activity/task.

Acting fast could be the key to increasing productivity, which takes us to the "7/3 Law", where the employee/worker has to act fast and decide, which has a 70% of chance of getting it right. Accepting the odds helps to act fast and avoid wasting time.

6.2.2.3 Characteristics that Influence Time Management

The DISC quiz intends to assess the behaviour characteristics of workers when it comes to time management and productivity.
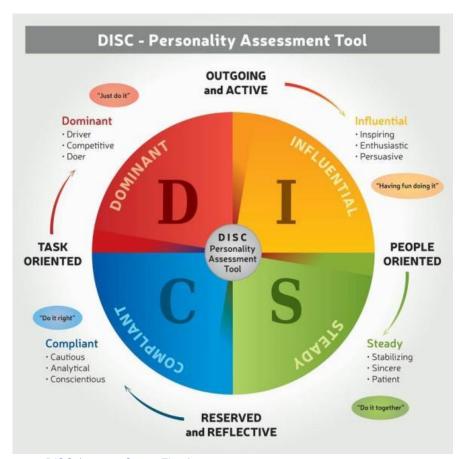

Figure 4 - DISC (source: CareerFitter)

DISC's personality assessment tool aims to find weaknesses and strengths in employees and associate them with the following behaviour profiles:

- Dominant;
- Influential;
- Steady;
- Compliant.

The **Dominant** worker is the one that enjoys competition and is the one that, normally, takes charge of asks when needed. They tend to focus on tasks and doing them. The **Influential** worker is, as explicit in the name, the one that inspires and motivates those around them. It's all about enjoying working.

Steady workers are patient and enjoy stability and helping others. They are all about sharing activities and working together. The last one is the **Compliant**. They are perfectionists and conscious about doing it correctly.

Finding out the profile of employees and employers can be fundamental for both to check the necessary skills and most adequate techniques and methods for successful time management. According to the attributed behaviour profile, the skills and methods to apply may change.

6.2.2.4 Time Wasters

Is normal to waste time, whether on purpose or accidental and, according to its nature, these can be useful or contra-productive. Its origins can be internal or external, as explained below:

Self-Generated	Contextual
- Disorganization - Procrastination - Inability to say "no"	- Visits - Phone calls - Useless emails - Waiting for someone - Non-productive meetings - Crises
Other	
- Talking - Unnecessary perfectionism	"Water-cooler" talks - Useless reports

Table 2 - Time Wasters

These ways of spending time are, most likely, prejudicial to all employees, as they can affect productivity and interrupt workflow, however, it is still essential to take breaks now and then as the body requires it because is important to allow the mind to rest so it gets back to work more refreshed. The list below shows you some questions that should be answered to manage your time wastes:

- Are you efficient?
- Are you organized to the point of saving time?
- Is the material's and movement's flow freely happening?
- Have you thought about bringing - closer to you - the materials you use the most?
- Is your workspace messy?
- How long does it take you to find the things you are looking for?

6.2.2.5 Tips and Techniques for Time Management

As was explained throughout this chapter, time management is very important when it comes to remote working as it can help to maintain balance and productivity when WFH. Here are some techniques that could be used to manage time correctly:

Know Yourself and Your Routines

One of the tips to correctly manage time is to know your biological rhythm and coordinate your routine accordingly. This way, you can create your schedule as you are working from home, and still maintain (or even improve) your productivity.

Define Goals, Aims and Objectives

If you know what your final goals are, it is easier to organize the tasks you have to do along the way. For these techniques, it is recommended to create a checklist, reminding you what you need to do and when is the deadline for each. These can be done on paper, on your phone, at the computer or even through apps and websites. Some browsers even have features that allow you to create a checklist (e.g.: Gmail).

Establish Priorities

If you create a checklist (as was proposed in the previous tip), you can't organize it through priority, as you only define goals and deadlines. Maybe you can set deadlines, but some tasks may have further deadlines yet more priority. With this, it is proposed to create an Eisenhower Matrix.

