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**International peer reviews of
e-learning:
results and
recommendations**

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Let's build a future for learning

Digivisio 2030

Survey

International peer reviews of e-learning

Survey topics:

1. International e-learning collaboration in Finnish institutions of higher education
2. National support websites for higher education pedagogy
3. International MOOC platforms and their use in Finnish institutions of higher education

Materials:

- literature review (previous scientific research and survey of publicly accessible websites)
- responses from institutions of higher education to the questionnaire distributed through the contact persons of the Digivisio 2030 work package 4: “e-learning”, workshops carried out at contact person meetings (21 April 2022 and 8 June 2022, where 35 contact persons and/or deputy persons from institutions of higher education were present)
- targeted interviews.

Implementation 04–06/2022.

1. International e-learning collaboration in Finnish institutions of higher education



Current status

- nearly all institutions of higher education reported that they collaborate internationally in the development of e-learning
- in some cases, e-learning was the target of the collaboration, in others it was a tool

The most typical forms of collaboration:

- *International projects* (especially Erasmus+ or other EU-funded, but also intercontinental)
 - Provide resources for development work that could not be implemented without additional funding
- *International networks* (a total of 23 different networks were mentioned in the responses)
 - Enable long-term development collaboration and, for example, planning and implementing joint curricula or courses
- *Partnerships and cooperation between institutions of higher education*
 - Are often a prerequisite for project work
 - Enable long-term cooperation, such as joint international degrees

The objectives of cooperation:

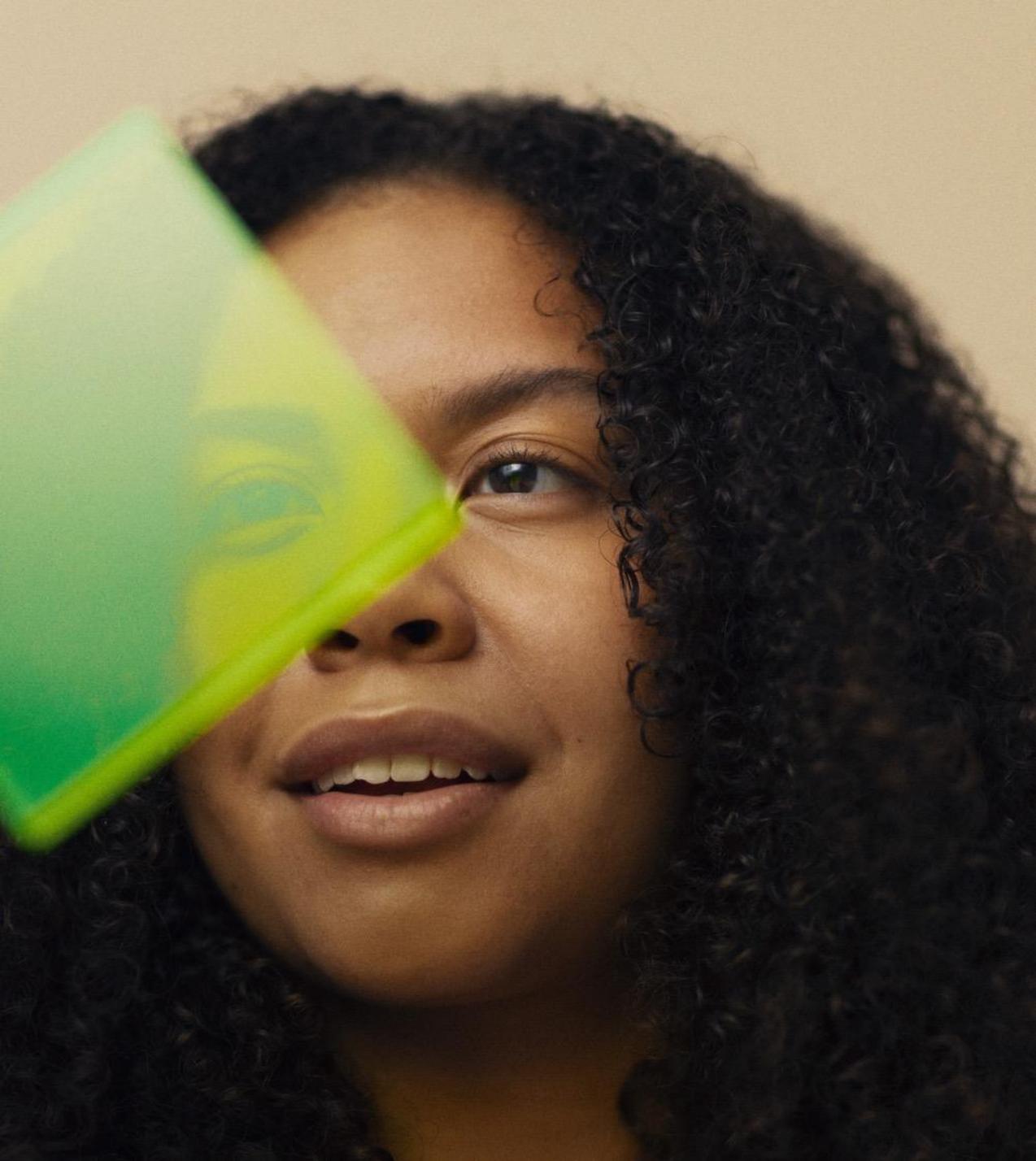
- Partly focused on subject matter, partly on pedagogy, and partly on both, e.g.
 - joint degrees or joint study plans or courses
 - identifying, developing and sharing best practices
 - developing the international and cultural skills of both teachers and students
 - developing online environments and e-learning
 - education export

