ONLINE COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS

This module aims to:

- Introduce online tools that allow students and teachers to collaborate and cooperate
- Demonstrate the specific potential of these tools
- Present the features of the tools so that the student can decide which ones will best support his or her stated learning objectives.

What digital skills does the module support for teachers?

- Communication; Continuing professional development
- Creating and editing digital resources
- Teaching; Student guidance; Student independent learning
- Feedback and planning
- Student activation
- Digital content creation

What areas of the digital competence of the students can I support with the knowledge I have gained in this module?

- Creating digital content - students create content in different formats, using different digital media

Introduction

The group of tools that support collaboration and cooperation includes applications that allow extended forms of synchronous and asynchronous communication in any direction between teacher and learners, and programmes that facilitate group work and the sharing of resources and knowledge in the context of learning teams. Encouraging communication and collaboration develops learners' independent activity, reflection on their own views or learning, and the ability to analyse different possible perspectives and viewpoints on a given issue. It can be argued that the use of these tools fulfils the principle of creating, sharing and reusing information, experiences and skills within a learning community. In this sense, some community team tools can serve several phases of learning, starting with the joint creation of learning materials, which are then used by other learners through the same technological means.

Online tools

Jamboard

URL: https://jamboard.google.com/
Jamboard is Google's online whiteboard. We can recommend it for use in the classroom not only to those who like to use Google's services a lot, but also to those who do not work with them regularly. The Jam (the name of the virtual notebook you create) can take the form of a multi-page document that can be used to take notes on the interpretation (using a keyboard or stylus if you are working with a touchscreen device), draw, "stick" virtual post-its, insert images, etc. It is a very intuitive tool that can completely replace the classroom whiteboard with all its functions. It is a slight exaggeration to say that the possibilities are limited only by your creativity and imagination. Your students can collaborate with you on the Jamboard - for example, they can insert post-its with their own ideas or create according to your instructions.

If you decide to enrich your lesson by working with Jamboar, it is good to know that:

- it can be run on a PC, tablet, laptop, smart phone
- a Google account is required
- the work in it is automatically saved, you can download the output in pdf or png format
- up to 40 users can work in it at the same time
- when sharing the jam with students, you need to make sure that the user rights are set appropriately - decide who can post to it and when (Editor) or just read the content (Reader). Of course, it is possible (and advisable) to change the settings as the work progresses.
- it looks like the Jamboard will end on October 1, 2024.
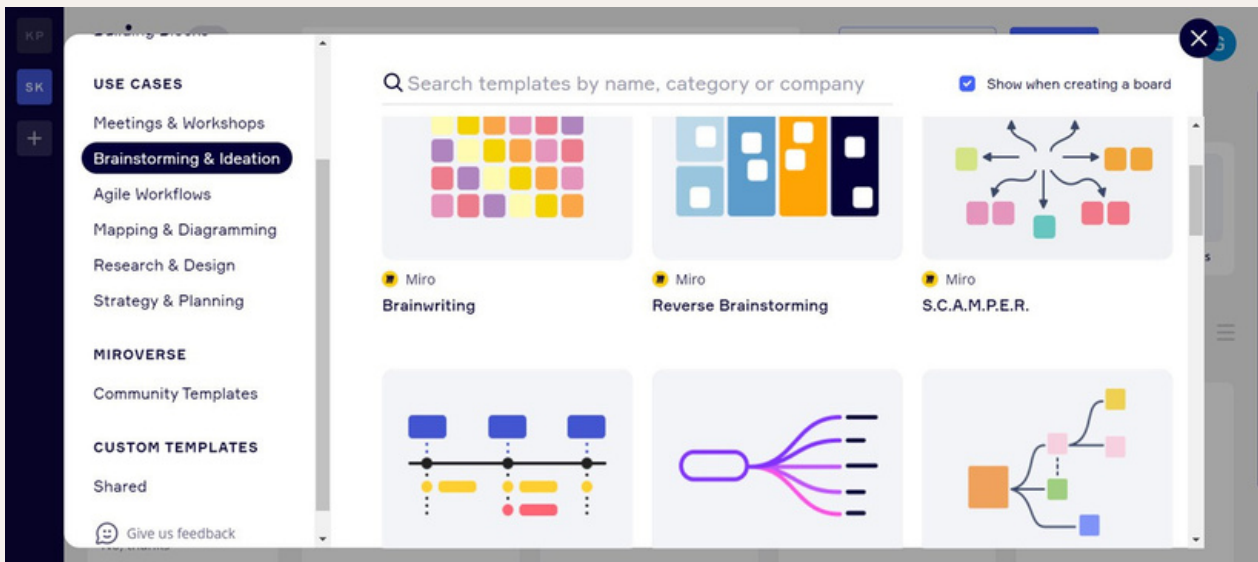

