



D-ChallengHE Newsletter

Issue no. 2

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1. The D-challengHE Hub and Observatory Start Up

The D-ChallengHE Erasmus+ project launch the creation of a HUB and a related Observatory to connect academics, research centers and stakeholders on the digitalisation of the HE system, exploit and advance innovative data capture and analysis in education.

The two main D-ChallengHE objectives are the creation of *The European Digital Innovation Hub in HE* to create an international and inter, trans and multidisciplinary research network. The Hub will share best practices and promote collaboration among different HE institutions to allow the university, understood as a complex organisation, to renew itself from within and integrate the opportunities offered by digital, countering its risks and/or unwanted and perverse effects.

The Hub

D-ChallengHE HUB is based on the values of openness, diversity, collaboration and innovation.

Individuals and institutions (universities, departments, research institutes) may submit their application to the [D-ChallengHE HUB](#) through [the form](#) on the [research group's website](#). So, any other research unit can be a Hub member. Both institutional and individual participation in the group is voluntary and does not entail any obligations (without financial obligation).

We call upon researchers, practitioner, institutions and research centre to take part to the HUB considering the essential role of HEIs in promoting “sustainable development by empowering individuals, organisations, enterprises and communities, and by fostering employment, decent work and lifelong learning, to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and competitiveness, social equity and environmental sustainability” (UNESCO, 2015).

The Observatory

Within this framework, the D-ChallengHE Observatory becomes part of the SKILLMAN DECLARATION 2023, to operate within the [skillman.eu network](#) and plays an active role for redefining the future of learning and skills.

The [Observatory](#) serves as a platform for dissemination, research, networking, and knowledge-sharing among skillman.eu members. It focuses on the digitization of the Higher Education system at the European level, providing the latest publications and facilitating discussions on the challenges, changes, innovations, scenarios, risks, and opportunities posed by digital technologies to universities and society as a whole.

The D-ChallengHE Observatory, supported by the skillman.eu community, enables academics, research centres, and stakeholders to connect and collaborate on the digitalization of the Higher Education system. By harnessing innovative data capture and analysis techniques, the Observatory empowers the skillman.eu network to advance its understanding of the digital transformation in higher education.

For this reason, we invite all research, people, and institutions interested in accompanying the digital transition in teaching/learning, research, society and the labour market by empowering logic to adhere to the HUB.



SIF2023

During the [SIF2023](#) D-ChallengHE project has established a significant partnership with the [skillman.eu network](#) by joining the SIF Declaration 2023. As a result, the D-ChallengHE HUB & Observatory will operate under the skillman.eu umbrella and be included in the skillman.eu initiatives. This collaboration will be formally recognized through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the SIF (Skillman International Forum) 2023 in Riga, September 26th/27th. The skillman.eu community played a pivotal role in launching this remarkable initiative, and we are grateful for their support. We know that in the context of the changing global political and institutional scenario concerning higher education, a series of questions are being asked which await innovative answers both to face the crisis adequately and to create better conditions for cultural and structural aspects to redefine the terms of the development of university institutions in the 21st century in a cooperative, participatory and inclusive logic. An effect where universities are required to direct scientific innovation and social and technological transfer, starting from a renewed ethics of responsibility and shared values. We invite all research, people, and institutions interested in accompanying the digital transition in teaching/learning, research, society and the labour market by empowering logic to adhere to the HUB.

2. KU: call for panel and for the paper

20th Annual International Scientific Conference on Social Innovations for Sustainable Regional Development

Klaipeda, Lithuania, April 25-26 2024

Call for workshops and call for panels

For the *20th Annual International Scientific Conference on Social Innovations for Sustainable Regional Development*, set to take place in Klaipeda, Lithuania on April 25-26 2024, the Klaipeda University is launching a **call for workshop and a call for panels**.

The two main theme of the conference are:

- **Governance and Digital Innovation in HEs:** Focus on alignment between digital strategies and educational practices, reorganization of HEIs for digital transitions, and addressing digital transformation.
- **Overcoming Digital Transformation Challenges in Higher Education:** Explore obstacles faced by institutions during digital changes, innovative strategies for managing digital transformation, and the impact of the digital revolution on teaching, learning, and student participation.



The **submission deadline for the Call for Workshop is on March 15, 2024**, with an acceptance Notification on March 25, 2024. Detailed programme of the call to https://d-challenghe.unilink.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/20231102_KU_-Call-for-workshops.pdf

For the Call for Panel Proposals, the submission deadline is on 1 december 2023, with an acceptance Notification on 15 december 2023. Detailed programme of the call to https://d-challenghe.unilink.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/20231102_KU-call-for-panels.pdf

Join us in shaping the future of universities in the digital age through critical discussions and innovative ideas. We look forward to your participation!

For inquiries or further information, please contact:

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3. Academia: The Launch of Training for Innovative Teaching

Project Output 3 (WP3), a critical pillar of the D-ChallengHE project, was designed to empower educators with the knowledge and skills needed to enhance teaching practices through modern pedagogical approaches and digital technologies.

In order to do so the online course delivery platform was set up. While the user interface and the online version of the courses is still being modified, the platform can already be found at <https://d-challenge.eu/>.

In addition, the partners already created content for 3 online courses, which will be soon adapted for the online delivery on the platform. The courses we will launch are:

1. Soft and Communication Skills for Digital Teaching
2. Online Teaching Methodologies
3. Use of AI in Education

Between January 2024 and June 2024 all of the courses will be pilot tested at each of the project partner countries. In each country, 3 trainers will deliver the courses and 36 participants will be included in the testing of the delivery.

