

Social Impact of Collaborative Teacher Community in Online Immigrant Integration Training

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ABSTRACT

Since 2015, a continuous online integration training service has been active. In 2021, eight integration instructors, teaching online for two to six years across diverse regions participated in semi-structured interviews. Analysing the technology-mediated community formed by teachers and learners, we explored how the entirely online, gradually growing teacher community operates. The interviews revealed four influential categories for the teacher's work which encompass individual resources, antifragility\leftrightarrowresilience, collaborative resources, and an entrepreneurial mindset. An entrepreneurial mindset fosters collaboration and community, thereby enhancing learners' engagement in online learning and social inclusion. The study highlighted key factors for social impact within the community: informal teacher chats, the mentor-mentee model in learning design, shared materials, teacher rotation, direct collaboration with learners' environments and employers, and information shareability. This teacher community proved to be entrepreneurial and involves learners in co-design individualized integration training connected to their living situations. Entrepreneurial mindset. However, challenges in sustain, antifragile and developing online teaching, such as psychological insecurity, diversity of teachers and learners, heightened competition, time management, and workload, were also noted.

Keywords: artefacts, co-design, learning community, learning design, immigrants, collaborative learning

Introduction

The teaching profession has evolved into a permanent full-time online occupation for many educators. This study's online teacher community has operated entirely online since 2015, devoid of geographical constraints. The community consists of integration trainers teaching adult immigrants. Initially composed of three individuals, the community expanded to nearly twenty teachers before the onset of the pandemic. The COVID-19 era brought in more members and new operational models as the online teaching cohort rapidly grew.

However, this study delves into the dynamic functioning of a collaboratively learning online teacher community, examining it as a social construct (Leoz & Petter 2018). It explores the entrepreneurial characteristics (Davis 2022; Seikkula-Leino et al. 2010) cultivated by online teachers constantly navigating risks and changes (Jones et al. 2023).

Aligned with the design science research paradigm (Hevner 2007), this research pertains to the technological artefact of online integration training design. This article specifically investigates the social sub-artefact, scrutinizing the social structure's impact on teachers' work and the online teacher community's dynamics. The interviewed educators are experienced online teachers, showcasing advanced self-efficacy (Saienko et al. 2020), often more pronounced in language teachers than in other domains (Simsek 2019). Their proficiency extends to online interaction and technology utilization (Archambault et al. 2010), influencing their teaching, personal practice, and community involvement.

The study provides additional insights into where the inter-teacher collaboration originates and how it becomes transformative in teachers' work. The article also investigates how advanced online teaching and a mature online teaching community are led and developed when the practices and routines of online teaching no longer raise questions within the community, and technological challenges or interacting with learners online becomes seamless and routine.

Research background and literature review

Online Integration Training as an Artefact

In Finland, integration training for adult immigrants focuses on employment-related education, encompassing language, cultural, and communication studies, along with vocational skills tailored for active participation in the digital society (OPH 2022). Unemployed immigrants are directed by the Employment and Economic Development Office (TE) to integration training programs offered by various service providers, procured through competitive bidding. Immigrants have the right to an integration plan and can participate in integration-promoting services, such as integration training, upon its formulation (Integration Act, 2010).

Online implementation emerged to address the need for accessible integration training in sparsely populated areas, starting with the first online implementation in Lapland, where the nearest educational facility might be hundreds of kilometres away. From 2015 to 2021, 630 immigrants to Finland, with varying language proficiency, diverse backgrounds, and different professions, completed online integration training (Haikala 2019; Haikala & Kuja-Lipasti 2021).

Cases have not been found in Finland or other countries where integration training starting from the beginner level of the target language has been organized entirely online. The training represented a novel technological-pedagogical design, developed collaboratively while being executed. Consequently, the community's actions within the design took on entrepreneurial characteristics. The organization granted the teaching team complete freedom to develop the training, starting from customer acquisition and comparative data exploration based on their experiences. The team's responsibilities encompassed managing funding instruments, implementing various stages of training, recruitment, team coordination, network collaboration, and end-to-end customer management in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (TEM) and The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY centres). Continuous dialogue was maintained with funders and collaborating companies. A notable challenge in implementing the training was motivating learners, often directed to online training by the Employment Office when classroom-based courses were unavailable in the municipality at that time.

Conditions for Teachers in Online Integration Training

Teachers are required to possess Skills 2030 capabilities (OECD 2023) to engage with learners and utilize resources when online integration training demands technological self-directedness (Saienko et al. 2020) alongside language and culture-sensitive skills (Henttonen & Alhanen 2023) to address a diverse learner body. As the self-directed team was provided a growth platform, a growing teacher community began evolving based on the needs that emerge when creating new content and functioning within an evolving online education system. The educational artefact was co-developed, relying on the actions of individuals and groups within the artefact. Co-development and actions are also definitions of entrepreneurial behaviour (Seikkula-Leino et al. 2010).

Teachers engaged in education primarily from home or in rented office spaces within their residential areas. The employer provided ergonomic desks, chairs, computers, technical peripherals, and, if needed, textbooks and learning applications. Recruitment sought curiosity toward online teaching, but prior teaching experience or familiarity with educational technology was not mandatory. After the pilot year, teachers were recruited for online integration training, including graduating or recently graduated teachers and experienced individuals new to technology, willing to venture into unfamiliar territory. Several instances suggest that younger teachers have better technological skills but lack pedagogical expertise, while experienced teachers struggle with smooth technology usage (Saienko et al. 2020; Nazari et al. 2019).

The training was divided into four modules, forming approximately a year's worth of studies (OPH 2012; 2017). Modules 1-4 covered the Finnish language and work readiness skills. Module 2 included a two-week work placement, and Modules 3 and 4 included longer work placements. During non-placements, teachers collaborated with a work partner or a small team online, instructing learners studying from home. Teaching sessions were conducted individually, but each learner group had at least two teachers working collaboratively. Throughout work placements, teachers travelled across Finland, guiding learners and employers at various work placement sites.

Collaborative dimensions in the design for teachers include a virtual teacher lounge 'coffee shop' for teacher interactions, as well as chats between smaller teams and individuals, enabling communication through text and video. Additionally, teachers have smartphones and the opportunity to arrange video conference meetings, along with two annual team-building days in person. Collaborative spaces between learners and teachers encompass shared group chats, rotating small group chats with text and group calling capabilities, and a video conferencing application utilized for daily collaborative language learning exercises.

The Teacher in a Learning Community

Teachers' Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) entails the management, fusion, and comprehension of subject matter, pedagogical skills, and technological expertise (Mishra & Koehler 2006). Professional learning based on individual needs without time and location constraints and the experience of belonging to an online community is generally acknowledged, even though teachers exhibit diverse user types online (Prestridge 2016). Through collaboration, teachers can redistribute, learn, and integrate available knowledge shared among colleagues with different expertise. They compile various knowledge resources, often shared within the teacher team (Yi-Fen et al. 2021). Regular time should be allocated for teacher collaboration (Akinyemi et al. 2019). Interaction encourages more active and profound learning, commitment, and community building (Archambault et al. 2010). Collaborative discussions following the Design-Teach-Reflect-Redesign cycle provide teachers with the opportunity to exchange personal TPACK packages and construct collective TPACK (Yi-Fen et al. 2021).

As our study seeks characteristics influencing teacher collaboration and commitment, TPACK anchored in technological expertise alone is insufficient as an analysis method; a broader examination of teachers' competencies is needed. In this study, the attributes of online integration instructors are reflected against the Entrepreneurship Education framework (EntreComp) described skills, referring to the teacher's ability to encourage learners and empower them to engage in self-driven actions, networking, and collaboration, guide in identifying and seizing opportunities, support creative learning, instill confidence in learners' abilities, and encourage risk-taking (Gibb, 2005, 57). When an entrepreneur refers to a person involved in business, an entrepreneurial teacher refers to an instructor's change-oriented mindset and attitude in teaching (Davis 2022). The role of an integration instructor involves motivating job-seeking and assisting learners in integrating into the Finnish job market.