Sample of a French lesson in Jamboard
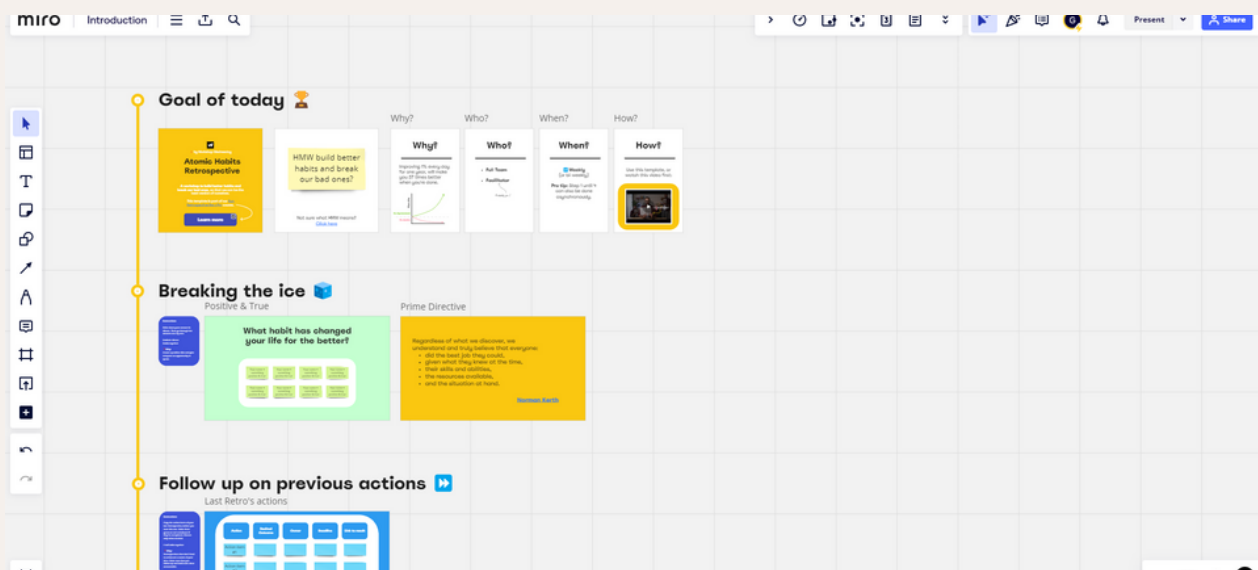
Miro

URL: https://miro.com/

It is another tool that serves as an infinite board in the online world. It is a paid tool and you need to be registered to use it. However, even the free (or edu) version has all the essential features that make Miro one of the most popular tools for conducting online meetings, workshops and training sessions. Its interface is in English, but it is so intuitive that you can work with it even if English is not your main language. If you decide to enrich your lessons by working with Miro, it is good to know:

- In the free basic version, you have 3 editing boards at your disposal. If you need more, you will have to upgrade to the paid or edu version.

- the tool itself has professional tutorials to guide you through the process.
- In Miro, you can easily take notes in class, as well as create complex diagrams or mind maps.
- If multiple users are working on the same board at the same time, everyone has a name tag next to their cursor so you know exactly where they are at any given time.
- You can use the timekeeper or the common chat.

Dozens of templates ready for your project in Miro

Miro working environment

Padlet

URL: https://cs.padlet.com/

Instead of a whiteboard, a padlet is the equivalent of a bulletin board on which you can pin virtually anything (a message, an assignment, a link to a website, a document, a picture, etc.) in any size group of students or teachers. This makes it ideal for planning, meetings, keeping track of assignments, sorting ideas. Typically, you work in Padlet by signing up as a teacher, creating a bulletin board, and sharing the link with your students. Students don't have to register anywhere, they just open the link and can and start posting right away.

Padlet is a favourite of many teachers. This is evidenced by the large number of Padlets that can inspire you to create your own.

If you decide to use Padlet to enhance your lessons, it's good to know:
- A wizard on the right side of the screen will guide you through the steps and allow you to set your privacy settings (private, password protected, secret, public).
- You can share the whiteboard with your students, for example using a QR code.
- The resulting whiteboard can be downloaded in pdf, png or csv format

Trello board

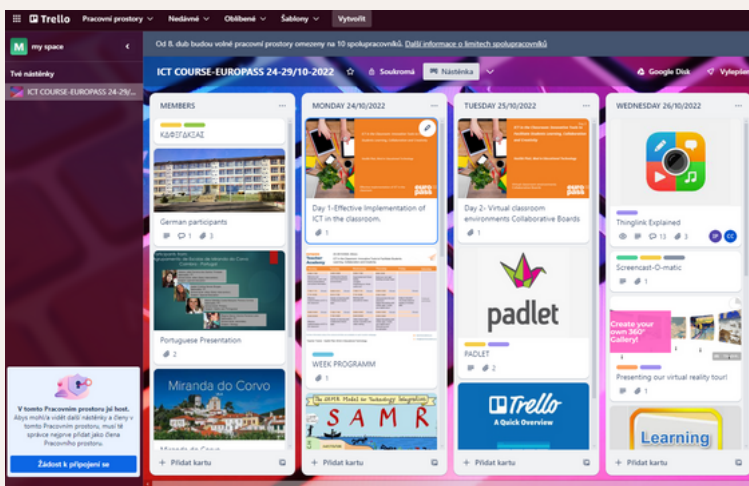# Slack

URL: https://slack.com/
Slack is a synchronous online communication tool for small and large teams. You can use it as a communication channel for your classroom and to collaborate with your school colleagues. Slack is typically used to solve problems quickly and in a timely manner. But you can also use it to communicate with parents. If you decide to use it, remember the principles of digital wellbeing that you could read about in the Teaching with ICT module (in this case, especially the appropriate notifications).

Trello

URL: https://trello.com/
If you are planning a school trip with your class, organising a school fair with your pupils, or want to start a new school magazine, you can use a tool designed primarily for project management right from the start. It will also come in handy when you want to organise your own pedagogical activities (which examples you want to create for which class, which tasks you have given to which class, by when they have to be corrected, filled in, handed in...).

There are hundreds of such tools on the web, so it depends on your specific needs and expectations, but you can definitely try Trello - it is a free tool, which makes it very easy for new users to get started. In Trello you create individual teams, and within each team you further define the structure of the order of individual tasks (e.g. to do, working on, done). For each task, you can assign students responsible for completing it, prioritise it, set a due date, etc. In addition, Trello is one of the tools your students will routinely use (or alternatives to) in their future careers. By teaching them the principles of working with a project management tool, you can also make it easier for them to organise their own learning.