

Today's Teaching Tools

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Preface

I was quite nervous, but I had prepared my lesson well. This would be the first class that I would teach on my own. It was a large group and they were infamous for being a rowdy bunch. I waited for them at the door and greeted each student. When I started class, I told my students I was quite nervous, and that I wanted to try something new



with them. It caught their attention. I said I wanted to try to use ict-tools, so that all of them could work at their own pace and on their own level. "If you think an assignment doesn't fit you in a way, please raise your hand, so we can try to make it interesting for you, too."

I had prepared my lesson in such a way that I could use several ict-tools to support collaborative learning, to quiz my students now and then, and so that I was able to provide them with lots of feedback (and compliments!). During the collaborative assignments, I could see what all my students were doing (we used Google Docs). I added comments to their work, gave them compliments, and provided them with some input on how they could

improve their work. Towards end of the lesson, I had given all my students feedback. I could see their faces brighten up every time I left a comment, and I noticed students working harder whenever I gave them tips on how to improve their work. A final interactive quiz was the end of class. Within 50 minutes, all students had worked really hard, they had all received feedback, they all tested if they knew what they had to learn, and I managed to personally address each of them.

At the end of the lesson, just before the bell rang, I thanked this wonderful group of students. I told them that I was very content with how they had done their best, how I could see that everyone tried, and that I was grateful that they were willing to try this new method of working with me. Out of nowhere, all students got up and gave me a standing ovation. I couldn't help but blush; there I was at the start of my career in education. This first, very important lesson, I learnt two things: 1. Every student needs and deserves to be and feel seen, and 2. Ict-tools can support this.

With this in mind, I started to develop a website that can help and support colleagues who want to use ict-tools in education. I try to publish as much freely available information as I possibly can to support you. The [website in Dutch](#) is somewhat more elaborate, but I do try to

translate as much of my work as I can, to be able to help teachers all over the world.

Do you have any questions for me? Please feel free to add me on [Linkedin](#), contact me on [Facebook](#), or fill out the [contact form](#)!

With special thanks to:

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Introduction

With this (mini) e-book, I aim to provide (future) teachers with practical tips and tricks to use digital learning tools in their lessons and learning. In this document, you will find an overview of approximately thirty tools with a brief description. Apart from that, I explain how you can use these tools to support your students' learning, for example through online formative testing, interactive instruction, or collaborative learning. For each concept that I mention, I try to provide you with clear examples as to how you could incorporate it in your own teaching practice.

Practical tips

Before we fully dive into all the different tools, I have a few quick tips for you:

1. Create a (fake) Google or Microsoft account.

Many digital learning tools have the feature 'sign in with Google' or 'sign in with Office365'. If you have a default account for digital tools, you will save a lot of time by signing up with your fake account, rather than filling out your personal details over and over. Apart from that, you won't receive all the spam email that the free tools tend to come with. Lastly, you can avoid privacy issues if your account is fake; signing in doesn't automatically mean the tool has your personal details.

2. Request upgrades

The majority of tools mentioned in this e-book are free to use. However, to use all the exceptional features that some tools have, you will have to have a paid plan. I would recommend you to talk to colleagues and see what kind of tools they are using. If you are using similar tools, it could be worth going to your management to request a paid plan for the organisation. If you manage to get a plan for a group of teachers, the costs will often be lower because of the group discount.

3. Start small.

Finding, creating, and trying new tools can take up a lot of your time, and it can be difficult to determine how you could use them in your lessons. Therefore, it would be recommended to start small: Pick one tool that appeals to you and that seems easy to use. Creating positive experiences as regards to the use of ict-tools is crucial to stay motivated.

4. Collaborate!

Many studies show that trying new things on your own can be tough; one tiny setback can cause you to lose all your motivation. Sit down with a colleague and make a plan to use ict-tools together. Help each other to get used to how it works, and inspire each other with new ideas and positive experiences (and send them this e-book, of course!).

Digitalisation

Digitalisation is a topic that seems to keep on coming back. All over the world, organisations make an appeal to integrate technology in education (e.g. ISTE, 2016; Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Using technology is a skill, which means it should be practised in many different situations and contexts.

Almost all future job requires citizens to be able to use technology efficiently. In order to do this, you will need to be familiar with using basic technological hardware, but apart from that, computational thinking should also be a skill you possess. In order to acquire these skills, the integration of technology in education is incredibly important. Apart from that, using technology in teaching can make lessons more interactive, fun, and efficient. Consider for example quizzing your students with [Kahoot!](#) or [Quizizz](#) in a competitive game, or use interactive presenting software, such as [Nearpod](#) or [Lessonup](#).

For some people, using technology in education may seem like a big change or challenge. However, the methodology and pedagogy of teaching does not change; ict-tools are just there to support the learning processes that we are all very familiar with.

Ict-tools that are mentioned in this e-book

Below is a short description of the educational ict-tools that have been mentioned in this e-book. For a complete overview of the ict-tools I am familiar with, click [here](#).

[Animaker](#) is a tool that allows you to create your own animation videos. The free version provides you with several templates and characters that can be used to make our own video. The maximum duration of a video for a free account is two minutes, and you can create a maximum of five free videos per month. An animation video is a fun way to provide your students with information, but it can also be interesting to let your students create their own videos as part of an assignment.

[AnswerGarden](#) is a very easy tool to use. You simply go to AnswerGarden.ch and you enter a question or a statement. Subsequently, you share the link with your students, and they can respond. The main advantage of AnswerGarden over any other tool, is that you don't need to sign up to use it. It's completely privacy-proof. However, the downside of this is that you can't delete comments and AnswerGarden's features are quite limited.

[Asana](#) is ideal for larger projects where collaboration is key. Asana allows you to create and assign tasks, to