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Handbook

Remote forms and tools

for vocational training support

Gathered through research in Polish, Italian, and Greek markets



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Warsaw - San Cataldo – Thessaloniki – Ostrołęka

2023

This handbook is the result of project number

2021-2-PL01-KA210-VET-000050808

entitled

**“Internationalization of Vocational Education
in the Tourism Industry (Hotels and Gastronomy),
Combining Post-Pandemic Experiences of Employers
and Vocational Training Providers,”**

abbreviated as



Project partners:



Zespół Szkół Zawodowych Nr 4
im. Adama Chętnika w Ostrołęce



ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΗ ΠΑΡΕΜΒΑΣΗ
ΚΑΒΜ Α.Ε.

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Introduction



Dear Reader,

You have just come into possession of the manual being an effect of the project "Internationalization of vocational education in the tourism industry (hotels and gastronomy) combining post-pandemic experiences of employers and vocational training providers," realized under the Erasmus+ program in 2022 and 2023. The project aims to enhance the standard of vocational teaching in the tourism sector, including hospitality and catering, overseen by partners from Poland, Greece, and Italy and their associated entities. By sharing the results of our activities, we want to raise awareness about the employers' needs in the European labor market after the COVID-19 pandemic ends and highlight a selection of possibilities for responding to them by implementing remote forms and tools in vocational development. Therefore, we hope you will find this manual helpful and valuable.

For whom?

If you are...

- a vocational education teacher or a teacher of another subject
- a supervisor of apprentices or juvenile workers appointed by employers
- an employer
- a manager responsible for practical vocational training
- a trainer or employee working as a methodologist
- a project manager

...then this handbook has been designed for you!

How to use the handbook?

This publication is intended to guide and inspire you to design and conduct VET programs using commonly available technological tools. In **Chapter 1**, you'll find information on the methodology we used to gather data on tourism market demand. In **Chapter 2**, you can read a detailed description of forms of education and training using technology. You'll also find definitions and clarifications of the terminology used in the further text. Through **Chapters 3, 4, and 5**, you can learn about the implementation possibilities of selected online tools and applications. At the end of the handbook, you can find a list of contributors to this publication, a figure index, an index of applications and sites, and a bibliography. We hope you enjoy reading and have many ideas for your lesson plans and programs.

From whom?

The manual was developed by experienced in the tourism industry and vocational training project partners, which are KLS Partners (Poland), Promimpresa (Italy), EKPEDEFTIKI PAREMVASI (Greece), and Adam Chętnik's Vocational School Complex (Zespół Szkół Zawodowych im. Adama Chętnika) No. 4 in Ostrołęka (Poland). We have included the most essential information about each partner below.



KLS Partners, the Project Leader from Warsaw in Poland, specializes in vocational and academic teaching support. The company implements projects devoted to, among others, adult education and employment-related issues. To provide the most accurate solutions, the company cooperates with universities, i.a., Warsaw School of Economics, Warsaw University of Technology, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, University of Agribusiness in Łomża, University of Engineering and Health Sciences in Warsaw, University of Health Sciences in Gdańsk, University of Economics and Social Sciences in Ostrołęka, University of Business in Radom, and University of Business and Management in Ciechanów.

The results of the KLS Partners' projects have been deployed in local policies established by municipalities from the following Polish cities: Ostrołęka, Pisz, Jędrzejów, Góra Kalwaria, and Piastów.

Projects realized under 10.3.1 RPMA, in cooperation with the City of Ostrołęka, supported more than 1000 people through vocational training, career counseling, workshops, internships, and apprenticeships. Moreover, in partnership with Adam Chętnik's Vocational School Group (Zespół Szkół Zawodowych im. Adama Chętnika) No. 4 in Ostrołęka, KLS executes vocational activities helping students of the tourism-related fields, e.g., hospitality, tourism organization, catering, food technology, confectionery, dairy processing, cooking, baking, or waitressing.

Promimpresa, the Project Partner from San Cataldo in Italian Sicily, provides vocational training in various fields, including tourism, language learning, business management, healthcare, creative industries, IT and software, technical-mechanical sector, health, and security. The entity is a continuing and vocational education center delivering vocational courses in various professions, such as hotel receptionist. It is an Italian-certified training institution with 35 full-time employees and many associates. The company trains about 80 SMEs per year, both locally and nationally.

Moreover, Promimpresa launched an employment agency that targets the unemployed, youth, or NEET group by offering research and recruitment, job placement, retraining, and upskilling. It promotes entrepreneurship and self-employment through, for instance, digital competency training for people over the age of 50 and for NEETs.

Regional authorities have recognized the company's activities. For example, the Telematics University "Pegaso" uses the focal point for e-learning developed by Promimpresa.



Ekpedeftiki Paremvasi (EkPa), the Project Partner from Thessaloniki in Greece, is the Vocational Training Center accredited as the Vocational Training Center with national status by the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP). The company has three fully equipped educational branches in Thessaloniki, Kozani, and Karoti of Didimotixo. Ekpedeftiki Paremvasi is engaged in lifelong learning, i.e., vocational curricula, training programs tailored to business employees' needs, self-funded training programs, and training for school and adult trainers.

With more than 20 years of experience in adult training, EkPa has accumulated extensive experience in planning, organizing, and implementing training programs and

related activities, such as partnership development, community initiatives, national and European conferences, trainings, and workshops. Besides, the company established a network of European educational organizations and participated in multiple European undertakings, such as ADAPT, INTERREG, EQUAL, LEONARDO, BALKAN MED, ERASMUS+, and GRUNDTVIG PARTNERSHIP.



Adam Chetnik's Vocational School Complex No. 4 Ostrołęka, Poland

The Adam Chetnik's Vocational School Complex (Zespół Szkół Zawodowych im. Adama Chętnika) No. 4 is located in Ostrołęka, Poland. It has a long tradition dating back to 1968. Its students may study, among others, hotel management and tourism organization, nutrition and catering services, food technology, confectionery (specialty: production of confectionery products), dairy processing, economy, and sales. Systematically, the school introduces new study fields based on the needs of the local labor market.

As a public institution, the school is engaged in vocational education for youth aged 14-20. According to data from the 2023/24 school year, the school has 743 students in 29 departments. Nearly three-fourths of the students come from rural areas around Ostrołęka or neighboring districts.

To prepare students for future jobs, the facility conducts practical vocational training in laboratories adapted to vocational training or by establishing cooperation with local employers. These provide access to their plant or production facilities and share knowledge and skills, thanks to which the school's students gain experience in realistic working conditions.

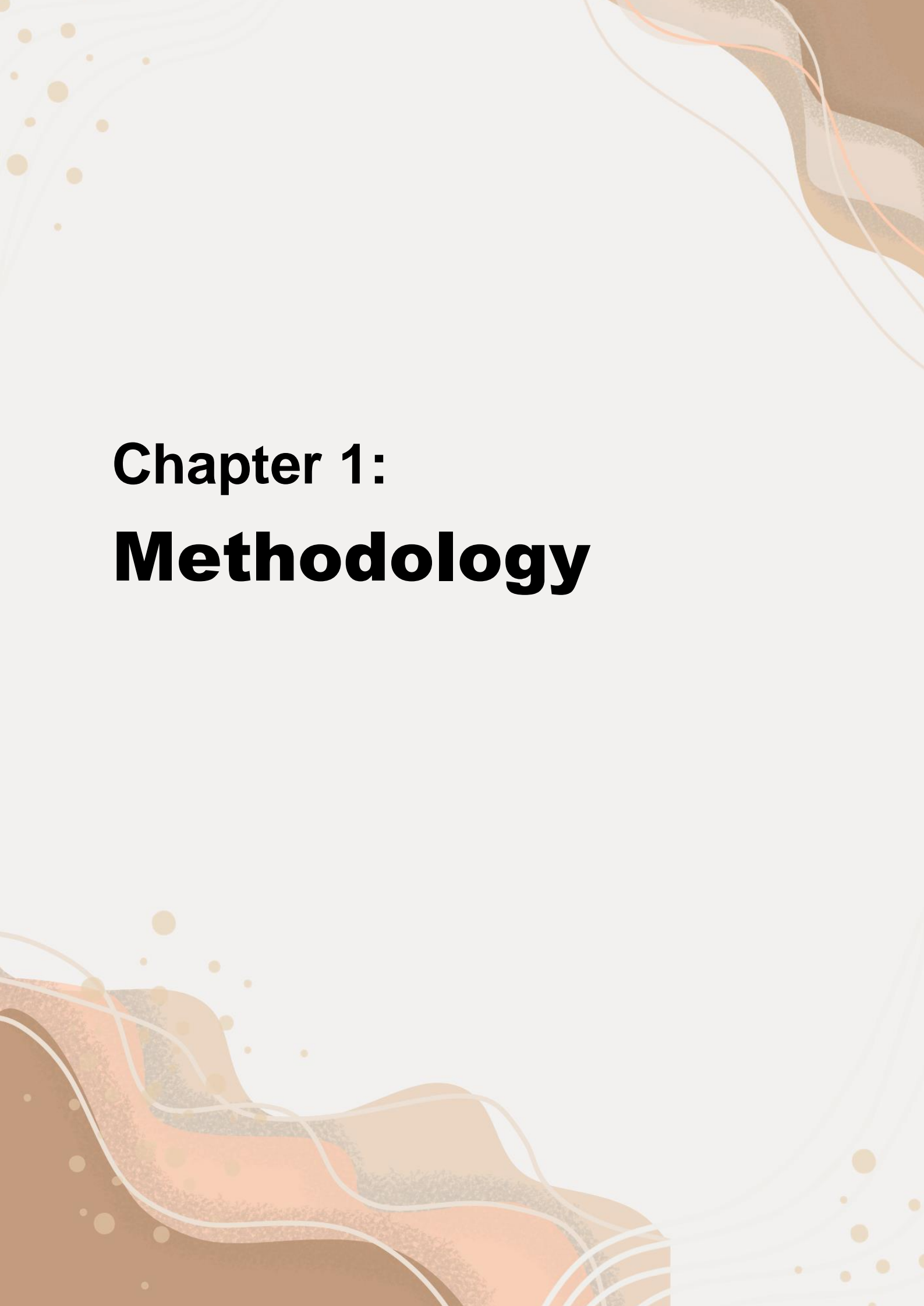
In addition, the school is experienced in conducting projects subsidized by the European Social Fund under the RPWM 10.3.1 measure in providing vocational training and apprenticeships for students.

More about the project

The project "Internationalization of vocational education in the tourism industry (hotels and gastronomy) combining post-pandemic experiences of employers and vocational training providers" (No. 2021-2-PL01-KA210-VET-000050808) plays a significant role in spreading innovative changes made by top entrepreneurs in the tourism sector from diverse countries.

The primary project goal is the internationalization of vocational education in the tourism industry by combining the post-pandemic experiences of employers and vocational training providers. As the Project Partners, we strive to:

- normalize the best practices exchange between local employers and vocational training providers
- boost the qualifications of both sides: business employers and employees, as well as vocational teachers and trainers
- enrich the quality of the project partners' operations
- increase the attractiveness of VET
- promote the inclusion of target groups
- collect data about remote forms and tools applicable to vocational support
- and share all this information in this manual.



Chapter 1:

Methodology

Chapter foreword

As the Project Partners, in this handbook, we decided to collect and comment on all data derived from the five-stage project operation, which includes the following:

- the preliminary desk research on the tourism industry employers' needs regarding current competencies and professional gaps
- the questionnaire addressed to employers and vocational training managers
- panel discussions involving representatives of target groups
- reports from study visits in the tourism sector entities like restaurants and hotels
- face-to-face interviews with employers from the tourism industry
- consultations with training institutions, schools, and local governments located in Poland, Italy, and Greece, where the study visits mentioned above occurred.

Through the above activities, we developed the scope and form of this handbook. Now, the fruits of our work are coming into your hands. You are welcome to familiarize yourself with them in the following chapters.

In addition, we outline selected stages of the project operation below to assure you of the highest quality of our work.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire (Figure 1) examined the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the tourism industry's operations and resulting changes related to required workers' universal competencies and professional qualifications in the post-pandemic period. The study targeted employers and vocational training managers.

Questionnaire

Q1. Please indicate the type of organization represented:

- a. Entrepreneur
- b. School, training institution, or university
- c. NGO
- d. Other – which one? (a field to be entered)

Q2. The tourism industry area in which the represented organization is active:

- a. Catering
- b. Hospitality
- c. Vocational training related to the tourism industry
- d. Other tourism services (e.g., travel agency)
- e. Other – which one? (a field to be entered)

Q3. The country in which the represented organization operates:

- a. Italy
- b. Greece
- c. Poland
- d. Other – which one? (a field to be entered)

Q4. Please indicate to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic has affected how your organization does business (a scale answer from 0 to 4, where 0 means “had no impact” and 4 means “had a major impact”).

Q5. Please indicate the area of activity in which changes have occurred:

- a. Customer service
- b. Delivery process
- c. Safety and health protection
- d. Marketing and PR
- e. Internal procedures
- f. Communication
- g. Forms of work
- h. Training methods
- i. Training content
- j. Other – which one? (a field to be entered)

Q6. Please indicate what changed in operations:

- a. Sanitary protocol
- b. Non-contact handling
- c. Reduction of the staff number
- d. Adapting the offer to the needs of the market changes
- e. Remote communication
- f. Means of serving
- g. Other – which one? (a field to be entered)

Q7. Please indicate what consequences the COVID-19 pandemic has had on your organization:

- a. Reduced number of customers
- b. Increased number of customers
- c. Turnover reduction
- d. Turnover growth
- e. Downsizing
- f. Scaling up operations
- g. Employment reduction
- h. Employment growth
- i. There were no consequences
- j. Other – which one? (a field to be entered)

- Q8. Please assess, in the post-pandemic period, which universal competencies have become more crucial in the tourism industry (each possibility is to be evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5, where the following numbers mean: 1 — “definitely not gained,” 2 — “not gained,” 3 — “hard to say,” 4 — “gained,” 5 — “definitely gained”):
- a. Interpersonal communication
 - b. Creativity
 - c. Flexibility
 - d. Familiarity with new technologies
 - e. Multilingualism
 - f. Entrepreneurship
 - g. Ability to learn and absorb information
 - h. Ability to work in a team
 - i. Other – which one? (a field to be entered)
- Q9. Please assess, in the post-pandemic period, which professional qualifications have become more crucial in the tourism industry (each possibility is to be evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5, where the following numbers mean: 1 — “definitely not gained,” 2 — “not gained,” 3 — “hard to say,” 4 — “gained,” 5 — “definitely gained”):
- a. Events design and travel services (including these made online or by phone)
 - b. Customer service related to travel and gastronomy provided with minimal face-to-face contact
 - c. Booking services made online or by phone
 - d. Guest service with minimal direct contact
 - e. Active leisure promotion via remote formats
 - f. Providing tourist information
 - g. Business meetings and conferences organization
 - h. Waiter service in hospitality
 - i. Other – which one? (a field to be entered)
- Q10. Any additional comments on changes in the tourism industry employees’ competencies following the COVID-19 pandemic? (field for writing)

Part 3/3

Figure 1: Questions of the questionnaire conducted within the VETourism project.

