CREATIVE USE OF TABLETS IN SCHOOLS: MODULE 4

SECTION 4.1

[Introduction]

In this video, I will give you an introduction to the topic personalized learning as an innovative learning approach. I will first present what we understand by the term personalized learning. Then I will talk about the role of the students and your role as a teacher when you organize personalized learning activities. I will also explain how tablets can support personalized learning and give some practical tips.

[What is personalised learning & why is it interesting?]

Students differ in their needs, competences, capabilities and learning preferences – but traditional teaching is often "one size fits all". If we talk about personalised learning, the goal is to design learning activities that meet the needs, competences, capabilities and learning preferences of individual students. Therefore, trying to personalize the learning experience for your students is a demanding task for you as a teacher. It is very important that you know your student's abilities, strengths, and weaknesses and can design learning activities that are appropriate, challenging, and motivating. You will probably already know quite a bit about how your students learn and will incorporate this implicitly in how you work with them. But it is important to formalize this knowledge and to find out more about your students' learning styles and preferences on a continual basis. You can do this for example with questionnaires, portfolios and regular face-to-face discussions. For the students it can be very motivating to engage in tailored learning activities or with own topics of investigation. The ultimate goal is to support your students so that can they understand and take responsibility for their own learning process. To foster your students' autonomy in learning you do not only need to think about the process of accessing and acquiring knowledge but also about the assessment of the learning and how to explain the process to your students.

[Role of students]

The goal is that students act as designers of their own learning process. They become reflectors, presenters, explorers and evaluators. Developing personal learning portfolios can help students to gain ownership over their learning and to foster a sense of personal responsibility for their learning. Personalised learning activities should also help students to become aware of their own learning skills, and understand differences in learning styles with other students.

[Role of teacher]

In a personalised learning scenario, you as a teacher have an important supporting role and in particular in the beginning developing a variety of learning plans for your students can be challenging. You can act as researcher, designer of individual learning plans, facilitator and evaluator of your students' learning. You need to decide to which extent you want to personalize the learning experience of your students. One option is to propose individual learning plans and targets. Another option is to try a part-way differentiated approach offering several modes of learning. These several modes of learning could also be suited to groups of students. You can support the students to form pairs, groups and teams required to perform tasks according to personal interests and levels, but also mixing different capacities. Your feedback on the students work and performance is also very

important. You can encourage your students to make self-evaluations, to practice their self-reflection and to define personal goals. When you personalize your students learning, you might also need to coordinate with their parents, as they have an important role both as supervisors of their children and supporters of their learning. The parents can help you to understand the interests, needs, prior experiences and circumstances of your students.

[Role of tablets]

Tablets can help you to support the personalised learning activities of your students. For example, the students can use their tablet to access online assessment tools to identify their learning type, according to their preferred learning style, strengths and weaknesses. One example of such a tool is ePace. For you as a teacher, the tablet can be a tool to access class management tools such as ClassFlow. These management tools can help you to have an overview of the students and their progress by providing you on a constant basis with valuable information on your students learning that previously was difficult to attain. You can also use the tablet to prepare content like presentations, videos and audio files that take account of the different learning styles. Tablets can also be a tool for students to access tools to vote like EasyPools to vote on their preferred learning content. Students can access their individual collection of resources in a personalised learning environment on the tablet. This personalized learning environment can include personalised apps, content and learning activities like learning games. The students can keep track of their individual learning and progress, for example via eportfolios and blogs. They can also use the tablet to share ideas about what they will learn in the beginning of the process and reflections and conclusions about what they have learned and the learning process in the end. To do that they can use for example blogs or padlet.

[Tips for your practise]

At the end of this video I would like to stress once again that in order to organise personalised learning activities for your students, it is important that you know your students as individuals and are in contact with parents. One possible way forward is to develop targets and a customized learning plan together with the students and preferably also their parents. Also think of how tablets and other online tools and services can support personalised learning. In particular, these tools enable you to offer students choices in how they access content and produce some form of product at the end of a project. Tablets can also be very valuable for you in acquiring more information about your students. You can use them to collect data about students' progress and to offer new ways for students to share and communicate with you. Finally, it can be useful to store evidence of progress and your students' achievements digitally