

DIGITclue - Digital Inclusion in Teacher Education

Erasmus+ Projekt Strategische Partnerschaft (Juni 2021-Mai 2023)

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Education is a powerful tool for building inclusive and pluralistic democratic societies. Democratic principles, including i.a. gender and racial equality, freedom of speech and religion, equality and acceptance of different sexual orientations do not come naturally. They need to be taught. Further, different scholars have demonstrated how experiences of discrimination and exclusion negatively affect students' performance at school, if not their motivation to attend school in the first place. Considering these challenges in European Societies the project's general aim is to enhance the quality of teaching to support the creation of inclusive schools that will provide young people with the necessary skills to participate in the democratic life and global knowledge. The idea of DIGITclue is to provide teachers with the skills, knowledge and tools to deploy ICT-based interactive and e-learning technologies for inclusive teaching.

The project will link the latest research findings on inclusive pedagogies, ICT-based learning tools and transcultural education to develop software applications for teacher education. One core and innovative aspect of the project consists in ensuring the inclusion of teachers with special needs, multilingual teachers or hard-to-reach teachers who work in remote and marginalized areas, in every step of the development and delivery of educational material. One of the key elements in improving the quality, social outcomes and efficiency of schools is to give stronger support to teachers and school leaders. Teachers play a pivotal role in communicating knowledge and shared values and in giving support to pupils with a vulnerable socio-economic background. Enabling teachers to cope with these challenging tasks, requires strategic investment in effective school leadership and a teaching profession based on excellent initial education, teamwork, and career-long professional development. The project will build on recent insights of socio-anthropological studies of education, to equip prospective teachers with methods to teach inclusively and tools for promoting awareness on (in)equality along various axes of social difference. A handbook, Application Software for Pre/In-service Training and a Website will enable teachers to sustainably create more inclusive learning environments and address students' specific needs. Future and practising teachers will be equipped with the skills to deliver classes using ICT-based learning tools that can facilitate a shift in students' learning approach by enabling the move from teacher-centred to student-centred learning. However, to be truly useful educational technologies need to be grounded in pedagogical frameworks that guide their application and teachers need to be equipped with the necessary pedagogical knowledge and skills. DIGITclue will provide a HUB, which is a homepage/online knowledge platform comprising the core digital/technical outputs of the project for each target group (pre/in-service teachers and university trainers/staff). It will comprise a Pre- and In-Service Teacher Education tool in Digital Inclusion: a Blended Learning Platform and an Application Software for Smartphones and Tablets. Furthermore, a Train the Trainer (University Staff) Module and Manual on Digital Inclusion will be developed and made accessible via the DIGITclue HUB. University staff will be trained in a Learning Training and Teaching Activity to apply and teach the Application Software and didactic tools developed.

To ensure that tools are sustainable and relevant to the needs of educational staff, practicing teachers, teacher educators and students will participate in the development of the didactic tools. Efficient collaboration within the team is guaranteed through personal meetings and regular online

meetings. In addition, LTTA meetings will take place to ensure dissemination and exchange beyond the project team. The project will comprise: a team of experts in educational organization and technology, human-computer interaction, e-learning and knowledge cooperation with new media from the DIU Dresden; 3 experts in educational anthropology from the University of Zadar and Vienna; but also 4 pedagogues and specialists in the field of Teacher Education from Croatia and Austria. The team is complemented by: critical friends from the University College for Teacher Education in Vienna; an expert of the University of Tirana in pedagogical approaches of inclusive teaching and learning and in pedagogical usage of digital tools; and by colleagues from the University of Vienna, dealing with participatory design and human-computer interaction in education.