Summary of key data

In the attached charts, you can find responses to questions that are essential for the following chapters, which are the following:

Q1. *Please indicate the type of organization represented (Figure 2).*

Q4: *Please indicate to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic has affected how your organization does business (a scale answer from 0 to 4, where 0 means “had no impact” and 4 means “had a major impact”) (Figure 3).*

Q5: *Please indicate the area of activity in which changes have occurred (Figure 4).*

Q8: *Please assess, in the post-pandemic period, which universal competencies have become more crucial in the tourism industry (each possibility is to be evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5, where the following numbers mean: 1 — “definitely not gained,” 2 — “not gained,” 3 — “hard to say,” 4 — “gained,” 5 — “definitely gained”) (Figure 5).*

Q9: *Please assess, in the post-pandemic period, which professional qualifications have become more crucial in the tourism industry (each possibility is to be evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5, where the following numbers mean: 1 — “definitely not gained,” 2 — “not gained,” 3 — “hard to say,” 4 — “gained,” 5 — “definitely gained”) (Figure 6).*

Figures 2-6 present data summarized from surveys conducted in 3 countries of the VETourism Project Partners: Poland, Italy, and Greece.

When analyzing the charts below, please remember that our data should not be considered definitive or on par with official statistics from central agencies like national statistical offices. Due to a limited number of respondents, our data is more indicative than statistically rigorous. It offers insights, but with the understanding that it doesn't reflect the comprehensive accuracy typically associated with larger-scale statistical analyses.

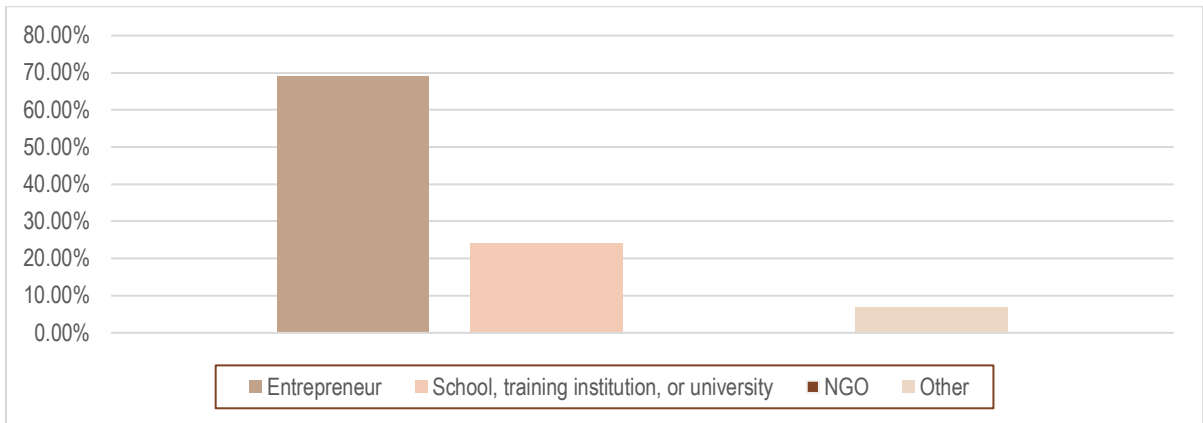


Figure 2: Respondents' organization types (based on Q1).

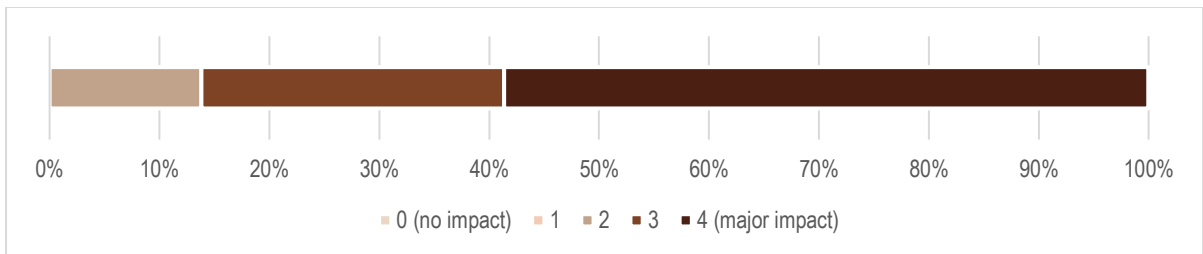


Figure 3: The COVID-19 pandemic impact on doing business (based on Q4).

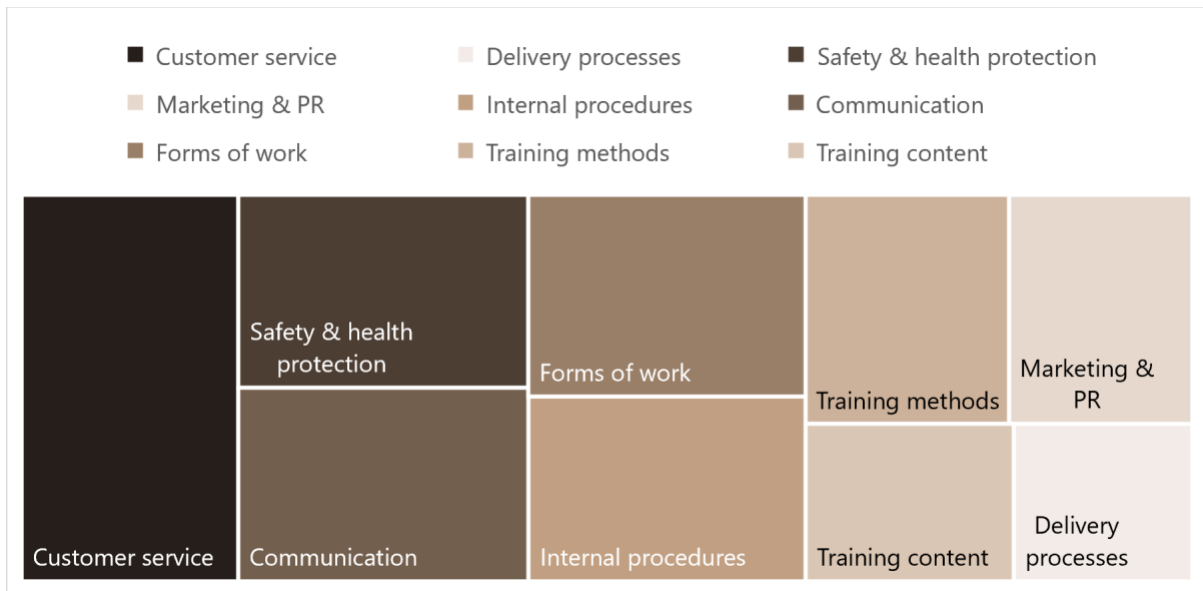


Figure 4: Business areas covered by changes (based on Q5).

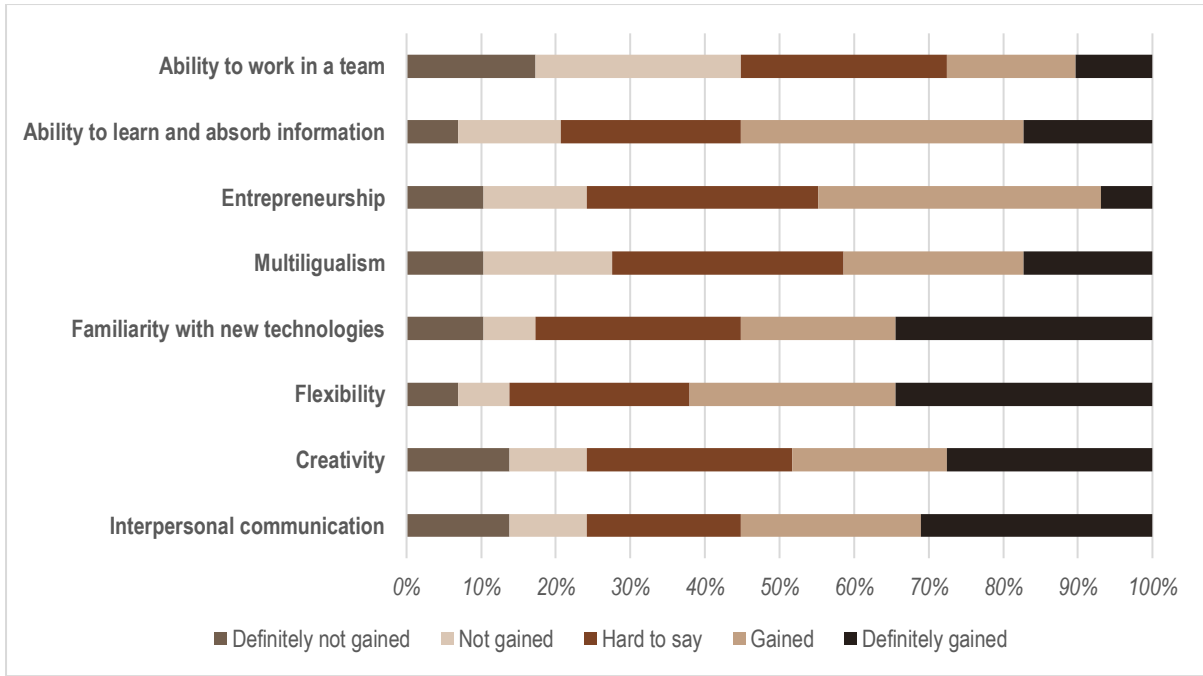


Figure 5: Competencies that gained importance after the pandemic (based on Q8).

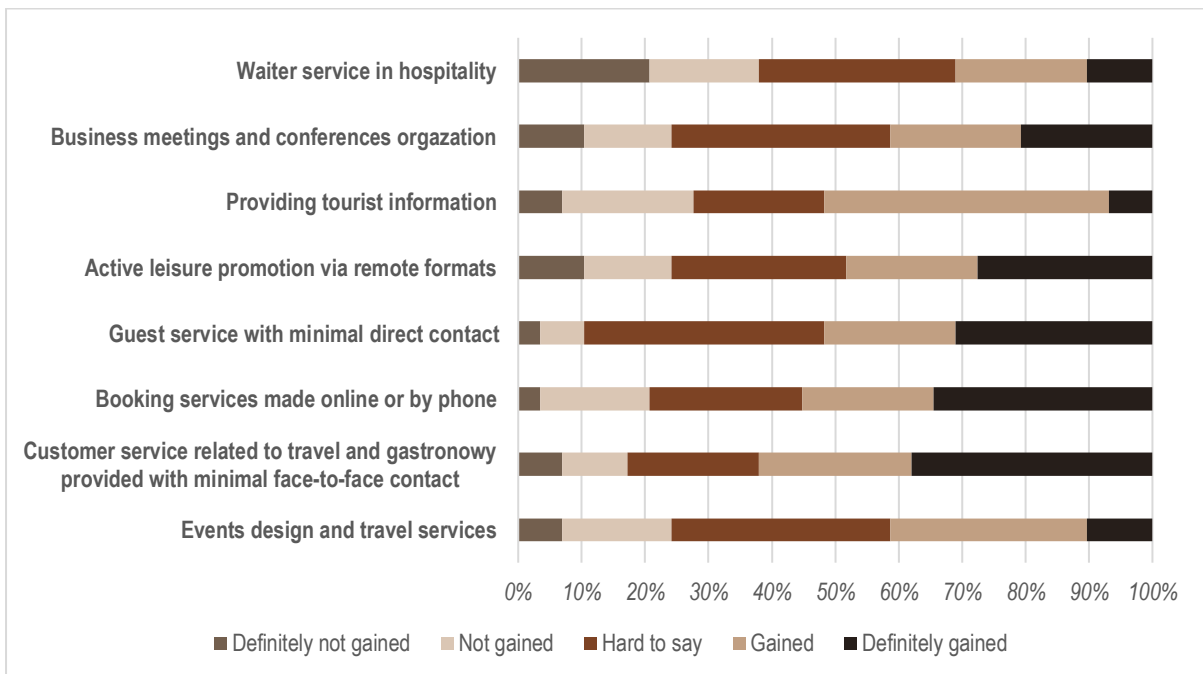


Figure 6: Professional qualifications that gained importance after the pandemic (based on Q9).

Discussion panels

As the Project Partners, we decided to add to our methodology research an additional tool in the form of discussion panels. In addition to the representatives of institutions responsible for the Project, among the panelists were the following spokespersons:

- vocational school teachers
- training companies' representatives that provide professional training
- cooperating staff, i.e., methodologists, professional project managers, and other trainers
- local employers speaking on behalf of the tourism industry, mainly catering and hospitality
- students and participants of professional vocational training programs.