Dwight Eisenhower (1890 – 1969) was the 34th president of the United States of America. Whilst it was the president to come up with the concept when dealing with issues related to the U.S. Army, it was Stephen Covey, decades later, that popularized the method that is now used worldwide.
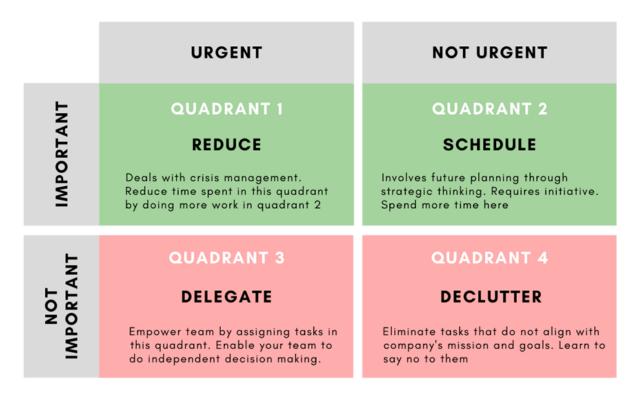
	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	**QUADRANT 1** **REDUCE** Deals with crisis management. Reduce time spent in this quadrant by doing more work in quadrant 2	**QUADRANT 2** **SCHEDULE** Involves future planning through strategic thinking. Requires initiative. Spend more time here
NOT IMPORTANT	**QUADRANT 3** **DELEGATE** Empower team by assigning tasks in this quadrant. Enable your team to do independent decision making.	**QUADRANT 4** **DECLUTTER** Eliminate tasks that do not align with company's mission and goals. Learn to say no to them

Figure 5 - Eisenhower Matrix (source: TechTello)

Eisenhower Matrix consists in organizing your tasks within 4 quadrants according to the importance and urgency of each:

- Urgent and important (**Do it now**);
- Urgent but not important (**Who can do it for you?**);
- Not urgent but important (**Schedule a time for it**);
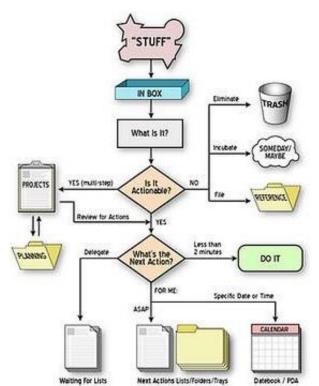- Not urgent and not important (**Eliminate it**).

When we arrange our tasks, it will be easier for us to decipher what to address first and what does not need our attention right now. With this, productivity will increase as well as the capacity of using time correctly and do more in less time.

Keep Organized

To keep everything organized, we can use a planner. This planner can be daily, weekly, monthly or yearly. When we organize tasks, we need to have in mind that we should provide a period for each activity, so we don't get overwhelmed with the amount of work we think we can get done and end up working over hours, especially when WFH.

Method Getting Things Done (GTD)

The GTD method intends, as the name expresses, to Get Things Done. This method consists of 5 steps: Capture; Clarify; Organize; Review; Engage.

The **1st step** consists of capturing everything and dropping it in the box. Everything is acceptable.

The **2nd step** consists of separating and organizing everything that is in the box. The organised tasks should be directed into a project, a next action or reference material.

The **3rd step** consists of organizing. Add dates, sort tasks, priorities, …

The **4th step** consists of revising the organization you just did. Create an hourly plan for each activity you believe it's the priority.

The last and **5th step** consists of getting things done and starting working!

Figure 6 - Getting Things Done Method (source: medium.com)

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Kanban Method

The Kanban Method is used, mainly, to aid in the organization of groups and tasks that require more than one employee.

