



**Action plan for modernisation of teaching
and learning in Serbia and Albania**

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Introduction

The TeComp project has set a clear goal to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at university level, in partner countries (PC), Serbia and Albania. By means of questionnaires filled out by teaching staff and students, the analysis of current situation in university frameworks in Serbia and Albania is performed and it requires quality improvement.

Forms and models of teaching and learning at the EU HEIs are reviewed and their experiences are collected in the reports of these institutions.

Just as many conclusions those obtained herein should be considered with a caution. This report is based on experiences collected by representatives of the PC HEIs during their visit to UNIOVI, UBB and UO and some differences in practices between EU partners are noticed. Therefore, it would be wrong to conclude that what is presented herein is representative of the HE practices across Europe. Having said that, the obtained information is significant and has some significant correlations between different institutions. This gives us the opportunity to use data, compare the surveys conducted in partner countries (Serbia and Albania), make comparisons and suggest/set project specific outcomes. EU HEIs are defined by great effort and success in using new pedagogical and methodological methods and the high level of integration modern technologies in teaching and learning process.

Project rationale

According to the comparison of the survey conducted in the PC HEIs and situation in EU HEIs we must point out that the deep reform of education in the partner country universities is needed. Obviously, the conclusion is that comprehensive strategies for the adoption of new modes of learning and teaching within higher education have to be developed at both the national and institutional level, and the main proponent of changes should be the teaching staff of these institutions. To be up to the task, the teaching staff must possess the knowledge and skills to allow them to fully utilise the range of new teaching tools available. Consequently, continual professional development for teaching staff must become the imperative across all higher education institutions.

Preliminary analyses we performed through insight into the study programs of partners from Serbia and Albania have shown that a large number of our university teachers and teaching assistants in the field of natural and mathematical sciences, especially the younger ones, have never attended and completed

courses in pedagogy and methodology of teaching. However, the teaching staff at our faculties of natural and mathematical sciences are mostly recruited from those study programs and modules that are oriented towards education of researchers or professionals for work in various companies and government institutions. These study programs and modules sometimes do not provide a choice of courses in pedagogy and methodology of teaching. Consequently, we will organise continual professional development of the teaching staff in pedagogy and methodology of teaching. They should be enabled to attend special courses and to gain new knowledge about the basic pedagogical principles in the higher education, and the specifics of teaching and learning in the field of natural and mathematical sciences, thereby raising the level of their teaching competencies and skills. Through the activities of TeComp project we will organise the training of teachers.

Our project partners from EU have a firm view that regulations need to be changed from top to bottom, as well as that Serbian and Albanian policies must be changed. But if we look around our system, it is very difficult, practically impossible. Because of that, our action plan is to make first changes on the Faculties' level (institutional level), then to try to implement the project results at our Universities and then, with reference to good results in education to take an initiative for changing the regulations on higher levels and to make them to ensure wide continuous assessment and advancement of the quality of teaching and learning in the PC HEIs. It would be our success if we slowly climb up with implementation modern practice from down level towards the top, during and after the project life. Our imperative must be to apply new modes of learning and teaching and to adopt them, in concrete fields completely.

How can we install the system?

First, we must work on raising awareness about the necessity of modernizing teaching and learning through the integration of new technologies and relevant pedagogy. In order to demonstrate benefits it brings both to teachers and students we will launch several pilot projects for the integration of online technologies and pedagogies within courses, with special emphasis on their integration into laboratory classes. We need to motivate students to work regularly, because group work in labs and hands-on work is the waste of time if they come unprepared.

At our institutions we will also launch an initiative to develop and implement strategies for the support and on-going improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.

Sometimes this is not enough, but it should force students to work, by using some pedagogical methods, which maybe, are not always suitable to them, such as, for example, checking if they follow classes, through short tests on every fifteen-minutes of the lecture. According to the survey results, our EU partners think that we must struggle to keep the students, and our teachers should lower their criteria if it is needed for realising mutual harmony between what they provide and what they require.