Teacher autonomy is strong, which is one reason genuine collegiality, real interaction, and collaborative pedagogical work through collaborative learning are not commonly observed in the school environment (Peltonen 2014). The teacher's learning and reflection process which promotes critical thinking towards teaching is essential in transforming education into an entrepreneurial one. Teachers should envision the learner group as a learning community, where teachers have the motivation and understanding to adapt pedagogical and organizational practices to the practical reality (Seikkula-Leino et al. 2010). The agility of an enterprise's provided integration training is measured by the quantity of new training acquisitions, making collegial collaboration essential in continuous change and pedagogical innovation.

Comprehensive pedagogical leadership focuses on the learning of all community members, including learners, teachers, supervisors, and support services (Fonsén & Lahtero 2023, 174). The integration training is in constant flux, with the teacher's work and learners from different backgrounds changing rapidly (Jones et al. 2023), necessitating a supportive, innovative, and emotionally considerate leadership approach from management. Collective emotions (Farny et al. 2018) impact group-level dynamics, such as consensus and shared values. Building a new community raises common concerns and helps bring people together while mobilizing their affective experiences. Collective emotions fulfil an important justifying function, capturing what is the right thing to do in a certain setting, that is integral to the legitimation of practices creating new arrangements, and provide reasons for commitment. Collective emotions support the social activity of the community: maintaining the spread of practices and recreating the institution (Farny et al. 2018).

Methodology and data

From the interview data, we examine the impact of the educational artefact on interpersonal relationships and interaction within the teachers' operating environment. Conversely, studying social impact is crucial in the development of this artefact because interaction among individuals, groups, organizations, and society can influence the artefact (Leoz & Petter 2018), enhancing its utility and relevance as a facilitator of societal challenges.

Research questions:

1. What is required for teachers' collaboration in online training promoting the integration of adult immigrants?
2. How entrepreneurial features contribute to the social structure of online teachers?

Within the artefact, a functioning community forms a social sub-artefact. This community consists of teachers whose actions, as users of the design, re-design the artefact. The aim of this study is to evaluate the dynamic and collaborative online activities of the teacher community. If teachers exhibit an entrepreneurial approach, it can also influence learners, enhancing the societal impact of education (Jones et al. 2023; Peltonen 2014).

The semi-structured interviews involved eight teachers who have been teaching entirely online within the same community for up to two years. All eight interviewed teachers are native Finnish speakers. Six of them are qualified Finnish Language teachers, holding a master's degree in Finnish language or Finnish literature as their main subjects. Two of the interviewees have degrees in social sciences, education, and linguistics. At the time of the interviews in 2021, the online integration training artefact had been in continuous operation for six years. Two of the teachers had been involved since 2015, three since 2016, one since 2017, and two since 2018. Three of the interviewees worked as teachers, three had progressed from teachers to managerial positions, and two had changed jobs.

The interview material is handled anonymously; the analysis does not attribute responses to specific individuals. The interview questions (Appendix 1) were tailored based on the researchers' own experiences in teacher training, aiming to gather comprehensive information about teachers' individual TPACK skills, community practices, and dynamics. This somewhat limits the results since further examination revealed a need for more specific questions, particularly about data security and learner engagement methods. Experienced online teachers were selected for the interviews due to their advanced self-reflection skills, aiming to capture diverse changes in online teachers' self-efficacy and TPACK between 2015 and 2021.

The data has been processed by the designers using transcription software. They have read the transcripts, listened to the interviews multiple times, and compiled perspectives on teacher community engagement, design development ideas, and direct quotes that accurately comment on the subject. A qualitative content analysis was conducted by coding interesting elements in the material, which were then grouped into categories reflecting the social impact and structure of the artefact.

To ensure authenticity, the analysis includes numerous direct quotes (Appendix 2) that encapsulate essential viewpoints in the interviewees' own words. The use of direct quotations is justified as they reflect the interviewees' advanced reflective abilities as online teachers, avoiding a mere interpretation by the authors.

There's a risk of interpreting interviewee responses through the researchers' experiences since they have been close colleagues to the interviewees. Hartikainen, who conducted the interviews, taught in the design from 2017 to 2019, and Ahola was the original developer, teacher, and teacher trainer in the online integration training design. However, interviews would have been impossible without familiarity with the design and its operations. This familiarity might positively influence the interviewees' perceptions, making them feel more comfortable and potentially sharing more in-depth and diverse information than they would with an external researcher. Another advantage is that the interviewer knew the interviewees, enabling more focused and profound questions on topics where the interviewees were knowledgeable. To maintain objectivity, the dissertation supervisor, who approaches the research and data from an external academic researcher's perspective, collaborates in writing.

Findings: Collaborative learning teacher community

The online teacher community is young and has been constructed without references to other online teacher communities. Since its inception online, this community lacked pre-existing customs or routines before entering the online sphere. This makes the community exceptional when compared to, for example, teacher communities during the COVID-19 era, which traditionally existed within physical walls and already had their own routines, dynamics, and ways of interaction.

At the time of the interviews in June 2021, the number of teachers online had significantly increased in a short period due to the surge in online education during the COVID-19 period across all types of training. In our analysis, we examined how the activities within the technological design impact the social structure of the online community and individuals' interactions and collaboration. Subsequently, we identified challenges and developmental needs of the community.

Four key categories emerged from the analysis. 'Individual resources' refer to resources inherent to an individual without the environment. 'Antifragility\leftrightarrowresilience' defines the environment and circumstances within which a teacher operates. Together, these two components form the basis for collaborative resources, serving as the foundation for genuine collaboration. Existing resources require a positive breeding ground, in this case, an entrepreneurial mindset, resulting in collaborative efforts.

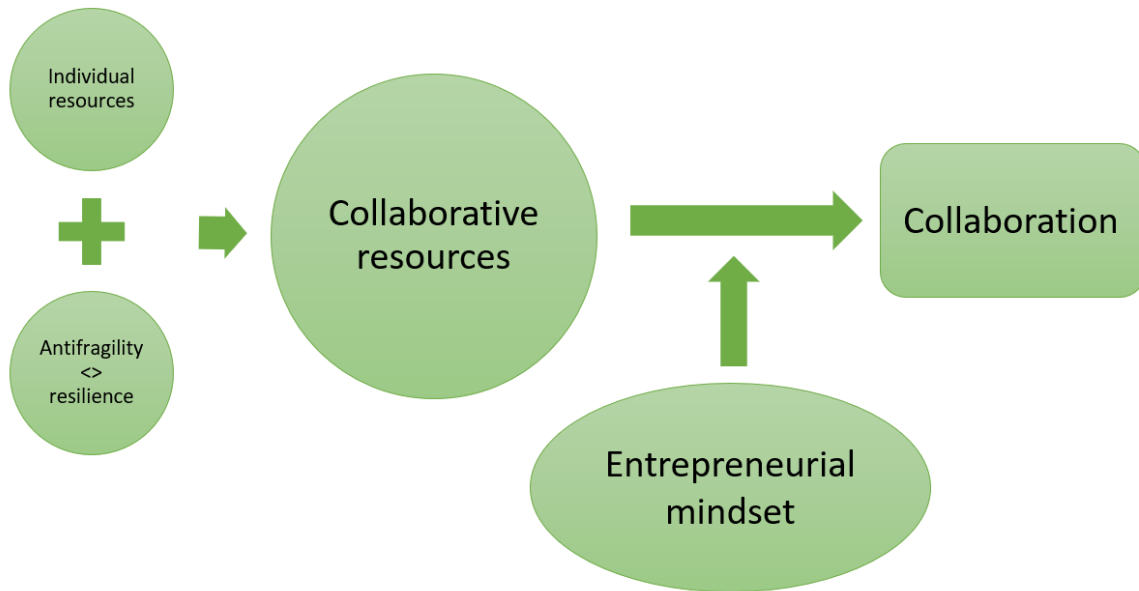


Figure 1. Categories that collectively generate innovative collaboration.

