



COVET

**Continuing Professional Development
in Vocational Education and Training**

Career counselling - Self-Awareness

Inspiration for online teaching



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/>

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Career Counselling – Self-Awareness

Offline version of the lesson

Goal:

The lesson will offer an opportunity to help students discover themselves, in order to be able later on to develop a proper good career plan and have solid career orientation and self-development.

Students will be able to:

- Identify one's own strengths and limitations.
- Strengthen self-identity and self-awareness to improve self-efficacy.
- Demonstrate the ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.

Opening the lesson with discussion-provoking questions, such as: How do you enjoy spending your free time? What are your passions? What would your best friend say you are particularly good at?

After registering some of the students' responses, the class can be splitted into teams (4-5 members) or it can remain as a whole group. It works both ways, depending on the number of students in the class.

Group exercise (team exercise): positive reflections about others

Students and teachers describe the positive qualities, personality traits, and character traits of one group member at a time, ensuring that all students have an opportunity to hear praise/descriptions. Students can create their own paper to record the traits and qualities that others observe about them.

At the end, each student will take extra 5 minutes to evaluate their list and write any additional traits they recognize in themselves.

Discussion: Unique Attributes

The idea that every individual has a unique set of positive, valued qualities and traits is reinforced. The individuality of each other is faced (lists are not identical, they may contain same traits but in different combinations) and assumed.

Exercise: Identifying Interests and Affinities

Students will think in groups or in teams about their own interests. Incentive questions:

What do you find exciting to do or learn about? What generally piques your interest? What do you excel in? (Do not hesitate to allow students to choose silly interests such as lip gloss or making nice painted nails). Make this an enjoyable exercise.

Discussion: Identifying Employable Skills

Discuss what makes a skill relevant to employment. Explain that in addition to positive traits and personal interests, students need to identify the skills they possess that an employer would be interested in. Have students record their employable skills; be prepared to prompt students with employable skills you notice about them.

Discussion: The Other Side

Time to consider the reverse. Have students consider areas of weakness—skills they might not have an affinity for, might be good at but don't enjoy, or personality traits that might make them unsuited to a given line of work. Describe an area of weakness of your own ("Math is not a strong subject for me.") and talk about how your awareness of this area of weakness helped you make good career decisions. Students will make notes on a separate sheet about their own area of weaknesses .

Review:

In the end, students will have 2 pieces of paper – one with interests and employable skills and the other with weaker areas.

I would like to emphasize the fact that this exercise is about building awareness so they can make informed decisions.

Shift to online version of the lesson

Things to be considered

Definitely the lesson could not be implemented in the online environment in the same way as face to face, because not having direct interaction and communication, the connection and cooperation between students would have been lost.

I had to figure out how to make students be involved in the activity, attract and maintain their attention and develop their own perspectives on self-awareness.

I also had to consider that discussing one's own personality may be sometimes difficult for teenagers and they need to feel secure, accepted and encouraged to do so. When online, a lot of direct interaction and non-verbal support is lost so the level of self-confidence of students may be lower than usual.

Reasons for the decision

Gamification was the right choice in transforming the lesson so that I could both develop the skills of the students and at the same time maintain their attention and involvement as well.

Materials:

- Interests, Values, Abilities – handout pdf
- Online Google form – my top 10 personal values
- Jamboard exercise – Who am I (positive reflections and unique attributes)
- Online game What would I be, if I were...., What would I do, if I were....?

Flow of the lesson:

Warming up – state of mind using Mentimeter (students answer individually and anonymously to a question. Software creates a word cloud with the answers, based on the relevance and frequency.

Warming up – Elevator speech (adapted)

You end-up in the elevator with Elon Musk. You know you can impress him in order to know you better and even work with you. You have a maximum of 30 seconds to do that.

All students participate, teacher included 😊

Jamboard exercise – Who am I (positive reflections and unique attributes)

Students will be assigned a page in a jamboard and going through every page, each student will complete with sticky notes some traits, attributes and qualities for their own page, making their own description (5 minutes).