Benefits of international cooperation

- The active participation of institutions of higher education in international projects and networks promotes
 - the identification, development and sharing of best practices
 - the international and cultural skills of both teachers and students as well as increased understanding
- Enables better understanding of the institution's own position in the international context
- Projects produce expertise and materials for shared use
- International cooperation serves as a form of societal influence and promotes local businesses

Challenges

- Lack of consensus on objectives, activities and perspectives
- Structural and legislative differences in the education systems of different countries
- Finding international partners
- Lack of resources regarding people, time as well as money (travel costs etc.)
- Involving students (especially Finns) in international courses
- Sharing best practices
- Time differences (especially intercontinentally)



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- Nearly all Finnish institutions of higher education consider international cooperation in e-learning a necessity.
- In the responses, project activities, networks and personal relationships were shown to be interconnected in practice; networks and personal relationships were seen as a prerequisite for the implementation of the projects, and the projects created networks and personal relationships.
- For networks, project activities also create an opportunity to carry out development work for which there would otherwise be no resources. Networks are needed to implement project results so that the results are not just one-off occurrences.

Recommendations

- The project field is fragmented and there is overlap in the content of projects. This means that the Digivisio 2030 project can support institutions of higher education in internationalisation and strengthen the already identified benefits in a concrete manner.
- For example, the national e-learning support website designed in the project can be used for
 - publishing a list of ongoing international project applications in different institutions
 - bringing together national experts
 - providing visibility for ongoing projects and networks and the good practices created in them.
- The responses of the institutions of higher education did not mention a lot of international cooperation in research on higher education pedagogy. A further study would be needed on how much research is done in the institutions of higher education and how the results are utilised and shared nationally.