Individual resources

Individual resources refer to personal skills and capabilities inherent in an individual regardless of the environment, but their utilization is influenced by the positivity of the environment.

Teachers were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of online learning for both teachers and learners. The primary benefit highlighted was the freedom that comes with work and study not being tied to a specific place or location. There's no need to commute to the workplace, and long distances don't hinder education. Additionally, the work area encompassed the entire country, eliminating the need to relocate for work, even if the next training session was in a different area.

The most crucial skills for teachers in an online setting included self-efficacy, soft skills, self-reflection, and aspects related to life management. Specifically, the ability to interact online and empathetically perceive social needs emerged as key skills for teachers in the online domain. Teachers must have the capacity to empathise with situations because they interact with people rather than merely 'talking to a computer.'

“Listening, interaction, a certain softness: the online environment is tough, not forgiving for teachers, nor for learners. It’s easier to judge a teacher online, just as it is for a learner. One can maintain professionalism and seriousness, but laughter and humour are needed when engaging with learners and building a community. It’s crucial to establish trust with learners over the web so that they feel comfortable sharing and making mistakes. A technically inept teacher who can engage gets forgiven much more than a technically skilled teacher who simply conducts their teaching.”

Furthermore, the benefits of online training, for both learners and teachers, included tranquillity, silence, space, and opportunities to focus. Online, learners hear well, eliminating the need to raise voices, making differentiation effortless by combining groups from different areas based on learning needs and language proficiency. Taking peaceful breaks is easier than in a classroom, and there is versatile material available in abundance. Some teachers mentioned that handling conflicts and ensuring physical safety worked well online as they could easily terminate starting situations by muting or removing a learner from the study space with a button press. However, forming close relationships online takes longer than in a classroom, resulting in fewer conflicts.

Teachers reported fewer absences as participation was possible even if there were minor compulsory engagements, often encountered by immigrants facing various settlement-related issues. Even the parents of young babies wanted to continue their training despite being on parental leave. Respondents also thought that online learners were easier to engage with privately and have confidential one-on-one conversations, away from others' sight. Due to individual conversation possibilities, trust relationships can be established more easily than in a classroom. Screen sharing and detailed examination of content together add significant value to online guidance. Moreover,

respondents mentioned significant developments in learners' ICT skills as they are more confident in contacting via instant messaging or calling, even if their language skills are not yet advanced.

The enabling multichannel aspect of the internet was said to assist both fast and slow learners. Online tools have many advantages in language learning as learners hear and see precisely what needs to be learned. Multichannel learning easily becomes highly intensive as online learning captures attention.

The disadvantages included complex instructions, the teacher talking excessively and too quickly without allowing learners to perform tasks themselves or concentrate on listening to them. Crucial qualities for an online teacher include problem-solving skills, patience, and approachability. In addition to plain instructions and teaching substance, the teacher's metalinguistic discourse is essential, such as providing detailed explanations of what is being done, how the recipient's screen should appear, and the type of activity required in the task. All respondents mentioned that teachers must pause more frequently online to listen, observe, and check whether the subject matter is understood.

Both studying and teaching online can be very lonely if face-to-face meetings are not arranged. Smooth collaboration in full-time online training requires regular contact, and physical contact is not always entirely replaceable. Greater investment is required in online community and presence although one can easily choose to remain isolated. Teachers think that due to the lack of face-to-face contact, some tasks take longer online as one needs to 'warm up' more slowly.

Antifragility, resilience and environmental influences

The new working environment demands flexibility from teachers, the ability to learn new things, and tolerance for continuous changes. Teachers lived in different parts of Finland, so all team members worked either from their homes or in workspaces provided by the employer, but none worked in the same space as other teachers.

Teachers described the initial phase as a virtual teacher as extremely demanding. Initially, there was a lot to learn for both more experienced colleagues and those embarking on their teaching careers. Everyone said they had worked excessively at the start because there was so much to familiarize themselves with. The concept was new, so it started with building foundations, based on the contract made by the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY) and the training provider, as well as the curriculum for adult immigrants' integration training (OPH 2012; 2017).

At the beginning, each teacher had gone through shared online teaching practices, such as creating a daily learning program on a blog site, including a visually clear and accessible schedule, learning objectives and tasks, group work and allocations, links to communication tools, and video meetings, i.e., the "classroom," where learning activities took place during the day. Additionally, they were introduced to applications and what the teacher needed to do and guide technologically so that learners could find the right place and initiate interactions in desired ways.

"I needed support with technological devices and applications, the structure of the day and practices. How to open accounts for each person, how people can access different places, creating a blog, front-loading the daily planning. Especially at the beginning, it was necessary to plan the days meticulously for the work to flow. Later on, it became easier: as the learners progressed and no longer needed minute-by-minute guidance, there was more flexibility in the schedule."

The orientation progressed as later joining teachers thought that they were initially comprehensively introduced to the job, first to the technology in use, and secondly to the methods, routines, teaching situations, and pedagogical choices relevant to online teaching, as well as the considerations in personal work, such as working hours and personal resilience. Plenty of common material was available, but finding, organizing, and compiling suitable material was initially perceived as quite laborious.

The use of technical devices and applications related to online teaching was mostly a new venture, just as instructing learners to use necessary applications and devices in teaching. Initially, a significant amount of time was devoted to addressing both their own and the learners' IT issues. Some experienced teachers (10-20 years in the field) from a younger generation were notably more sceptical about the success of online teaching and didn't need orientation primarily in pedagogy but rather in regional differences and technology-mediated teaching.

For learners, weaknesses in the online setting were noted to be the more laborious construction of teacher-learner interaction and trust. Building trust is fundamental to successful online training. As the number of courses increased, the resources for group initiations and in-person orientations were reduced, leading to diminished

opportunities to build trust at the beginning of courses. Meeting online requires scheduling and calling, and even small interactions via chat may seem more laborious than casual chats in a classroom, especially if the teacher-learner relationship hasn't developed.

As the number of learners rapidly increased in the initial years, teachers became overloaded with continual changes and increased workload, leading some to change jobs. Although the work mainly involved collaborative efforts, with each having a close colleague, there have been some individual projects handled by one experienced teacher, which burdened them and prompted a change of workplace.

Teachers acknowledged that the workload accumulation weakened creativity and enthusiasm for work. Therefore, they hoped for an increase in teacher and managerial resources. Rapid and continual changes reduce teachers' psychological safety when there is insufficient stability. Pre-planning teaching days is often mentioned as a design weakness and a factor increasing the workload. Having to display the next day or week's schedule and tasks on the website in an ever-changing training environment and in varied, differentiation-requiring groups resulted in evening and weekend work for teachers.

Responses indicated that dominant personalities sometimes took up too much space in the community. Occasionally, one person's distress can burden the entire community. Online teaching enables quick access to work even when one should be off work due to a doctor's order. Employers should invest in mental well-being rather than externalizing the burden of work to the individual.

The online environment would be safer if employees had more opportunities to influence their own workload balance. Flexibility is the strength of the online learning design, but the feeling of permanent transience should be addressed. Agility often leads to chaos and a sense of insecurity, requiring astuteness of management. Leaders need to consider situations where employees might suddenly be relocated or new learners join a group with only a few hours' notice.

Teachers' risk-taking capacity was tested by the changing regional locations of training, requiring them to always learn about the employment and study opportunities in new areas, as well as other services learners might utilize. Tolerance to uncertainty was emphasized during the pandemic when inexperienced classroom teachers abruptly transitioned online and became part of the community. Pedagogically skilled and experienced online teachers instructed groups of hundreds and guided teachers new to online teaching to continue their work. This resulted in all training smoothly shifting online within a week. However, for some online teachers, their motivation was undermined by scepticism from colleagues about whether this work could be done entirely online.

Experienced online teachers do not agree with the assertion that everyone became online teachers overnight due to the pandemic. According to them, organizations might not necessarily be up to date with advanced online teaching. For instance, due to instant messaging culture, a teacher might be more present to learners than in a school building. A culture of collaboration is highly emphasized because interactivity is a prerequisite for learning, and a lot of effort is required online to achieve that.