Then, teacher shares screen with the jamboard and each student will visualize its own page, the other students will complete the traits and attributes with other sticky notes (they may be put in separate place of the page so that the students compare what they wrote with what others wrote).Teacher will read these notes and the key words for each student.

All students will receive appreciation from the others, in an interactive way.

In the end, students could take a printscreen of their jamboard page – that will be further used in the future lessons/

Online game What would I be, if I were...., What would I do, if I were....?

Students will be involved in this game, answering each question.

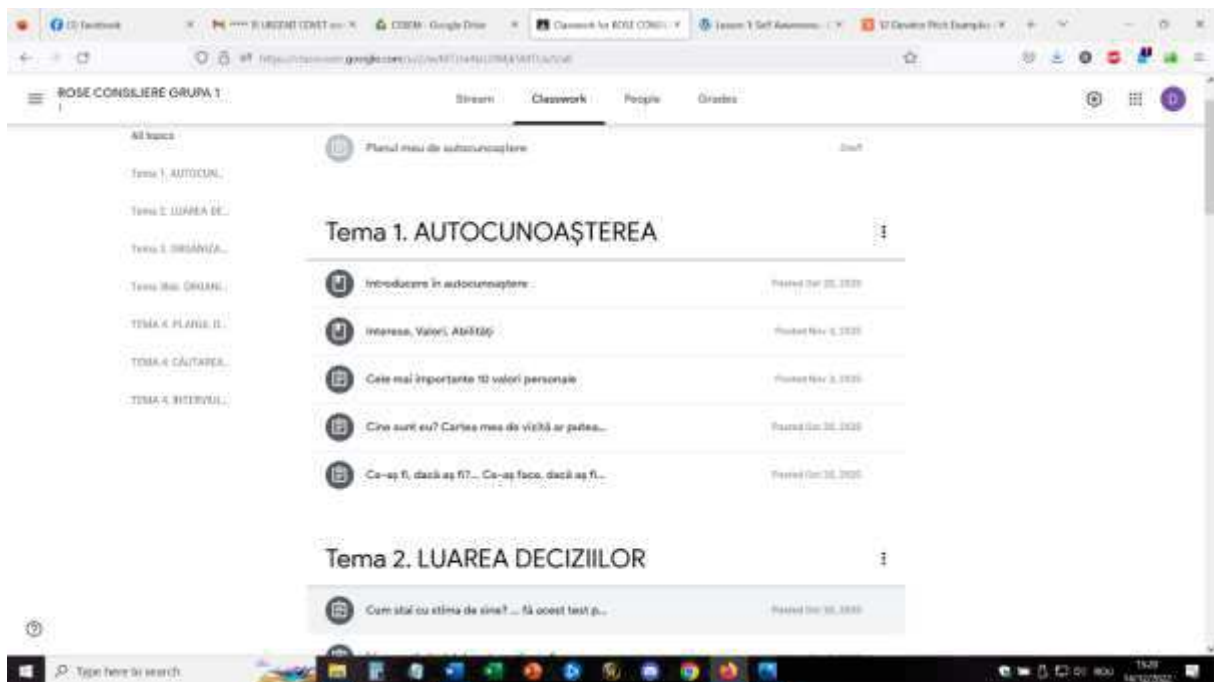
Variation – the game can be played also by using a shuffling software so that the students receive a different question and answer to it.

Homework – students will complete the Online Google form – my top 10 personal values that will be the incentive for the future online class on personal values (the flipped approach).

It was essential to have a safe online environment for students to participate in the online lessons. School decided to use the Google Suite for Education – Google Platform and dedicated accounts have been created for both teachers and students.

First, I had created my classes in the Google Classroom Platform. Students first had to roll-in into the class, using the code I provided for each one. Some of the students have been invited by the teacher directly to the class. The enrollment has been done prior to the beginning of the course, in September 2021.

