

Strength cards to foster concentration

I teach **programming and computer science** in a **public high school** in a **medium-sized city of Eastern Poland**.

14

age of pupils on average

570

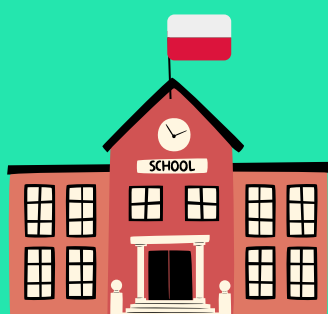
pupils

33

pupils per class on average

17

classes

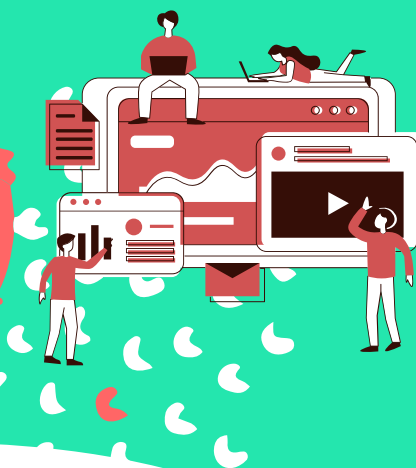


Teaching environment

We have **integration classes** and students with hearing impairment, Asperger's, dyslexia, skin diseases, and chronic diseases. Teachers try to work in groups.

Digital tools

There was an **electronic register application** in our school, to which everyone - teachers, parents, and students - logged in. It was used for everyday communication and sending materials. We used Google chat too. My students were **equipped at home** and had a reasonably good internet connection.



Experience with digital tools before Covid-19

I took part in distance learning training, collaborated in a cooperation network, and tutoring groups. I also **learnt on my own**. I was involved in the improvement of a web platform. The platform was created for the needs of innovative projects, it was used to **support teachers who were looking for new teaching solutions**.



HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

<https://points-of-you.pl/>

Points of you is a pedagogical tool which provides icebreaking or warming-up exercises to make students feel at ease and eager to learn.



Needs for this new teaching practice

I wanted to **strengthen my relationship** with my students and students' relationship with each other. I also wanted to be able to observe their **behaviour and mood**.

Needs solved

I chose tools that would allow me to start the meeting by making contact, **getting to know my students' emotions**, their mood and finally gathering their attention to our meeting and the tasks to be performed.



Audience targeted

The activities I prepared were intended for the whole class. I tried to be **attentive and address students individually**.



Organisation

I didn't want to overload my students, but I really wanted to **understand their situation at home**.

When planning lessons, I kept an eye on the balance between what students said and what they really needed. This balance was needed in order **not to focus only on tools**, especially in my subject - computer science - and to be there as a teacher, and also as a person.

To get students to open up, **I prepared strengths cards**, photo cards, cards from games such as "Dixit", the electronic game "Points of view", and the German online game "Gefühlmonster".

The overriding goal was to create a group that was **engaged in their learning** and in the objectives of my lesson at the beginning of every class.



Practice activity

We naturally started the online meeting with something nice. I tried to **start with a conversation** about how the students were doing, what they had done that day, or if something important happened that they would like to talk about as a group. I tried to **support them** during lockdown.

I started with **one of the cards** I had prepared, followed by a short conversation. Sometimes we discussed for a while, sometimes it was a very short moment, depending on what was needed. After that, we were all ready to deal with the subject of the lesson to be developed.

Those first few minutes of the lesson made sure that we were **all ready for the lesson**, together and ready for further tasks. At the end of the lesson, I gave feedback - usually in the chat.



Impact of the practice

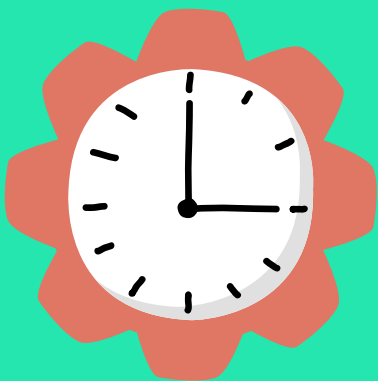
An innovation

My students are more comfortable when **talking about their emotions**.

My practice allowed me to maintain **good contact** with my students.



An efficient practice



- I worked with the **cards** all the time and used them to start conversations.
- Thanks to our exchange, we built our **knowledge base and tools together**.
- I **no longer did short tests** in the classroom, I asked my students to send me their work.

Keys to success

Balance **teaching and time sharing** with the students.

Talk with **every student**, individually.

Try to **maintain a good work hygiene**.

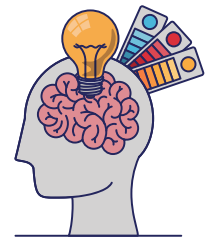


Benefits



The **relationship with my students improved**, as well as the relationship among students themselves.

I **know and understand** my students better now.



Students are **more involved** during the lessons.

Ready ?