Discussion panels covered, among others, the following **questions**:

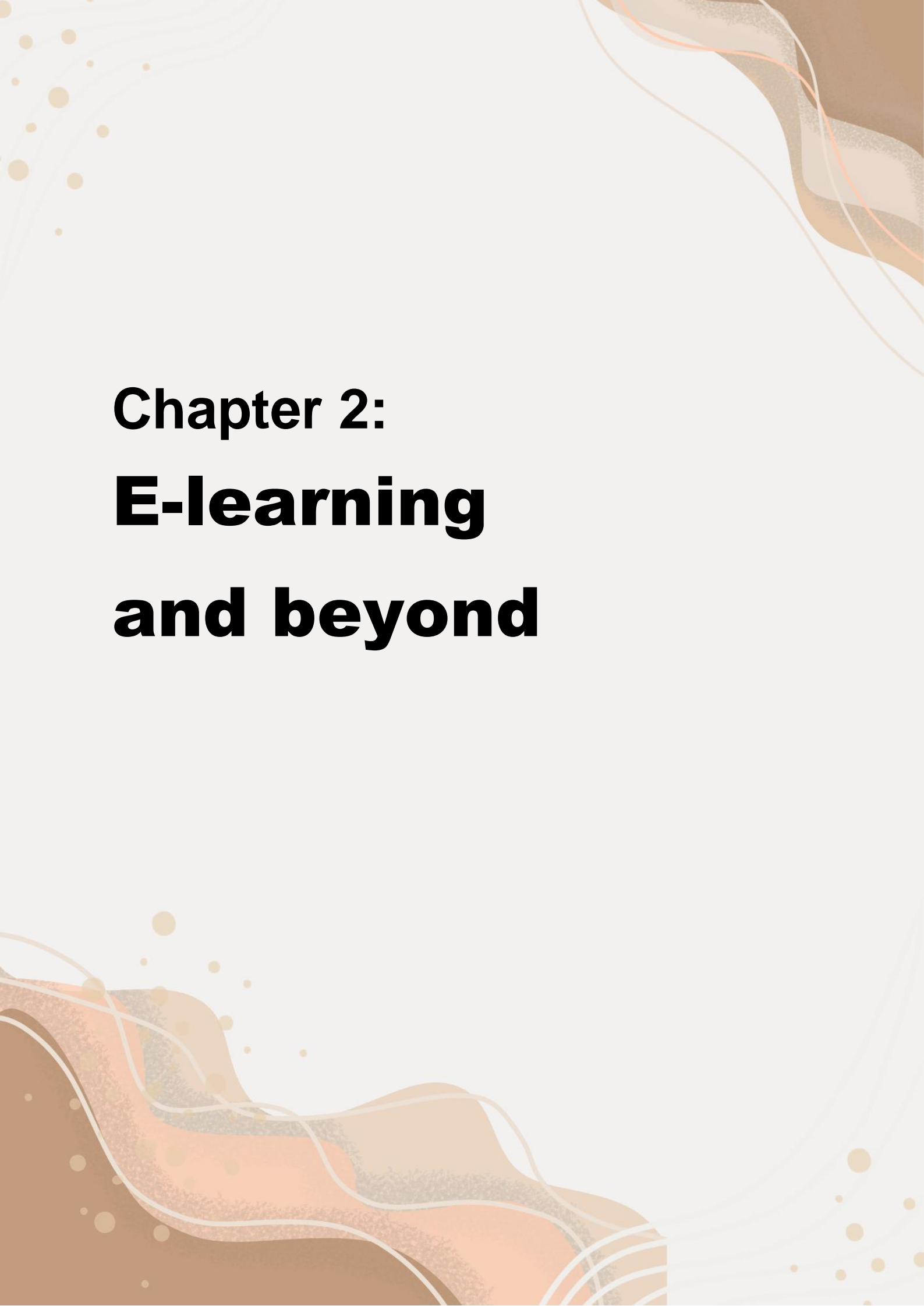
- Q1. When the pandemic broke out, did you have problems getting into the mode of using modern and remote technologies?
- Q2. What was the reaction of various groups (teachers, students, employees, customers) to the need for digital solutions?
- Q3. Were there any specific guidelines (government, organization authorities) for teaching and how to do business? If yes, where could you find them?
- Q4. What were the positive and negative impacts of the teaching mode change?
- Q5. How did the teaching mode change affect the learning of professional subjects?
- Q6. What were the effects of returning to the traditional teaching mode after the lockdown period?
- Q7. What were digital programs and tools used for remote learning and business making?
- Q8. What were the most severe pandemic consequences on employers?
- Q9. Did employers conduct apprenticeships during the pandemic? If so, in what ways?

Q10. How should the teaching change to prepare students better for the employers' demands?

Q11. What remained unchanged in teaching and working in the tourism industry after the pandemic?

Q12. What are the most essential professional competencies for employers in the post-pandemic era? Professional skills or soft skills?

The following chapters describe the collected recommendations for remote tools and activities in vocational education and training.



Chapter 2: **E-learning** **and beyond**

Chapter foreword

In this short chapter, you can find essential organizational information about remote teaching and training. We provide here the key vocabulary that we use in later chapters.

So, starting from the crucial roles in remote VET, we should explain the following terms:

- **instructor** — each person delivering vocational support, like a VET teacher, professional skills trainer, or methodologist operating on behalf of an employer
- **participant** — a VET student or employee adapting to the profession
- **administrator (or admin)** — each person responsible for remote education and training organization, such as a methodologist, VET manager, platform provider, IT specialist, IT manager, or employer.

Please keep in mind these 3 terms to understand the further content properly.

Remote VET formats

Remote format of teaching and training conducted through various technological tools is commonly known as **e-learning**, i.e., electronic learning, also called online learning, distant learning, or web-based training¹. However, it's a vast generalization, as it has at least 2 variations and gives an initial insight into the other remote formats' concepts. So, let's clarify the details.

E-learning can be divided into 2 main categories²:

- **synchronous e-learning** — also known as instructor-led learning; it's an online meeting in real time involving the instructor and participants (one time or in a cycle)
- **asynchronous e-learning** — also known as self-directed or self-paced; it's a case where firstly, the instructor prepares educational content and places it in a given spot on the dedicated platform (called later LMS), or space on the web (e.g., on YouTube as a video material or a quiz in some app), and then participants can view it at any convenient time and place; by this form, the instructor has no real-time contact with the participants.

Of course, you can choose more than 1 of the 2 options mentioned above and mix them in the same educational or training process. Indeed, e-learning (both synchronous and asynchronous) can be used not only as a stand-alone format but also in combination with other remote or on-site ones. How to do that?

Let's take a look at a few variations that can be adapted to vocational education and training³:

- **hybrid learning** — a mix of tools, methods, and channels enabling a real-time, synchronous, and simultaneous connection between instructor and participants

¹ Hashemi-Pour, Lutkevich, *E-learning (online learning). Definition.*

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

- ◆ a good example here is the so-called cohort course made famous by platforms such as Coursera⁴, Udemy⁵, and Domestika⁶
 - ◆ a cohort course is a learning program organized according to a given, timed-bounded (from-to) curriculum (usually broken down into sections); the content is followed by a group of learners, in other words, a cohort, over the same specified time⁷
 - ◆ cohort-based methods refer to the traditional organization of education (from elementary school to university), according to which a group of students enter a classroom together and participate in a lesson or lecture; however, in the online environment, participants log into virtual classrooms, like those provided by Coursera, Udemy, and Domestika
- **m-learning (mobile learning)** — includes any e-learning utilizing mobile devices (smartphone, tablet)
- **social media learning** — any e-learning using social media channels to deliver educational material (e.g., dedicated Facebook groups or fan pages, InstaStories or Reels on Instagram).

There are a lot of possibilities already, and there are still a few more to come, like format mixing e-learning with on-site education and training. It's commonly known as **b-learning** (i.e., blended learning) and can be a combination of:

- **online** (synchronous and/or asynchronous) and **offline** real-time forms (e.g., tasks on an online platform plus on-site meetings)
- or **synchronous** and **asynchronous** ones (e.g., real-time online appointments plus assignments on an online platform)
- or **all** of them!

⁴ Coursera offers thousands of courses, professional certificates, and degrees from world-class universities (e.g., Imperial College London, University of Stanford) and companies (e.g., Google, IBM).

⁵ Udemy provides hundreds of thousands of courses and certifications in the areas of soft and hard skills.

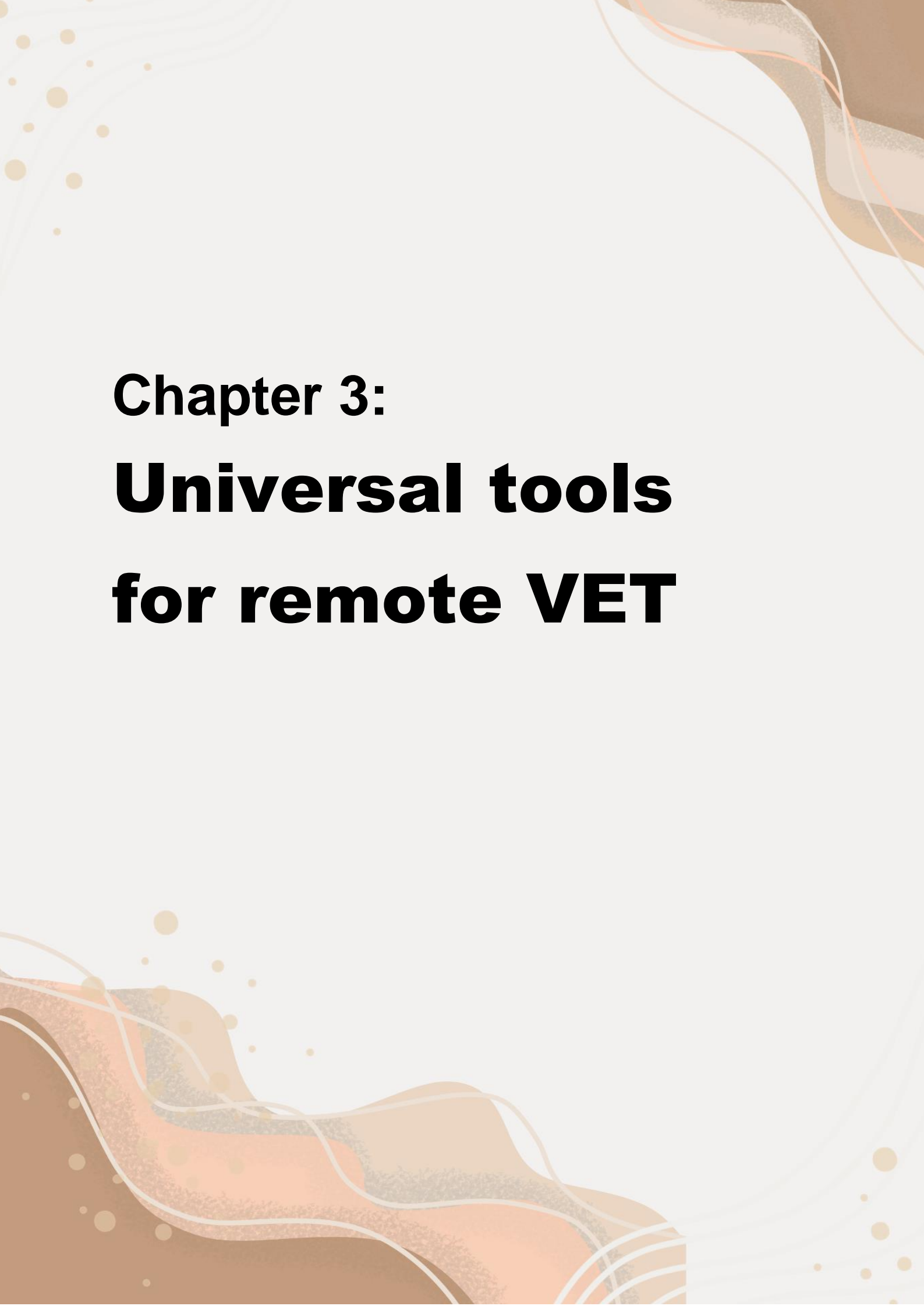
⁶ Domestika focuses on courses developing creative, design, and artistic skills.

⁷ *What is a cohort-based course?*

What's essential b-learning is often confused with hybrid learning. So, please remember that b-learning is more complex than hybrid.

In the further chapters, we discuss how to deliver the educational and training formats mentioned above. No matter which option you as an instructor choose, remember that each refers to educational strategies far from the traditional, on-site ones. Consequently, all scenarios and curricula you have already used in in-person education and training must be adjusted to the online environment.

Running remote programs successfully and efficiently requires the readiness to change the mindset, related habits, assumptions, and beliefs that instructors acquire by providing classroom education.



Chapter 3: **Universal tools** **for remote VET**

File Sharing Platforms

Any remotely run education and training program needs some cloud space, allowing the instructor and participants to share texts, images, and video files. Google Drive, One Drive, and Dropbox are the most popular tools that provide this capability. They all provide robust solutions for storing, backing up, and sharing files through the cloud while differing in the additional features outlined below.

So, the choice of application depends on the instructor's and participants' specific needs and preferences. We recommend you pay particular attention to what tools you and your organization already use, for example, for communication. If your video conferencing app is Google Meet, the obvious choice should be Google Drive since they are products for the same provider, making synchronization and organization much more straightforward. If, on the other hand, you are working on MS Teams, you already have file space, so ask yourself if another one is necessary.

Remember that the golden rule of working with new technologies is avoiding the multiplication of things. More straightforward means more effortless for everybody, and more effortless means more accessible.

Google Drive

Website: [google.com/drive](https://www.google.com/drive)

Key features:

- File storage and synchronization service.
- Used by individuals, businesses, and educational institutions for file storage, backup, and collaborative work on documents and projects.
- It gives users their own space in the cloud if they have an email address on Gmail.
- The storage space is free and genuinely enormous.
- It is easy to use and responsive on various devices.

- It is integrated with [Google Workspace](#)'s apps (i.e., Google Docs, Sheets, Slides), allowing seamless collaboration and editing of documents, spreadsheets, and presentations simultaneously or each in their own time.
- Unlike MS Teams, Google Drive also allows you to freely share and collaborate on files with people who don't have an email address on Gmail and their own cloud space.

One Drive

Website: microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/onedrive/online-cloud-storage

Key Features:

- One Drive is almost identical to Google Drive but brings a connection to Microsoft 365 suite apps mentioned already in the MS Teams description.
- If you use MS Teams, the files posted on each channel are automatically uploaded to One Drive so that you can access them from there.
- It's, therefore, perfectly suitable for users of Microsoft products.

Dropbox

Website: dropbox.com

Key Features:

- Dropbox is another file hosting and synchronization service.
- Like Google Drive and One Drive, Dropbox allows users to store files in the cloud, access them from anywhere, and share them with others safely.
- The user interface is simple and intuitive.
- It offers features for file synchronization, automated backup, and file recovery.
- There is no option to collaborate and edit files uploaded to the cloud. Documents placed on Dropbox require downloading to make changes and re-

uploading to a virtual drive to share with others. For files that require multiple updates, this can be problematic.

→ It supports integration with various third-party apps and services.

Creation of presentations and other visual materials

Online teaching requires the preparation of educational materials in a different way than for on-site sessions. The most common resource type used in synchronous and asynchronous e-learning is a presentation (slides).

The presentation is displayed during real-time meetings and plays the role of a mini textbook for the topic discussed. After the meeting, we recommend providing this presentation (via a file-sharing platform) in pdf format so the participants can repeat and consolidate the subject.

On the other hand, for asynchronous teaching, presentations are used as manuals for self-study. In this case, slides should contain more detailed descriptions and instructions to let the participant complete the subject independently.

In addition to the presentation, when doing e-learning, you should consider additional visual materials, such as:

- **Handouts** — They are digital documents provided to participants to supplement their online learning. They can include pdfs (including presentations), worksheets, guidelines, or summaries that learners can download and use for reference, note-taking, or offline study⁸.
- **Infographics** — Visual representations of information, data, or knowledge designed to present complex information quickly and engagingly. In infographics, visual content (images, icons, diagrams) represents a noticeably higher percentage than text, which should only complement the rest⁹.
- **Flashcards** — This term refers to brief sheets or cards summarizing essential information on a particular topic. In e-learning, these might be digital cards or short documents highlighting essentials or steps in a process¹⁰. These can be printable materials or those that a participant will keep on his or her phone and always on hand. In the latter case, you must ensure that the fiche's resolution is compatible with smartphones.

