

The logo features a stylized globe with white wavy lines on the left, a solid purple circle in the center, and the text 'Velocity Arcademy' in white to the right of the circle.

Velocity Arcademy

Gamified upskilling platform

Promising Practice

Implemented by: Velocity Arcademy

Where: Cambodia

Status: Started in October 2020

Summary: Velocity Arcademy has developed a gamified upskilling platform that aims to equip teachers and trainers with up-to-date digital and pedagogical skills and competencies.

Overview

Skills and competencies for a rapidly changing society

Velocity Academy is an EdTech start-up operating in Cambodia that aims to transform Cambodian teachers and trainers into digital educators by equipping them with the up-to-date digital and pedagogical skills and competencies required in a rapidly changing knowledge-based society. Its target groups are TVET and general education teachers from public and private schools and higher education institutions, and trainers from large companies in Cambodia.

The delivery of flexible, student-centred training

While working as a consultant helping companies with instructional design and providing training solutions, Velocity Academy co-founder Pichpisey Sovann noticed a gap in the market. There was a need for digital skills training that combined pedagogical skills with digital skills and content knowledge to help teachers and trainers deliver flexible, student-centred training as well as to promote the development of interdisciplinary fields, which will become increasingly important in the future.

Linking digital skills to pedagogical skills

Prior to launching its upskilling platform in 2020, Velocity Academy spoke to several TVET providers who were seeking digital skills training for their staff to help them to deliver education and

training remotely. While the providers understood the need for digitalization to expand access to their programmes, they did not understand the importance of linking digital skills to pedagogical skills to introduce new and more engaging teaching techniques into their classrooms.

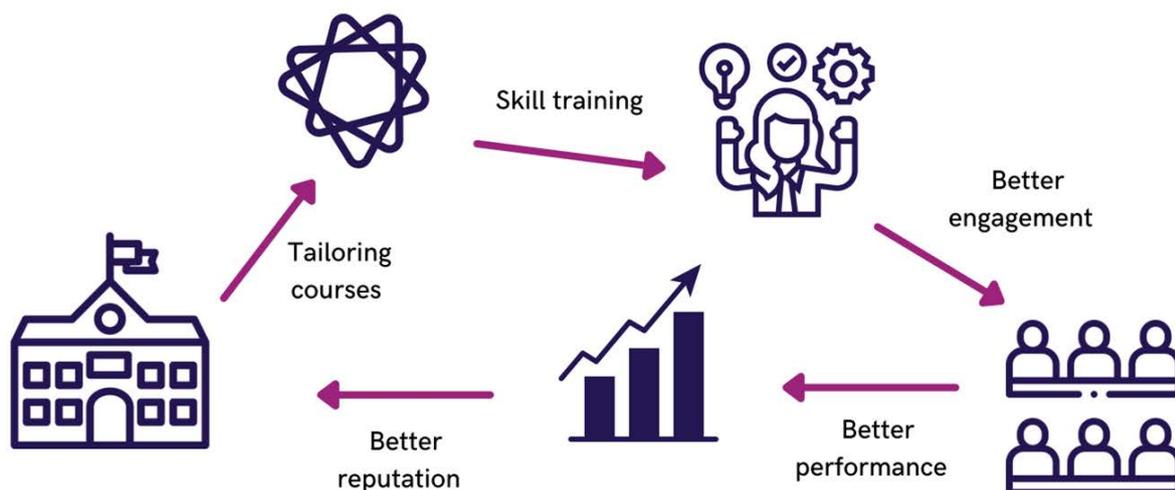
Transforming teachers and trainers into digital educators

Velocity Academy's remote training approach overcomes several constraints faced by teachers and trainers in Cambodia, such as lack of time, lack of access to training and lack of funds. Its upskilling platform is usable in low-bandwidth internet areas and is available in Khmer and in English to overcome linguistic barriers to training. Velocity Academy utilizes the power of mobile learning, since its research has shown that 90% of teachers/trainers participating in its programmes prefer using mobile phones over laptops.

The platform's gamification features make training fun and encourages teachers and trainers to continually improve their skills, while its system of digital badges – which are awarded to those who complete training modules – are designed to motivate participation in continuous professional development.

The training focuses on problem solving, thus providing TVET staff with 21st century skills and demonstrating how they can challenge their own students to foster self-learning and applied skills. Participants learn how to use open-source, free-trial or freely available tools and resources to deliver engaging training, including in practical skills areas (e.g. by showing relevant YouTube videos in a motorcycle maintenance course), at a low cost.

HOW DOES IT WORK?