Teachers spoke rather little about cybersecurity. It was mostly mentioned concerning having confidential conversations if a learner's camera is off, and they are unaware of whom is present on the other side. On the other hand, the rush to go online during the pandemic led to strangers being present in teachers' chat, not communicating, raising questions about who falls into each division.

Collaborative resources

Online teachers' coffee shop: "The chat was active all the time, quick answers to questions"

The dialogue in the coffee shop chat was likened to a teacher's lounge, but it was noted to be more informal and devoid of hierarchy compared with a traditional school building. The coffee shop fosters a sense of belonging and sociability, providing the experience of working with other people. Sociability is at the individual's discretion, as one can easily participate in discussions or withdraw to the background. Those who engage more get to know each other better. Remaining inactive might keep one less acquainted with others. If one doesn't communicate with others, they easily become an outsider. There is a strong sense of unity within the community. Dialogue is continuous, with several topics being discussed simultaneously.

"An empathetic reception when sharing personal life matters. Social situations related to the training are often brought up in chat, especially if peer support or advice is needed; online, negative situations are different in comparison with in-person classes, so addressing them together is important."

Continuous chat conversation is described as solution-focused and communal: each person takes responsibility not only for their own group and work but also for the success and achievements of the entire community. In a traditional teacher's lounge, one happens to be present, but in the online coffee shop, one is present all the time, and conversations are visible afterwards even if one is absent. Respondents considered the work of an integration trainer personally and societally meaningful because it can genuinely impact another person's life, employment, and well-being in a new country.

All respondents stated a preference for working with a colleague or in a team, most preferably with a suitable partner, as larger teams easily become chaotic and inefficient. Working in pairs facilitates efficient idea development and saves time in planning and material creation. The most effective setup was pairing a senior and experienced teacher with a less experienced one, allowing for new perspectives to be brought into the work. Even those who usually prefer working alone mentioned the importance of having a partner to exchange ideas. The crucial factor was the ability to engage in discussions about learners with someone who is familiar with them. Challenges related to learners' employment are often complex, and because learners have different personalities, they relate differently to different teachers.

Orientation directed attention toward collaborative resources. All respondents mentioned receiving help from the entire teacher community right from the start, mostly and commonly in the coffee shop chat where all teachers are present. Support was also obtained from their own work partner or a smaller team with whom learners were shared. Gradually, they learned whom to ask about different matters. Task distribution was managed so that work pairs mostly comprised a younger-older or experienced-new teacher, enabling mentoring among colleagues. Additionally, the later-established IT support chat and hired instructors in the learners' native languages assisted with questions. Most mentioned receiving prompt guidance, answers to questions, encouragement, and trust in their work from their team leader. Online teachers mention the need for support always existing but evolving in its forms.

The coffee shop chat became a space where most of the collaborative development and activity occurred. Experiences, practices, news, and successes are shared there. Many freely share things even outside work hours. Teachers work with their own personality, which is also reflected in the chat. A younger teacher mentioned that even though they got to know colleagues through chat for a few months initially, people were in real life similar to the image that had been conveyed. For new employees, the chat is introduced as a place where other teachers are present and one can ask or talk about anything. Team leaders participate in the chat to start discussions, bring energy, and enthusiasm.

Emotions in the coffee shop chat are conveyed genuinely and immediately through emojis, which is usually absent in a classroom setting. As text alone can be "cold," celebratory, dancing, laughing, and singing emojis, as well as GIFs and memes, are used. Emojis were primarily described as essential tools for expressing emotions and self-expression although there were discussions about the possible meanings of emojis not known to everyone. Achievements are celebrated and a large part of the team actively participates in shared celebrations. Celebrated things include successful learning situations or learner employments, course beginnings, and endings.

“Visual reactions reinforce emotions, fun, humour, deeper situational context, and enrich expression that would otherwise be lacking in textual form. The same applies to learners expressing emotions: breaking the ice, learners became enthusiastic and could develop mini-cultures around the use of emojis. They also expressed the personality or ways of constructing.”

As drawbacks in the coffee shop chat, it was mentioned that questions might get lost in the flow, or no one is chatting when one wants to. Expressing emotions might sometimes feel forced, and the jumping heart and sun emojis can be irritating on a bad day. On the other hand, one easily finds solitude and peace if desired. Occasionally, negativity is brought in when one has a bad day. Unpleasant matters are also shared, but some respondents mentioned that often it is better to discuss negative things either by calling someone and having a private conversation or in a collectively organized meeting.

Even though teachers can largely define their own schedules, there seems to be a need to standardize practices. Common schedules are seen to facilitate work. Collective sharing and reciprocity are perceived to enhance professionalism.

The original designers and teachers who acted as team leaders have led the social development of the online community. This included e.g. greetings in the coffee shop chat at the beginning and end of the day, good wishes, weekend wishes, and initiating discussions on common practices, new information, and informal conversations.

Moreover, conveying affects—when a leader sets an example of reacting emotionally—makes it easier for others to adopt similar behaviours. Face-to-face meetings a few times a year are significant boosters for team spirit.

From the experiences during the pandemic, it was learned that a trust-based online community does not scale up for a larger group. In a chat with 10-20 people, there is still room for different voices and personalities, but if there are dozens or hundreds of people in the same chat, it serves more than an information channel, discussing very general matters usually communicated top-down. Expressing emotions, colourful personalities, and personal discussions within a close-knit community no longer fit into this forum as before. Teachers suggest creating smaller channels for smaller groups to converse, but they also questioned whether it is meaningful to artificially separate team members into different groups.

Entrepreneurial Mindset

The entrepreneurial risk-taking traits of teachers were assessed by comparing responses with the features defined in The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (Bacigalupo et al. 2016). Several traits related to an entrepreneurial mindset and actions can be identified from teachers' interviews, crucial for the vitality of the community.

| | RESOURCES | | | INTO ACTION | | | IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| EntreComp | Self-awareness and self-efficacy | Mobilising resources and others | Motivation and perseverance | Planning and management | Working with others, Learning through experience | Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty & risk | Creativity | Ethical & sustainable thinking | Spotting opportunities, Visions |

Table 1. The entrepreneurial features according to EntreComp that the interviewed online teachers possess. When the individual's and community's resources intersect with the environmental demands, an entrepreneurial mindset becomes a force that drives teachers to work together, encouraging each other, seizing opportunities, identifying them, taking risks, and reforming practices.

The teacher community is more innovative and open-minded than traditional ones usually are. Collaboration is built on trust and immediate interaction, as it is so self-driven and devoid of pretence. Within the community, individuals can be themselves, speak freely, and receive reciprocal responses. Moreover, the teacher community forms closer groups regionally as well as based on interests and social needs.

"Online teaching has opened up another pedagogical way of thinking: you end up following didactics and pedagogy more closely and keeping yourself updated. Living in the online teaching world every day, getting the latest information from the internet and sharing it in chats, visiting a classroom feels like, 'aha, things are still being done here in a complicated and inefficient way when there are better methods available."

Teachers were asked what they share online and the extent of sharing. Upon analysing the responses, it is noted that sharing pertains not only to teaching materials but also to practices, emotions, information, personal matters, including informal ones. The culture of sharing is community-led, as all teachers considered sharing matters as self-evident and the work environment encourages it.

The responses mentioned the coffee shop chat's random, informal, and voluntary nature. Revitalizing chat conversations builds users' identities and unique modes of expression. The chat sparked ideas for further development collectively and initiated a culture of experimentation, the experiences of which were shared. The informal and relaxed chat is fragile and vulnerable to changes. Vitality and creativity flourished when discussions were somewhat uncontrolled yet gradually adhered to established etiquettes, collaboratively created by its users. Such an environment was an excellent breeding ground for creativity and innovative thinking.