⁸ *Designing handouts*, in: "Wiki Educator."

⁹ *How to make an infographic – ultimate guide*, in: "Canva Learn."

¹⁰ *Free Printable Flashcard Maker*, in: "Canva."

Below, you can find 4 tools that will help you create visuals for your e-learning easily and quickly.

PowerPoint, Keynote, and Google Slides

Websites:

- microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/powerpoint
- apple.com/keynote
- google.com/slides/about

Key Features:

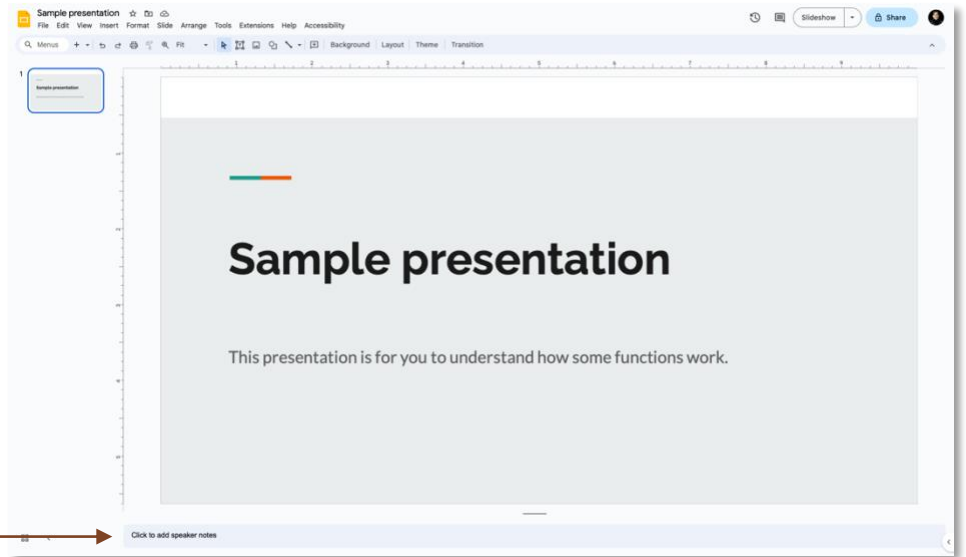
- All 3 software enable the creation and edition of presentations (slides). However, they are delivered from different providers: PowerPoint is from Microsoft, Keynote is from Apple, and Google Slides is, of course, from Google.
- They offer a variety of templates and design options.
- Slides may include text, shapes, images, links, and videos.
- They include tools for adding and editing charts and graphs.
- They all provide features for animation and transition effects.
- They offer speaker notes and presentation modes (see Figure 7).
- They provide cloud storage integration.
- They allow exporting presentations in different formats, among others, in:
 - **pptx** — Standard presentation format. It's editable after sharing with others.
 - **pdf** — This option is best when an instructor distributes a presentation to participants. Then, slides are uneditable, so they display identically on all devices, regardless of the operating system (Windows, iOS, Android, etc.).
 - **mp4 or mov** — These are video formats. When you save your presentation as such, it will be turned into a video. It makes sense, especially if the slides contain animations relevant to the content and the material is intended to be viewed individually by participants.

- Please note that the default format for Keynote is Keynote Presentation, which is specific only to this program and is possible to open only on Apple devices running on the iOS operational system. Therefore, when creating with this software, you must remember to export the file as either pptx (PowerPoint presentation) or pdf.
- Please remember that:
 - **PowerPoint** is a part of the Microsoft 365 suite, widely used in business and education. The choice of this application is clear if the school uses other Microsoft products.
 - **Keynote** is exclusive to Apple devices but allows exporting slides in pptx format to reopen them in PowerPoint or Google Slides. Also, pptx files may be edited in Keynote. The choice of this application is related to the device and operating system you already have. If you, as an instructor, use a Macbook or other devices from Apple, you already have Keynote software bundled.
 - **Google Slides** is a free and web-based app. Picking this one is obvious when the school uses other Google products.

Figure 7: Instructions for adding and activating presenter notes on the Google Slides example.

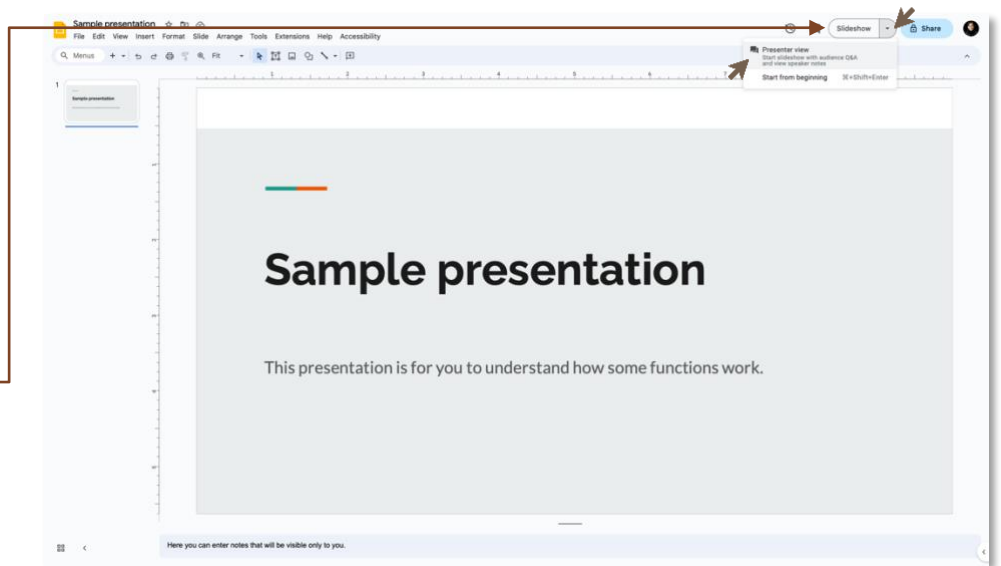
1

In this box, you can enter notes (e.g., additional questions or instructions) visible only to you during the presentation.

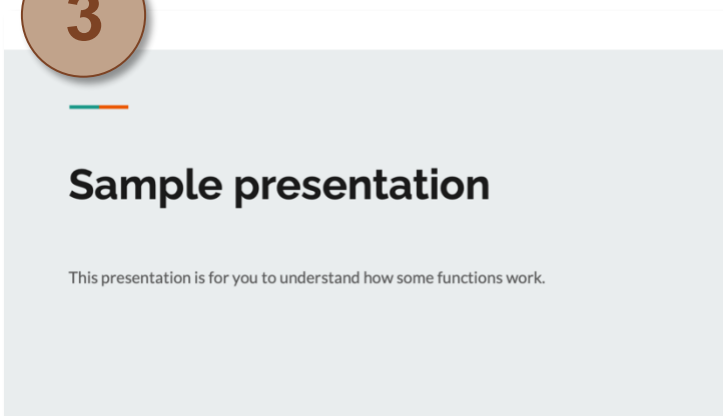


2

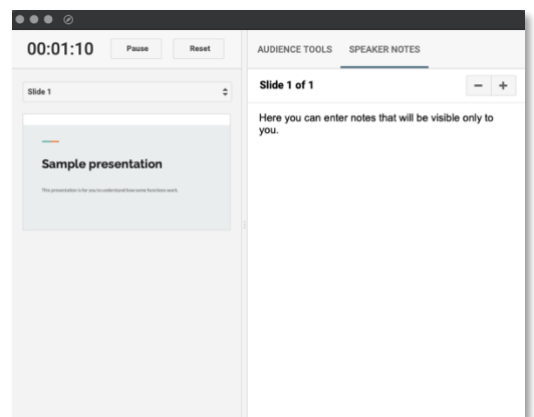
Then, start a slideshow in presenter view.



3



Presentation in full-screen mode in the first window — that's what your participants will see.



Notes in the second window - this will be seen only by you, under the condition that you don't share the whole screen with the participants during the live meeting but choose the first window with the presentation.

Website: canva.com

Key Features:

- Canva is an intuitive online design and publishing tool, ideal for creating any visual content.
- It's web-based, requiring no software installation, and is accessible from any device.
- It's necessary to remember that not all web browsers correctly reproduce Canva's interface and capabilities. Make sure to use Chrome browser (from Google), Edge Chromium (from Microsoft), or any other one based on the Chromium engine¹¹.
- Canva has a free version with extensive features, making it budget-friendly for schools.
- It's constantly updated with new features and design trends, keeping the content relevant.
- This gives many possibilities for creation while being user-friendly and requiring minimal expertise from new users. It's different than a professional graphics tool like Serif Affinity Designer or Adobe Illustrator, which both demand much more advanced skills in operation.
- So, Canva can be considered a semi-professional tool. It offers a drag-and-drop interface, making it accessible even for total beginners.
- The platform provides a vast library of ready-to-use templates, legal images, icons, and fonts.
- It's a comprehensive tool for creating presentations, handouts, flashcards, infographics, posters, social media graphics, and many more.
- It enables collaboration on the file, allowing teachers and students to work together during or between meetings.

¹¹ More about the Chromium-based browsers: Akhtar, *50 Top-Rated Browsers Built on Chromium: Ultimate Guide 2024*.

- Teachers can use Canva not only to prepare educational materials but also to enhance lesson plans and make learning more engaging, e.g., by working on the same file or preparing CVs individually by students.
- In addition, Canva offers a massive library of articles, tutorials, and case studies in the [Learn](#) and [Design School](#) categories.
- To sum up, Canva supports the development of digital literacy and creative skills.

Virtual whiteboards

Virtual whiteboards imitate the functionality of traditional classroom boards or whiteboards in an online environment. They provide a collaborative space where instructors can write, draw, visualize ideas, and share everything with students in real-time, regardless of their physical location. They are, therefore, valuable during synchronous e-learning, but not only.

Virtual whiteboards can also be used efficiently in asynchronous online teaching. They can be implemented as an environment for gathering ideas, group brainstorming, and writing individual responses by students or an online library with shared resources, such as links, embedded text, video, or audio files. Moreover, instructors can create templates for scenarios and specific activities directly on virtual whiteboards. However, it's not obligatory, as whiteboard apps include many ready-made templates, like SWOT analysis¹², SMART goal formulation¹³, or prioritization based on the Eisenhower Decision Matrix¹⁴.

The following section discusses the selection of virtual whiteboard apps. Before that, however, we encourage you to check the capabilities of a whiteboard feature in your communication tool, such as MS Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet. They all offer integrated whiteboard functions and/ or support third-party whiteboard apps.

In MS Teams and Zoom, for instance, the whiteboard feature allows instructors and participants to note and draw. Until recently, Google had its own user-friendly and simple board called Jamboard, but the company decided to take it off the market. Currently, Google Meet supports only third-party applications like Miro, described below.

¹² SWOT analysis is a business tool for identifying and examining strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T) of an individual, team, or institution. See: Bigelow, Pratt, Tucci, *SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis)*.

¹³ SMART is a popular framework for setting personal and business goals. See: Yasar, *SMART (SMART goals)*.

¹⁴ Eisenhower Matrix is a time management business tool enabling efficient task prioritization. See: Chai, *Eisenhower Matrix*.

To sum up, virtual whiteboards aim to facilitate and enhance the interactivity of online vocational training sessions, fostering a more collaborative and engaging learning environment.

Miro and Mural

Websites:

- miro.com
- mural.co

Key Features:

- Miro and Mural are pretty similar whiteboard apps. They offer a vast, zoomable canvas that facilitates real-time collaboration through extensive mind mapping, brainstorming sessions, design thinking workshops, flowchart creation, and visual project or business planning.
- They offer various ready-to-use templates.
- Besides drawing and writing features, they provide, among others, sticky notes, emoji, and other media.
- As they enhance team communication and collaboration, they can support activities made anytime: in real-time, between online meetings, and asynchronously.
- Integrates with other tools and platforms, such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Google Drive.
- As they're used in business, education, design, and other fields, instructors can consider introducing Miro and Mural not only as a content carrier and a space for practice but also as tools necessary in the job market in many sectors. Therefore, it's advisable to plan a gradual implementation of apps' functions so that students acquire them unintentionally while performing substantive tasks related to the class topics. Remember that including a high level of proficiency

in one or both apps on a resume or LinkedIn profile can open many doors to students' career paths.

Surveys, quizzes, and tests tools

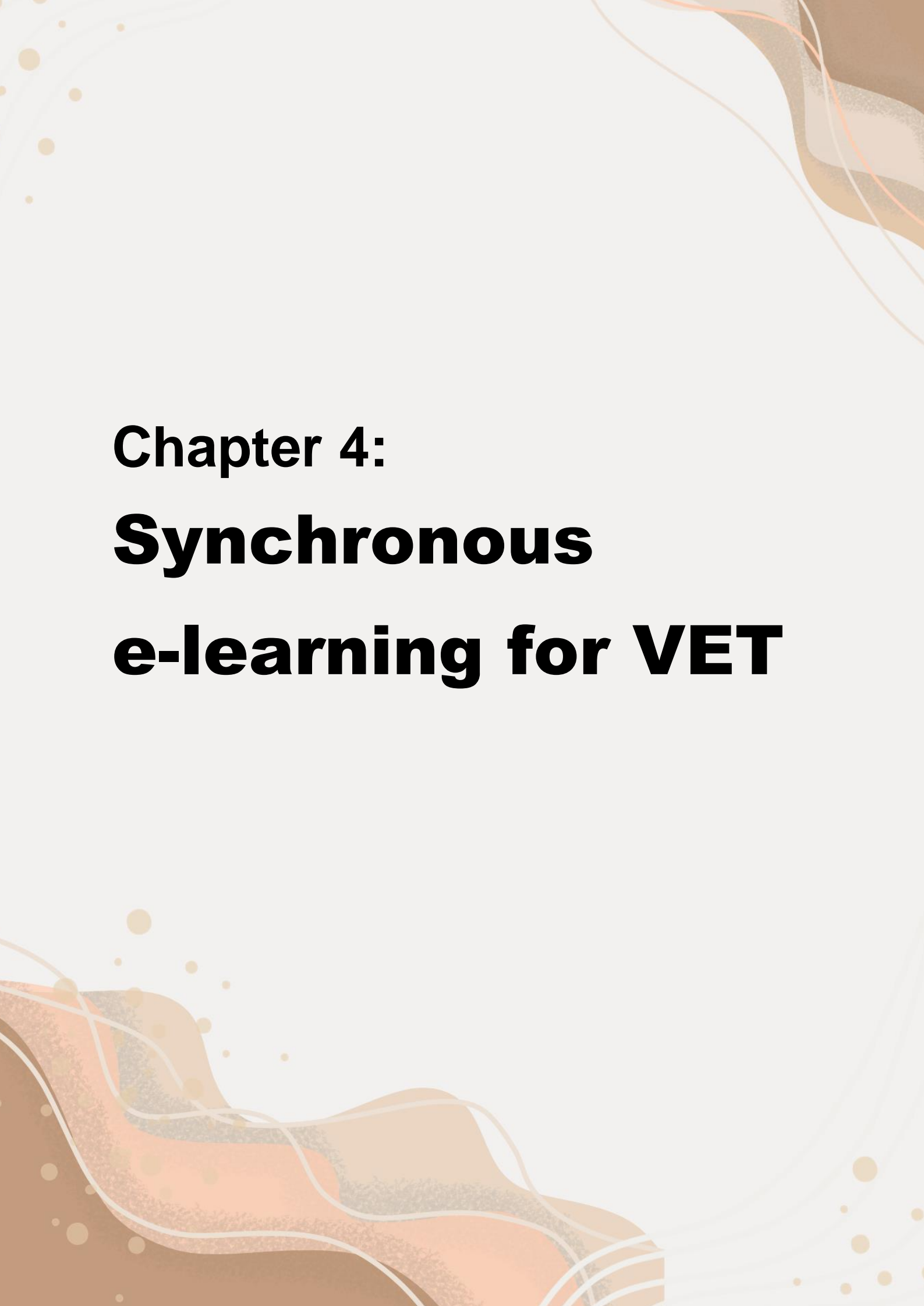
Google Forms

Website: docs.google.com/forms

Key Features:


- Google Forms is a survey administration tool.
- It enables the creation of surveys, quizzes, and forms simply and for free.
- Simplifies the process of creating surveys and quizzes.
- Facilitates efficient data collection and analysis.
- Questions may require choosing one or multiple possible answers, writing a short or long text, and putting responses on a scale.
- In a form, you can also create sections that help to organize questions so that only 1 topic category is displayed to participants on their devices at a time. In surveys, for example, it's common to put demographic questions (such as age, gender, and size of the city of residence) in the initial section and content questions in the next section or sections. That's highly recommended for longer surveys and quizzes.
- Let's be honest — no one likes monotonous tasks. So, what's the maximum number of questions in one section? You need to decide for yourself. Consider the questions' length, the number of answers to choose from, and the time necessary for completion.
- Forms may be customized, for example, using the institution logo and color palette.
- After finishing the creation, surveys, quizzes, and forms have dissemination links assigned to them. The quizzes are equipped with dissemination links. Instructors must share these links with students to enable them to respond.

- Each response is gathered and organized in Google Sheets automatically. However, the student must approve submitting the completed form to send the answers back to your database. Partially fulfilled ones are not saved. Students should be constantly reminded about this fact.
- After collecting responses, Google Forms presents you with automatic summaries and charts.
- In education, an essential feature is the possibility of summing up data related to each participant separately and for a group (like a team or class), increasing their performance and feedback.
- In conclusion, it's an excellent tool for creating assessments, surveys, and feedback forms.



Chapter 4:
Synchronous
e-learning for VET

Chapter foreword



As the Project Partners, we understand the importance of real-time online contact in today's VET landscape. So, please become familiar with powerful e-learning forms at your disposal, which are webinars, online workshops, and training sessions. Thanks to them, you will be able to deliver knowledge and support skills development interactively and effectively. Moreover, you will have a chance to build strong bones with your participants.

Synchronous e-learning forms are ideal for incorporating brainstorming, discussions, simulations, role-plays, and other experiential learning techniques instrumental in professional development and vocational training. They enable maximization of the VET education and training's impact and relevance to real-world applications.

In this chapter, we delve into how you can leverage these synchronous e-learning forms to their fullest. We explore using appropriate digital tools, ensuring they align with your learning objectives and enhance the overall participants' experience. We aim to empower you to create an inclusive, engaging, and efficient online learning environment that meets your participants' diverse needs and backgrounds.

Online webinar (standard version)

A webinar is a method of delivering an online event where an instructor or guest expert shares information on a particular topic with a large audience (from several dozen to even several thousand people) over communication tools. The name is a compound of two words: web and seminar. The name is a composite of two words: network and seminar, suggesting that it's a lecture format rather than an instructional or exercise one. We can say that it's the most passive way of gaining knowledge in real-time, as participants listen to the instructor or guest expert and watch accompanying presentations (in pptx or pdf format). The participants' engagement may be implemented through submitting questions and comments via a native chat feature in the app by which the event is run.

What are the topics you can cover?

Good ideas for webinars are introductory talks on a particular topic, summaries, or interviews with guests. Below, we provide sample webinar subjects for applying to VET education and training. Feel free to use them in your work.

- "Understanding Tourism Industry Trends and Job Market Demands in Eco-Tourism"
- "Career Planning and Professional Development in the Tourism Industry"
- "Efficient Restaurant Management: Skills for Success in the Hospitality Sector"
- "Introduction to New Technologies Application in Accommodation Management"
- "Communication Skills for Tour Guides and Hospitality Staff"
- "Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking in Customer Service"
- "Gastronomy: Exploring Local Cuisines as a Travel Attraction"
- "Revolutionizing Hotel Dining: Emerging Trends in Cuisine"
- "Teamwork and Collaboration in Culinary Arts and Restaurant Services"

- "Essential Tools and Techniques in Digital Marketing for the Tourism Industry"
- "Safety Standards and Practices in Hospitality Management"
- "Understanding Legal and Ethical Responsibilities in the Travel Sector"

What tools do you need?

- A videoconferencing application (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet)
— please go to [Videoconferencing apps](#)
- Application for presentation creation (e.g., PowerPoint, Keynote, Google Slides, Canva) — please go to [Applications for presentation creation](#)

Online webinar (interactive version)

An interactive webinar version is pretty similar to a standard one but incorporates additional engagement features. An instructor (or guest expert) is still the primary source of knowledge. However, beyond watching presentations and texting in chat, participants can be engaged in live polls, surveys, real-time collaboration on virtual boards, or even virtual hand-raising to ask questions vocally. This format encourages more active participation and feedback from attendees. Their number, however, should be smaller than during standard webinars since each participant-generated interaction requires time and space, e.g., on shared whiteboards. For beginning instructors, we recommend up to 50-70 students in a meeting; for more advanced teachers and trainers, the recommended group counts up to 500.

What are the topics you can cover?

In this webinar version, you can cover the topics we suggested earlier for the standard form, introducing, for example, a quiz or collecting feedback from participants via a survey tool or a virtual whiteboard.

However, we want to encourage you to go further in your activities with a large audience. Please try implementing interactive options to lead brainstorming, moderate discussions, Q&A sessions, or collect feedback and opinions on the given topics. To do this, you can refer to the following list of topic ideas:

- **"Brainstorming Session on Sustainable Tourism Practices"** — Participants collaboratively generate ideas on green tourism initiatives using an online whiteboard.
- **"Moderated Discussion: The Future of Eco-Friendly Hotels"** — A discussion on trends in eco-friendly hotels enabling participants to take their voice by turning on mics in a videoconferencing app. Followed by a concluding survey.

- **"Interactive Q&A session: Challenges in organizing survival adventures after COVID-19 pandemic"** — A real-time interactive survey regarding participants' current experiences organizing survival scenarios to open the meeting. The survey results displayed live are the basis for the Q&A session.
- **"Give Them Feedback! Evaluate Menu Ideas for Hotel Restaurants Created by Other Students"** — A webinar presenting innovative dishes for hotel menus created by school students from one class and leading the feedback collection by live survey engaging students from a second class.
- **"Brainstorming: Enhancing Guest Experience in Boutique Hotels"** — A brainstorming session on improving hotel guest experiences by collecting participants' ideas on an online whiteboard.
- **"How do digital nomads influence the travel industry? Redefining Work and Travel Concepts"** — Exploring the digital nomad lifestyle and its influence on the tourism market through an interview with the representative of the discussed group. The session includes an interactive map-based activity, allowing participants to pinpoint attractive destinations for digital nomads. A live Q&A segment will also cover how tourism businesses can adapt to accommodate the unique needs of these travelers, such as offering coworking spaces and long-term stay options.
- **"Moderated Discussion: How to Integrate Local Legends, Myths, and Beliefs in Tour Packages?"** — A discussion on incorporating local legends, myths, beliefs, and exciting stories into tour offerings, with good practices development on a virtual whiteboard.
- **"Opinion Poll: Impact of Digital Marketing on Travel Choices"** — Gathering votes on specific digital marketing solutions and their impact on customers' travel decisions to develop the dos and don'ts through a poll. In doing so, one can embrace the instructor's and participants' inter-generational differences as an opportunity to gain insight into various generations of clients.
- **"Navigating the Future: Automation and Robotics in Tourism"** — An interview with a guest expert. Deep insight into practical examples of automation and robotics implementation in the tourism sector. Participants can discuss with a specialist through a Q&A session at the end of the meeting, enabling their mics in the videoconferencing app.

- **"Leveraging Instagram Influencers for Tourism Promotion"** — The online, real-time analysis of how Instagram influencers shape travel choices and destination popularity. The webinar may feature case studies of successful influencer partnerships, interactive brainstorming sessions on creating engaging social media campaigns, or an interview with a guest influencer. It's worth considering local influencers who feel a bond with a particular place (then they'll perform an Instagram guide role) or Instagram-famous celebrities who don't live in a specific location but have their own reasons (such as family ties, good memories, business trips or vacations) to return to it frequently.

What tools do you need?

- A videoconferencing application (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet) — please go to [Videoconferencing apps](#)
- Application for presentation creation (e.g., PowerPoint, Keynote, Google Slides, Canva) — please go to [Creation of presentations and other visual materials](#)
- Additional tools (depending on the webinar format selected):
 - please check [Surveys, polls, and quiz apps](#) or [Survey, poll, and quiz apps](#)
 - please check [Virtual whiteboards](#)

Method: online workshop

You are probably familiar with the workshop concept in the on-site format. A workshop as a method of teaching combines in-class practice and a lecture. Typically, it involves a small group of participants. Some sources¹⁵ give a number between 5 and 30. However, based on our experience, working in groups of 4-12 individuals is the most productive. The main goal of a workshop is to enhance students' practical skills and show them a functional aspect of a theory implementation. This is performed under conditions allowing for testing, mistakes, failures, and conclusions. So, the instructor needs to ensure an extremely safe working atmosphere.

In the online environment, the overall workshop's principles are the same. It is a virtual, interactive, and practical session where participants actively engage in hands-on or problem-solving activities, simulations, exercises, or collaborative tasks related to a specific topic or skill. Here, the primary objective is also learning by doing. It might be divided into multiple sessions or segments extended over time. Participants usually develop a particular outcome, like a solution to a challenge, a plan, a project, or a practical skill. The number of participants is much smaller than on webinars. We think it should be comparable to on-site workshops, which are 4 to 12 people.

What are the topics you can cover?

Workshops encourage not only learning but also integration. Therefore, we recommend the following topics:

- **"Hands-on Customer Service Scenarios"** — An instructor creates various customer service situations in the form of scenarios and provides them at the beginning of the workshop. Participants engage in role-playing exercises, enhancing their problem-solving and communication skills in a real-world setting.

¹⁵ University of Hertfordshire. *What is a Workshop?*

- **"Cooking Masterclass: Local Cuisine"** — A practical online cooking workshop where an instructor guides participants in preparing dishes from local cuisine, focusing on culinary skills, ingredient knowledge, and presentation techniques.
- **"Creating Eco-friendly Tour Packages"** — Participants design sustainable tour packages, learning about eco-friendly practices and balancing tourist satisfaction with environmental conservation.
- **"Social Media Marketing: Live Campaign Creation"** — Participants develop and implement a real social media marketing campaign, e.g., for a hotel or restaurant, learning about content creation, audience engagement, and analytics.
- **"Developing Virtual Customer Experiences"** — Participants develop virtual customer experiences using new technology possibilities, like creating a virtual map of hotels or facilities to be explored through 360 photo technology.
- **"Event Planning Simulation"** — Participants plan and execute a simulated event, dealing with everything from budgeting and logistics to supplier management and customer satisfaction.
- **"Hospitality Financial Management Exercise"** — A practical workshop on financial management in the hospitality industry, where participants work on real-world budgeting and financial planning scenarios and tools.
- **"Mixology and Beverage Service Workshop"** — Participants learn and practice the art of mixology, including cocktail preparation, presentation, and pairing with food.
- **"Front Desk Simulation: Handling Bookings and Inquiries"** — A simulation based on scenarios prepared in advance by the instructor where participants manage a hotel front desk, handling reservations, customer inquiries, and check-in/check-out procedures.

What tools do you need?

- A videoconferencing application (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet)
 - please go to [Videoconferencing apps](#)
- Other tools, apps, and devices depend on the topic:
 - please check [Surveys, pools, and quiz apps](#) or [Survey, pool, and quiz apps](#)
 - please check [Virtual whiteboards](#)
 - please go to [Creation of presentations and other visual materials](#)

Method: online simultaneous training

While sharing some similarities with the workshop format, online training primarily focuses on a more structured and instructor-led approach. Unlike workshops, which are highly interactive and hands-on, online training is more directive and informational, often involving larger groups of participants. It's common to have between 10 and even 100 participants in an online training session, depending on the subject and the objectives. However, based on our experience, we recommend groups of up to 12 people for beginning instructors and of up to 30 people for more advanced ones.

Training aims to transfer knowledge and information, covering theoretical aspects and best practices of a particular topic. This method typically includes a mix of presentations, lectures, simulations, demonstrations, and exchanging question-and-answer segments to clarify participants' doubts and queries. Thanks to that, it's remarkably efficient for introducing new concepts, guidelines, or procedures.

In the online format, interaction still plays a critical role, but it is more centered around disseminating information than collaborative problem-solving or hands-on activities. Participants are usually encouraged to engage through polls, asking questions, brainstorming, discussions, and exercises made in breakout rooms. Still, the primary focus remains on learning from the instructor's expertise and experience. What is most interesting in the training curriculum exercises based on the workshop approach can be involved to benefit from both methods.

Online training sessions can be single, standalone events or part of a series, allowing for deeper topic exploration. The outcomes for participants are generally increased knowledge and understanding of a specific area, readiness to apply what they've learned in a practical or professional context, and sometimes, certification or accreditation in the trained field.

To conclude, while online workshops are designed for small groups to interactively “learn by doing,” online training is more about “learning by listening and asking.”

What are the topics you can cover and tools you need?