To do this in a quality way and support all participants of the pilot testing, 3 user guides for the delivery were created:

- E-Facilitators platform and delivery guide
- Coordinators platform and delivery guide
- Trainees platform and course guide



A big part of the preparation for the pilot testing was staff training and project meeting in Patras, Greece, which was held in September 2023. The event's agenda was packed with enlightening sessions, engaging discussions, and exciting demonstrations that promise to have a profound impact on the future of education. The training session provided an overview of the purpose, goals, and key indicators of the Training for Innovative Teaching. It was emphasized that this training is a crucial step towards achieving high-quality online and blended teaching in higher education. Academia, the leading partner of the WP3 and other partners assigned to various tasks, presented the course contents created, user guides created, the online course delivery structure, evaluation tools that will be used to get feedback from the participants, application call materials, and, most importantly, the country action plan for the course delivery.

The training for Project Output 3 has laid the groundwork for the successful development and implementation of innovative teaching practices in higher education. By providing a clear roadmap and structure, this output will help educators empower themselves and enhance the quality of online and blended teaching across Europe.

4. HOU: Staff training and Patras multiplier event of October

The DAISSy Research Team of the Hellenic Open University (HOU) co-organized and hosted the staff training event organized within the European project 'D-ChallengHE – Digital Challenge in Higher Education', which took place from September 20 to 22, 2023, in Patras. The actions were carried out in person at the HOU facilities.

The first day of educational activities was covered by a set of speakers invited by the DAISSy Research Group. Specifically, Mr. Christos Zotos gave a presentation on "Artificial Intelligence in the minds of students: Perception and Ethics", Dr. Panagiotis Koustoumbardis, Mr. Nikos Anatoliotakis and Mr. Dimitris Tzouvelekis presented "STEAM education through Robotics for the promotion of university knowledge in society", Dr. Haris Tschouridis, professor at the University of Patras and Mr. Nikos Mitrakas spoke about "Innovative teaching methodologies and tools" and Dr. Alexandros Mikropgiannidis, professor at Open UK, described "Genetic Artificial Intelligence in Distance Education". The actions of the first day closed with the presentation of the role of the "Internet of Things in STEM education" by Dr. Gerasimos Vonitsanos.

On the second day of the staff training activities, the online learning environment, the online courses and the educational material, the national action plans of implementing the educational program of the project, as well as the evaluation tools of the courses, the educational process and the satisfaction of the trainees were discussed. Moreover, several details concerning workshop and panel setup were provided towards effective organization of international events. Finally, on the third and final day the partners discussed the role of serious games in technology-enhanced learning, while Roberto Vardisio and Patricia Chiappini from Entropy Knowledge Network s.r.l presented a story-writing approach, as well as a serious game development tool. The participants were then divided into groups with the aim of training them in the use of the serious game editor through a specific scenario.



On the 26th of October, the Greek Multiplier Event will take place in person presenting the D-ChallengHE training program, the online courses, the educational contents and the Greek action plan to a targeted audience. The goal is to draw the attention of people who fall into the project's target groups and attract participation in the upcoming training program.

5. EKN: Gamification: students' enrollment

A crucial aspect of the D-ChallengHE project is innovation in learning and teaching practices. WP4 aims to develop tools to involve students and young researchers engaged in higher education, with the aim of:

- Enhance the digital skills of students and young researchers or support staff;
- Create innovative methodologies and tools for integration into online learning platforms used in higher education.

Within WP4, the responsibility to lead this initiative lies with Entropy KN, which since 2006 has been developing teaching methodologies in line with the principles of Technology Enhanced Learning and in particular gamification tools such as Serious Games.

As part of WP4, Entropy presented partners with its Serious Games, which are configured as "virtual simulation, similar to video games, through which you can "train" specific skills and abilities."

In the context of the D-ChallengHE project, each partner will be required to develop its SG in line with the set learning and training objectives, with particular attention to the transversal competences (soft skills) associated with it. Each partner will have a tutor available and will involve a group of 20 students in the game design process. Entropy will support each partner, from storyboard creation to the practical implementation of the game.

For further information and registration, please contact:

d-challenghe@unilink.it and/or dites.progetti@unilink.it

6. Call for panel and papers: Conference of Digital Pedagogy

As part of the D-challengHE project, the **Institute of Education in Romania is excited to announce the call for papers for the 3rd volume** (No. 1/ 2024) of its *Journal of Digital Pedagogy*, welcoming works related to the following thematic areas:

- Digitalisation of curriculum in higher education;
- Pedagogical and psychological research on online and hybrid education;
- The use of OER and open educational practices in higher education;
- Digital competences for teaching staff/ Professional development in digital education.

The **abstract submissions**, consisting of 200-300 words, are due by **December 1st 2023**, and the notification of acceptance will be sent within one week. Following acceptance, the deadline for **full paper submissions** is **February 1st, 2024**, with acceptance notifications in



less than two weeks. Once accepted, your work will be published within a two-week timeframe.

The Proposals can be submitted in English, French, Italian and Romanian to **office@iEdu.ro**. We wish to emphasise that the review process and the publication of papers are free of charge.

For those interested in presenting at the **Conference of Digital Pedagogy**, which is held in conjunction with activities of the D-ChallengHE project, the optional presentation date is **March 15th 2024**. This presentation can be conducted online or in person in Bucharest, Romania.

Learn more about the Journal of Digital Pedagogy at: <https://digital-pedagogy.eu>.

Call, submission and last papers: <https://digital-pedagogy.eu/2024-call-for-papers/>

Call for panels: <https://digital-pedagogy.eu/2024-call-for-panels/>

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