Maintaining a good relationship with your students is essential for them to progress. It is important to be able to adapt to their needs.



Resources

Screenshots

Examples of strengths cards:

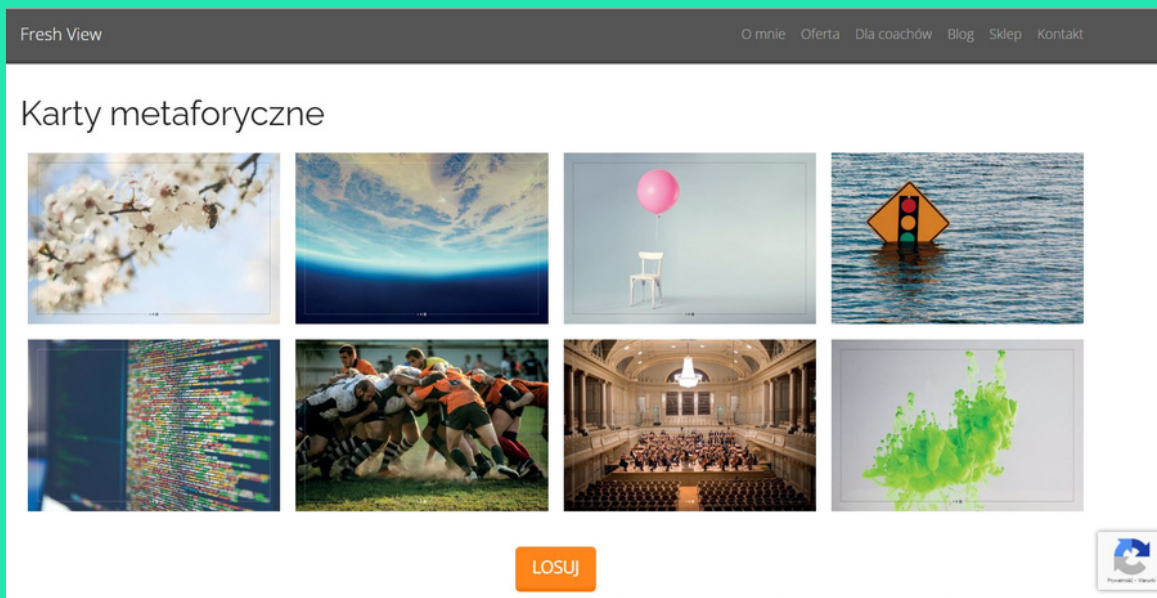
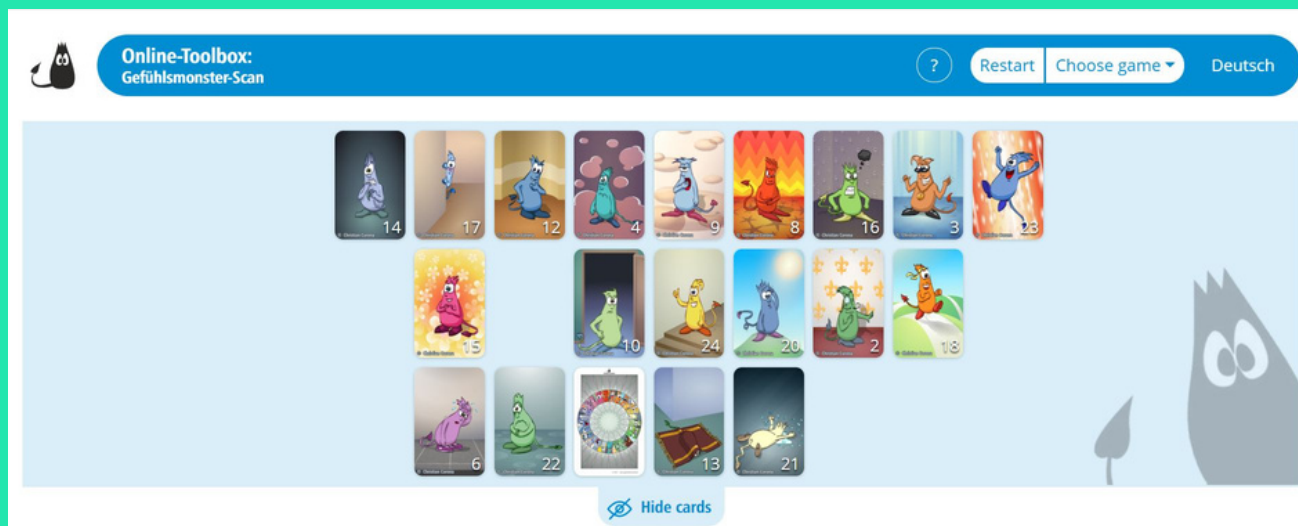


Photo cards from Gefühlsmonsters page:



This portrait gives a representation of the teacher's choices which are not our own. The statements in this portrait are not direct quotations but have been adapted from an interview which took place in 2022.