Technology evolves and continuous learning is necessary. Online pedagogical skills also include improvisation with technology, being able to modify and transfer teaching quickly between systems. Quality online teaching requires precise structure, but at the same time, one must be ready to improvise continually. One teacher mentioned that working online sometimes feels like a performing artist's job. Emphasizing performance can help teachers fail more liberally, which also alleviates learners' stress. Learners from different cultures often want to build a hierarchy

and see the teacher as a role model. Teachers' own behaviour influences how interaction and hierarchy are built. Authoritarian situations in teaching aren't effective.

Collaboration, for instance, helps teachers identify methods that engage and involve learners studying remotely from other course participants. Some teachers were very aware of how physical activity declines if one spends a year studying on the computer. For this reason, the design encouraged teachers to consider alternative ways to organize teaching so that learners (and teachers themselves) can move around. The immediate environment becomes familiar to learners when, for instance, they describe things related to the course theme in their home town or backyard and send pictures via text chat to the group. This way, learners, teachers, and course participants get to explore various new places and observe the Finnish language and culture in their living environment.

Although the role and image of online teaching evolved during the pandemic, attitudes towards it changed, it was noted that the immediate and collaborative culture of the coffee shop chat doesn't transfer to new teachers who enter online teaching from classroom teaching due to emergencies. The experience of classroom teachers transitioning online felt distorted in the collaborative online community, suddenly filled with people lacking the social and other etiquettes previously found in a safe shared space.

Despite online work being perceived as very taxing, it has a certain appeal that equivalent face-to-face work might not offer. When, asked what keeps them working online, teachers mentioned freedom, community, continuous personal development, and the development of new working methods and training. Although work sometimes spills into personal time, the blending of work hours with home and family life, as well as the safety and comfort created by the home environment, were seen as pleasant. Team leaders were mentioned as "daring to act outside the hierarchy, breaking out of roles and adapting to the community." Instead of traditional social hierarchies, team leaders are colleagues and resource discussions are approached from the teachers' needs. Some teachers wouldn't take a better-paid job if it meant losing the freedoms facilitated by online teaching.

In new projects, experienced teachers needed to specifically request support, which could lead to the feelings of inadequacy. Additionally, the right kind of support wasn't always available. Some teachers who changed jobs got tired of too little job rotation and lack of variation; others wanted to see learners more in person. Also, new job offers, lack of career paths, and opportunities to implement innovative ideas, salary, or value conflicts have influenced some in leaving their jobs. The working conditions and, to some extent, poor terms of employment burden some employees, as does loneliness and somewhat uncertain job continuity. The flexibility in work hours played a pivotal role in staff retention.

Regarding working hours, the interviewees had very different views. Some saw the freedom to define their work hours as a strength of the job, while others considered it a professional skill, and some wished for rules and management support in defining working hours. The both acceptance and criticism of different working methods were observed. Online design was described as "the untamed territory" of working hours because learners send messages at any time, some teachers are always available and respond immediately, others the next day during office hours, others after a long time. Learners might have severe questions, potentially related to domestic violence/shelter issues, which the following teacher does not want to leave unanswered, even if it is evening or the weekend. Some learners may call at odd hours. Most teachers mentioned that they need to take care of not letting work become burdensome. Due to the freedom in working hours, there is the temptation to work more than the stipulated hours, salary, or necessity. Additionally, various small development projects are carried out during personal time, even when not required.

Discussion

Creating inclusive online integration training requires teachers to put in special effort in how to get different learners to learn, how much and what kind of interaction is needed, and how learners network in their living environment as well as with other learners. We argue that high-quality online education demands entrepreneurial skills from teachers to plan resource utilization and activities, generate new ideas and learning opportunities, and integrate them. However, this is not possible without resources allocated for collaborative work (Akinyemi et al., 2019).

The first question was: What is required for teachers' collaboration in online training promoting the integration of adult immigrants?

The instructional design was crafted to support entrepreneurial behaviour among (including non-entrepreneurial background) teachers. Evolving technologies offer new opportunities and responsibilities (Archambault et al. 2010). Design features that supported the social impact of the educational artefact, which encouraged teachers to

act entrepreneurially and collaboratively, included the coffee shop chat as an interaction channel enabling formal and informal co-development and assessment; continuous and unexpected chat streams; sharing and shareability supporting the development of TPACK (Yeh et al., 2021); shared materials saving everyone time; teacher rotation (competency-based learning, shared competency targets) preventing boredom and loss of innovativeness and encouraging teachers to do their best, as well as direct collaboration with the living environment and businesses.

User-friendly learning design enables learners in sparsely populated areas to form friendships and a learning community online when selected applications are easily accessible to them without hard-to-reach learning designs. On the other hand, considering data security needs to be tailored to the tools used separately. Areas to be developed include easy access and user-friendly design that allows, for example, work training companies access to the online environment.

Secondly, from the teachers' perspective, the design empowered them to act entrepreneurially: taking risks, being curious about things, and constantly reflecting on their work (cf. Ho & Bryant, 2020). Consequently, teachers' technological-pedagogical self-efficacy continuously increased, as did collective TPACK knowledge. The mentor-mentee structure embedded in the design promoted natural peer learning and collaboration. Building interaction and trust in online design requires substantial resources (Prestridge, 2016), but it also led to a flourishing community. At its best, learners, teachers, and support staff formed an entrepreneurial community.

Teachers benefit from humble leadership (Ho & Bryant, 2020), which prompts them to act innovatively when it is possible in terms of organizational resourcing. Adapting innovative ideas to learner groups increases teachers' job satisfaction when learners achieve better learning performances. A trustworthy and consistent relationship with colleagues and team leaders gradually forms through collective actions (Ho & Bryant, 2020). For leadership, the most critical aspect in the vitality of the teacher community is the freedom and full trust to create a collaborative online team, revealing teachers' capabilities for assuming responsibility, co-development, and peer mentoring (Prestridge, 2016), while setting boundaries for themselves regarding working hours and work-related matters.

Thirdly, the design is ambitiously planned for an ideal teacher who can endure endless changes and new things and is constantly an empathetic interactor. The development of the design should pay attention to teachers' diversity, endurance, and fair distribution of resources.

The realization of teachers' psychological safety in the design emerged as a significant issue. The sense of safety and collective trust legitimized social practices (Farny et al., 2018). Increasing competition was mainly based on differences in employment contracts, but when the workload increased excessively and problems arose in organizing work and time management, the competitive atmosphere intensified, and psychological safety deteriorated.

Individuals' influence on their work is limited. On an individual level, co-teaching with a work partner, support from team leader, and moderate stability in learner groups affect work. At the organizational level, new training purchases that consistently bring in more learners to the organization have an impact on work. Thoughtful leadership is essential during changes in work roles to prevent teachers from becoming overwhelmed by the workload. At the societal level, social and inter-organizational factors affect work, over which nothing can be done internally in the organization, such as political decision-making, infectious diseases, wars, and other factors accelerating global mobility, as well as the general economic situation.

The second question was: How entrepreneurial features contribute to the social structure of online teachers?

Firstly, teachers are courageous in expressing both successes and failures. Each failure provide new valuable insights (Taleb 2012). As learning culture evolves to support risk-taking, the fear of risks and failure decreases, making teachers feel safe to experiment (Jones et al. 2023). Teachers share ideas and constantly try new things. They preferred modelling innovative teaching practices, appreciated their colleagues' contributions, and listened to their concerns (Ho & Bryant 2020). Teachers have advanced skills in maintaining technology-mediated connections with colleagues, learners, and an outward-facing attitude in communication, information seeking, and collaboration with authorities, employers, and businesses.

Secondly, interviews revealed that teachers mostly tolerate continual change quite well because they can prioritize and focus on essential tasks. This may be due to job satisfaction, as entrepreneurially behaving teachers experience breakthroughs in their professional development and produce cross-subject and cross-topic practices and innovations (Ho & Bryant 2020). Trusting and harmonious relationships develop among teachers, motivating them to seek common understanding.

Thirdly, as responsible individuals, teachers generally exhibit conscientiousness, which was also reflected in discussions about professional boundaries. Strength lies in defining appropriate accessibility limits within the profession. The all-encompassing entrepreneurial attitude must be regulated in work settings.

