Enhancing Teaching Practice in Higher Education in Russia and China (ENTEP)
A newsletter published by ENTEP – a project funded by European Union's Erasmus+ programme

No. 3

Current activities

The third project meeting

The Third Council Meeting was held at Hualian Private University in Guangzhou (China) on 27 – 29 May 2019. The participants of all consortium members (TUD, UH, LJMU, UNIBO, IPC, IWC, IPPSP, USUE, PSU, SU, HLU, and JXNU) explored, among others, the following sections:

⇒   Overviewing the implemented project activities and events;
⇒   Reviewing the monitoring visit to PSU (Penza) undertaken by the Erasmus + office representatives in Moscow;
⇒   Exploring the improvements made by the project coordinator following the feedback received from EACEA about the monitoring visit;
⇒   Presenting the achievements and plans of establishing Centres for Teaching & Learning at PCIs;
⇒   Discussing and scheduling future project activities and events (the Second Project Conference and the Fourth Council Meeting).

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Current activities

The activities to be completed include:

- Setting-up the Centres for Teaching & Learning at PCIs aimed at enhancing teaching practices;
- Organising 3-days seminars on curricula and module development focused on learning outcomes;
- Developing modern, module-based pilot curricula for higher education teacher training based on contemporary education science;
- Arranging pedagogical study visits of MA and PhD students from PCIs to the EUIs.

The establishment of the Centres for Teaching & Learning requires addressing the following issues:

- Providing premises, where Centres will be located;
- Drawing up statutes, regulations and operational capacities of the Centres;
- Purchasing equipment and pedagogical and methodological literature;
- Appointing the administrative staff and teams, who will design curricula and module and prepare the development plans;
- Piloting the elaborated curricula and module.

The teaching teams at each PCI develop modern, tailored, professional development programme curricula and module syllabi for higher education teacher training depending on internal needs and practices. They pilot them in accordance with the recommendations in the Didactical Manual and forms suggested by the Guide under the supervision of EUI experts.
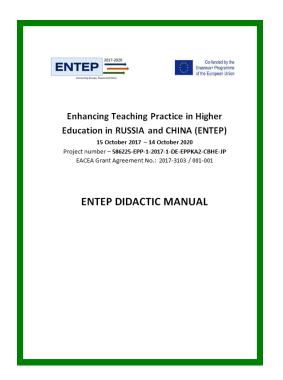
In addition, they modernise MA curricula by devising and introducing modules on Teaching Methodology, Pedagogy and Psychology.

The 3-days seminars at each PCI on teaching practices, curricula and module development focus on learning outcomes, inspection and consultation on the operational capacity of the Centres for Teaching & Learning. The goal of the seminars is to:

- Identify the difficulties arising at the universities level;
- Give consultations and advice to PCI teaching and administrative staff;
- Examine and explore the established Centres for Teaching & Learning.

Pedagogical study visits of 28 PCI Masters' students to TUD, LJMU, UNIBO, UH and IPC will be introduced into the contemporary teaching practices and pedagogical and psychological approaches to contribute to their theoretical and practical education.

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Project results

The advanced pedagogical approaches and innovative methodologies were developed and presented in the way of the Didactical Manual and Practical Guide. They will be translated from English into Russian and Chinese and disseminated among partners.

Didactic Manual

The Didactic Manual was developed by the Working Group, presented to the Council for approval and published in paper and put on flash drives. The Manual is intended for:

♦ Introducing teaching staff to the contemporary teaching practices and to the core systemic principles of the pedagogical framework;

♦ Overviewing the most important types of didactic teaching strategies and their genesis and presenting possible subject-specific applications of these strategies;

♦ Assisting teachers in selecting the didactic strategy, which should fit one of the Bologna cycles or levels (BA, MA or PhD) in both online and face-to-face contexts, including problem-solving or modelling strategy.

The Manual brings awareness to teaching staff of the Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area set up by the Dublin Descriptors. It also provides common understanding of the outcomes of a programme as represented by the qualification (diploma) within the overarching European Qualification Framework.

One section of the Manual is devoted to programme goals, objectives and learning outcomes and their comparison. It addition, it focuses on translating course goals into measurable student learning outcomes.

