

## Construction in Transition – Article 3

# Use digital tools as an addition – not the exception

Digitalisation tools and delivery mechanisms are playing an ever-increasing crucial role in meeting the skills needs in the construction industry. Primarily, e-learning platforms are being used to provide access to training and education programs, enabling learners to engage from anywhere, at any time. This “beyond blended” approach is helping learners engage, to overcome geographical barriers, and to learn at their own pace.

**A**dditional digitalisation tools can include using virtual reality and simulations to provide extra training and a safe, controlled environment for workers to practice and develop their skills. This helps reduce the risks and costs associated with on-site training, and delivers a more immersive learning experience. Using digital tools in this way as an addition, and not the exception, is also improving communication and collaboration and reducing errors and rework. Data analytics are also a key tool to help identify skills gaps and training needs, and to inform the development of tailored training and education programs.

Digital training projects such as ARISE are utilising mobile apps to provide 24/7 access to on-demand training and support, enabling workers to learn on-the-go. Leveraging these tools and mechanisms will ensure that workers develop the skills required for the future, and to meet the ever-evolving needs of the industry.

### Dynamic, learner-led training

Moving skills and training from the current “static uni-directional maintenance mode” to one of a more dynamic, learner-led engagement model that is bi-directional is a must. For instance, the ARISE project utilises a comprehensive full-cycle approach comprising the following:

*Personalised training* – This non-linear approach means learners can choose their own learning paths, set their own individual learning goals, and progress at their own pace;

*Interactive and collaborative learning* – This creates opportunities for learners to collaborate with each other, to interact with their trainers and mentors, and to learn from group discussions, problem-solving activities, and role-playing scenarios.

*Feedback and assessment* – This helps learners identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to their learning approach. It includes self-assessment, peer feedback, and trainer-led assessment.

*Continuous learning* – Lifelong learning through digitalisation encourages learners to take ownership of their learning, and to develop a culture of continuous learning, ensuring they keep up-to-date with latest industry developments and trends.

Overall, moving to a more dynamic, learner-led engagement model helps create a more effective and efficient skills delivery system. Focusing on the needs and preferences of the learners, and providing them with the tools and resources to take ownership of their learning journey, creates a more engaged, motivated and skilled workforce.

### Delivering a vocational skills system

Delivering a vocational skills system that is agile, flexible and responsive, built on a foundation of digital tools including micro-modules and certification/recognition, is also essential. Several EU projects are utilising the digitalisation of exchange to achieve recognition and accreditation, including micro modules, digital tools, micro certification and accreditation, and enhanced engagement.

Offering short and focused micro-modules can also help develop specific skills quicker and more efficiently, while providing task- and impact-based learning that delivers immediate results on the job. This in turn offers significantly more flexibility for learners as well as major benefits for employers.

Indeed, using the ARISE strategy compass to fully engage with employers ensures that the vocational skills training being provided is aligned with industry needs. It puts industry at the core of the work by collaborating with employers to develop training programs that meet their specific needs.

See <https://www.ariseproject.eu/> ■



Paul McCormack, ARISE Project Leader, receiving the VocTech Future of Skills Award 2023 from Rebecca Garrod-Waters and Dominic Gill, both of Ufi, the awarding authority.