Continuous critical research is needed in the future to gain insights into how teachers can be best supported in entrepreneurial skills, task prioritization, innovative work approaches, and facilitation of smooth integration. Entrepreneurially acting teachers contribute to solving the challenges of integration and encounter in society, as an entrepreneurial teacher community influence's learner to engage more actively as citizens and participants in society. This is supported by studies (e.g., Peltonen 2014; Ho 2020), indicating that learners adopt entrepreneurial behaviours from teachers and thus engage more actively and committed in society.

Limitations of the manuscript were partly due to unanswered questions. Privacy and accessibility would have been important topics to address during the interview. Additionally, a more thorough discussion could have taken place regarding collaboration between learners and teachers, as well as between teachers, learners, and businesses. The interviews specifically focused on inter-teacher cooperation.

Future challenges and recommendations

Key factors for the future are the sustainability, antifragility, and development of the teacher community. This definition is based on the teacher's ability to act in a constantly changing school environment (Taleb 2012; Jones et al. 2023).

Sustain: in a teacher community aiming for an entrepreneurial mindset, the learning design and leadership culture should align the work culture practices for teachers, such as practices and resources for collegial interaction. TPACK skills develop through interaction, hence collaborative efforts need strategic development and management. Additionally, an entrepreneurial community is fostered by designing technological aspects to be flexible and adaptable to regional and national societal and economic changes. It should facilitate connections with various stakeholders. The design should guide dynamic teaching with user-friendliness, interaction-supported offerings, and light adaptability. Online orientation continues beyond the initial stage. In orientation programs, emphasis should be placed on fostering a sense of belonging to the online community (Prestridge 2018), as teachers feel engaged when actively co-developing and sharing thoughts within the learning teacher community. Leadership for teachers emphasizes guidance and continuous interaction.

Antifragility: loneliness and social isolation pose risks online. It is essential to openly discuss this threat so that teachers are aware of their own social well-being, their activity, and their and others' psychological safety.

Online teachers are highly adaptable. Working online is very demanding because guiding learners and building interaction requires significant resources. Therefore, teachers' self-regulation skills should be strengthened, along with the ability to prioritize and focus on essential aspects. It is also essential to define who leads the interaction, whether it is strategically sound, and what impacts it has on teachers' actions.

Excessive changes in community dynamics can make it fragile. A teacher community functioned well for many years until the COVID-19 era brought in numerous teachers, rapidly expanding the community and making it somewhat impersonal. This increased psychological insecurity and discomfort.

Develop: data security was underrepresented in interviews. More discussion and common rules regarding GDPR and copyrights are needed. With adult immigrants, it is crucial to ensure they understand their individual data security requirements. The design of integration training has been based on channels familiar to learners, ensuring maximum accessibility even for those lacking strong digital skills. Security was considered, but as the teacher team expanded, discussions on safe online work were insufficient. Combining secure and accessible solutions is a massive challenge in online learning and impacts resourcing, such as device and application procurements and managing user data. Open discussion about security risks and accessibility improves online communities' understanding of what is possible, what limitations exist, and how to choose simultaneously accessible and secure solutions.

Integration training should commence with early and consistent engagement with local or nationally significant businesses in the learner's vicinity. Whenever feasible, the training should be customized to align with local employment requirements. This ensures the early identification and utilization of skill aspirations and connections to employers. Working across regions allows for specialization in different professions for teachers, as typically, there aren't enough learners in the same field in one area.

Collaboration needs to strengthen with other educational institutions and other teacher and entrepreneurial communities. Creative learning in online training communities requires both dynamism and harmony to maintain learning peace, community safety, and quality. Allowing diversity in teachers' and learners' work methods are important online; for instance, the flexibility of scheduling work hours. It would be beneficial to further study the dynamics of teacher communities and understand how communities endure entrepreneurial and risk-taking teaching, and where a balance of community members inclined towards safety is needed. Furthermore, there should be a concerted effort to thoroughly explore and leverage the full potential of artificial intelligence in alleviating workloads, particularly in administrative tasks and fostering empathetic interactions.

Conclusions

Educational services that promote integration have increasingly moved online, with the societal aim of helping individuals learn the language, navigate society, and either find employment or pursue studies that facilitate employment. For this reason, learning design should strengthen entrepreneurial skills, as adapting to a new home country becomes easier when adopting an entrepreneurial attitude and mindset. If the design and leadership style of the educational service provider encourage teachers to engage in entrepreneurial collaboration, these attitudes easily begin to trickle down to learners as well. Educational design should consider the diverse profiles of both educators and students: not everyone will become successful entrepreneurial talents, even if they put in a lot of effort. Attention must be directed toward ensuring that each individual can fully utilize their own potential within the constraints of their personal life circumstances.

A collaborative teacher community doesn't emerge in a vacuum. It requires strategy, a plan to integrate teachers into an online community, communal practices, openness using and sharing the teaching materials, and consideration of schedules and the individual needs of teaching groups in the design so that teachers always collaborate with at least one other teacher. The community also needs to be of a manageable size to enable mentally and technologically secure operations and high-quality interactions.

As our research shows, virtual communities can be innovative, but it takes a lot of effort for interaction, trust, and a sense of community to develop among teachers. Learners adopt and co-create this interaction style with the support of the teacher community, ideally consciously and with the community's backing. Visionary leadership that fosters independently operating teams supported by appropriate middle management allows for the inclusion of diverse voices in the online community. From these voices emerge ideas and innovations if the top leadership recognizes and utilizes them in the company's future endeavours.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Questions:

1. How long have you been working as an online teacher?
2. What subject or field do you teach?
3. What is your educational background?
4. How much total work experience do you have in teaching or guidance roles?
5. What are the pros and cons, advantages, and disadvantages of online education compared to traditional classroom teaching?
6. How did you end up as an integration trainer online?
7. What kind of orientation did you have or how did the first weeks as an online instructor go?
 - a. General orientation to the house rules
 - b. Online teaching according to the model implemented at provider
8. What assistance and support did you need during the first weeks and months?
9. From whom did you receive support during the first months in the online community?
10. From whom have you received support later as routines have started to flow?
11. How and how much do you communicate with other online instructors in the community?
12. Do you work more with a partner or team, or alone? Why?
13. How would you describe the teachers "Coffee shop" chat?

14. Describe the working dynamic at online community?
 - a. Among the online team members
 - b. Among the teachers (online and others)
 - c. With management
 - d. In relation to learners
15. What aspects of your teaching or guidance do you share with other online instructors?
16. How are good things or successes collectively addressed in the online team?
17. How are bad things or unpleasant aspects collectively addressed in the online team?
18. Online instructors have differences. What do you consider to be good and bad qualities for an online educator?
19. What keeps you at work in the online community? What motivates you?
20. Why did you leave?
21. How would you improve the online community? (What are the key elements? What is excessive? What is missing?)

Appendix 2. Quotations

To be noted: many quotes are applicable to multiple sections.

