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Newsletter 3

Digital pedagogy for academic teachers

Digital pedagogy for academic teachers

The forms and concepts of education are changing, and this requires new environments, methods, and devices. Digital learning environments and digital learning materials can serve pedagogical purposes both in remote/online learning and physical learning environments e.g., during face-to-face learning in a classroom. Therefore, it is important to improve the competencies of academic teachers in the field of remote tools and build their capacity to make the student´s learning experience in digital learning environments more motivating and inspiring.

In this project academic teachers of the participating three universities learned how to use the learning management system (LMS) itslearning. The aim was to achieve the capacity to create e-learning content of high technical and pedagogical quality.

The theoretical basis of the teachers´ skills development was the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) created by Mishra and Koehler (2006). The TPACK framework emphasizes how the connections among teachers' understanding of content, pedagogy, and technology interact with one another to produce effective teaching.
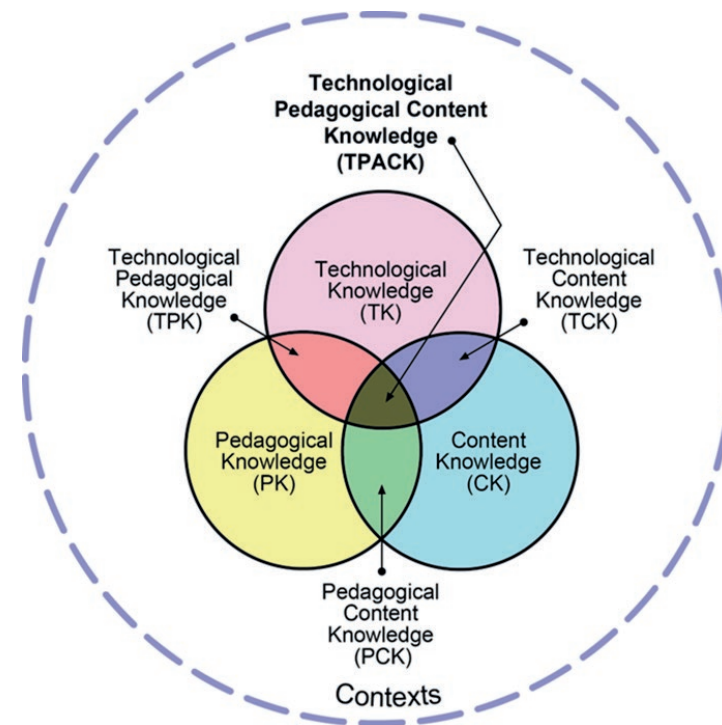
Mishra, P. & Koehler, M. (2006). Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Framework for Teacher Knowledge.

Objectives of O2 Result

The O2 Result has three main objectives:

- Support universities and academic teachers in providing distance learning by developing solutions that will permanently improve the quality of blended and digital teaching and learning.

- Improve teachers´ ability to use digital assessment tools to support the assessment of students' competencies, the presentation of knowledge and reliable evaluation of the students´ skills.

- Promote the skills of academic teachers in using modern teaching and learning technology.

Pedagogical and technical workshops for teachers

The objective of the workshops was to understand the concept of digital pedagogy, define the need, possibilities, and benefits of using digital pedagogy, and to recognize some of the imperatives that drive change in educational practices.

The pedagogical workshops paid particular attention to the importance of feedback, guidance, and evaluation in digital learning environments. This includes also the use of learning analytics which can be utilized by both teachers and students. Emphasis was also placed on the creation of multichannel learning materials and the use of varied assignments and tasks to activate students. One of the starting points for the design of assignments was the classification of the Bloom´s revised taxonomy (2014) and the drive to promote the students' higher-level thinking skills which also resonate strongly

with the working life competences identified in O1 Result of this project.

THE 6 LEVELS OF BLOOM'S REVISED TAXONOMY

https://www.teachthought.com/learning/what-is-blooms-revised-taxonomy/
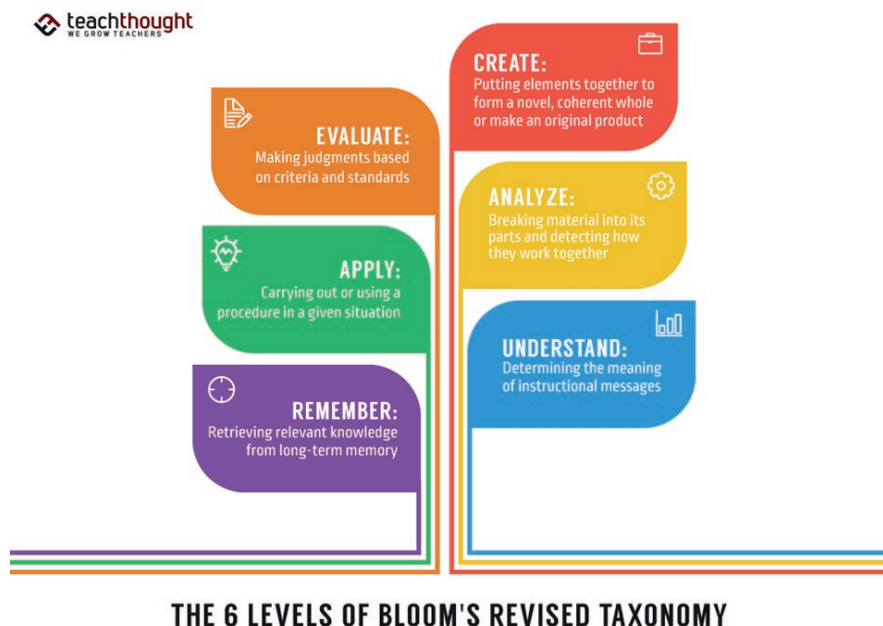
Additionally, the aim of the pedagogical workshops was to introduce learning theories applicable to e-learning and higher education.

