



Developing e-Learning Tools for Trade Union Education

Progress

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Project information

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Executive Summary

The DeLTTUE project aims to produce innovative tools, strategies and good practice guidance to support the development of online learning within European trade union education.

The project has a number of clearly defined strands and objectives. The outcomes generated will prove practical and have application to trade union education throughout Europe and as well as for the wider VET community. The main products will comprise a series of interrelated guidance manuals that will form the basis of an instructional toolkit that will enable e-learning practitioners to strategically implement successful online education programmes.

The DeLTTUE projects draws together educational expertise from five national trade union confederations and the European Trade Union Institute, the umbrella organisation for trade union education in Europe and is supported by a leading UK trade union studies centre based at Lewisham College in the UK. The project will be independently evaluated by members of the Open University research team.

The project began in early November 2009 and is due to end in November 2011 it will culminate in a conference where the reports and products, including the toolkit will be disseminated.

The project has already begun to develop and utilise innovative approaches to learning. Workplace representatives require flexible and accessible forms of training and the lead consortium partners offer e-learning as part of their overall educational offer. Partners are beginning to use tools and content developed as part of the project.

Towards the end of 2011 the results and outcomes produced by the project will be made available. It is hoped that the products will have application to trade union education practitioners as well as the wider VET community.

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1. Project Objectives

The principle aim of the project is to provide innovative tools and strategies that can be utilised by and applied to trade union education programmes across Europe.

It is recognised that the training of workplace representatives is of key importance to social progress. Quality training makes a difference to working conditions, tackles disadvantage and inequality and contributes to effective industrial relations.

The project will build upon existing knowledge and expertise and provide new innovative approaches to online education with wider application for e-learning practitioners. A major aspect of the project is the creation of a series of guides and process manuals which will form a practical toolkit for trade union education professionals. The project deliverables will enable trade union confederations to develop effective learning strategies to implement within their own education programmes.

The project will create an innovative multi-lingual web based community and resource portal dedicated to trade union education tutors and their continued professional development. The website will include the use of web conferencing, video content and other Web 2.0 technologies that will focus on the building of a professional practice community. This site will develop tutors' pedagogical skills to support online and blended learning. The website will focus on the effective use of innovative technologies in everyday educational practice and specifically its use in the curriculum development of online programmes.

The project will develop the application of innovative tools for use in training programmes via an open source virtual learning platform. The project will create online course content and material that incorporates the use of web based tools and innovative content for work based representatives' courses. This will include the utilisation of social networking tools and Web 2.0 technology.

This process will be informed by the national qualification frameworks of the project partners. These include the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF). These frameworks will inform the curriculum development process and provide the structure to apply the transfer of knowledge to trade union education providers within Europe.

The project will assess the impact of the online learning experience upon workplace representatives and evaluate the products developed during the project, these will help inform and encourage innovative curriculum development. The project evaluation will be undertaken by the Open University.

2. Project Approach

Initially the project concentrated on establishing working practices and partner protocols. A Project Management Committee (PMC) was created at an initial start-up meeting and partnership agreements were drawn-up and signed by each organisation involved in the consortium.

Subsequent meetings of the PMC have taken place where work schedules and progress reports accompanied by ongoing discussions regarding technological development were made.

Originally four meetings of the PMC were scheduled. An additional meeting was introduced to allow further discussions around work schedules and partner responsibilities. This was in contrast to the general approach to the management of the project. The project has relied heavily on communication between smaller teams allocated to individual workpackages. This has allowed the project teams to utilise technology to communicate and collaborate.

Three of the project partners the TUC, SAK and LO-Sweden have long established e-learning programmes and have trialled methods of delivering online learning to trade union representatives and union officers. The project will build upon this existing knowledge and expertise of the consortium and provide new innovative approaches to online education with wider application for e-learning practitioners.

A major aspect of the project is the creation of a series of guides and process manuals which will form a practical toolkit for trade union education professionals. The project deliverables will enable trade union confederations to adopt effective learning strategies to implement within their own education programmes.

The project will create a template with which other trade union confederations can adopt successful online learning strategies. The involvement of CITUB and GSEE will allow the application of this template to be trialled and tested. The use of GSEE and CITUB as an 'experiential yardstick' will allow innovative approaches, as well as products and materials, to be tested and evaluated in a live learning context will enable a qualitative impact assessment of the project objectives.

Feedback from tutors via the project website will allow trade union educators to share knowledge and experience through the online discussion forum. The website will also ensure the customisation and development of the tutor resources ensuring their continued relevance.

The project will disseminate knowledge, initiatives and products developed during the project to ensure they maximise their potential. The products will be successfully mainstreamed and have a long-term impact upon trade union education programmes across Europe and have relevance to the wider VET community.

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Key to the successful valorisation of the products and initiatives is the project website. The site discussion forum will provide an interactive and collaborative area for tutors to inform and influence the project and its processes. The mainstreaming of

the website by ETUI will enable trade union professionals to contribute to the future development of online education and provide an opportunity to exchange experience and future best practice.