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| <p>Individual resources</p> | <p>"With the right devices and methods, you can do the same things as in the classroom. Online learning opportunities equalise, services are accessible to everyone. Learners can participate in education regardless of their place of residence, and online learning suits almost everyone well if the right group is found."</p> <p>"Minor colds, etc., did not prevent participation. The ICT skills of learners improved significantly during the training because ICT teaching was constantly integrated into language teaching, confidence in using technology increased, the anxiety about computers disappeared as chats and blogs became familiar."</p> <p>"If the learner has a noisy and disturbing environment at home, for example, the family is in the same space and interrupts studying, there can be lack of confidential conversations. From the teacher's perspective: sometimes you long for space where learners do group work in the same space; some social aspect is lost when not in the same space. Group work is not as strong, and group dynamics are more difficult to follow. Front-loading: heavy when the whole day is scripted and pre-planned."</p> <p>"Control of own work, sense of self-efficacy, I needed support in dealing with uncertainty because there was no echo chamber in the same way from other people, and people interpret things more negatively through the screen than intended. The opportunity for empathetic interaction is more challenging and leaves out a lot. All technical systems and applications were new; all gadgets had to be learned, and what to cut out had to be decided."</p> <p>"If you are a lively person, it is good to be calmer online since there is no body language and gestures online, and you cannot point things out by hand. Instructions must be very easy, clear, speech slow and clear; if you are uncertain about technology and it shows to learners, it is very frustrating when the teacher should be able to guide the learners in using the software. You do not have to master technology in advance, but you must be interested so that solutions can be quickly sought in problem situations, for example, in a situation where someone cannot access the class online one day."</p> <p>"Listening, interaction, a certain softness (online is tough, not forgiving for teachers, but not for learners either), the teacher is easier to judge online, just like the learner. You can be serious and professional, but laughing and humour are needed with learners and in creating community, to be able to build trust over the internet with learners, so that they dare to share things and make mistakes. A technically very inept teacher who can interact is forgiven much more than a teacher who is technically skilled but delivers their own teaching."</p> <p>"You have to read the learners very carefully because reactions are not as easily visible; you should not love your own voice, you should not transfer information from top down, no lecturing, you should not fear trying new things or failing, you must give responsibility and space to learners, let learners ideate and hope, should be able to discuss and collaborate, should not fear technology but need not be very good with them, learn by testing and doing. Take into account different learners."</p> <p>"Devices were brought, and the staff guidance site was shown. For online teaching, I would have needed more orientation. I followed some classes. I missed more hand-holding guidance, for example, where the material banks were and where the learning objectives were. No one had the responsibility for orientation; I would have needed to work closely with someone for that."</p> <p>"The workload tired me; I wanted to do something other than teaching so that I wouldn't be tied to daily teaching hours. The lengths of workdays became insane; perhaps I was too ambitious myself, so work consumed me. Detaching was challenging. Separating work and free time was difficult. Every day, making the schedule and learning content visible and thinking about differentiation and individualised teaching beforehand was really laborious."</p> <p>"Independence is nice but dull and lonely. I taught myself to exhaustion. I strongly believe in job rotation; teaching online every day becomes exhausting. I wanted to start thinking about the structures behind everything and missed different perspectives on integration. I thought it was because of the lack of in-person contacts and being at home for too long. I realised at the beginning of the pandemic that in other workplaces, there were no routines</p> |
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| | <p>for interacting online, that this place is much further along in that regard than many others. The job description was too lonely, and it changed so much that there was never a breather; the workload kept increasing. It wasn't the online platform that tired me, but the workload.</p> |
| <p>Antifragility<> resilience</p> | <p>Incredibly interesting when initial doubts were about how one could learn online. My thoughts changed so radically regarding online teaching. I thought online would be boring, that interaction wouldn't work, that you couldn't learn to speak. But there were better opportunities for natural interaction when situations arose that needed to be dealt with, like technical problems: learners had to explain issues and practical challenges, so communication skills naturally improved in everyday situations that the online environment presented."</p> <p>"If the course lasts for a whole year (with a 5-day summer break), there's no room for vacation days for the learners. Daily sitting at the computer weakens physical health and can decrease study motivation due to the lack of breaks."</p> <p>"Can one speak freely if the learner doesn't use the camera, as they don't know who's on the other side?"</p> <p>"If there are too many people in the chat, one doesn't know to whom their own matters are reaching."</p> <p>"Work truly propels people forward: learning a language, finding a job or a place to study, learning to function in society, seeing personal development. Friendly colleagues, interesting learners, being able to trust the supervisor that there's enough work."</p> <p>"Work-related discrepancies grow like a snowball. If one starts, many join in, and if there haven't been face-to-face interactions, irony, sarcasm, etc., go unnoticed, and things are taken very seriously. Chat isn't good for handling negative and unpleasant things. It's preferable to address such matters in meetings with cameras on."</p> <p>"Technical adjustments can take a lot of time; building a community and social interaction can sometimes be harder but not for everyone."</p> <p>"The intensity of online learning is tiring. It's harder to assist learners when not in the same room. Technical problems are challenging when language skills and ICT skills are weak; understanding the instructions can be difficult. As a teacher, I missed having the work community nearby; facial expressions, looks, touch, and casual chatting were missing. However, there was no feeling of being distant from the learners."</p> <p>"I was sceptical about online learning. I needed a lot of help with small digital things: where to find things and how the technologies work. Once I established verbal contact with the learners, I didn't need help with pedagogy. Though pedagogically, everyone learned a lot just by observing what others did. Much more than in classroom teaching."</p> <p>"I needed support with technological devices and applications. The structure of the day and practices. Which credentials needed to be opened for whom, how people access different places, creating a blog, front-loading the day's structure. Especially in the beginning, the days had to be planned meticulously to get the hang of it. Later, it became easier: as the learners progressed, and they no longer needed guidance down to the minute, there was flexibility in the schedule."</p> <p>"Before the pandemic, one could be at peace in a small group online; with the pandemic, people who didn't know how to behave disturbed it, complained about everything, claimed that certain things couldn't be done online. There's no understanding at any point, and there's no interest in being the babysitter of classroom teachers. It feels like when they were forced online, the attitude was negative, and the focus was on complaining about not being in the classroom."</p> |

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| | <p>"Work became fragmented because it's so easy and quick online. Work piled up for the same workers, but the number of workers didn't increase, causing a loss of control over one's work. The feeling of permanence decreases when it's easy for teachers to move from one project to another. Managing the chaotic whole felt stressful. Online allows for flexible combining of different groups, leading to a sense of temporariness, but when the temporariness becomes permanent, the stress is constant. There have been discussions within the online team about entrepreneurial work. It started to feel like one gets the downsides of entrepreneurship, its uncertainty, but not the freedom that comes with entrepreneurship: the continuity of work was always uncertain, although the positive aspect was the freedom in one's work and strong trust from the supervisor and minimal control."</p> <p>"Permanent employment strengthens the sense of belonging, community, and commitment. The coffee room is important. Training material should be more accessible for everyone. Due to system changes, some of the material gets lost or is unavailable. Face-to-face meetings are needed."</p> <p>"Digital competence, being able to transfer and improvise in problem situations with technology, ease: learners don't have to be in constant chat with the teacher; mastery of methods and learning culture. It's not so serious if a device doesn't work one day.</p> <p>"Material and resources were abundant, but assembling it was challenging and difficult. Often, online, there's an ambitious plan, well-structured and carefully thought out in terms of what needs to be included within a day, whereas in face-to-face teaching, such a detailed structure isn't created. Striving for efficiency and perfection was tiring. Perhaps there should have been more room for flexibility, procedural tasks, and empowering learners, so that everything doesn't come pre-established. Smaller teams where ideas can be developed and perspectives gained for more learner-centered teaching."</p> |
| <p>Collaborative resources</p> | <p>An empathetic reception when sharing personal aspects of one's life. Matters related to training and social situations are often brought up in the chat, especially when seeking peer support or advice. In the online setting, negative situations are different from in-person classrooms, so discussing them together is important."</p> <p>"Despite long distances, one can establish connections and a sense of belonging, offering a rich peer experience when people from sparsely populated areas or small towns meet and share similar situations. Friendships are formed online too."</p> <p>"A whole range of emotions in a few messages. Multiple conversations happening concurrently, discussing successes, worries at work, personal life, along with casual conversations. One never knows what will be discussed; sometimes, the chat is filled with hearts and thumbs-ups, other times, there are tears and stress - all emotions on display. Playfulness in the chat adds flavor to work. Surprisingly vibrant place."</p> <p>"The chat room becomes one's life. Personal updates, emotional reactions, private life, work-related matters - a lively and unique space fostering a sense of community, where everyone decides their level of engagement. There are phases of more or less activity depending on workload. Laughter and tears. If someone with a negative attitude is visible in the community, negativity spreads quickly. Excessive positivity seems forced: on a bad day, seeing suns and hearts annoys. For online teachers, the break room is essential, a place to vent. There's always help for every issue, and it works quite democratically."</p> <p>"The break room chat builds a common view that online education works, leading to progress in people's lives, successful teaching, and advancement for learners in their own paths."</p> <p>"We embarked on something new, wanted to prove as a team that we could make this work, the freedom to choose where to teach."</p> |