2. National support website for higher education pedagogy



Starting point:

- International studies have identified the need for and the significance of national support for higher education pedagogy.
- A national support website can provide the following strategic and operational benefits:
 - *resource-efficient and consistent national development of higher education teachers' competence, especially in themes that are common for institutions of higher education (accessibility, sustainable development, e-learning methods, etc.)*
 - *promotion of national and international pedagogical research and project activities and sharing the results of projects*
 - *functions as an expert resource bank, bringing together expertise on different themes*
 - *increasing the appreciation of higher education through national pedagogy awards and information on them on the website; as a result, the website also serves as a national tool for pedagogical leadership*
 - *equal support provided by the platform for the national peer network of teachers and a discussion forum for pedagogical themes for all those working in higher education*
 - *functions as a material bank where the materials are freely available, promoting open and continuous learning in higher education pedagogy.*



Current state of pedagogy support websites

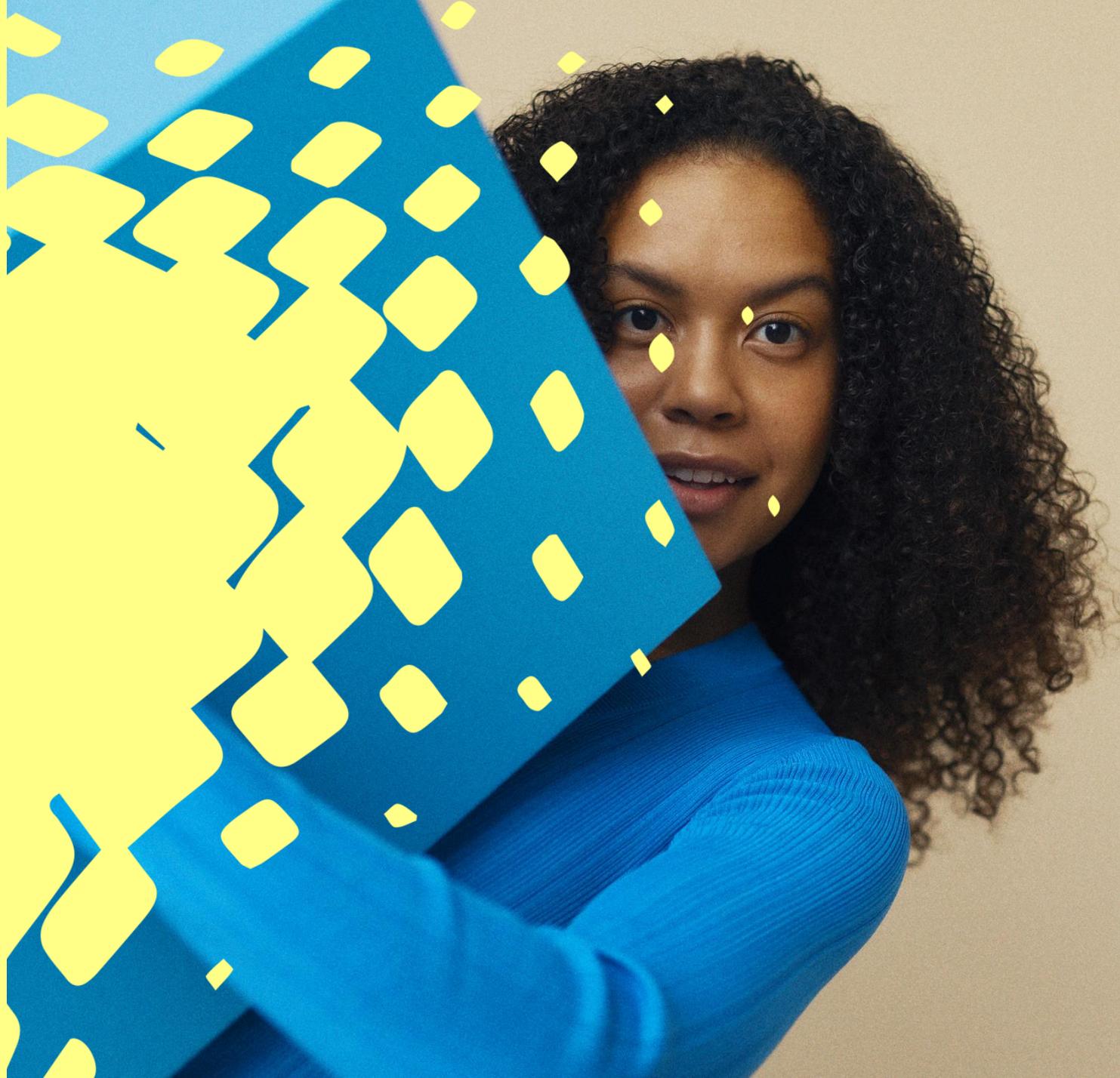
- National website only available in Ireland (www.teachingandlearning.ie, appendix slide 1)
- In other countries, the most typical sites are the Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC) websites of higher education institutions or national thematic sites (e.g. the Sustainicum website of Austria, appendix slide 2).
- In Finland, the only public support website currently available for a TLC is the website of the Tampere higher education community Teaching and Learning Centre (<https://www.tuni.fi/tlc/>, appendix slide 3)
- The content of the websites of the higher education institutions' own TLCs is mostly very similar, and studies show that the needs that each institution aims to meet with the support website are largely the same (appendix slides 4 and 5)
=> Most of the content could be shared, promoting the uniformity of pedagogical support provided by institutions of higher education

