Individual method

Generating ideas for promoting students' digital competence

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1. Aims

The aim of this activity is to engage the whole teacher community to generate and share ideas about advancing students' digital competence in teaching according to a defined digital strategy. The method is suitable to be used in phases *5. Acquiring new perspectives* and *6. Collaborative development actions* of the school mentoring process.

2. Description

The method is a short (e.g., from 1.5 to 2 hours) but effective workshop where teachers, first, generate individually one or two pedagogical ideas or scenarios about how to advance students' digital competence in their own teaching and, second, introduce and discuss ideas in small groups. Teachers write the ideas in a shared online document (e.g. a PowerPoint presentation) also for further use. The duration is short so that it is easy to implement in schools' everyday practice, e.g. using the time of regular teacher meeting. The participants can be from one or from several schools.

3. Context

The method was used in a Finnish mentoring case where the aim was to increase collaboration between two elementary schools (Finnish and Swedish speaking) and to implement the city's Digi Path model in teaching practices to promote students' digital competence. About 30 teachers participated, and they worked in three groups (groups based on the grades 1-2, 3-4 and 5-6). The method can be used in various

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contexts: in individual schools, with several schools, in a teacher training program, etc. Also the number of participants is flexible, because the participants are divided in small groups.

4. Requirements for implementing and resources needed

Teachers' brainstorming for promoting students' digital competence can start openly without any framework, but it is more effective if it is supported by a shared model. In our case all teachers knew beforehand the city's "DigiPath" which defines digital competencies that students should acquire in different grade levels.

The idea is to share the pedagogical ideas between all participants and create them also for further use, which means that the mentors need to prepare digital spaces to enable that. In our case we created an online PowerPoint presentation for each group in Teams channels with a template in each slide for writing the individual ideas before sharing them.

5. Structure

The overall structure of the activity including a pre-task for the participants is the following:

A. A pre-task to choose two topics individually

 The process starts before a joint meeting by instructing all teachers to choose two themes from the digital competence strategy that they could implement in their own teaching (e.g. teaching to use the Internet as a knowledge source or to use tablets for creating videos for digi stories).

B. Generating and sharing ideas in teacher teams

 A joint session (1.5 hours) is organised either face-to-face or online to all teachers. The structure of the session is the following:

 1. A short introduction (program, goal, some pedagogical viewpoints, instructions).

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2. Division into teams of 4-6 participants (e.g. according to grades or subjects; in this case according to grades).

   a. First each participant writes their own ideas (10 minutes) in the team's online presentation, one idea / slide, empty slides with a template created in advance.

   b. Then all ideas are presented and discussed together, and based on the discussion the authors can revise their slides. One participant works as a chair in order to keep the timetable and organising the discussion.

3. Back to a joint meeting. Each team reports their team work results shortly. A short reflection in which participants show with hands how useful the group work was to get new ideas about implementing the method and much they had learned something new.

6. Actions after implementing the method

Teachers are encouraged to implement their ideas into practice after the meeting. A follow-up meeting can be organized after two-three months for updating the descriptions in slides and for sharing experiences. The slides can later be moved into a more permanent, shared repository of pedagogical ideas.
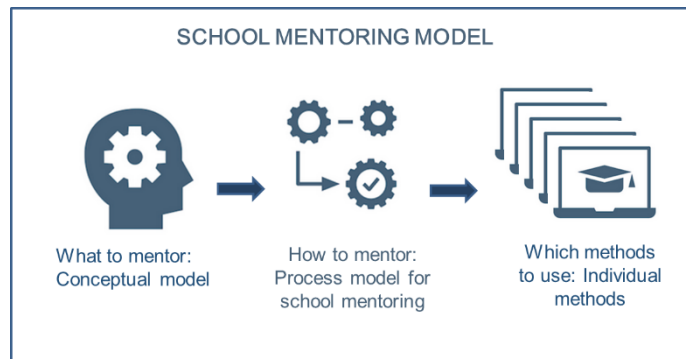
7. Recommendations

Reserve as much time as possible for the group work, avoiding lengthy lectures or explanations before that. It is relevant to have a joint reflection session at the end of the workshop for promoting the sense of community among the participating teachers and schools, but it can also be short, just a few minutes.

This material is part of the School mentoring model

The aim of the model is to foster the adoption of digital innovation at school level.

The focus is on teachers' understanding of digital technology and practices to implement technology in a pedagogically meaningful way.

SCHOOL MENTORING MODEL

What to mentor: Conceptual model

How to mentor: Process model for school mentoring

Which methods to use: Individual methods

The model promotes teachers' professional learning with peers and school management to create the culture and practices for evidence-informed implementation of digital innovation.

The model is created in the iHub4Schools project (2021-2023).

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