Continuing Professional Development in Vocational Education and Training

Organisation of the Spanish State

Inspiration for online teaching

COVET

In the COVET project, we have collected many great examples of teaching that have been transformed from the classic off-line version into a modern online learning method.

These sample lessons have been created by VET teachers from different EU countries. We present them to you as inspiration for your work.

The lessons are particularly suitable for vocational teachers, but can also serve as a training tool for teachers, trainers and lecturers in other educational settings.

All sample lessons, training materials as well as all information about the project are available at:
https://www.covet-project.eu/

© 2023 Continuing Professional Development in Vocational Education and Training

Organisation of the Spanish State

Offline version of the lesson

The aim of this lesson is for students to learn about the political and social context in which the current Spanish Constitution was adopted, so that they would be able to make a critical analysis of the current situation.

In addition, students study in depth the different types of institutions (legislative, executive and judiciary), i. e. what they consist of and how they are constituted.

In the first part of the lesson, we usually watch a one-hour video on the Spanish transition from dictatorship to democracy, which shows what Spanish society was like at the time.

In order to prepare the lesson 'Organisation of the Spanish State', I need to prepare the theoretical notes that will support my explanations, as well as a plan on how long it will take me to explain each part of the lesson.

It is highly recommended to hand out the notes after the explanation so that the students can take their own notes and answer the questions asked during the explanation without reading from the material provided by the teacher.

I find this last point very important as it forces the students to think of an answer and use their own resources rather than reading from a document.

The explanation of this lesson does not require any specific method or knowledge of digital tools, as it is a purely theoretical content with a blackboard and a marker to draw diagrams.

Online version of the lesson

In order to provide an online lesson for my students, I had to think about several things. I had to look for websites that could be useful for the students, as well as videos on YouTube. I also needed to find applications and websites that could support my explanations with visuals. I decided to prepare PDF notes on the theory and record myself explaining the lesson. I had to buy a digital blackboard to record myself. I had to learn how to use the digital blackboard and the computer screen capture and video editing software.

The most difficult thing is to keep students motivated to study a theoretical lesson, especially a legal lesson like this one, so I decided to use visual aids and not record my own explanations, as the visual aids and the pdf notes were enough to answer the exam questions.

I gave them PDF notes because I think it is better for the students to have the most important points written down. They are preparing for a theoretical exam, so they need such notes.

I also studied various online applications and programmes to prepare infographics and videos, as these will accompany the PDF notes in the general explanation. In this lesson they should learn how to calculate the number of political representatives a party will have in the Parliament, so I wanted to explain the process to them. Having found the appropriate applications and programmes, I had to learn how to use them to get the most out of them.

In the end, I chose Genial.ly, an interactive application helping me create interactive lessons and gamify activities that made it easier for students to understand visual and interactive content. With Genial.ly, students manage to remain focused thanks to visual content and participate through interactivity. It allows them to discover information on their own. I had to purchase the Premium Plan version enabling me to use more templates. And I also looked for videos on YouTube because there are a lot of options and really good videos on this topic that they can use to illustrate the theoretical concepts.

I had to learn to teach in a new and creative way and find ways to explain the subject without face-to-face communication. I also had to master the new applications.

Final result

The first online session introduces the topic of the lesson by asking what they know about the subject, if they know what a constitution is and, more specifically, if they know the context in which the Spanish Constitution was adopted.

Many of the current students are not Spanish, so this first approach to the subject is very interesting for them, as it enables them to learn why the society of the country in which they live behaves. Since we do not have enough time to watch the video on the transition (which I referred to at the beginning of this document) and there is no way of knowing if the students are paying attention, I would provide them with a YouTube link so that they could watch it also on their own. We discussed the way of transition from dictatorship to democracy in Spain and its profound impact on the rules laid down in the Constitution.

Then we go through the different areas of the subject one by one, explaining the most important parts. We also use explanatory YouTube videos which, if they are simple and less than 5 minutes long, we watch together and then comment on them.

Here are the links to the final online learning material for this lesson.

Pdf notes of the lesson.