Recommendations

- The development of the national e-learning support website planned in the Digivisio 2030 project takes into account the strategic and operational benefits identified in international studies that can be achieved through a national level website.
- The design and implementation of the website benchmarks the national support website for higher education pedagogy already in operation in Ireland and examines the operating mechanism and funding structure behind it as well as the experiences of using the website.
- As the website can be used to increase the appreciation of higher education pedagogy and teaching as well as to support teachers' professional development, the development work of the website should also be linked to the development of the teacher's career path described in Digivisio's vision.
- Developing and updating the content of the website is carried out in close cooperation with the other partial implementations of Digivisio, e.g. for the part of the continuous learning tray.



3. International MOOC platforms and their use in Finnish institutions of higher education





Starting point:

- The importance of MOOCs (massive open online courses) has grown globally in recent years, both as a result of the development of e-learning and the Covid-19 pandemic.
- MOOCs are offered on the higher education institutions' own platforms as well as joint national or thematic platforms.
- Internationally there are both commercial platforms (some of which have become very popular) and publicly funded platforms available.
- The popularity of MOOCs also contributes to the spread of open educational resources.

International MOOC platforms and their use in Finnish institutions of higher education, current state

- MOOCs play a particularly important role in the field of continuous learning, as they are open to everyone. The popularity of MOOCs also contributes to the spread of open educational resources.
- MOOCs may also play a socially influential role in expanding competence (e.g. University of Helsinki's Elements of AI with more than 750,000 registered participants) or as an agile competence provider (e.g. joint Covid-19 tracking course by the University of Eastern Finland and Tampere University).
- Hanken is the only Finnish institution of higher education that has implemented MOOCs on an international platform (FutureLearn).
- At the national level, higher education MOOCs have been shared, for example, on the DigiCampus Moodle platform implemented in the DigiCampus project (<https://digicampus.fi/>), but not all institutions participate in it. There are also sites for sharing MOOCs on a specific theme, such as the FiTech website (<https://mooc.fitech.io/fi/>).
- A purpose of use for MOOCs that is specific to Finnish institutions of higher education are the so-called sneak-peek courses for secondary school students and gateway courses providing an alternative admission method to grades. Other important purposes of use include courses intended for professional development and providing visibility for the institution's research projects.
- From the perspective of users, the great number of MOOC platforms offers plenty of choice, but the field is also fragmented and even confusing and hard to navigate.

