

During this period one very important milestone of the project was reached: the delivery of the *“Designing, Delivering and Evaluating Online Study-Units”* course by all the partners to the five countries. Additionally, a series of papers about the project were published and presented in international conferences and two journal publications were achieved.

“Designing, Delivering and Evaluating Online Study-Units” Course



Figure 1 - UCY Moodle Platform Dig-It Course

The partners' teams offered the 9-module course *“Designing, Delivering and Evaluating Online Study-Units”* to their respective university’s academic and teaching staff.

The course has kicked-off for all countries on Wednesday 03 March 2021, with a synchronous online session. The course is being taught in parallel in five different countries, in five different universities in Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia, Italy, and Finland.

Each university has started with around 30 learners in this course, from several different faculties. The course is hosted on the Moodle platform of each university.

The course facilitators are participants of the DIG-IT project partners, who had completed both the 9-module and train-the-trainer courses.

The course was selected for an Honorable Mention award in the E-Learning category of the 2020 International E-Learning Awards from the International E-Learning Association.

Publications and Presentations in International Academic Conferences

Six academic papers about the project were accepted for publication and presentation in international academic conferences and journals during this period of the project.

The paper “DIG-IT: Digital Education Initiatives and Timely Solutions”, lead by the University of Cyprus team was accepted for publication at the 15th International Conference on Research Challenges in Information Science (RCIS 2021) and was presented at the conference by Evangelia Vanezi, 2021. The conference, initially to be held in Limassol (Cyprus), was organised online due to COVID-19, on May 11–14.

The poster is divided into three main vertical sections. The left section is a grey box containing the project title, a description of the project's goal, the project acronym, and the names of the team members. It also features a QR code and logos for Erasmus+ and DIG-IT. The middle section is a white box with a black border, detailing 'Expected tangible result' (a list of 5 points), 'Current project results' (bullet points), and 'Digital current project results' (bullet points). The right section is a white box with a black border, containing an 'Introduction' (bullet points), 'Objectives' (numbered list), and a circular diagram titled 'Research Objectives' with a central 'DIG-IT' logo and surrounding text.

DIG-IT is an ongoing project aiming to support educational technologies.

A contradiction inspired the project: even though we are living in an era of rapid technological changes able to generate new approaches to education bearing benefits, at the same time, academic staff still resist taking advantage of available technologies in their teaching.

DIG-IT: Digital Education Initiatives and Timely Solutions

Evangelia Vanezi, Alexandros Yeratziotis, Christos Mettouris, George A. Papadopoulos, and Colla J. MacDonald

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DIG-IT Digital Education Initiatives & Timely Solutions

Expected tangible result

1. a digital education innovative interactive framework and companion evaluation toolkit as a quality standard in guiding the design, delivery and evaluation of effective online study units, supporting educational technologies;
2. innovative and evidence-based methods to assist university academic staff and health industry educators with adopting digital education practices into current curricula;
3. the two-phased delivery and evaluation of: (i) a nine-module course to support and motivate educators on how to design, deliver and evaluate digital education resources, and (ii) a train-the-trainer online course to develop digital education experts to support and promote digital education;
4. an open access repository and website providing access to free open digital education resources;
5. bilingual (English & Italian) digital healthcare education apps collaboratively designed and piloted in a hospital partner.

Current project results

- Delivery and evaluation of the first round of the two courses: (i) the online course on how to design, deliver and evaluate digital study units; and (ii) the train-the-trainer online course.
- results demonstrate positive outcomes and positive feedback.
- the “European Union Digital Education Quality Standard Framework and Companion Evaluation Toolkit” aiming to guide the design, delivery and evaluation of effective online learning

Digital current project results

- Interactive tool for the Digital Education Framework in the DIG-IT web platform
- The “ECG Interpretation for Nurses online course”
- An open-access resources repository

All the above tools were developed using web technologies (HTML, CSS, Javascript, PHP).

Introduction

- Covid-19: led to a substantial increase in the usage of digital learning environments.
- Some EU universities offer robust online education, while others lag, offering few to zero online learning opportunities.
- DIG-IT aims to address the imbalance and inequity of digital education opportunities offered at EU universities.
- The cost and time required to design or learn how to design online study units and resources are significant barriers in implementing digital education.
- The project deals with the need for convenient, accessible, continuing education in academia with a case study in the healthcare sector,

Objectives

- (i) to collaboratively design evidence-based methods to assist academic staff with adopting digital education practices, increasing their knowledge and skills and the use of technology in teaching;
- (ii) to create an international learning community of practice to collaboratively create, share and distribute innovative training and teaching resources to support academic staff by reducing time and cost required to design digital education products and processes.

Research Objectives

DIG-IT

Figure 2: RCIS Dig-It Poster

Citations:

Vanezi, Evangelia, Yeratziotis, Alexandros, Mettouris, Christos, Papadopoulos, George A., and Colla J. MacDonald, "DIG-IT: Digital Education Initiatives and Timely Solutions." Research Challenges in Information Science: 15th International Conference, RCIS 2021, Limassol, Cyprus, May 11–14, 2021, Proceedings. Springer Nature.

Sabina Ličen, Colla J. MacDonald, Maria Cassar, Alexandros Yeratziotis, Debra Clendinneng, Leena Seriola, Igor Karnjuš in Mirko Prosen. Implementing the European Union Digital Education Framework in Teaching and Learning in Nursing. In: ČUČEK-TRIFKOVIČ, Klavdija (ed.), et al. International Scientific Conference "Learning to Live and Work Together": book of abstracts : June 10th, 2021, Slovenia, online. 1st ed. Maribor: University of Maribor, University Press, 2021. pp. [41]. ISBN 978-961-286-522-1.

Kivioja, T., Ritsilä, J. & Seriola, L. 2021. Train the Trainer Course Using European Union Digital Education Framework to Become a Better Online Teacher. Poster presentation. Innovative Learning Summit Online 2021. AACE Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education. <https://youtu.be/QoQ9GVGAmc4>

D. Clendinneng, A. Yeratziotis, T. Costa, L. Muscat, M. Cassar, L. Seriola, S. Hakkinen, E. Vanezi, C. J. MacDonald, C. Mettouris, L. Filomeno, and G. Papadopoulos. Bilingual Digital Resources for Healthcare Professionals to Offer Mobile Learning at the Point of Care – DIG-IT Project for Erasmus+. 5th International Conference on Education and Distance Learning; 2021.

Journal Publications

Two research papers were accepted for publication in academic journals:

- MacDonald, CJ; Backhaus, I., Yeratziotis, A., Vanezi, E., Clendinning, D.; Seriola, L., Häkkinen, S; Cassar, M.; Zammit, S.; Mettouris, C.; Papadopoulos, G. (in press)). European Union digital education quality standard framework and companion evaluation toolkit. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open and Distance Learning and eLearning*.
- MacDonald, C.J.; Licen, S., Clendinneng, D. Prosen, M. Filomeno, L. Cilia, J.: Backhaus, I.; Cassar, M., Karnjus, I.; La Torre., G.; (2021). Program evaluation of a continuing education course to support academic staff transitioning to online teaching. *International Journal of Social Policy and Education* 3(2), 54-80). ISSN 2689-4998.



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