All the topics listed so far could be used to create a training scenario if the instructor would have to adapt the particular activities to this method. The same can be said for tools. Therefore, we didn't create a new list of topics but transformed some of the previous ones, for example:

- **"Advanced Customer Service in Hospitality: Theoretical Foundations and Best Practices"** — An instructor presents and describes some principles of excellent customer service in the hospitality sector (like communication strategies, examples of difficult situations and responses to them, and case studies). Participants are encouraged to brainstorm on the whiteboard and discuss their ideas of the principles that should be added to the primary list deeply.
- **"The Essentials of Modern Culinary Arts"** — Immersion into selected contemporary culinary techniques and trends through the instructor's presentation, case studies, exemplary videos, and photos that provide comprehensive knowledge on selected case studies, encouraging an experience exchange and discussion among participants on staying current.
- **"Implementing Sustainable Tourism Strategies"** — A session aimed at educating participants on the theoretical aspects of sustainable tourism (covering environmental, economic, and socio-cultural layers) by an instructor and developing best practices regarding the tourism industry.
- **"Digital Marketing Mastery for Hospitality Businesses"** — Participants analyze various tourism companies' social media strategies and learn the fundamentals and advanced concepts of digital marketing.
- **"Virtual Tourism Product Development"** — This training deepens the process of designing and developing unique tourism products by discussing technological possibilities, market analysis, product lifecycle management, and prototyping during workshop-based exercises.

Videoconferencing apps

First, an instructor and participants must access the same video-conferencing app, like Zoom, MS Teams, or Google Meet. In the case of synchronous e-learning, this type of tool fulfills the role of the fundamental communication channel.

We recommend standardizing one tool for organizations and institutions with multiple instructors. After all, changing the application for each teacher or trainer is problematic for participants. Moreover, it can cause additional difficulties and, more importantly, waste valuable meeting time.

Below, you can find more detailed descriptions of the tools we recommend.

Zoom

Website: zoom.us

Key Features:

- Webinar, workshop, and training hosting capabilities.
- User-friendly interface, easy to use even for beginners.
- It is a responsive tool that adapts to various screens automatically. There is also an app for mobile devices.
- High-definition video and audio communication for one-on-one and group meetings.
- A free plan allows running a meeting for up to 40 minutes, with a maximum number of participants of 100.
- In payable versions, depending on the plan you choose, Zoom meetings can handle an even more significant number of participants: 100-1000 people, with a single call time of up to 30 hours.
- All plans enable an unlimited number of meetings.

- A simple chat option during the call is available. With the possibility to save the chat in text format, an instructor can keep the ideas generated by the students for later.
- Lastly, Zoom implemented a new team chat option that allows communication between an instructor and participants added to this chat before and after meetings. Consequently, only people inside the team chat can text and share files. For outsiders, it is not possible. This feature can be used for repetitive meetings within the same group.
- Video and audio features for participants are on the instructor's demand. Turning these options on or off allows you to tailor the meeting to be more or less interactive.
- In each plan, participants can provide answers to questions, give feedback, or visualize their attitude and mood with emoji reactions.
- Paid plans offer a native option of adding pre-designed polls and quizzes to the meeting.
- Breakout rooms are sub-meetings with separate communication channels for participants assigned to a given room. This option allows participants to accomplish a given task within smaller groups.
- The screen-sharing option enables the presentation of the desktop, documents, slides, and other visual materials during meetings. This option can be used not only by the presenter but also by participants, e.g., during the presentation of projects, homework, or conclusions from an exercise completed in breakout rooms. The instructor can stay in the main room and wait for the participants to complete the tasks independently or join selected sub-meetings to ensure the accomplishment progresses successfully.
- Each meeting may be recorded for later reference.
- Zoom app can be integrated with various third-party apps that may be useful in VET development.

Microsoft Teams (MS Teams)

Website: microsoft.com/en/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software

Key Features:

- Webinar, workshop, and training hosting capabilities.
- Extensive security and compliance features.
- It is the most comprehensive and well-known platform for e-learning, offering chat, video meetings, file sharing, collaboration tools, and spaces as a standard.
- The user interface is more complicated than Zoom's but has become more accessible to learn, thanks to recent improvements.
- It adapts to various screens automatically. There is also an app for mobile devices.
- Microsoft offers one's own space in the cloud, enabling access to other apps and possible integrations with third-party tools.
- The free plan allows you to make a maximum of 60-minute calls with up to 100 people.
- Paid plans increase the maximum time to 30 hours, and people number even to 300 people.
- All paid plans provide Microsoft Office 365 suite access, including premium Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Thanks to that, the instructor and participants can work on the same document before, during, or after the meeting. It is helpful in brainstorming and preparing a plan or project within smaller groups.
- It allows the creation of communication channels for given instructors and participants, which can be implemented in case of one class, subject, or learning program. People outside the channel don't have access to its content.
- The screen-sharing option enables the presentation of the desktop, documents, slides, and other visual materials during meetings. This option can be used not only by the presenter but also by participants, e.g., during the presentation of projects, homework, or conclusions from an exercise completed in breakout rooms. The instructor can stay in the main room and wait for the participants to

complete the tasks independently or join selected sub-meetings to ensure the accomplishment progresses successfully.

- In each plan, participants can provide answers to questions, give feedback, or visualize their attitude and mood with emoji reactions.
- All paid plans feature real-time voice-to-text transcription in multiple languages, visible as captions during the call. This feature makes meetings more accessible to, among others, people who are deaf or have limited hearing.

Google Meet

Website: meet.google.com

Key Features:

- Webinar, workshop, and training hosting capabilities.
- Extensive security and compliance features.
- It is a responsive tool that adapts to various screens automatically. There is also an app for mobile devices.
- In each plan, participants can provide answers to questions, give feedback, or visualize their attitude and mood with emoji reactions.
- Google offers one's own space in the cloud called Google Workspace (formerly G Suite), enabling access to other apps and possible integrations with third-party tools.
- The screen-sharing option enables the presentation of the desktop, documents, slides, and other visual materials during meetings. This option can be used not only by the presenter but also by participants, e.g., during the presentation of projects, homework, or conclusions from an exercise completed in breakout rooms. The instructor can stay in the main room and wait for the participants to complete the tasks independently or join selected sub-meetings to ensure the accomplishment progresses successfully.

→ The feature of real-time captioning during meetings is available in multiple languages, making meetings more accessible to, among others, people who are deaf or have limited hearing.

Instant communication apps

Below are descriptions of Slack and Discord tools, highlighting their key features and applications in an educational context.

Slack

Website: slack.com

Key Features:

- Provides channels for team communication, which can be organized by project, department, or any other criteria.
- Offers direct and group messaging features.
- Supports video and voice calls.
- Keeps all communications, files, and information in one place, easily searchable and accessible.
- Allows file sharing and integration with various third-party apps and services.
- It can be used for quick communication within a more extended series of webinars, workshops, or training sessions.

Discord

Website: discord.com

Key Features:

- Primarily designed for creating communities (mostly among gamers), offering voice, video, and text communication.

- Allows the creation of servers with various channels for different topics or purposes.
- Offers features for live streaming, screen sharing, and more. Gamers use these features to perform real-time multiplayer games together.
- Provides robust moderation tools for managing communities.
- It can be used for quick communication within a more extended series of webinars, workshops, or training sessions.
- An instructor can also suggest that participants establish a channel on Discord for communication between them only, without a teacher or trainer.

Survey, poll, and quiz apps

Various applications and online tools available on the national and international markets allow you to conduct surveys, polls, and quizzes. However, not all of them are suitable for implementation during real-time online meetings. Therefore, we have selected those appropriate for synchronous e-learning below.

Kahoot!

Website: kahoot.com

Key Features:

- Kahoot! is a game-based learning platform.
- There is a [plan for schools](#), both for teachers and admins.
- It allows the creation of fun learning games (known as Kahoots) in minutes.
- It offers an extensive library of pre-made quizzes and games that instructors may use with or without changes.
- It supports real-time competition, where the instructor shares the screen with questions and possible answers, and participants can choose the option they want from the level of their devices (laptop, smartphone, or tablet).
- Each answer has a different color (red, blue, yellow, or green) and accompanying shape (round, squared, triangle, or deltoid).
- The essential thing is participants can't see the question or text of the answers on their devices. To answer
- After the activity is done, Kahoot! provides detailed reports analyzing learners' performance.
- It supports engaging learners through interactive and competitive quizzes.
- Enhances learning retention by promoting active participation.
- Facilitates assessment of learners' understanding and knowledge.

- It can be used for creating quizzes and assessments to engage students and evaluate their learning progress.
- It helps reinforce knowledge and concepts through interactive gaming.

Poll Everywhere

Website: polleverywhere.com

Key Features:

- Enables the creation of interactive activities like polls, competitions, and surveys.
- As in Kahoot, participants answer by using their phones or computers.
- Allows integration into presentation software for displaying real-time results after each slide and at the end.
- Offers various visualization options for displaying results.
- Enhances learning and discussion in various settings.
- The app is used in classrooms, meetings, events, and conferences to make interactive presentations and gather immediate feedback.
- Assists in understanding audience perspectives, making decisions, and creating engaging discussions.

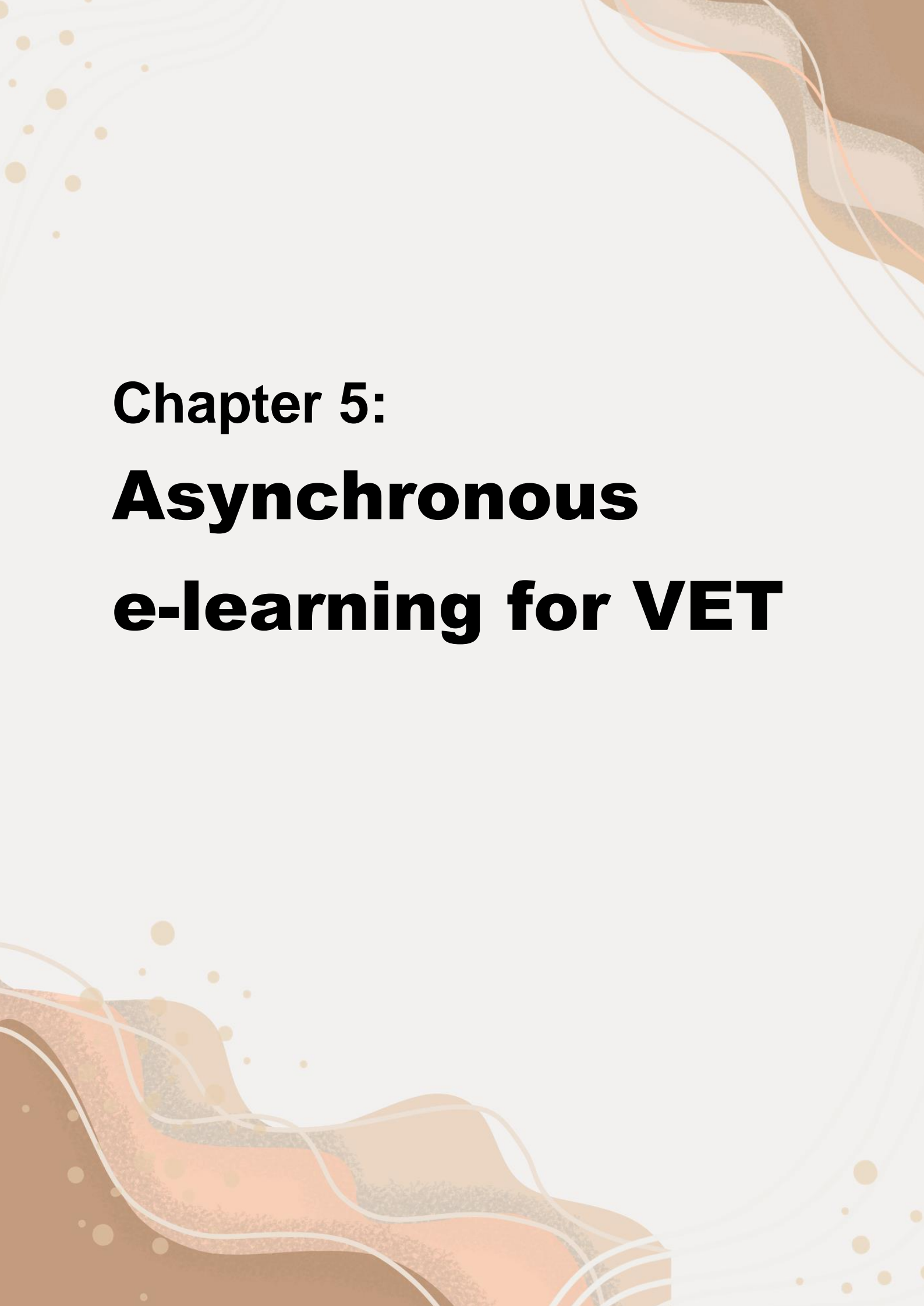
Mentimeter

Website: mentimeter.com

Key Features:

- Mentimeter combines a simple presentation with a quiz/ survey tool.
- It allows the creation of interactive presentations with real-time feedback.

- It offers various question types, including polls, word clouds, quizzes, and open-ended questions. You may see it helpful for decision-making, brainstorming, and assessing activities.
- Thanks to the combination mentioned above, instructors can share substantive content, activity instructions, and results within one presentation without changing the app.
- Like in Kahoot!, here instructors also share the screen with questions, surveys, or polls, and participants need to type or choose an answer from the level of their devices (laptop, smartphone, or tablet).
- To join the activity, participants must get the unique code to the presentation generated by an instructor before or during a meeting with an audience. Then, the code should be inserted on the website [menti.com](https://www.menti.com).
- Mentimeter supports interactive lectures and discussions where real-time audience feedback is desired.
- It's good to know that the tool is simple both visually and functionally, so even beginners are able to use it.
- It's another tool commonly used in business, education, conferences, and other events to engage the audience and gather real-time feedback. So, it's worth including a gradual exploration of the app's capabilities in the course scenario so that participants can achieve proficiency in using it and incorporate a new skill on their resumes and LinkedIn profiles.



Chapter 5:
Asynchronous
e-learning for VET

Learning Management Systems (LMS)

In asynchronous e-learning, the basis is the platform where you will post materials for participants. You can use MS Teams, mentioned in the previous chapter, for this by creating a channel dedicated to a particular subject or course and its "Files" section, uploading all presentations, videos, and graphic visualizations of issues (infographics).

However, it is worth knowing that some platforms specifically serve this purpose and thus have more options to support teaching. These are the so-called LMSes or Learning Management Systems. Below, we present a selection of them.

Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment)

Website: moodle.org

Key Features:

- Moodle is an open-source learning platform designed to provide instructors, admins, and participants with a single robust, secure, and integrated system to create personalized e-learning. The term “open-source” refers to software’s source code made available to the public, allowing anyone to view, modify, and distribute it for free.
- Moodle suits for various educational contexts. It is used for e-learning, b-learning, and hybrid learning in schools, universities, workplaces, and other sectors. In Poland, most universities utilize it as a main remote learning space, usually in combination with MS Teams as a communication tool, allowing meetings to be performed in real time.
- Its huge advantage is the customization of the e-learning flow and visual appearance. Admins can modify the main site, colors, and visuals like photos and graphics. They can also add an organization's or institution’s logo, creating a one-of-a-kind platform. Finally, they can place the modified platform on a

personalized domain and hosting, thus establishing a web address matching the organization's or institution's name.

- As it is an open-source tool, you, as an admin or instructor, became a part of the large, international community. This way, you can count on the support of real people rather than bots responding automatically.
- It offers typical education and development tools, like quizzes, homework, grading, and assessment.
- Moreover, it provides an extensive database of plugins to enhance the platform.
- The application may not seem up-to-date enough, both in its structure and in the capabilities it offers. However, it is pretty simple to use.

Blackboard

Website: blackboard.com

Key Features:

- Like Moodle, Blackboard offers instructors, admins, and participants a virtual environment.
- It's a comprehensive and robust system for e-learning, m-learning, b-learning, and hybrid learning.
- Blackboard is used mainly in higher education and professional development.
- The version called [Career Development](#) is the best for VET support. An instructor can smoothly guide participants from virtual spots to real-life careers, giving them knowledge about the labor market, supporting skills development, and in-demand career insights (e.g., job announcements).
- It has traditional learning features such as a virtual classroom, tracking performance, and mobile engagement.
- It provides multiple tools for course development, distribution, and management.
- Also, it supports the integration of various third-party tools and apps.

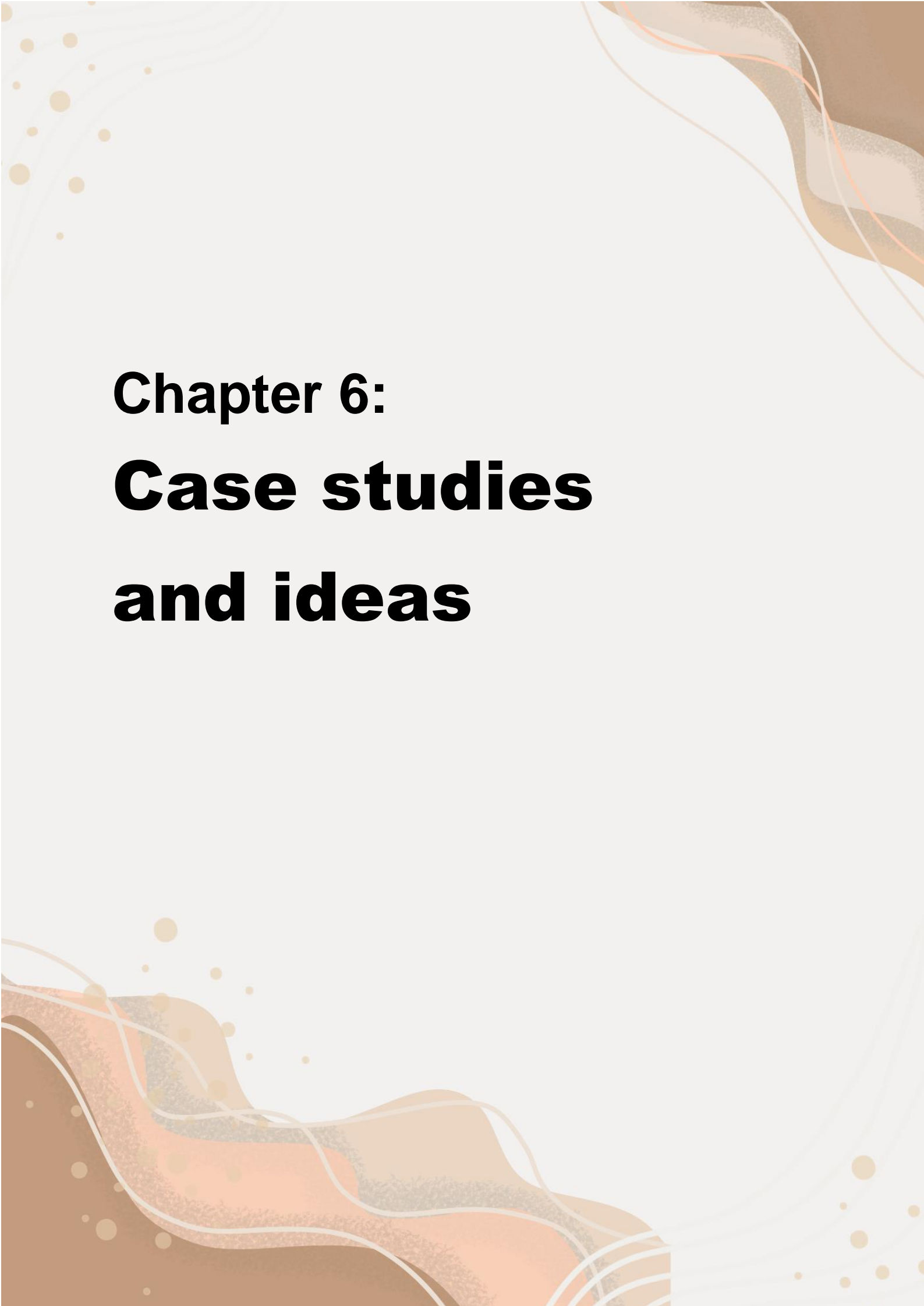
- The application's structure, user interface, and capabilities may seem more outdated than Moodle's. Admin and instructor need to spend more time improving the clarity of the e-learning content.

Canvas by Instructure

Website: instructure.com/canvas

Key Features:

- It's another open-source LMS that is good for e-learning, m-learning, b-learning, and hybrid learning.
- It's used by K-12 schools (i.e., the primary and secondary educational institutions supported by public funds lasting 12 years in total), higher education institutions, and businesses for delivering comprehensive and engaging online courses.
- Provides robust features for course creation, management, and participants' engagement.
- Unlike Moodle and Blackboard, it provides a user-friendly, more modern interface and mobile-compatible design.
- The Canvas mobile app suite supports m-learning.
- The Free-for-Teacher account enables content creation, such as assignments, quizzes, discussions, video conferences, and standards-based grade books.
- The app allows integration with a wide variety of educational tools and apps.



Chapter 6: **Case studies** **and ideas**

Chapter foreword

Methods and tools presented in previous chapters enable conducting more or less practical sessions. Thanks to them, an instructor can run meetings on culinary skills, hospitality management, or customer service. Below, we present specific examples and case studies.

Selection of the case studies gathered during interviews

Discussion Forum Using MS Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet

Case study: A discussion forum as a communication form has been well-known since the beginning of the Internet popularization era. Usually, it was a dedicated online space on some website or platform where individuals could post questions, share insights, and respond to comments in a structured conversational format. Today, instructors don't need additional tools to launch a discussion forum, as MS Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet enable that as an option. By employing the tools and options mentioned above, instructors are able to create and moderate virtual discussion forums during e-learning or b-learning in both synchronous and asynchronous activities, promoting community interactions, knowledge exchange, and collaborative problem-solving.

Instructions recommended by one interviewer:

1. Choose your videoconferencing platform.
2. Decide on where you want to create a space for discussion. Consider the following aspects:
 - a. whether the discussion forum as a tool is to be used once or repeatedly in the education of a particular group of participants
 - b. whether the discussion is to take place in a real-time moderated meeting with the instructor or to be a free space for posting a comment at any time.
3. The chat option may be sufficient for a one-time online meeting.
4. If it is a real-time part of a long curriculum during which you meet with the same group several times, then:
 - a. **MS Teams** — create a new team for the given group of participants, add people, and use the team's main channel as a space for the discussion

forum. Alternatively, work on a shared Word file you create by clicking on the channel's files.

- b. **Zoom** — there is a recent option for channel creation that is almost identical to those in MS Teams. However, a frequently used feature is saving chat content from a meeting in text format. So, when a discussion runs on a live call and should be continued or analyzed afterward, it is worth marking automatic saving in the settings.
 - c. **Google Meet** — we suggest creating a file (Google Doc) on the instructor's Google Drive and then sharing it with a link posted in the chat during the online meeting.
5. In the next step, choose the subject of the discussion, for example:
 - a. *"How can we best adapt to digital changes in hospitality? Tech at the front desk"*
 - b. *"Exploring global cuisine: What fresh flavors should we incorporate into our catering abilities?"*
 - c. *"How can we create eco-friendly travel experiences that support environmental responsibility?"*
 - d. *"Virtual vs. physical: What should we know about catering for digital events?"*
 - e. *"Post-pandemic guest relations: How can we meet and exceed new expectations in hospitality?"*
 - f. *"How can we Incorporate VR technology in culinary arts training?"*
 6. In the case of real-time form, schedule a meeting session using the chosen platform. Share the meeting link and planned discussion subject with participants in advance.
 7. In the asynchronous form, share the instructions and link to the space where the activity should be done with participants.
 8. In the case of real-time form, start the session at the given time.
 9. In the asynchronous form, remember to establish the beginning and deadline dates for participants to post on the discussion forum.
 10. Ensure everyone understands where to run a conversation.
 11. Encourage active participation and moderate the discussion.
 12. Optional for the synchronous form: use the platform's features, such as breakout rooms, for smaller group discussions.

13. Use the results of the discussion in subsequent activities.

Handouts from Canva

Case study: An instructor was preparing a class on organizing and planning tourism events. For this purpose, he created worksheets (handouts) and a list of good practices in Canva. He made all materials available to his students in advance so they could be ready to work on them during the real-time meeting. This class was recorded, and the video file was spread among participants so they could return and refresh the topic anytime.

Instructions (see Figures 8 and 9):

1. Prepare necessary files in Canva.
2. On the project page, change the file-sharing settings. Next to the menu “Any person who has a link,” choose a proper option, for example, “Can display” (if you want to provide a file for display only) or “Can edit” (if you and your participants want to work together on a file).
3. Then click the “Copy link” button and share it with the students.
4. For the option “Can display,” participants don’t need Canva accounts. So, once they open the link from you, they can download the document by clicking "File" and then "Download."

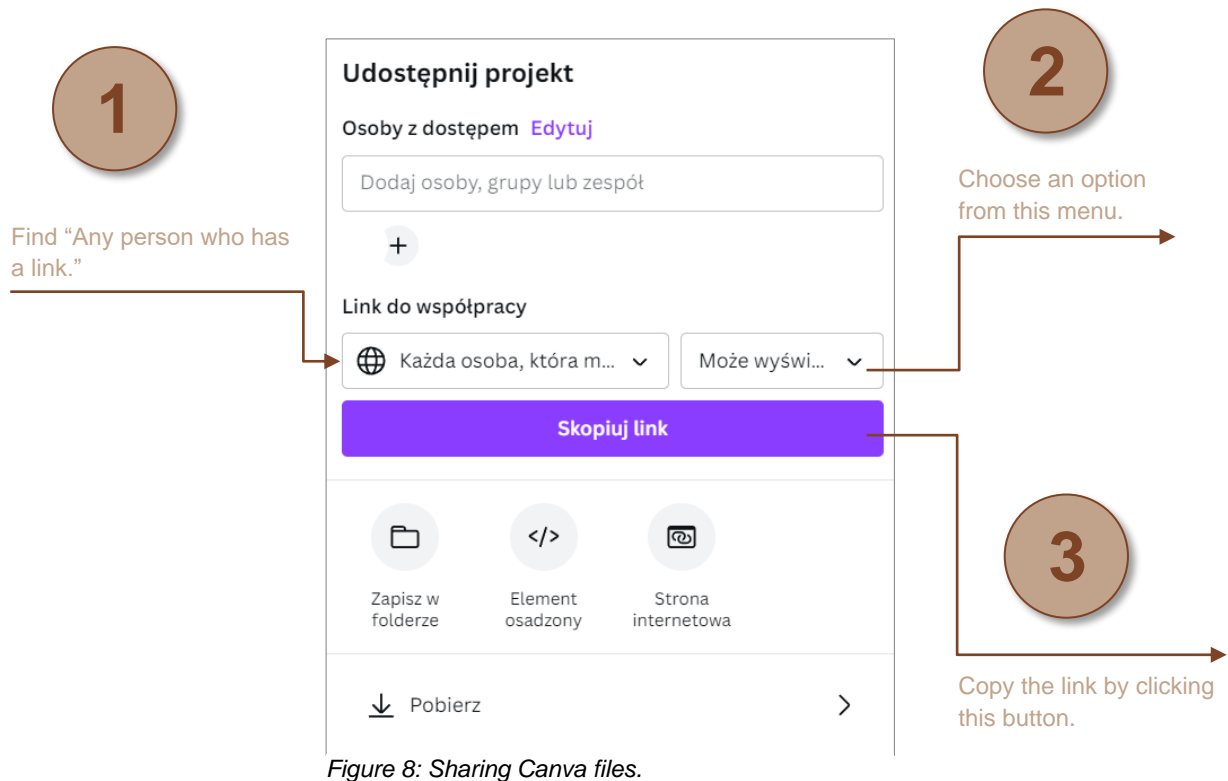


Figure 8: Sharing Canva files.

