SELFIE for work-based learning

Promising Practice

Implemented by: The European Commission

Where: Across Europe and beyond

Status: Piloting from 2018 and launched in 2021

Summary: SELFIE work-based learning (WBL) is a free online tool that enables students, teachers, school leaders and in-company trainers to self-reflect on their progress in incorporating the use of digital technology in teaching, learning and assessment in a TVET school or company. The tool anonymizes the data input and generates a report that helps decision-makers and schools formulate an action plan and set their priorities.

Overview

Developed for TVET stakeholders following the success of SELFIE for schools

SELFIE for work-based learning (WBL) was developed and piloted from 2018 to 2021, and it is the product of extensive collaboration between a range of different European Commission agencies and TVET stakeholders including schools, companies, social partners, TVET providers associations and chambers of commerce. In total, some 35,000 participants from around 150 VET schools and 250 companies in France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland, Republic of Serbia, Romania, and Turkey were involved in the piloting (Hippe, R et al 2021). SELFIE WBL supports the EU's mission to develop policies that help empower citizens with the skills they need, including digital competencies. SELFIE WBL is part of the broader SELFIE tool which focuses on assisting schools to self-reflect on how to improve their use of technology for teaching and learning. It is an adaptation of the original SELFIE to the specific requirements of WBL provision in TVET schools.

SELFIE WBL was developed because the existing SELFIE tool did not specifically address TVET schools which offer work-based learning (WBL) schemes combining school- and workplace-based experiences for students. The content of the self-reflection tool was adapted to reflect the different nature of TVET schools. SELFIE WBL is available in all 24 EU languages + 15 non-EU languages.

SELFIE WBL is based on the SELFIE principles

SELFIE WBL is based on the same principles as the overall SELFIE tool for schools which reflects the conceptual model published by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in 2015 (Kampylis et al. 2015).

Objectives

The objectives of SELFIE WBL are to support TVET institutions and teachers, students, school leaders and in-company trainers to:

- reflect jointly on their use of digital technologies for education and training
- plan for improvement
- monitor progress.

How does SELFIE WBL work?

SELFIE WBL takes a snapshot of a VET school/company's use of digital technology for training. It is an online and anonymous tool based around 4 questionnaires that gather the views of students, teachers, school leaders and in-company trainers. It covers 7 key areas and 74 specific descriptors regarding learning in the digital context. SELFIE WBL looks at 8 key areas of digital education:

1. Leadership and governance
2. Infrastructure and equipment
3. Professional development
4. Implementation in the classroom
5. Support and resources
6. Assessment practices
7. Students' digital competence
8. Network and collaboration

On the basis of responses to the questionnaires, a snapshot of the school's and company's strengths and weaknesses in their use of technology for learning is produced by the tool which includes:

- An overview of completion rates of the school leaders, teachers, students in digital learning/use of digital technology
- Individual results of the 8 SELFIE key areas listed above against the average rates of each by respondent group.
- Individual results per key area against the average rating for each statement within a given area from all respondents.
- Results for each user, showing the average responses per user group for all statements.

The tool is an adaptable one that can be customized for different school and company contexts. It does not assess schools or employers but produces information that can be used in the context of that school or employer.

Outcomes and impact

The results of the piloting show there was a different level of affinity with digital technologies among the different groups who completed the SELFIE WBL survey. School leaders displayed a higher propensity to engage with digital technology (70%), followed by in-company trainers (65%) and teachers (59%). This may reflect that the results come from a piloting exercise which attracted those who are more interested in digital technology (i.e., there might be a self-selection bias). For students, the pilot survey showed a difference between where and how they use digital technology. Over 25,000 students took part in the pilot survey. The results showed more than 60% of students use digital technologies very frequently (i.e., every day) at home for fun. But less than 30% use them at home for learning every day. In school, digital technology is used relatively infrequently with the majority of students using it for learning less than once a month.

Challenges

In terms of the development of SELFIE WBL, the piloting phase identified challenges. These included:

- **Constructing the survey at the right length**. Feedback from students suggested that the survey was too long.
- **Working across countries.** In a multi-country project, some issues on understanding the questions or specific terms were raised, but were not consistent across countries, which may be related to translation to national languages.

- **Internet connection.** The pilot took place during the COVID-19 pandemic; thus some students and staff were not able to access the internet in a school setting and relied on home-based access. The extent to which this impacted participation is unknown, but it remains the case that access to the internet differs across groups and societies. Such differences in access may have skewed the results to reflect the perspectives of certain groups of stakeholders over others.
- **Take up among company trainers.** This is a new category of users for the SELFIE tool overall which was designed initially for students and teachers in schools. In the piloting phase, the take up among this group was lower and it was recommended that specific measures may be necessary to target companies and relevant labour market intermediaries, at all levels.

Insights

In terms of how to develop online self-reflection tools for the TVET community, SELFIE WBL produced several insights centring on the need for bespoke tools to be developed for TVET stakeholders that reflect the particularities of the sector.

- Accessibility and usability of results for different users is important. SELFIE requires a school coordinator who needs to be able to export the results from the survey in an understandable and visually attractive format to enable them to be used most effectively by school leaders.
- Tailored support and guidance material for those working in TVET schools and companies are needed. These include tutorials or walk-through videos on how to set up a SELFIE self-reflection.
- The terminology used in the survey should be appropriate for work-based learning. Piloting has a vital role to play in ensuring the terms and language used are appropriate and 'speak' to TVET learners and educators.

Next steps

The consultation exercises that took place as part of the development of the SELFIE WBL tool provided potential areas for development:

- Work on the buy-in of national level stakeholders, such as Ministries, VET councils/authorities and economic sectoral/professional organizations.
- Develop a SELFIE eco-system at national level with a community of practitioners who can share practices, resources and knowledge among schools.
- Establish a network of SELFIE National Coordinators to connect SELFIE actors at system level and across countries.

To use the SELFIE WBL self-assessment tool, register at https://schools-go-digital.jrc.ec.europa.eu/school/registry and select upper secondary vocational school.

References

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- Kampylis, P., Punie, Y., & Devine, J., 2015. Promoting Effective Digital-Age Learning - A European Framework for Digitally-Competent Educational Organisations. doi:10.2791/54070
- SELFIE WBL scoping study: a potential role in linking companies and regional innovation with VET schools: https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC134782
- Involving companies to support the VET digital transformation with SELFIE WBL: https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC134556
- European Commission, SELFIE resources webpages: https://education.ec.europa.eu/selfie/selfie-for-work-based-learning