

Don’t miss out on development – Sharing digital skills in group development discussions at SeAMK

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Digital expertise can be the capability of an individual, but also of an organization, combining knowledge of substance, technology, and pedagogy or RDI competence. An essential part of this capability is the sharing of know-how, which can be supported and at the same time developed by identifying needs and strengths, for example, in group development discussions. Because learning is interactive and situational, we can influence the digital competence of SeAMK employees by participating in the group development discussions of our teams, which we at SeAMK piloted in May organized by Digi Skills. In a group development discussion, we can share information about our own expertise and thus support the organization’s culture of sharing and helping and promote not only others’ but also our own learning. Digitalization challenges each one of us, and communal learning can be one of the keys to this challenge. Sharing good practices communally increases well-being and promotes work ability if we are also able to utilize cognitive ergonomics in knowledge work and agree on common practices, for example, about electronic calendars and interruptions. When we fine-tune our own work, it can become even more meaningful to us. In group discussions the team’s goals are stated, and the topics of the learning circles are also developed together.

Learning communally

An organization learns only through learning individuals. That is why we launched a tool for SeAMK employees for self-assessment of their own digital skills, the purpose of which was to be a thought-provoking factor rather than a tool that provides raw data and tells exactly what a person should do to develop as a

digital expert. The content of this self-assessment tool, i.e. the questions, was prepared based on the EU Citizens' Digital Competence Framework. You can read more about the framework here. The areas of the questions remained the same, but the questions were either shaped or created to be related to SeAMK's environment and so that the questions were the same for both students and staff.

The utilization of these results was piloted with two different teams, bringing the discussion of the results alongside normal appraisals and group development discussions. In the group discussions, the participants discussed their own digital skills, but focused more on the strengths of the participants. Supervisors play an important role in guiding the discussion and, if necessary, also in sparking discussion. The feedback received from the pilots indicated that group development discussions are considered good among fairly new teams with people who may still be a little stranger to each other. Those who have been working with each other for a long time do not necessarily feel that they get added benefit from this kind of discussion.

Supporting a culture of sharing and helping

Group development discussions are an excellent tool for learning about the strengths of others, and through that you can find new things to learn together, either from a colleague or through a channel offered by the organization, such as self-study materials, trainings and learning circles. Through appraisals and group development discussions, supervisors receive important information about their team's digital competence and can use this information to request training on a specific topic or find things that could be shared with the rest of the organization.



Figure 1. Material for group development discussions to support the observation and wording of one's own digital competence.

Thank you to those of you who participated in piloting group development discussions. We also encourage all SeAMK employees to establish learning circles. The culture of learning and helping enables learning at individual, team and organizational levels.

Digital ability leaves a legacy of digital morning coffee and learning circles, which we hope will remain permanent ways of working in supporting communal learning and a culture of sharing and helping.

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