Inside the class, in the Classwork section I created topics corresponding to the program and inside the Topics, I have uploaded all the materials necessary for each class, always 1 week in advance for the following class.



For the Self-awareness lesson, the materials uploaded included: Introduction to self-awareness – handout .pdf, Interests, Values, Abilities – handout pdf, Online Google form – my top 10 personal values, Jamboard exercise – Who am I (positive reflections and unique attributes), Online game What would I be, if I were..., What would I do, if I were...?, Online Google form – my top 10 personal values.

For the lesson, students will login in with the appropriate account and join the Google Meet environment.

Opening: how do you feel today? Write in each box a word describing the way you feel now

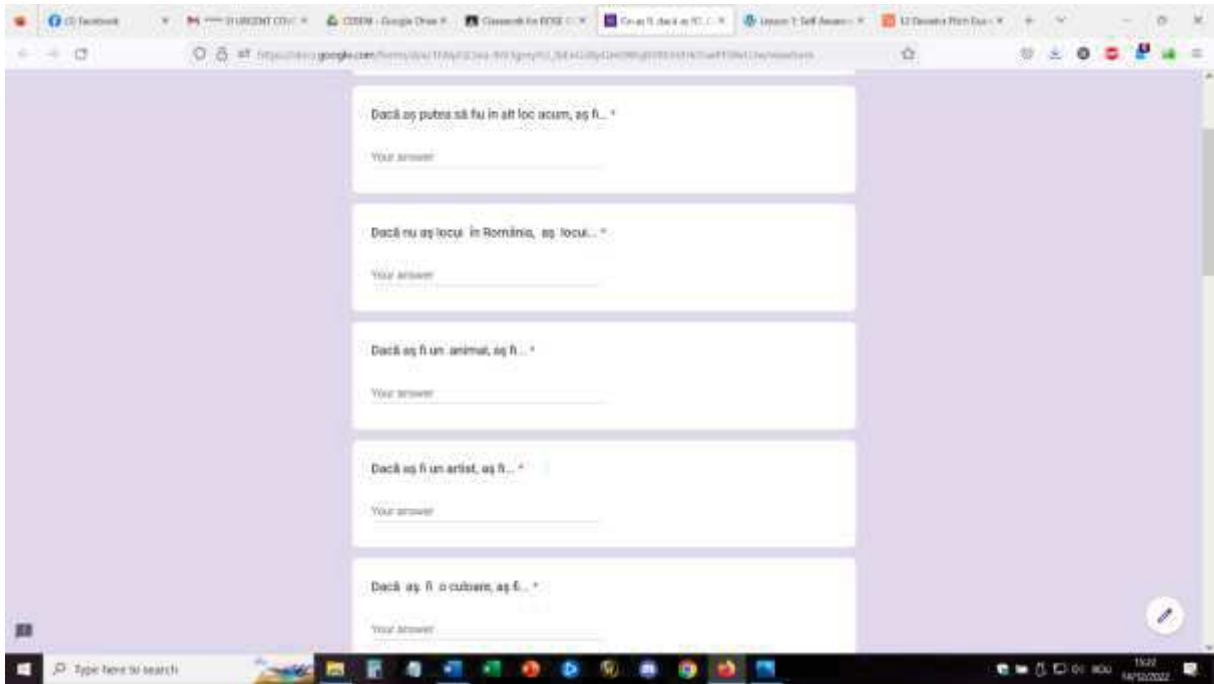
(Using Mentimeter software)

Most often written word was ... tired (not surprising, the class was at the end of the program, the 7th lesson in the day)