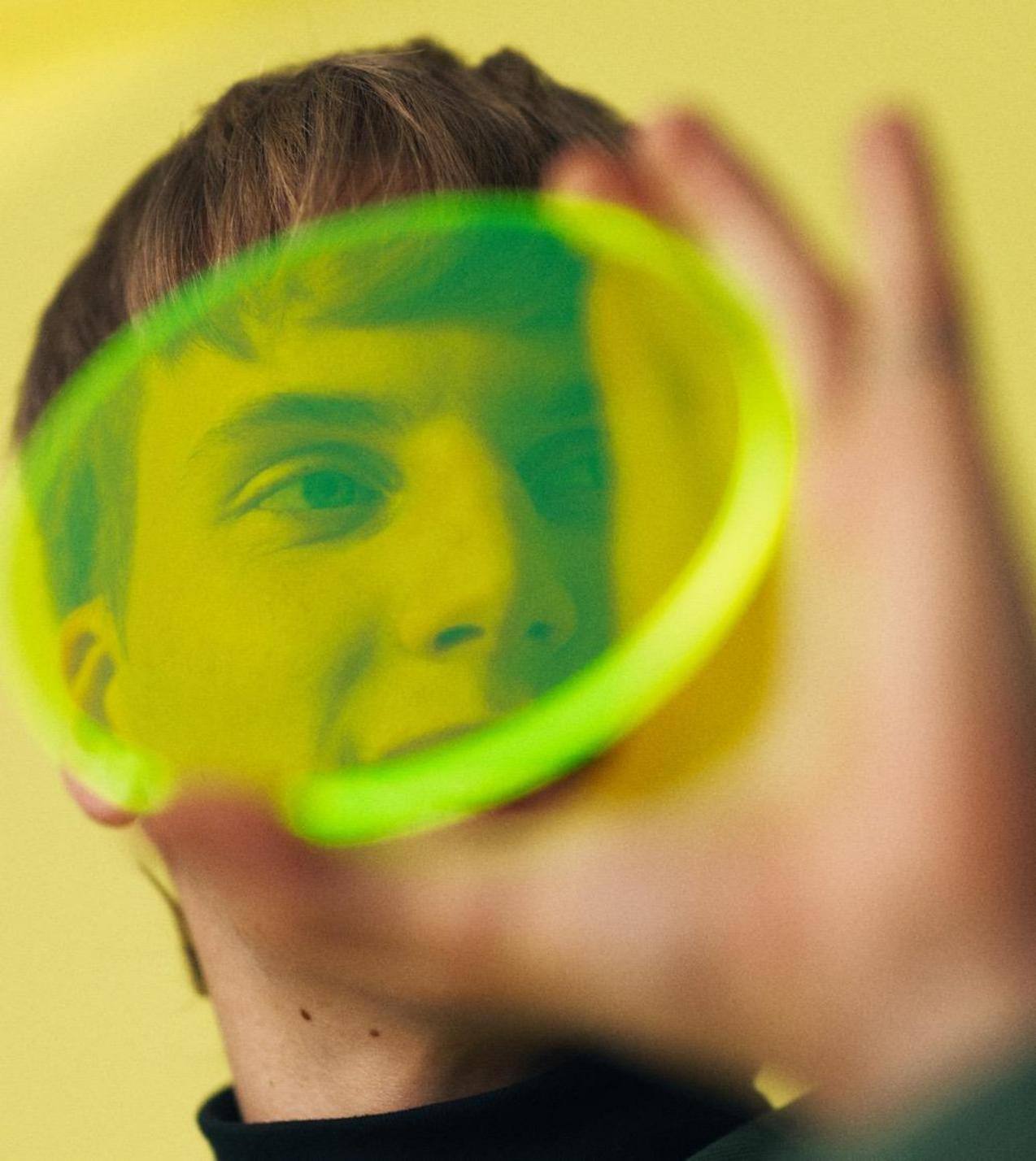
Recommendations (1/2)

- The development of MOOC technology and the MOOC offering should be monitored as part of the national learning tray developed in Digivisio. MOOCs will play an important role in the future, especially from the perspective of continuous learning.
- As MOOCs, by definition, offer open educational resources, Digivisio's development work in open education and MOOCs should be carried out collaboratively.
- In particular, the so-called sneak-peek courses and admission gateway courses aimed at upper secondary schools are a special feature of the Finnish education system in which the development work is typically carried out independently by higher education institutions without any uniform quality criteria, and the supply is fragmented over different platforms. Digivisio should examine the quality criteria and accessibility of MOOCs with particular attention to both student admissions and secondary school collaboration.



