POWERHEAD

Empowering Higher Education in Adopting Digital Learning
1. The project

- **Title**: Empowering Higher Education in Adopting Digital Learning
- **Time schedule**: December 2020 – November 2022
- **Partners**:
  - Department of Education and Training, Belgium/Flemish Community
    - Linked third party Flemish Education Council (VLOR)
  - Department of Higher Education, Innovation and Science, Latvia
- **Experts**:
  - Linda Daniela, Piet Henderikx, Demetrios Sampson, Pieter Soete, Cis Van Den Bogaert, Janina van Hees
1. The project

- Original objective of the project (call in 2019)
  - Design guidelines for a policy on digital learning in HE at two levels:
    - national policy
    - higher education institutions

- Impact of the COVID-19 context
  - Rapid implementation of digital education on large scale
  - But... even today: still many questions.
  - Given this context...
    - ...what do institutions need from the government to develop a digitalisation policy?
    - ...how can institutions further shape their digitalisation policy?
1. The project

2 crosscutting work packages:
- WP1: General management and coordination of the project
- WP2: Monitoring and evaluation

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All project outcomes: https://www.vlor.be/outcomes
2. Needs analysis: goal

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- **Goal**: Make an inventory of the needs of HE

- From the perspective of ‘change management’:
  
  What is needed to conduct a well thought-out digitalisation policy and to continue the digital transition?
2. Needs analysis: model

- Model for the needs analysis: model of Laurillard (2015)
  - ‘Drivers’: steering elements that determine how educators prioritise their activities.
  - ‘Enablers’: facilities that educators need to respond effectively to the ‘drivers’.

- Further concretisation: 5 major themes
  1. Students
  2. Course & Curriculum Design
  3. Vision, Policy, and Quality Assurance
  4. Funding and Infrastructure
  5. Stakeholders
2. Needs analysis: method

- Focus groups were conducted in Flanders and Latvia separately
  - Transnationally compared: common needs
  - Confirmed and further enriched during PLA
- Total of 10 focus groups, 62 participants

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<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educators/support staff</td>
<td>Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government/policy makers</td>
<td>Policy makers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibilities of HEI and directors</td>
<td>Industry/ business representatives</td>
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<td>Employers and social partners</td>
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<td>1 additional focus group: labour market perspective</td>
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2. Needs analysis: ‘Students’ theme

Need for...

• Acquisition of digital competencies
  o Students are digital natives = myth
  o Basic skills, but also high-level digital competencies

• Development of self-regulation skills, in early stages of study

• Monitoring of well-being and mental health

• Flexible and adaptive use of digital environments
  o Digitalisation can make HE more inclusive
  o Needs of different groups of students

• Digital inclusion: digital resources for all students

• Communication, involvement, student participation
2. Needs analysis: ‘Course & curriculum design’

Subtheme: Curriculum design & assessment

- Well-considered redesign of curricula in the long term
  - practical-didactical decisions during ‘emergency remote learning’ during pandemic, now time for reflection
  - Not purely digital, not just transfer to a digital channel
- Pedagogical-didactical principles
- Towards a flexible and modular curriculum (design)
- Study modules on digital skills: in different fields
- Student assessment in the digital environment
  - Several benefits and drawbacks of online assessment
  - Variety of assessment methods
2. Needs analysis: ‘Course & curriculum design’

Subtheme: Support & professionalisation

- Sharing/exchange/mutual learning between educators
  - Teams vs. the individual educator
  - Knowledge sharing should be facilitated
- Support, time and recognition for educators
  - Transition to digital education requires time and energy
  - Policy must valorise educators’ efforts
- Need for targeted professionalisation of educators
  - Not just technical
  - Efficiently organized to cover different needs
2. Needs analysis: ‘Vision, policy, and QA’

Subtheme: Vision and policy

• Vision, change management, and leadership
  o Long-term vision needed at HEI level: determine goals
  o Leadership and change management

• Commitment, involvement, implementation at all levels
  o ‘HEI are not made by visions but by people’
  o Support for the vision needed at different levels
  o Psychological acceptance of change

• A coordinating framework at national level
  o Digitalisation as policy priority
  o Support for HEI’s, e.g., SURF (The Netherlands)
2. Needs analysis: ‘Vision, policy, QA’

Subtheme: ‘Vision and policy’

• Internationalisation and digitalisation
  o Offer programmes and reach students on the global market
  o International cooperation and mobility

• Cooperation/exchange/common understanding in HE
  o Lack of openess at all levels: educators, programmes, HEI

Subtheme: ‘Quality assurance’

• During pandemic: focus on continuing education
• Digitalisation should be part of regular QA systems
• No need for new QA frameworks
2. Needs analysis: ‘Funding & infrastructure’

Subtheme: Funding
• Specifically allocated funding and investments, at the European and the national level
• Continuous basic funding for HE
• Enough staff and well-being of staff

Subtheme: Infrastructure
• Digital tools: determines the ‘quality of service’
• Infrastructure as a whole: spatial design of buildings/rooms, scheduling, etc.
• Sharing of educational resources (e.g., materials/software)
• Administrative processes and systems
2. Needs analysis: ‘Stakeholders’

- Involvement of industry representatives in the development of study programmes
- Local governments
  E.g. providing place to study for vulnerable students
- Developers of educational hardware/software
  o HEI become dependent on developers, given current funding
  o Cooperation needed between HEI and HEI/developers
- Privacy, data security, and other regulatory/legal aspects
3. What’s next?

- **Guidelines on digital learning (and teaching)**
  - For HEI and for national governments
  - Prepared in Latvia and Flanders separately, afterwards transnationally compared

- **Dissemination conference:** October 17 2022, Brussels

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Thank you!

Questions?

Any comments on our needs analysis?
Any suggestions to take away towards our guidelines?

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https://www.vlor.be/powerhead-project