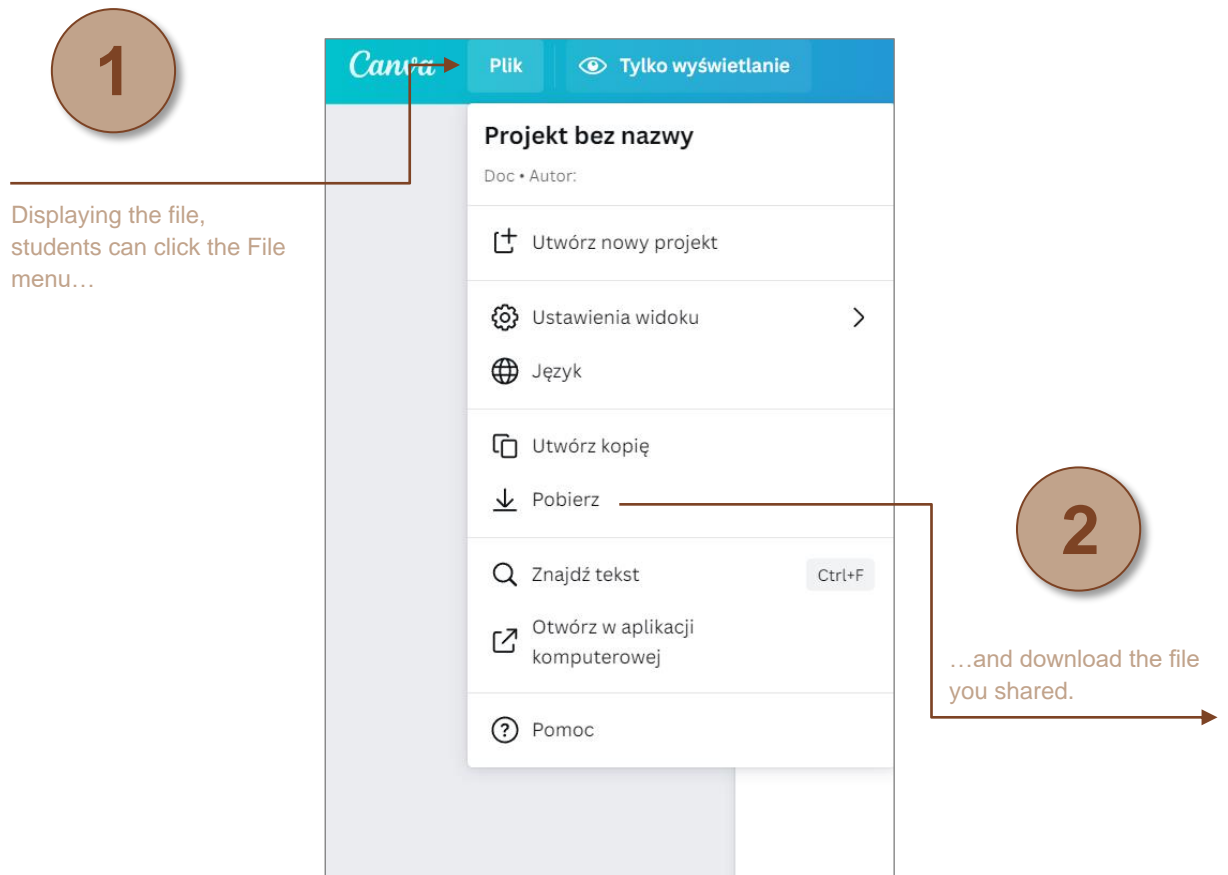


Figure 9: Downloading Canva files sent as documents to display only.

Lessons learned:

- Only some students can access a printer, so they shouldn't be required to print out worksheets or other materials. Providing an editable document or whiteboard to work on remotely is the best idea then.
- While sharing pdf files, remember that participants may have no access to readers for such files (e.g., Adobe Acrobat). Make sure that each student will be able to open and work on the document.
- Creating A4 files in Canva, you can share the document directly from the tool. However, you must be sure that all participants have already opened Canva accounts because working on the documents you provide is only possible with that. Moreover, support participants with instructions on how to navigate the app to complete the task.

Practical cooking classes run online

Case study: Due to the pandemic, remote teaching was launched in many countries, which made vocational training and class organization more difficult. In one of those we visited, it was necessary to conduct online cooking classes. To make it possible, students had to get all the essential ingredients. So, the school organized a distributing truck.

Thus, classes could begin. All were connected online via the MS Teams platform. The teacher demonstrated step-by-step what to do with video streaming. Watching that, students could repeat the actions, cook in their own kitchens, and present their final meals.

Lessons learned:

- Introducing this type of scenario required students to show their home environment. That may appear challenging due to the family and social conditions. For example, one of the abovementioned school's student's father was regularly drunk and lay on the floor or couch behind the student's back, being visible in the background to others. The student couldn't change a room

due to the need to cook. So, to ensure his and the other participants' comfort and safety, the teacher suggested using the MS Teams video feature that blurs the background. Moreover, he implemented a rule that limits the obligation of camera usage only to crucial moments of the class (like showing results).

- The school can't demand that the students have all the vital ingredients and equipment at home. Conversely, it must provide students with at least the basic things, just as it does in a classroom setting.

Discussions with whiteboards

Case study: At one school we visited, the teacher wanted to run a class on environmental awareness and sustainable tourism. The topic is timely and stirs up many emotions, so it had to let the instructor open up a discussion, find out the participants' opinions, and teach them how to discuss controversial topics.

Due to the online nature of the class, the teacher prepared a space to work on an online whiteboard. As the school has already incorporated the Canva app in its curricula, the best option was to use the same tool for online discussion. Fortunately, Canva recently implemented the option to create a whiteboard.

Lessons learned:

- To use Canva whiteboards, the instructor and students need to create an account in the app before the class. In the above case, the school had already taken care of this, so that makes the discussion easier to begin. If your situation is different, you inform participants about steps to prepare themselves for the topic.
- Please remember that users can sign up for Canva in 3 ways (see Figure 10):
 - Traditionally, creating a login and password.
 - Using a Gmail address, provided the email isn't used for official purposes and there is no sensitive data in the mailbox. It's also a good idea to encourage participants to set up a single Gmail account, which will just be used to log in to various applications.

- Using a Facebook account, which we don't recommend for safety reasons.
- Instructors should always give accurate instructions on using given tools in the lesson context. Students must know how to log in and navigate a particular application. Ensure that everyone has access to the link before class. Providing the required information increases safety and helps build trust within the group.
- To make the work on a shared board easier, lock the items that won't be edited. Otherwise, someone can accidentally move or delete a vital text element or graphic.

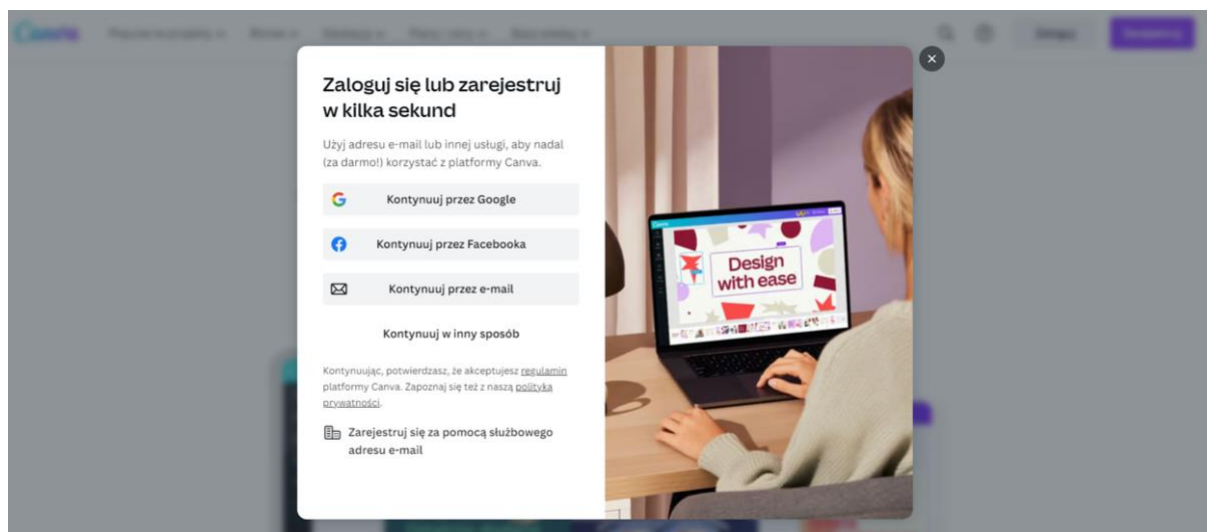


Figure 10: Signing up for Canva.

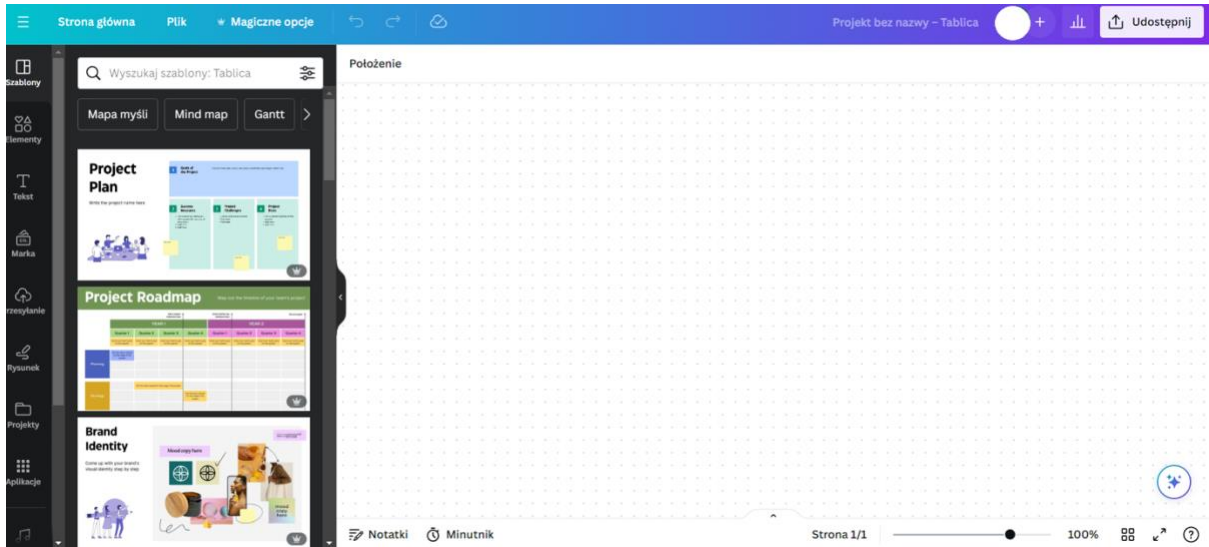


Figure 11: The view of the Canva whiteboard project.

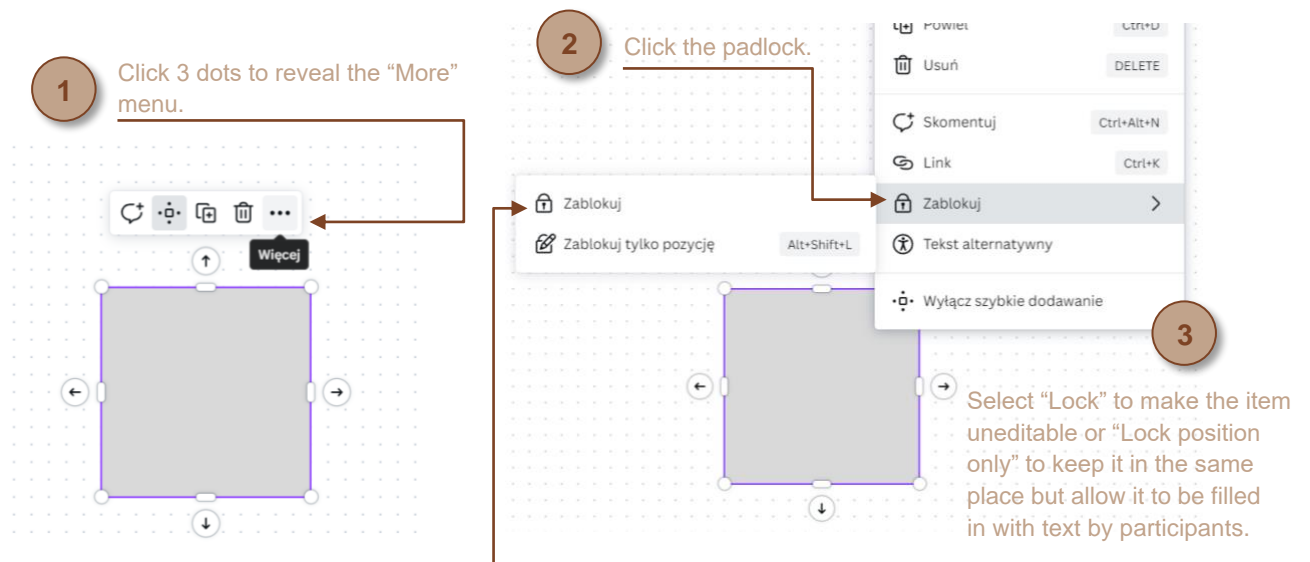


Figure 12: Locking selected items on the Canva board.

Definition: Programmed methods allow the consolidation of knowledge by successive repetitions and individual work. In VET e-learning, multiple situations include simulations and interactive exercises, such as the previously mentioned cooking lessons.

However, one of the most attractive examples of program methods is the application of gamification. Gamification relies on the adoption of mechanisms known from games in other contexts to increase recipients' engagement¹⁶, like in marketing (loyalty programs, time-limited promotions), HR (encouraging current employees of a given company to recommend a new candidate and rewarding for the fact that this candidate signs a contract) and, of course, education. The global gamification pioneer is Taiwanese-American entrepreneur Yu-kai Chou, inventor of the Octalysis framework, which structures the sources of human motivation and reveals how to build various activities on them¹⁷.

Case study: Visiting tourism industry companies and vocational schools, we were pleased to discover that several applied at least 1 gamification element in their educational scenarios. In one of these institutions, the teacher used Kahoot! app to repeat and reinforce students' knowledge. Before the lesson, the teacher prepared a series of multiple-choice questions (4 responses described with application-specific 4 various shapes and colors) on crucial topics from the previous meeting. Once the lesson began, students individually logged into Kahoot! game and answer the questions in real time, using their mobile devices. The competition and immediate feedback after each question motivate students to stay focused and actively participate in the review. After the quiz, the teacher downloaded a file with the results of the entire class from Kahoot! and then discussed and clarified the most common mistakes.

Lessons learned:

¹⁶ Waşık, *How Gamification Can Increase Motivation in Language Learning*.

¹⁷ Chou, *The Octalysis Framework for Gamification & Behavioral Design*.

- To avoid discouraging participants from partaking in the repetition, develop questions at different difficulty levels. Set questions to be displayed in such an order that difficult ones are interspersed with easy ones. In this way, you'll avoid a situation in which vulnerable attendees and those absent at the previous meeting will also have a chance to score at least a few points. Remember that gamification is about increasing people's involvement, regardless of their level of knowledge.
- Take care of a safe atmosphere. Avoid pointing out participants' individual mistakes in public and making them feel discouraged. Instead, focus on collective data. If any person's score needs to be addressed, arrange a one-on-one conversation.
- After the quiz, encourage participants to discuss which issues were assessed as problematic, challenging, or tricky and why. Collected insights will give you, as an instructor, a chance to analyze and improve your teaching methods.
- Use Kahoot! not only for repetitions but also to diagnose gaps in participants' knowledge and understanding.

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Index of apps and websites

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Blackboard's Career Development: anthology.com/products/lifecycle-engagement/career-development

Canva: canva.com

Canva Learn: canva.com/learn

Canva Design School: canva.com/designschool

Canvas by Instructure: instructure.com/canvas

Coursera: coursera.org

Discord: discord.com

Domestika: domestika.org

Dropbox: dropbox.com

Gmail: mail.google.com

Google Drive: drive.google.com

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Google Meet: meet.google.com

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