This online platform requires real-time communication, which is one of the main strategies used to coordinate a team that is on Remote-Work or a Hybrid-Work model:
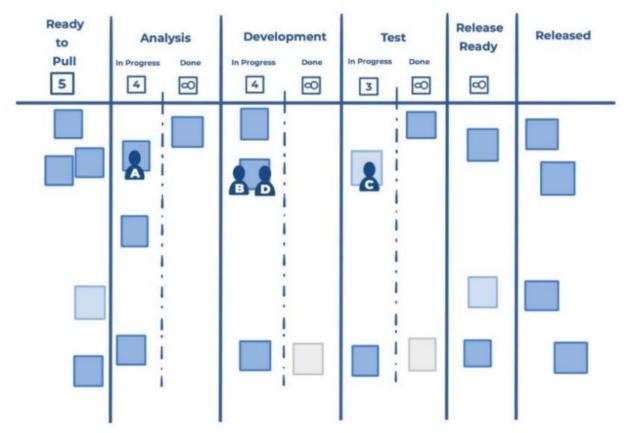

Figure 7 - Kanban Method (source: Aktia Solutions)

The method intends to visualize workflow, and limit the work in progress so that tasks can be finished before starting new ones. As soon as the workflow is controlled and managed, an explicit process is built and the team will then get to experience it, giving constant feedback through it.

The main goal of this method, besides keeping organized and improving time management, is to generate collaboration between all workers and better communication within them.

Pomodoro's Technique

The Pomodoro Technique was created by Francesco Cirillo in 1980. This technique consists of setting a timer to coordinate the ratio between work time and rest time. *Pomodoro* in Italian means *Tomato*. This fruit is the main "image" of the technique, as the timer that Cirillo used was in the shape of a tomato.

Figure 8 - Pomodoro Technique (source: clockwise)

To apply this technique to your work management, you should first decide what task are you going to be working on. When that is decided, you should set a timer for 25 minutes. Work on your task until the timer rings. When the 25 minutes finish, you take a short 5 minutes break. After the break, you repeat the whole process three more times. After the fourth 25 minutes period, instead of resting for 5, you allow yourself a break for 15 to 30 minutes. You repeat it for as long as you want.

6.2.3 Problem-Solving Skill Enhancement

Problem-solving consists, as the name indicates, to solve problems that might occur along the way. The process of problem-solving should consist of 4 steps:
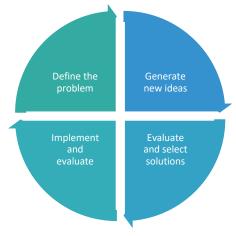

Table 3 - Problem-Solving Acts

6.2.3.1 The Problem-Solving Process

According to asq.org, problem-solving consists of 4 steps:

Step	Characteristics
1. Define the problem	1. Identify the initial problem; 2. Focus on the problem and not the symptoms; 3. Apply problem-solving techniques (e.g.: flowcharts, cause-and-effect diagrams); 4. Analyze data retrieved from the charts/diagrams and the way the company works; 5. Evaluate the possible impact of the new tools, procedures and policies.
2. Generate alternative solutions	1. Postpone the selection of a definitive solution; 2. Consider multiple alternatives; 3. Brainstorm with the team the multiple solutions proposed.
3. Evaluate and select an alternative	1. Consider the solution according to the following: • An alternative that solves the problem without causing other problems; • A total agreement by the whole team; • Likeliness of implementing an alternative; • Said alternative fits in the organization's constraints.
4. Implement and follow up on the solution	1. Explain to the team and implement the solution; 2. Ask for feedback and analyze it; 3. Continue to follow the impacts of the measure implemented.

Table 4 - Problem-Solving Process

6.2.3.2 Problem-Solving Tools and Systems

To solve problems there are some tools and systems that can support the problem-solving process. After understanding and identifying the problem, with the following 3 styles is possible to choose the right action and implement it correctly:

- **Accept Constructive Criticism** (wide perspectives and incentive discussion);
- **Inductive Reasoning** (compile people's experience with theoretical know-how);
- **Mean-Ends Analysis** (extra clarity and beginning of the kick-start process).