Recommendations (2/2)

- As MOOCs often also have societal functions (e.g. teaching the basics of AI at the European level or producing Covid-19 trackers for an acute need), the effectiveness of MOOCs should be widely recognised and taken into account in the project.
- Closer cooperation between higher education institutions in the Digivisio project also makes it possible to identify strengths related to competence in which higher education institutions could jointly produce international level MOOC offering.



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Thank you!



The screenshot shows the homepage of the National Learning Impact Awards website. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, VECAL Work, Open Content, Community, Newsletter, and Contact. The main banner features a photograph of an awards ceremony with the text "National Learning Impact Awards". Below the banner, there are three featured articles:

- Latest News:** "Teams from DIT, MTU and TU Dublin Celebrated at National DELTA Award Ceremony" (April 2017).
- Events:** "National Seminar Series" (November 14, 2017).
- Latest Resource:** "Next Steps for Teaching and Learning: Moving Forward Together" (Featured).

Below these articles is a "Featured" section highlighting the "Student Success Toolkit". The description states: "The Seven Cs for Embedding Student Success: A Toolkit for Higher Education Institutions (SEVEN Cs Toolkit) has been developed as a resource for higher education institutions (HEIs). It outlines a systematic process for embedding the continuous enhancement of student success. It includes resources to enable institutions to take stock of how student success is currently embedded in their institution, and to identify what currently works well and what needs to be developed further."

At the bottom of the page, there is a "National Seminar Series" section with "Upcoming Events" for the 27th, 28th, and 29th.

National support website: Irish example

www.teachingandlearning.ie

The purpose of the site is to promote

- teaching and the learning of all students in higher education
- sharing expertise
- shaping and implementing best practices in all Irish institutions of higher education.

The website describes e.g.

- ongoing national higher education pedagogical seminars
- available higher education pedagogy courses (some can also be completed as independent studies)
- ongoing national project applications
- annual national awards for good teaching
- the organisation behind the forum.

The website also describes the national values of higher education in Ireland and provides toolkits, for example, for learning analytics, open education, accessibility and inclusion.

National thematic support website: Sustainicum example (Austria)

<http://www.sustainicum.at/>

Includes e.g.

- teaching materials and videos on sustainable development
- a pedagogical toolkit for including the themes of sustainable development in one's own teaching.

The screenshot shows the Sustainicum Collection website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a home icon, a search bar, and a language selector (EN). Below the navigation bar, there is a sidebar with a menu containing: Home, Teaching Resources (highlighted), Teaching Units, Teaching Methods, Your Contribution, Project, Contact, Legal Notice, and Privacy Policy. The main content area features a search filter section with dropdown menus for Teaching Tools & Methods, Time required, Group Size, Social Setting, University, and Language. Below the filters, it states "47 teaching methods found". The methods are displayed in a grid of cards, each with a title, a brief description, and a "Teaching Tools & Methods" icon. The visible methods include:

- Graz Model for Integrative Development**: The Graz Model for Integrative Development (Mader, C., 2009, 2012) assesses development processes on the basis of five principles:...
- Six Thinking Hats**: This method is best used to solve complex problems as it aims at looking at problems from different perspectives. Participants learn how to embrace problems in an...
- Dyade**: The Dyade is a conversation between two persons using pre-defined questions. The same questions are asked again in several rounds, allowing a more profound...
- Fishbowl-Discussion**: Democratic decision making can be simulated in a fishbowl discussion. Since the majority of the participants will observe the process, they can analyse it. A fishbo...
- Interactive Backcasting**: In this method one starts with defining a desirable scenario for the future and then the group will analyse the way towards it. By planning the way backwards – starting fro...
- iooi method (Input – Output – Outcome – Impact) by Bertelsmann Stiftung**: The iooi method deals with impact assessment of corporate social commitment. iooi stands for 'input – output – outcome – impact'. The importance of...