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| | <p>"Through co-teaching with an experienced teacher, I received guidance and a model. Later, roles switched, and I got the chance to guide others. Someone always knew something, and each person brought their own style to the team. Quick responses to questions every time."</p> <p>"Through live meetings, I've gotten to know colleagues better, making it easier to ask specific questions and feel confident in asking."</p> <p>"The virtual break room worked incredibly well; people were active, with a low threshold for asking questions and receiving help. An invaluable resource in the beginning. Later, when routines started flowing, support was needed in different areas, and the break room continued to serve as support along with the immediate supervisor."</p> <p>"During the pandemic, emotions escalated, leading to conflicts that might not have happened if discussions occurred face-to-face, seeing the person entirely, not just through a camera, voice, or text. It demands more reflection on one's and others' communication: 'What did that person mean by that?' With classroom teachers, the only joint chat during the pandemic was more factual and supportive when needed; not as immediate as the online teachers' chat."</p> <p>"I definitely prefer working with a colleague or team rather than alone. Working alone online is very lonely. Communication with learners is different from sharing work-related matters with another teacher. It's important for another teacher to know the learners in a group because it helps in understanding learner learning and connection. Learners might behave differently with different teachers, giving a more comprehensive view. Online teachers tend to take it personally if a learner doesn't attend class, even though there could be various reasons. It's easier to judge a person if the only contact is online."</p> <p>"I would definitely rather work with a colleague or team to check my thoughts and not remain stagnant. Professional reflection can't happen through learners because it's biased towards personal success and failure, but colleagues offer direct and equally valuable feedback."</p> <p>"A lot of time went into finding materials, listening to others' webinar recordings to understand what others are doing, what themes and functions the subject relates to. What to teach in different situations (e.g., running errands), how grammar, vocabulary, and situations connect. Not many questions about technical issues as basic skills had been learned."</p> <p>"Sharing successes and what went well or didn't, what works online and what doesn't, work methods, pedagogy, methods, and effective techniques for different groups."</p> <p>"In the chat, materials, ideas to use, and share, models, schedules, operational methods are exchanged. I'm happy to share if someone asks. I share when I feel it could save someone else's energy."</p> <p>"Everyone can do as they wish, but practices are gladly shared. For instance, the daily routine is quite similar for everyone, with slight variations, even though teachers have the freedom to teach as they prefer. New teachers often try new things. Helpful tips for everyday life and information about new technical settings and updates, good new applications with possible existing material, information packages for course starts and different phases, guidance for updating and organizing material banks, various working methods - everything can be shared as it's not seen as a competition."</p> <p>"Generally, things are shared within the community, especially if someone asks. Things might not be shared if no one asks. There are pedagogically skillful teachers online who show positive humility in their work, not coming with an attitude that their method is the only correct one. There have been some, but they've had to admit that there are other good methods. The community fosters an expertise where collaboration and sharing are seen as</p> |
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| | <p>beneficial for both the sharer and the recipient. Getting to know colleagues is essential to understand what to ask from whom."</p> <p>"For a new colleague starting online, experiences, information, and materials are shared willingly. Materials created by one teacher, adapted by another, and further developed by another are shared with others. Sharing is easy and practical, as it's about sharing files or links, not boxes of paper. Sharing can't be measured by how much one has shared and received."</p> <p>"For a larger group, the community doesn't function well. Older online communities don't live as dynamically online. Interaction is more traditional."</p> <p>"Everyone writes whatever they like. All conversations go to everyone, and responses might not always come. Some things get lost in the conversation."</p> <p>"Visual reactions intensify emotions, fun, humour, deeper situational relevance, and add colour to expression that might otherwise remain inadequate in text form. The same works for expressing emotions with learners: breaking the ice, learners got excited and could build mini-cultures around using emojis. They also expressed personality or a way to construct it."</p> <p>"Not everyone is very active; some write when there's something to say. The loudest group writes about various things every day: work matters, teaching materials, how they taught a specific topic, work contracts, dog pictures, weekend activities, geographic locations, and sights during work trips. The chat is a relaxed place, like having coffee with colleagues, but since we're working in the same place, work-related conversations inevitably happen. It's not time or location-bound; you can chat casually even during free time. If I start stressing about messages, I log out outside work hours."</p> <p>"The chat community doesn't work if everyone jumps in. I'd reserve it for casual conversations. Meetings every other week. Regular meetings (cameras on) to discuss updates; for example, when new employees join. Educational workshops, standardising practices, such as assessments."</p> <p>"People would meet in person more often, at least twice a year, preferably three times. More time to meet colleagues, be together, develop, and talk."</p> <p>"Cross-project communal events should be developed. Casual chats and meetings. How to integrate newcomers? The community has been consciously built, but should there be etiquette/rules as the community grows? At work, there might be quite a few people feeling lonely when chatting even during their free time. Or are colleagues just that nice? A community of like-minded individuals?"</p> |
| <p>Entrepreneurial mindset</p> | <p>"Teachers need to be flexible, eager to experiment, curious, not wanting to do things the same way they've always been done. Technology is evolving constantly; it needs to be mastered, fostering a renewing attitude, tolerating multichannel communication, with burnout as a risk: being able to set boundaries for their work hours, understanding their task isn't to save the entire world."</p> <p>"Learners don't need to be in constant chat with the teacher; the teacher needs to master various methods and online learning culture to engage learners."</p> <p>"I would strengthen communication, increase teacher and managerial resources to facilitate information flow, open work planning (who is where on any given day), utilizing teachers' skills elsewhere, even though teaching is the primary role, but there should be other opportunities."</p> <p>"It's a developing field; methods and technical solutions are evolving constantly. Many different aids have emerged, which can be tried and developed."</p> |

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| | <p>"At the beginning, a lot of work had to be self-created because there weren't established practices in the field, and there weren't clear answers on how things should be done. It was about understanding what falls into the daily work routine, what needs personal planning, and everything had to be done."</p> <p>"We started from scratch, work involved planning, doing, and learning together. Understanding the online realm was about doing, the designer provided a lot of briefs. Because there was so much information initially, and no personal experience with the online environment and apps, many things were understood gradually after years of work. Continuous learning happens by asking questions and doing."</p> <p>"At the start, I needed help with lesson planning, finding materials, constructing lessons, defining learning objectives, apart from tracking lessons, understanding what goes on behind the scenes while planning work. In the general chat, a question could get lost, so one had to think about who to ask for help on different matters."</p> <p>"Leadership should actively develop and illustrate the path of an online teacher because during the pandemic, there was a prevailing notion that everyone is an online teacher, but in reality, this doesn't work unless teaching and the teacher's identity online are systematically reinforced. Senior management appears in everyday life mostly echoing strategies but not implemented."</p> <p>"Don't fear technology, even if you don't know how to use it. It's a tool like a chalkboard in a classroom. There needs to be curiosity about tools and readiness/attitude towards how things can be done online. More important than using programs is being able to use those tools for teaching and communicating with people online."</p> <p>"Being able to respond quickly to various things, produce material swiftly, and be patient with all kinds of people. You need to get over the initial uncertainty: make your choices, build your job profile, handle learners' difficult situations. You can't be too boring, especially when teaching dull topics."</p> <p>"Cheerfulness, entertainment, a teacher is like an actor-host-radio announcer: constantly producing written, visual content, chatting, speaking, hosting, reacting to messages and events, responding immediately to questions, always present. Cheerful mistakes also lighten the learners' stress. Skills in visual presentation, simplifying content, quick information retrieval, managing fragmented work, message overflow, and multiple programs simultaneously. Good self-direction and skills in independent work and time management. Empathy towards learners, fair treatment, encouragement, patience, and clarity. Bad aspects are inflexibility and rigidity in learning new things."</p> |
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