onlineHE

A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR INTEGRATING ELEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULA - ONLINEHE

2023

Welcome to the ONLINE HE initiative!

In this compiled edition of the **ONLINEHE** newsletter, we want to introduce our readers to the "A practical toolkit for integrating eLearning in Higher Education Curricula [ONLINEHE]" project, a project that aims to build the capacity of HE teaching staff, academics, learning designers, and teaching staff in integrating eLearning in the design and delivery of courses.

This newsletter features the all-project results to be obtained as well as the current activities of the project Partners.

OnlineHE Consortium:
Universitatea din Pitesti – Romania
Vilniaus Universitetas – Lithuania
Centre for advancement of research and development in educational technology LTD-CARDET – Cyprus
Diethnes Panepistimio Ellados – Greece
OBREAL GlobalObservatory
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Feature article on Intellectual Output 1:
Toolkit on how to adopt astrategy for eLearning in HE

The objective of this first ONLINEHE project output is the development of a practical and innovative toolkit that is expected to support HE instructors to develop, design and implement effective eLearning courses for teaching purposes.

During this output, partners engaged in a review of the current eLearning practices used to teach online in higher education courses of various disciplines, developed tools to support educators in Higher Education, and focused on the collection of best practices identified certain approaches that proved useful as illustrated in related literature following the established recommendations.

The toolkit contains the following sections:

1. Pedagogical Mapping: All partners implemented desk research on the state-of-the-art of eLearning in HE in partner countries and in the EU.

2. eLearning readiness checklist for teaching online in Higher Education. It is a practical checklist for users to use, adapted from the SELFIE tool, to support HE reflect and be prepared on what is needed to integrate and implement eLearning courses.

3. Evidence-based practices and practical tips: All partners conducted focus groups and administered questionnaires in their own countries with a sample consisting of eLearning experts, higher education instructors and decision makers.

4. Author national reports and a cumulative report: Partners authored a national report on implementing eLearning courses in HE across various disciplines while the leading partner authored a cumulative report summarizing the findings of all partners.

5. Create the e-toolkit for HE: The collection of 30 EU Best eLearning Practices including OERs learning activities and resources provided an annotated list of tools with practical recommendations for the implementation of eLearning courses in higher education.

Feature article on Intellectual Output 2:

Training Course

IO2 offers training to a group of people composed of HE staff, researchers, practitioners, adult educators, learning designers, and university support staff. It aims to support a group of HE professionals to understand all basic elements needed to be able to effectively design, develop and implement innovative and interactive eLearning courses to university students and adults, acknowledging its potential in the HE sector. Through this course, participants get the opportunity to adapt, adopt and integrate eLearning in HE courses, before introducing them to the wider HE community. This group will serve as the trainers for subsequent scalability of the intervention in HE. Therefore, the model followed is train-the trainer. Participants are introduced to the stages of the ADDIE Model to apply this method in the design of their eLearning courses. All 7 partner countries designed eLearning sessions/ teaching practices (scenarios) in HE courses across various disciplines following the lead partner's guidelines.

Upon completion of the training, the participants should be able to:
●understand what eLearning is, what the main principles are, and knowledge of the current state of the art
●familiar with the most common eLearning platforms and tools, their basic pros and cons
●competent to fully design and develop an eLearning course (knowledge of technology, knowledge of content, knowledge of the pedagogy behind teaching-how to teach) following the ADDIE model
●introduce eLearning in teaching and learning to others (fellow-academics, colleagues, education experts, students, etc.)
●identify the design elements suitable for the development of eLearning courses
●design and develop activities to be implemented online that are suitable for HE
●evaluate pedagogical material of users online to provide recommendations and constructive feedback using online means.

The focus of the training addresses the significant issues and topics of how to adopt eLearning in HE step-by-step and is aligned with EU policies, current trends and emergencies arise from COVID19 and HE needs. It will include hands-on activities to empower and educate academics to adopt a strategy to shift from traditional education to e-learning.

With the support gained from the training programme, HE are able to improve, modernize and elevate their current curricula and transform them to online courses. They are guided on how to design and deliver online courses. Successful use of the training allows HE providers and their staff to acquire skills and competences, multiplying the impact of the project and ensuring the toolkit's continued impact in future.

This is one of the first MOOCs that has a clear focus on supporting participants to develop parts of an online course, while guiding them closely. Specifically, all MOOCs' participants are assigned to a coach and collaborate closely with them to support them and provide feedback in the MOOCs activities. A forum is also embedded in the MOOC and is monitored by the MOOCs' coaches. These coaches can also be part of the consortium of the OnlineHE project. The MOOC is designed as a gamified environment, with scenarios and authentic learning activities. The format of the gamified digital learning resources supports the learning of HE staff. The focus of the MOOC addresses the significant issues and topics of integrating eLearning in HE and is fully aligned with EU policies and HE needs. It includes hands-on online activities to empower academics to integrate eLearning in their teaching.

Using the MOOC, HE staff are able to improve and modernize their curricula and integrate innovative technology tools for the design and delivery of courses. Successful use of the MOOC allows HE providers and their staff to acquire the skills and competences, thus multiplying the impact of the project. This will ensure that the toolkit will have a continued impact into the future.

The MOOC was initially be developed, reviewed, and piloted in educational environments in the partner countries. Demonstrating the adaptability of the MOOC curricula in this manner emphasized the potential for further exploitation within the partner countries but also in countries beyond the initial partnership. It must be stressed that the issues that the MOOC address are key priorities for the EU (shift to online teaching and learning, WFH, digitalization, Open Education Agenda, Digital Education Action Plan) and will remain at the forefront of EU policy for the foreseeable future.

Compliance: Data privacy and data protection processes is in place, and a data protection officer will be assigned to ensure GDPR compliance. The MOOC is also compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1/ 2018), ISO/IEC 40500.

Feature article on Intellectual Output 4:
Policy and practice guidelines for integrating eLearning in Higher education

The IO4 engages key people for the production of a policy report within the context of integrating eLearning in HE for maximizing the opportunities for all to participate in education and provide equal opportunities for all. The main objective of IO4 is to provide concrete policy recommendations for university leadership teams, decision makers, and key policymakers at national policy levels of government and governance in the EU and promote the use of online teaching and learning in HE.

Building on input provided by project deliverables with reference to the national policy recommendation reports, the overarching goal of this output is to fit the brief practical recommendation reports into policy directions. Initially, discussions with stakeholders took place and secondly, consolidation of the scientific results of the different outputs turned into policy-relevant messages related to eLearning in various subjects/fields of study. Last, an eLearning readiness checklist was adapted to lead to examine HE institutions and faculty readiness to include online practices/methodologies/strategies into their courses and provide support to policymakers to develop strategies for adopting eLearning in their institutions.

Therefore, this intellectual output was operationalized through the following steps:
1. Discussions with Policymakers and key Stakeholders
2. National Policy Recommendations - Desk research
3. Implementing the eLearning readiness checklist for HE institutions
4. Final Policy Recommendations report
5. Translation of the Final Policy report (comprehensive and brief version) and dissemination

Using the practical policy tips and guidelines, HE institutions are able to improve and modernize their curricula and integrate cutting edge technology tools for the design and delivery of courses. Successful use of the guidelines will allow HE providers and their staff to develop strategies and make decisions on digitalization thus multiplying the impact of the project. This will ensure that the report will have a continued impact into the future.