LEARNING DESIGN FOR FLEXIBLE HIGHER EDUCATION: ROADMAP TO A EUROPEAN PILOT DEVELOPMENT

L. Morgado¹, A.P. Afonso², I.C. Carvalho³

¹ LE@sD - Universidade Aberta (PORTUGAL)
² LE@sD: Universidade Aberta & CBUC, Universidade Coimbra (PORTUGAL)
³ CMUC-UAo e LE@sD, Universidade Aberta (PORTUGAL)

This paper presents the development process for designing and implementing an innovative pilot course under the ERASMUS+ project, FLed (Learning Design) to promote flexible and effective pedagogical practices in higher education. This project arises in response to the identified need for effective learning in digital environments, beyond the mere adaptation of traditional teaching methods to virtual contexts, a gap highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the European Digital Education Agenda.

The pilot project aims to explore and expand digital competencies and pedagogical innovation among the teaching staff of the six participating universities, and to subsequently replicate the experience in other institutions.

The main goal of the FLed project is to help design flexible learning scenarios by applying the Flipped Learning (FL) method and optimising digital tools to support asynchronous time and promote a sustainable shift towards flexible education.

The objectives of the pilot design include testing the effectiveness of the FLed project's tool, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the process, and refining it. The goal is to develop inclusive learning scenarios. The phases of this pilot project cover preparation, implementation, evaluation, and analysis for continuous improvement.

During the preparation phase, learner personas were defined, and participants were selected, followed by an online workshop. In the implementation phase, the design of FL scenarios, registered in the FLed tool, co-created FL scenarios, received peer feedback, and shared scenarios. The scenarios were implemented, and the support of the FLed tool and the guidelines provided.

The pilot course began in December 2023, with teachers designing its content and familiarising themselves with the FLed platform. Course scenarios are curated, and assessment instruments are being applied.

By promoting innovative teaching practices and providing a pedagogical framework and guidelines for developing innovative learning scenarios, this project seeks to prepare teachers better to use flexible and effective teaching strategies. The pilot project raises awareness of flipped learning by testing and refining it. It facilitates the adoption of pedagogical approaches that respond better to students' needs in diverse contexts (face-to-face, hybrid, and online).

The successful implementation of the FLed Project can transform how teaching is pedagogically designed in universities, making it more adaptable.

Furthermore, by emphasising collaboration, feedback, and iterative improvement, the project establishes a model for continuous pedagogical innovation, higher education, and preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century.

Keywords: Flipped learning, learning design, flexible teaching, digital pedagogy, educational technologies.