The Constitution. This is an infographic that explains the concept and characteristics of the Spanish Constitution, its inspiring values and principles, who can request its reform and what are the powers of the state.

Aínda que o vídeo fala de Chile, podemos extrapolalo a España.

The separation of state powers. This is a dynamic presentation of genial.ly in which you can find the explanation of Montesquieu's power division theory.
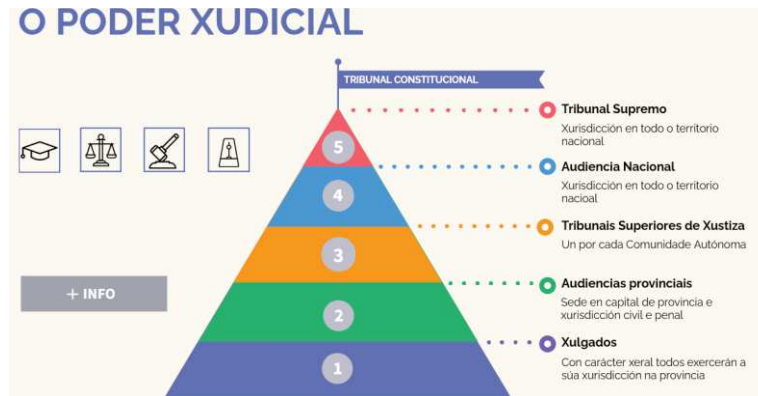
Constitutional reform. YouTube video on constitutional reform.

The legislature. Presentation in Genial.ly on the Cortes Generales (the Spanish Parliament) - the Congress and the Senate and the prerogatives of the parliamentarians.

The Spanish Parliament. YouTube video on constitutional reform.

Labor Courts. It is a dynamic presentation in Genial.ly where you can see the Spanish judicial pyramid and where it is explained how it works and which are each of the judicial levels.

Video YouTube video on constitutional reform.

The Constitutional Court YouTube video on Constitutional Court.

The Public Prosecutor's Office YouTube video on the Public Prosecutor's Office.

The Executive Power YouTube video on the Executive Power.

Government and Administration YouTube video on the Government an Administration.

How the president of the government is elected YouTube video on how the president of the Government is elected.

Censure motion YouTube video on the censure motion.

Then, the activities were uploaded to the school application (Moodle). Any work of the students was corrected online.

Review of Unit 1 - Breakout

An online exam. An online questionnaire (short or multiple questions) about the concepts they have studied.

Final feedback

The module in which this lesson is found is part of a Higher Cycle of Vocational Training, so when programming the course and modules we assume that the students have enrolled in this cycle because they are interested in learning the trade. Despite this, confinement has taught us that motivation for online learning must be accompanied by a good dose of extrinsic as well as intrinsic motivation.

Most of my students were able to complete this module without any problems, as it is sufficient to pay attention to the presentations, the provided YouTube videos and to carry out the practical exercises suggested, together with a proper reading of the notes in pdf.

However, a small part of the students disappeared, they did not connect to the online classes and did not carry out the suggested exercises.

What I mean by this is that in order for an online course to be satisfactory, in addition to having a motivated student, we should bear in mind that not all homes have a stable internet connection or modern computer equipment on which to play videos or process texts correctly.

With this in mind, it is important to use tools that can be used on portable devices such as mobile phones or tablets, so that all students have access to the material to complete the module.

We were instructed by the regional government to maintain a class schedule during the lockdown that simulated school attendance, so we had to be in constant contact with the students. Through these online lessons we could see if the students had difficulties in following the explanations or not. However, in some specific cases, they connected and it seemed that they were not following the lesson, as they did not answer any questions (direct or indirect) they were asked, neither through the microphone nor in the chat of the Google Meet application.

In addition, we could not force the students to turn on the camera to make sure that they were at least in front of the computer, which made it even more difficult to know how they felt and what difficulties they were having.

COVET

Erasmus+
Continuing Professional Development
in Vocational Education and Training

2020-1-CZ01-KA226-VET-094350

https://www.covet-project.eu/