1. Phenomenon-based approach to teaching and learning invites teachers to break the boundaries of traditional subject teaching and to move toward interdisciplinary explorations of phenomena. This practice also supports co-development between teachers and disciplines.

2. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which complex real-world problems are used to promote learning of concepts and principles as opposed to direct presentation of facts and concepts.

3. Flipped Classroom is a pedagogical teaching method that challenges traditional teaching, i.e., lecturing in a classroom and transferring information.

As a part of the activities a ready-made course was created. The theme of the ready-made course was "A toolkit for distance work and distance learning". The ready-made course consisted of 5 modules with various resources and activities. Before the start of the workshops, the participating teachers were invited to test the ready-made course using a student status. The idea of this was to provide teachers with first-hand experience of itslearning. We hoped that this approach would support the production of student-centred learning content.

After the experimentation, 2 pedagogical workshops were offered to each participating university. In addi-

tion, itslearning provided technical support for the implementation of university-specific itslearning platforms. Participating teachers were also offered one-on-one support in both pedagogical and technical questions.
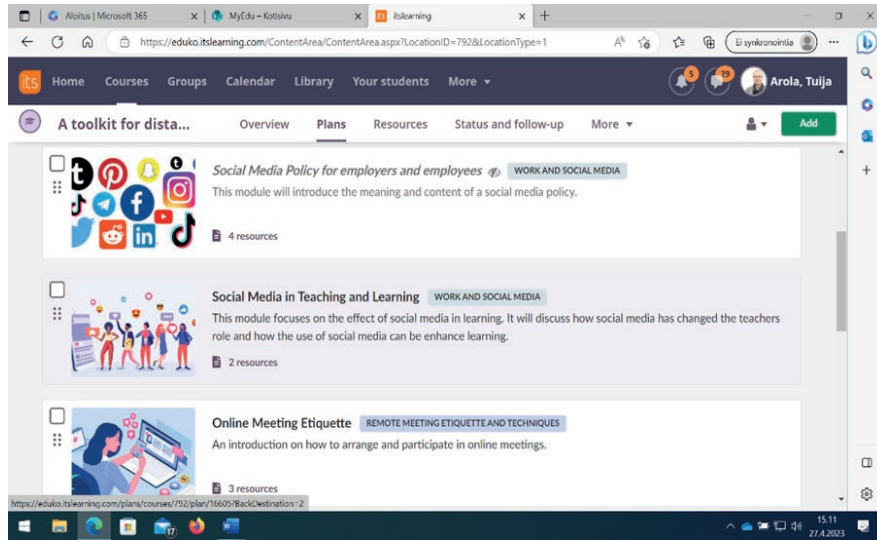
A Manual and videos for teachers

To support the teachers in making appropriate pedagogical choices, and to facilitate production of multichannel learning content, also a written manual was produced. The manual includes conceptual and theoretical perspectives, ideas and instruction, and technical tips for the implementation of an itslearning online course. The manual also covers copyright and accessibility issues and gives concrete guidelines and templates for designing an online course. To make it easy to use, the manual is translated into Polish, Hungarian and Greek.

In addition to the manual, two videos are produced to support teachers. One of them is focusing on technical aspects and the other on pedagogy.

In the design process of e-learning content, the guidelines for teachers could be summarized:
- Ask yourself: What are the most important things that the students need to do learn?

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- Build and maintain working life relationships.
- Connect the learning experiences with authentic working life situations.
- Combine theory and practice in a motivating way.
- Use multichannel elements.
- Make sure that the students get timely feedback.
- Put the students in the center of the learning process.

Building own online content

In the third phase of the O2 Result, the teachers who participated in the workshops designed and implemented their own online courses using itslearning. All participating universities had set up their own itslearning platforms on which the new courses were built.

The new online courses have been presented to the project network. Both technical and pedagogical feedback and suggestions for improvement have been given and the contents will be shared between the partners.

The themes of the new online courses are:
- Wroclaw University of Economics and Business: A course for seminar students preparing rigorous theses (bachelor and master) and a Project management course
- University of Pannonia: A course of Problem Solving and a course for the international week.
- University of West Attica: Ecotourism and Managing activities of educational tourism.

The itslearning online courses will be piloted with students in spring 2023 and the students are asked for feedback.

Future

The teachers who participated in the O2 Result´s development activities have gained knowledge and received support for the development of e-learning. They are now frontrunners of e-learning and digital pedagogy in their own universities. In the future they can support and guide their colleagues in developing modern and student-centered e-learning, and also act as promoters of e-learning in various networks.