Repetition

Our project must strongly support a high degree initiative to develop "trainers" of trainers and this in view of staff development in Serbian and Albanian universities. The main goal of our future activities is to develop strategies and materials which will introduce the trainers to new approaches that are evidence-based and will be effective and efficient in higher education settings.

The material must be "active" and it must give to trainers a sufficient experiential base to develop their professional background to develop their own training sessions in professional development centres in universities. We will be focused on finding the strategies that teachers can adopt to invoke learning in their students and to pull together all the strategies toward deciding on a systematic curriculum approach that reflects systemic choices for typical objectives and interactive learning activities. To support the hands-on skills and the related reflective abilities in trainers, each strategy will have specific learning objective.

This brings us to the question which goals of the training courses are to be achieved by applying this material?

We aim at developing the following key learning objectives:

- Making decisions how to change nature of an entire curriculum at faculty level.
- Developing a blueprint for materials to be implemented in the context of one course.
- Implementing a curriculum blueprint in one course to exemplify the nature of teacher and student interactive activities.

Advance organizer

This is an introductory activity that gives a basic experience as a base for reflection about a new interactive learning approach in higher education. It is the base for a group discussion that clears the way for a shared understanding of what we will focus upon in the next phase. The advance organizer can be based on a videoclip, a short activity, exploring a website, reading a research note, ... It invites all participants to open their mind for new theme. In many cases, advance organizers can start before the actual training session takes place, since participants can do part of the activity on their own or even have to consult their own setting, learning materials, assessment approaches, etc. We mainly assume all the advance organizers are carried out on-site, where a workshop is set up. This nevertheless still allows that participants can prepare their input beforehand.

Main activity

This will be the core of the hands-on session in the workshop: designing, developing and implementing a specific new interactive learning approach.

Research and literature base

To develop sufficiently grounded competences in the trainers, we will provide background literature, examples from research, case studies, that exemplify how the interactive learning approach indeed can affect learning or related variables in a positive way. As much as possible, a variety of higher education settings is covered to enhance the relevance for participants in a variety of knowledge domains.

Technology dimension

Very often, the interactive learning theme can be linked to specific Information technology solutions. In that case, we will try to give some examples of widespread use of tools, apps or environments, teachers or trainers can install or download to foster the implementation of on-line and blended learning environment setting.

Portfolio Activity

The portfolio setting is the place where participants will get a personal task to be carried out of the training. It will mostly be a product, a design, a prototype, a blueprint of an interactive learning activity that can be set up in the future in a concrete teaching and learning setting. The portfolio content will be shared among participants and participants will get feedback on their portfolio product during and after the training.

Learning objectives

After studying this theme, you will master the following learning objectives:

Explaining in what way a script represents a competence in a learner.

Writing a script and transversal elements as a base for a video-clip.

Explaining what the socio-motivational part of a competence entails in a video competence training setting.

Create a videoclip that reflects the mastery of a script and related socio motivational elements for competence.

We will explore the interactive potential of video in higher education, but now by stressing its capabilities to support assessment of these competences.

Collaborative learning

One of the most successful interactive learning interventions in higher education is collaborative learning. Firstly, we will develop scripts to guide learners in collaborative tasks.

The key conditions that guarantee that successful collaborative learning will be attained are individual accountability, group accountability, supporting the collaboration process, and giving feedback of the collaboration process and defining roles that will support learners in a collaborative task.

Power of feedback

We will discover how many online assessment tools incorporate possibilities to give feedback.

In study this theme we will try to achieve the following objectives:

- Explaining the rich nature of feedback in terms of feedback, feed up and feed forward.
- Pushing students' work by emphasizing the "learning" orientation when giving feedback.
- Developing tasks that push peer feedback between students.
- Use (self designed) tools to give feedback to peers and students.



University of Niš

The TeComp Consortium

www.tecomp.ni.ac.rs

e-mail:

tecomp@ni.ac.rs

tecomp.p2018@gmail.com

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