



EADTU-EU Summit 2017

‘Innovations in teaching and learning; new directions for higher education’

Brussels, 25 April 2017

SUMMIT Conclusions

EADTU board members, representatives of the EU and members states and other stakeholders have discussed current issues in higher education policy at the yearly EADTU-EU Summit. This has led to following observations and conclusions:

New approaches in Short Learning Programmes,

Short learning programmes (SLPs) respond to the demand of large numbers of students for a shorter study period in order to obtain an academic award, a certificate or a diploma at diverse qualification levels (EFQ 4 to 8: foundation, bachelor, master and doctoral level). SLPs fit in the formal qualification systems.

Integrating academic SLPs in higher education systems is important, because they make higher education more attainable for adult learners, who combine work and study or learn for personal development. Many of these learners have already a degree, others don't, but all will have longer careers or switch careers and are in need for updating knowledge and skills. Therefore, SLPs are demand-driven.

SLPs are strategic as they respond to current economic knowledge and skills needs in enterprises and to needs for cultural and personal development in society for learners with a restricted study time horizon, in most cases from 5 to 30 ECTS. Online/blended SLPs use flexible, innovative learning approaches and delivery methods to improve quality while expanding student numbers. They combat drop-out as they correspond better to students' ambitions. Flexibility guarantees that student can learn when and where possible for them and that learning paths are personalized. Also peer learning and learning on the workplace are facilitated.

EADTU members have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in order to accelerate the development of SLPs to serve better the needs of the economy and society at large. They plan to extend the offer of SLPs and to collaborate for developing joint flexible and online SLPs, leading to qualifications fit to the European Qualification Framework. They will facilitate assessments and exams of students within the partnership by making available examination centres transnationally, so that students don't have to travel. They will mutually recognise credits obtained in SLPs. Quality assurance is organized by the partners according to national requirements.

SLPs contribute to the Modernisation Agenda of the European Commission. They will increase the potential of European higher education institutions to fulfil their role in society and contribute to Europe's prosperity. Fact sheets of the European Commission show that neither the EU attainment objectives for higher education nor for lifelong learning are achieved and that there are dramatic differences between member states, although progress is made. 40% of the employers face problems with recruiting workforce with the right qualifications. The EU employment rate is 53% for low-skilled young people and 80% for high-skilled. SLPs can compensate for these figures at a later stage of life, which is badly needed.

As current initiatives for continuing education and continuous professional development at European universities are too small and not accessible enough for the majority of learners, higher education institutions and governments have to develop policies to make this a substantial area of provision, next to degree education and open education. This responds to the needs of large numbers of learners and the need for innovation in enterprises.

The first envisioning report of EMPOWERING universities in the uptake of new modes of teaching and learning

This is the first of a series of yearly reports, in which each of the twelve expert pools of the EMPOWER program established by EADTU publish latest trends and developments in new modes of teaching in their area. New modes of teaching and learning create new opportunities for enhancing the quality of the learning experience in on campus programmes, for reaching out to new target groups off campus and for offering freely accessible MOOCs nationally or worldwide through the internet. They enhance the quality, visibility and reputation of the institution.

The implementation of new modes of teaching and learning requires institutional strategies and frameworks. It cannot be successful without a strong motivation of a professional teaching staff and without a continuous commitment from the top management of a higher education institution.

The EMPOWER expert pools are working in all relevant areas for the development of new modes of teaching and learning, embracing:

- Course related expertise: course and curriculum design, access to knowledge resources on the internet and in libraries, student support, and assessment online.
- Institutional development: staff support services, enabling good teaching and learning; institutional innovation strategies and management.
- Governmental policy: fine-tuning institutional policy and governmental policy.
- Some expert areas specifically focus on applications as blended education, open and flexible distance education, continuous education/CPD, international education and OERs and MOOCs.