Outcomes and impact

In addition to running a range of non-formal workshops and training programmes, from June to July 2021, Velocity Academy ran a two-week formal training programme, Innovative Teacher, to provide pedagogical support and digital skills to 50 teachers and trainers from various provinces across Cambodia. The training also included lessons on how to use the platform. At the end of the programme, Velocity Academy offered frequent (monthly or bi-monthly) follow-up support to encourage participants to apply what they had learned in their teaching practices.

Notable outcomes of the programme:

- Teachers'/trainers' improved digital skills, pedagogical skills and content knowledge
- Continuous skills upgrading by teachers/trainers owing to the platform's accessibility and gamification features, as well as Velocity Academy's follow-up training and support
- Improved teacher/trainer practices following participation in Velocity Academy's workshops and training programmes have resulted in increased student engagement and attendance
- A former participant reported that student attendance in her classes had risen from 45% before the training to around 80–90% following training
- 80% of teachers/trainers who completed Velocity Academy's Innovative Teacher programme in July 2021 have continued to use its upskilling platform post-training

Challenges

Funding issues

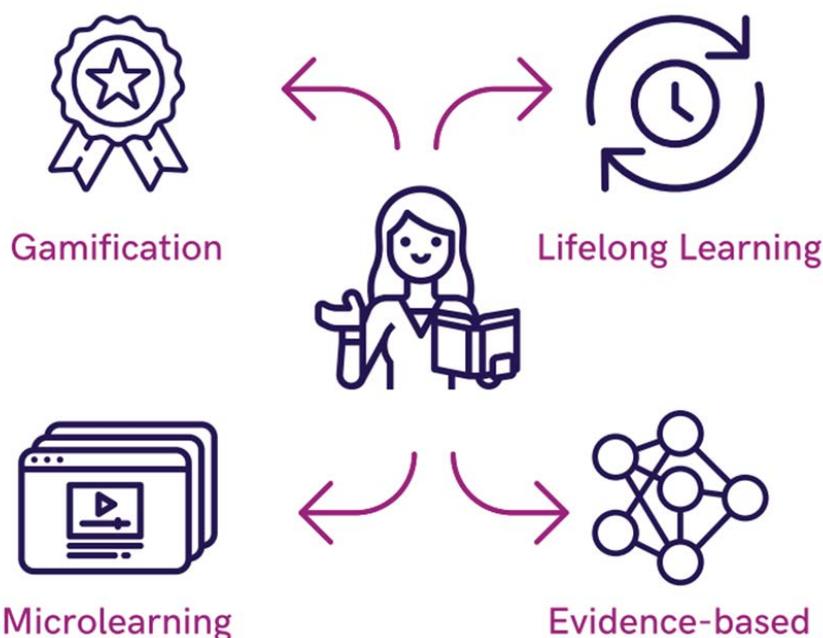
Velocity Academy is self-funded and therefore relies on the support of its team members and friends as well as colleges who see the impact of the initiative. The programme was initially pitched to investors, but ultimately, the co-founders decided not to seek external funding in order to maintain control of the business. Nevertheless, this has also posed a constraint on its operations. To keep within budget, Velocity Academy has had to find ways of lowering the costs of production of its courses and its trainings, as well as the costs of its operations.

Teachers' reluctance to undergo training

There was a level of reluctance from teachers due to the lack of available free time or the commitment required to undergo continuous professional development. To overcome this challenge, Velocity Academy has tried to leverage partnerships with schools and other stakeholders, including relevant government agencies, to increase the attractiveness of the training programmes.

Lack of accreditation

Velocity Academy is still looking for an accreditation system that can provide it with the right accreditation feature for its training model.



Insights

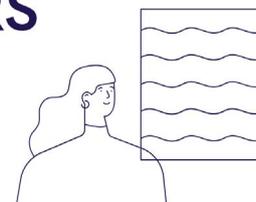
Lessons that Velocity Arcademy would like to pass on to other TVET teacher training institutions include:

- *Become more active* – Velocity Arcademy focuses on interacting with teachers, students and other stakeholders to form connections and offer practical training.
- *Focus on solving problems* – Listen to the challenges that teachers/trainers, students and school managers have experienced, and try to understand what is going on in their particular context, then tailor your solutions or your initiatives to their needs.
- *Leverage partnerships* – Helping teachers and trainers continuously upskill and find solutions to the digitalization challenge cannot be the work of a solitary agency. Velocity Arcademy works with partners who believe in the possibility of positive change in the education sector.

Next steps

Velocity Arcademy is currently focused on the Cambodian market but it is considering expanding to other countries in the future.

Think about the roles of TEACHERS



Learn more

Velocity Arcademy was co-founded by Phasokvina Sar, a Learning Support Officer at CamEd Business School, and Pichpisey Sovann, an Educational Researcher with a background in educational technology, pedagogical development, blended learning, online learning environments and lean teaching.

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To learn more about Velocity Arcademy, visit:
<https://velocityarcademy.com/>

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