Higher education community's TLC support website (TUNI example)

<https://tuni.fi/tlc>

The most popular pages on the website in spring 2022 according to user analysis (5/2022):

- theoretical and conceptual perspectives on teaching
- pedagogical design
- digital pedagogy
- digital pedagogy environments and tools

Tampereen yliopisto
Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu

Etusivu Opettajana korkeakoulussa Opetuksen suunnittelu ja toteutus Pedagoginen tutkimus ja hankkeet Blogi

Teaching and Learning Centre

TLC - opettamisen ja oppimisen keskus
Opetus- ja ohjaushenkilöstön tukena

Blogi 2022-05-12 Opiskelijan ääni: Etäopetusta extroverteille?

Blogi 2022-04-05 Facilitating the Wide Space for Learning!

Uutinen 2022-04-05 TLC tarjoaa henkilöstölle verkostoitumismahdollisuuden eri aiheiden parissa

Koulutuskalenteri

TOUKOKUU 2022

MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

Webinaaritallenteet

Tampereen korkeakoulu yhteisön Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) on verkosto, joka kokoaa pedagogisen asiantuntemuksen sekä opettajien tarvitseman tiedon ja palvelut yhteen. Lisäksi TLC tukee kaikkia korkeakoulu yhteisössä opetustyötä tekeviä

National strategic goals for the operation of the Teaching & Learning Centres (TLC) of institutions of higher education (Holt et al. 2011):

- producing new visions and plans promoted by participating in national and international pedagogy research and by strengthening strategic cooperation between institutions of higher education
- developing flexible ways to support and guarantee the continuous pedagogical learning of academic staff, taking into account the needs of both new and experienced teachers
- developing the competence of part-time teachers in addition to permanent teachers
- timely pedagogical development; online education can be used to reach higher education teachers living in different parts of the country at the national level and to simultaneously offer topical education and pedagogical services to everyone
- creating a national virtual meeting place for higher education teachers; both to promote peer support and collaboration between teachers and to promote cooperation between institutions of higher education
- strategic funding of pedagogical development work; a joint centre can support the project application phase and the sharing of the results of development projects
- rewarding teachers; Australia has developed national criteria for good higher education, and institutions of higher education have developed their own systems for rewarding good teaching accordingly
- sharing best practices from new teaching methods for everyone's benefit
- building an "expert resource bank" to provide visibility for teachers' expertise, taking into account the recognition of expertise as part of teachers' career development
- developing leadership in ways that take into account the integral role of pedagogy in formal and informal leadership

Holt, D., Palmer, S. & Challis, D. 2011. Changing perspectives: teaching and learning centres strategic contributions to academic development in Australian higher education. International Journal for Academic Development, 16 (1), 5–17.

The key functions of the support websites of the Teaching & Learning Centres (TLC) of institutions of higher education (Gaebel et al. 2018)

- providing courses and materials to teachers to support development (65%)
- providing guidance and help to academic staff for the development of teaching (62%)
- support for innovative teaching development initiatives (guidance, financial support, logistics support, etc.) (54%)
- analysis of student feedback and student performance assessment and/or teacher assessment (45%)
- research in higher education pedagogy (39%)
- organisation of awards for good teaching (31%)
- developing and implementing paths for teachers' personal development (24%)
- other methods (9%)

Gaebel, M., Zhang, T. & Iucu, R. 2018. Advancing Learning and Teaching in the EHEA: Innovation and Links with Research. In: Curaj, A., Deca, L. & Pricopie, R. (eds) European Higher Education Area – Challenges for a New Decade. Springer, 273–282.