EADTU has conceived the action programme EMPOWER to support European higher education institutions in their transition to new modes of teaching and learning in:

- Blended education or the combination of e-learning and face to face teaching and learning on campus (in mainstream degree programmes).
- Online and flexible education for 25 + students, in short or degree programmes or in continuing education schemes (incl. CPD).
- Open education, which is freely available in the public domains (e.g. open educational resources, MOOCs).

This action programme is supporting individual universities by on site expert seminars with free independent advice, onsite seminars, guidance for university leaders, expert panels for targeted reviews and, support for whole of institution initiatives. It hosts the Empower Online Learning Leadership Academy on new and emerging models of teaching and learning.

Supporting European Open education and MOOCs

The MOOC hype in the media might be over, but investment and uptake of MOOCs are increasing significantly worldwide. By the end of 2015, approximately 4,200 courses were offered by 500+ universities to 35 million students. This has increased by 2016 to 6,850 courses by over 700 universities to 58 million students (Class Central, 2016).

Several studies demonstrate that the uptake of MOOCs in Europe is maturing at a higher level compared to the US. This is mainly an achievement of the current, partially language-bound platforms. However, many European HEIs that want to develop MOOCs report that (regional) support structures are missing and/or existing structures are unknown or inaccessible to them. The regional differences in languages, cultures and pedagogical approaches hinder the development and uptake of MOOCs in large parts of Europe. Hence, effective collaborations and scalable services for emerging MOOC provisions have to be made available in Europe.

However, in Europe the low or about zero penetration of MOOCs in the corporate world is somewhat surprising. A recent study (by BizMOOC project, 2017) amongst 56 European companies concludes amongst others that there is a low level of familiarity with MOOCs and a very low percentage of the interviewed organisations are involved in MOOC related activity. It is therefore needed for both European MOOC platforms and the many HEIs providing MOOCs that the companies are aware of the strong advantages of MOOCs. The big US platforms in this respect are increasingly focussing their MOOC activities to business training and monopolize the conversation on MOOCs and business training, while the context is different.

National and regional support centres for MOOCs and digital education in general would promote the development and delivery of MOOCs all over the country and activate the uptake of MOOCs by the corporate sector and by society at large. To make this happen, universities should collaborate with civil society organisations and social partners.

Improving education by learning analytics

Learning analytics involves the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of 'big data' related to learners and their contexts, with the intention of providing actionable intelligence that supports teaching and learning. Learning analytics aim at optimizing the process of teaching and learning in online education and solving problems related to study-progress and student-retention. It will contribute to personalised, adaptive learning and giving support and feedback to students during the learning process.

Therefore, formative analytics are recently more emphasized. Formative analytics support learners to reflect on what they have learned, what can be improved, which goals can be achieved, and how they should move forward. They have "the potential to empower each learner through timely,

personalised, and automated feedback, including visualisations of potential learning paths” (Innovating Pedagogy, OUUK, 2016).

Main research centres in the EADTU membership are dealing with learning analytics in this perspective.

Quality assurance and accreditation of online and blended education

The EADTU study on quality assurance and accreditation of online and blended education is based on a recent investigation on practices of quality assurance and accreditation, based on the answers of 18 universities in Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Israel, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom.

It deals with national frameworks and regulations, institutional developments in universities, current practices of external quality assurance for online and distance education, aspects of internal quality assurance for blended, online and distance education, and finally practices of accreditation of online and distance education.

If one of the tasks of quality assurance is to support the improvement of teaching and learning, it should also evaluate educational processes in universities and not just learning outcomes. The quality of teaching and learning process is also determining the quality of results. In systems, where the focus is more on institutional quality assurance, quality assurance agencies should make available to universities criteria and models for internal evaluation, also for digital modes of teaching and learning. Although several agencies have set important steps in evaluating and valuing innovation and quality enhancement by digital education. Agencies, supported by ENQA, can assure that expertise and good practice are shared and that specific criteria, benchmarks, guidelines and frameworks are developed and disseminated. To achieve this, EADTU will promote a dialogue with ENQA.