Partners will exploit the project results by implementing sound pedagogical method to course development and delivery processes. The results and products developed will enable trade union education professionals to implement successful online learning strategies. The project toolkit will be mainstreamed and its use promoted by ETUI.

The professional development of tutors via GREET will help to embed teaching methods and systems into everyday practice. The methods and tools developed will enhance trade union education programmes across Europe.

Trade union confederations have access to 'high-level' stakeholders responsible for education and innovation such as government departments. They can raise awareness of the project objectives on a national level and influence future policy. ETUI can influence policy at a European level.

ETUI will disseminate the results of the project by means of an active, participatory conference involving confederations across Europe. It will ensure a shared understanding of the use of the tools developed and their impact on trade union learning. The project toolkit will be made available at the final conference. The use of Wikis and other collaborative tools will ensure electronic versions of the products are continuously revised and relevant.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

Progress has been made in a number of key areas. A project management team has been established and has so far met on three separate occasions. Partnership agreements, protocols and work schedules have been agreed by the consortium members.

A project website has been produced www.delttue.org. The website functions as the project information resource, and will be used to develop the toolkit manuals and guidance. The website contains project documentation as well as external facing information about the project work. The website also allows the project consortium to update and communicate with one another.

The website contains examples of videos created as part of the project. Video content produced policy vodcasts to brief trade union tutors and representatives have been developed and Lewisham College are in the process of producing video clips as to supplement the TUC's Union Reps Stage 1 course and are due to deliver a reps course on creating video to support their learning entitled Lights, Camera, Action. Reps participating will be given flip cameras to use in their workplace and film each other about their role as reps, members etc. In the New Year the TUC will commission the creation of rapid e-learning authoring using an off the shelf product Articulate. Video content produced by Leonardo will used as part of this exciting development.

Lewisham College are also beginning to develop their use of e-tools within the classroom, blended and e-learning course delivery.

The GREET – Getting Ready for Effective E-tutoring – is close to completion. The content and structure of the course has been developed. The course will be piloted to a representative tutor cohort comprising educators from the UK, Finland and Sweden. The course will be hosted on the TUC's Moodle learning environment. TUC Education tutors will be responsible for facilitating the delivery of the course.

A large amount of dissemination work has taken place: representatives of the partner organisations have promoted and publicised the initiative to interest groups, affiliates and other parties. Project participants have disseminated the work of the project at conferences, events, meetings and workshops internally and to external organisations. The ETUI invited representatives of the DeLTTUE project to their training workshop Project Management for Trade Union Officers course (<http://www.etui.org/education/Courses/2010-2011/1052-028>). Representatives presented and discussed the DeLTTUE project with attendees from across Europe. There have been valuable exchanges with other projects such as the Grundtvig E-MODE (www.emode-net.eu) project that made a presentation to the Athens PMC.

A project leaflet has been produced explaining the work of the project. The leaflet has been distributed to relevant groups across Europe.

The ETUI are in the process of appointing a Project Officer who have specific responsibility for the research, technical and administrative activities and for organising the dissemination conference to take place at the end of 2011.

4. Partnerships

DeLTTUE is contributing to the development of programmes which address national and EU level challenges as a result of European legislation, whilst recognising the benefits of sharing experience and collaborative development work between unions sharing common aims. Trade unions across the EU campaign for rights at work and fairness and tolerance in society, promoting a better understanding of cultural diversity. The use of web-based technologies by the consortium helps bring people together to exchange view points and break down linguistic and cultural barriers. The project will provide an exemplar to other organisations in Europe by bringing together teaching innovation to enable a step-change in the shape and pace of this work.

The consortium partners bring expert knowledge and experience to the team. The geographical spread represents the variety of levels of knowledge of this form of education. The TUC offers professional, competence based accredited training through colleges across the UK. TUC Education's programme is highly valued and is a model to European counterparts.

LO and SAK are European leaders in online learning for trade unionists and offer exceptional knowledge and understanding of the application of new technology in the delivery of learning to workplace representatives. The work of the consortium also echoes previous Grundtvig projects for example the E-MODE (www.emode-net.eu) and the GSEE led Inter-Tie project. GSEE and CITUB act as an experimental yardstick allowing products and materials to be tested and evaluated in a learning context.

However the opportunity for the five union confederations to collaborate and share good practice has been of enormous value. The approaches adopted by each confederation to trade union education are diverse; the opportunity to explore divergent and common ground has been immensely valuable. The pool of knowledge is greater than anticipated and the ETUI have recognised that they play a key role in coordinating strategic approach to the development of e-learning for trade union education. The ETUI will ensure effective exploitation of the project outputs to trade union education providers across Europe. A key element of the project is the development of tools and guidance on course accreditation for curriculum developers. This is being carried out within a European-level context establishing accredited competence based learning within national qualification frameworks whilst providing exemplars for exploitation and adoption by trade unions external to the project in anticipation of EQF implementation.

The exchange of approaches around accreditation has already enabled an ETUI led, European wide, EQF mapped, accredited training course to take place and there are now concrete plans to transfer this innovative approach to accreditation throughout the ETUI network.