Contemporary concepts of teaching-learning process, namely learning outcomes, constructive alignment, teaching-learning strategy, and competence, are considered by the Manual compilers, who explore the graduates' profile.

The overview of contemporary teaching approaches is also given. The principles inspiring Student Centred Teaching (SCT) are formulated and contemporary teaching methods and tools are proposed.

The final sections outline the methods to individualise learning and summarises them and cover the issues associated with heterogeneity and intercultural didactics.

In conclusion, the Manual recommends using a variety of teaching methods, as:

- Some learning goals are not really achievable through some methods;
- It is important to monitor student learning outcomes;
- Teachers have individual considerations;
- Students have numerous learning style preferences.

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Practical Guide

Following the approval of the Council, the designed Practical Guide was published and put on flash drives. It presents:

- Summary of the developments in higher education curriculum design in recent decades;
- User-friendly guidance for writing modules, courses and programmes in terms of learning outcomes;
- Description of degree programmes focusing on learning outcomes.

The introduction highlights the importance of learning outcomes in curriculum development and the necessity to devise a programme and module guide with clear learning outcomes.

Aims and objectives at the programme level and module level are characterised in the second section. It provides the guidance on how to describe aims and objectives. Moreover, it features some key readings on the relevant topic.

The third section deals with learning outcomes and reviews Bologna values and principles. It gives the practical tips on designing learning outcomes and factoring in specific items in this process, i.e. knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In general, it sets out the guidelines on producing learning outcomes.

Being the practice-oriented paper, the Guide presents the week-by-week plan and assessment. The fourth section generates the ideas to contextualise the content, to link it for adjusting learning outcomes and formative assessment, to summarise student learning, to employ the feedback strategy, and to develop a reading list.

Additionally, it features the templates of Programme and Module Guides to assist HE teachers to implement constructive alignment in their programmes.

The Guide emphasises that in order to comply with the Bologna Process, Degree Programme Profiles must include both programme competences and programme learning outcomes and instruct teachers how to formulate degree programme profiles, suggesting also curricula and syllabi templates.

Feedback

The outcomes from the workshops for top managers and teachers held in June, September and October 2018 were measured and presented within the third project meeting.

After each training workshop the participants were given a feedback form (questionnaire) to fill in. The feedbacks were sent to the Project Coordinator (TUD), Deputy Project coordinator Elena Guseletova (USUE) and Internal Quality Control Group. The completed questionnaires were analysed by the University of Hildesheim. The quantitative and qualitative results showed:

- The participants rated the workshops with "excellent / very good" by a quantitative mean of 1,79;
- The qualitative feedbacks underlined this impression very much.

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Monitoring visit

The first monitoring visit was made to PSU by the NEO representatives in Russia, Anna Muravyeva – deputy director, Yulia Redina – manager. It took place on the 27th November 2018.

ENTEP representatives during the visit included Sergei Vasin, Konstantin Korolev, Tatiana Razuvaeva, Tatiana Glotova (PSU); Elena Guseletova (USUE); Holger Kuße, Svitlana Vyshnevska, Christina Spirow (TUD, by Skype).

The goals of the visit were to get an overview of the main project activities and its results, to discuss the main issues and weak points and to give a first informal feedback.

The goals of the visit were to get an overview of the main project activities and its results, to discuss the main issues and weak points and to give a first informal feedback. Positive points assumed during the visit:

⇒ The Centre for teachers' training is in the making: the premises and staff and parts of equipment have been provided by the University administration; the framework for operation is in place.

⇒ Study training visits for administrative and teaching staff were organised on time and have already impacted the teaching practices at the university (PSU) after the appropriate internal dissemination.

⇒ PSU is very supportive of the project and internationalisation at large.

⇒ Despite a late start, the project products are developed and delivered on time, e.g. report on the analysis of teacher training practices in EU and PCs.

⇒ Dissemination is under way and comprises university websites, a conference in Kazan, special issue of "Kazan pedagogical journal", media coverage, etc.

⇒ Drafts of Didactic Manual and Guide are developed.

At the same time, it was recommended to meet the visibility requirements, improve the Quality Control Plan, establish an internal communication channel, and widely promote findings of Analytic Report in the university community.

The provided feedback from EACEA was discussed during the Third Council Meeting in Guangzhou. The report on improvements was made by the project coordinator.