Besides these three tools, you can also apply three other systems:

- **Simplex** (an eight-stage process that build-up a cycle of problem finding (Table 3) and improving the organization);
- **Appreciative Inquiry** (examine what's working well);
- **Soft Systems Methodology** (four stages to discover hidden details that create the problem).

6.3 Assessment

Time Management and Problem-Solving are essential skills that need to be applied when working. The use of these skills is especially important when working from home, as the workplace changes and work gains a new shape. These skills are complemented by methods, techniques and principles.

6.3.1 Knowledge Assessment

This part includes quiz-like questions for you to reflect on your knowledge! Take your time to answer the ten (10) following questions!

1. The model proposed by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti in 2006 is called: (select only one answer)
a. Work Design
b. Job Demands-Resources
c. Homogeneous Work Sequences

2. Time management can be the key to increasing productivity and accomplishing the perfect balance between work and leisure hours. (select only one answer)
a. True
b. False

3. The concept of time is considered: (select only one answer)
a. A limited resource
b. A combination between people and work
c. A way to earn money

4. Some of the skills necessary to manage time are: (select more than one answer)
a. Stay organized
b. Set priorities
c. Divide work into 25 minutes time slots
d. Be smart

5. Being reasonable is one of the essential skills to manage time, but what does it actually mean? (select more than one answer)
a. Consider limits and physical health
b. Train your mind to work harder
c. Have a reason for what you do
d. Don't try to do the impossible

6. The DISC personality-behaviour profiles can be: (select more than one answer)

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a. Dominant
b. Independent
c. Serious
d. Compliant

7. The problem-solving process consists of: (select more than one answer)
a. Address the responsible person
b. Generate alternative solutions
c. Evaluate and select an alternative
d. Implement a permanent solution

8. Match the terms with their definitions.
Dominant: enjoys competition and is the one that, normally, takes charge of tasks when needed
Influential: inspires and motivates those around them
Steady: shares activities and works together
Complaint: perfectionist and conscious about doing it correctly

9. Match the concepts with their explanations.
Biological Rhythms: Listen to the body queues
Parkinson's Law: work distribution should be organized around the time available and not the time needed
Pareto's Law: 80% of the total events come from 20% of the causes
Homogeneous Work Sequences: reduce distractions and work continuously
Diluted Responsibility Law: when working in a group, no one feels responsible for the activity/task.

10. Match the processes with their aims.
Accept Constructive Criticism: wide perspectives and incentive discussion
Inductive Reasoning: compile people's experience with theoretical know-how
Appreciative Inquiry: examine what's working well
Soft Systems Methodology: four stages to discover hidden details that create the problem
Mean-Ends Analysis: extra clarity and beginning of the kick-start process

6.3.2 Skills Assessment

This is the part where your knowledge is being put into action!
Train your brain with the skills you gained through this module and think through a possible answer to the following assignment!

This activity should have an estimated time of **60 minutes** to answer.

Think about the tasks you have to do for the next week. According to it, apply the following time-management techniques:
- Alternance Law;
- Eisenhower Matrix;
- Pomodoro Technique;
- Getting Things Done Method;
- Kanban Method.

After applying these, explain what problems came up with these methods/techniques/laws and what were your reactions.

Possible guidelines:
- Explain what the implementation processes were and what worked and what didn't
- Mention possible time wasters that appear within the methods/techniques/law applied
- Try to come up with a solution for each problem.

6.4 Module Summary

- Time management is essential in working (either remotely, hybrid or in-person);
- Time is a limited resource and should be treasured and well-used;
- There are skills and behavioural profiles required to manage time;
- Techniques, tools, laws and principles can help and guide an employee on how to organize and manage time;
- Problem-solving is a required knowledge that complements and helps time management in all types of work.

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