The toolkit comprising the guidance and online management manuals will be available in three languages. They will provide step-by-step guidance for trade union confederations across Europe. CITUB and GSEE will provide working examples of online learning strategy implementation. This will assist the effective customisation and application of the products and processes to non-partner confederations.

The use of social networking tools and especially video based media provides an effective means to deliver policy information cost effectively.

5. Plans for the Future

Over the next year DeLTTUE will begin to draw together the knowledge gained from the initial work undertaken. The aim is produce a series of guides and process manuals which will form a practical toolkit for trade union education professionals.

The project deliverables will enable trade union confederations to adopt effective learning strategies to implement within their own education programmes. The project will create a template with which other trade union confederations can adopt successful online learning strategies. The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) will adopt these project outcomes as best practice and as a model for trade union education programmes. The ETUI are beginning to explore the use of e-learning to deliver elements of their programme.

The existing project website (www.delttue.org) will be enhanced to enable trade union tutors and curriculum developers across Europe to exchange information and resources and discuss issues related to the delivery of trade union education programmes. The website will contribute to tutors' professional development by providing a facility to encourage the sharing of best practice amongst trade union educators.

A major component of the project is the development of Getting Ready for Effective E-Tutoring (GREET) a training course for trade union tutors. The course will be piloted in the New Year before being finalised and mainstreamed. The ETUI will adopt the course as a means to develop trade union education tutors throughout Europe.

DeLTTUE will also produce two key research documents carried out by the Open University. The first will evaluate the tools and pedagogic methods developed in the project on workplace representatives. The second will evaluate tools and pedagogic methods developed in the project on trade union professionals and curriculum developers. These two reports will be of immense value to European trade union education, but will be of equal significance to the wider VET and e-learning community.

In November 2011 the ETUI will disseminate the results of the project by means of an active, participatory conference involving confederations across Europe. It will ensure a shared understanding of the use of the tools developed and their impact on trade union learning. The project toolkit will be made available at the final conference.

The main objective in the coming year is to produce the guidance manuals and the evaluative reports for this conference. The development of these will continue as scheduled.

More broadly the use of technology to deliver trade union education is moving rapidly. The widespread use of smartphones and increased use of web based video content is impacting on our specific learning sector. The consortium is beginning to look at how these new forms of learning can be incorporated into the work of the project.

6. Contribution to EU policies

DeLTTUE contributes to developing programmes which address national and EU level challenges as a result of European legislation, whilst recognising the benefits of sharing experience and collaborative development work between unions sharing common aims. Trade unions across the EU campaign for rights at work and fairness and tolerance in society, promoting a better understanding of cultural diversity.

The use of web-based technologies helps bring people together to exchange view points and break down linguistic and cultural barriers. The project will provide an exemplar to other organisations in Europe by bringing together teaching innovation to enable a step-change in the shape and pace of this work.

DeLTTue will produce tools and strategies for the implementation of innovative solutions for competence based curriculum programmes of European trade union confederations. It will develop innovatory approaches around the application and use of Web 2.0 technologies, social networking tools and the training and development of workplace representatives. The project will achieve a multiplier effect through dissemination including through demonstrating relevance and potential to other VET networks.

Consortium partners bring expert knowledge and experience to the team and will ensure high quality products and deliverables. Translation software, via the project website, will ensure effective dissemination. The toolkit comprising the guidance and online management manuals will be available in three languages. They will provide step-by-step guidance for trade union confederations across Europe. CITUB and GSEE will provide working examples of online learning strategy implementation. This will assist the effective customisation and application of the products and processes to non-partner confederations.

DeLTTUE recognises the key to the successful development, application and exploitation of online education is the continued professional development of tutors. The project will develop guidance and training (including Getting Ready for Effective E-Tutoring (GREET) as standard) ensuring new technologies and competence based vocational systems are adopted and exploited in tutors' professional practice.

This project will contribute to the Vocational Education and Training theme of this programme through building social partner capacity and practice around increasing the quality, relevance and attractiveness of VET and adult learning provision by developing and mainstreaming the use of innovative ICT approaches in their learning programmes and consequently increasing adult participation in lifelong learning.

The project will enable unions to increase and make more effective the training and learning programmes available to workplace representatives to support union and social partner contributions to the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, in particular training around managing change at work, promoting workforce learning and promoting equality and diversity.

The project will enable trade union organisations to be more effective in delivering programmes around tackling all forms of discrimination in the workplace. The project addresses accessibility issues in the solutions developed and will identify and highlight within tutor training and programme development materials the solutions

that can be applied to promote inclusion and will enable greater understanding of equal opportunities issues and relevant legislation.

The project will develop tools and guidance on course accreditation for curriculum developers. This will be carried out within the context of and following established practice of accredited competence based learning within national education qualification frameworks. The project will share knowledge, experience and practice of accredited education programmes and provide exemplars for exploitation and adoption by trade union's external to the project in anticipation of EQF implementation.

Trade unions seek to play a leading role in promoting the sustainable development agenda in the workplace. The project utilises new technology applications to enhance learning programmes in this area.