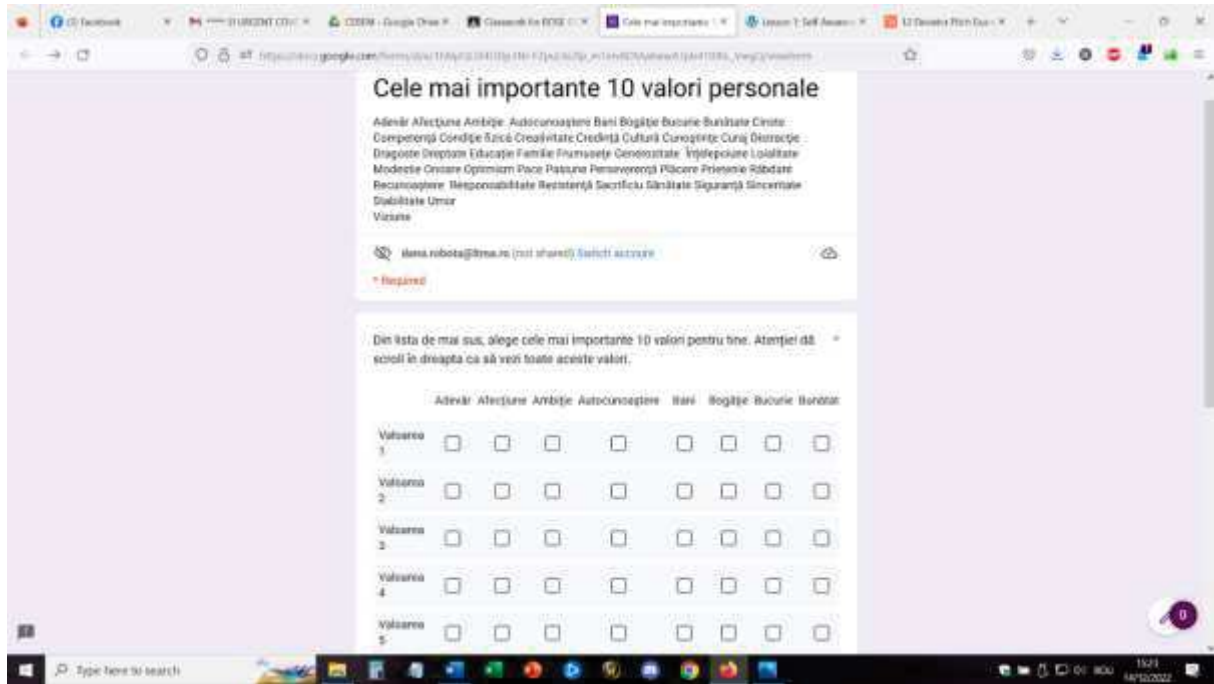
Online game *What would I be, if I were...., What would I do, if I were....?*

Students will involve in this game, answering to each question.

Variation – the game can be played also by using a shuffling software so that the students receive a different question and answer to it.



Homework – students will complete the Online Google form – my top 10 personal values that will be the incentive for the future online class on personal values (the flipped approach).



Feedback from the lesson

Good equipment and good internet connection are absolutely essential in order to implement such an online activity. Students need to have access to cameras and microphones too. These need to have enough quality in order to provide good image and sound and ease the communication.

It is easier to participate in this activity if using a laptop/PC than using a phone or a tablet.

For the teacher, I would consider it almost impossible to hold the lesson from a phone or tablet.

Students and teachers should get comfortable with this kind of setup. If the platform and the set up are used for the first time, it may take longer for the students to adjust to the activity and participate actively.

Participating requires a proper space (quiet room, silent environment) in order to facilitate direct communication between the participants. Also for the teacher, it is necessary to be in a good environment in order to implement the lesson.

Teachers and students need to speak slowly and clearly and have patience for the communication to happen, in turns. Online communication is slower than face-to-face communication and this is an issue that needs practice in order to adapt.

It was rather slow at the beginning but when repeating this type of lesson, it worked more than other types of lessons. But I think that the students, once they get used to online learning and participation, could more easily cope with the challenges and involve themselves actively in the lesson.



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