Written update on Advisory Group 2 "Learning and Teaching"

Name of AG/WG: AG 2 on Learning and Teaching
Co-chairs: Eurashe, France and Netherlands
Date: March 2019

Scope of the work

The increased focus on learning and teaching, capacity of institutions to open up to new skill demands and educational pathways and an urgent need for concepts and effective programs to train teachers as well as clear frameworks for teachers future teaching skills is challenging the current European higher education Area. While higher education systems in member states are often under pressure due to changing demographics, societal challenges, technological advancements and possibilities of digital learning and teaching are calling for change.

It is the mission of the advisory group for learning and teaching to develop concise principles for innovative and inclusive approaches in learning and teaching, with actions and best-practice examples of how governments can support institutions to develop, enhance and implement strategies for teaching and learning within higher education institutions while respecting academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Apart from the digital agenda which is one important focus point of the Paris Communique, also the issue to equip teachers with skills and competences for future teaching, as well as helping learners to become autonomous learners, and inclusive and lifelong learning are included in the scope of this AG.

Update on the work

Advisory Group 2 met for the first time on the 28th of February in Brussels, at the Eurashe office. In the run up to this first meeting, the co-chairs sent out a scoping questionnaire, asking the members of AG2 to indicate to what extent the proposed issues in learning and teaching were priorities for them, as a means to define the scope of thematic priorities for the advisory group. The questionnaire was filled out by almost all group members. At the bottom of this paper, please find a summary of the results.
At the board meeting in Skopje, the outcome of this questionnaire was discussed. The board recommended to balance both aspects of AG2: Learning and Teaching. The board also suggested to ensure there are no overlapping topics from the other groups (such as AG1 on Social Dimension). These ideas were shared by the members of AG2 during the meeting in Brussels (28.4.2019). The selection of themes that the group will focus on, were adjusted accordingly and further fine-tuned following discussions in the group.

During the meeting of AG2 in Brussels, taking the results of the questionnaire as a first input, the participants discussed in small groups about the clusters of topics that, were considered to have most priority. These discussions led to further refinement of the topics, which are presented in three thematic clusters:

Theme I - Learning – Students' Perspective
- Bringing student centered learning in practice (supported also through curriculum design)
- Align student's assessment methods and criteria with the learning outcomes and with the learning activities that have taken place
- Making learning environments inclusive: Flexible, empowering, accommodating different learning paths, and supported through digital means
- A focus on developing and supporting future oriented skills in learning processes Skills to cope with new and innovative learning and teaching scenarios: Students to become autonomous learners
- [Possibly: Open learning]

Theme II - Fostering Learning through improved Teaching - Skills and competences of teachers
- How to identify and promote good teaching/ innovative pedagogies, incl. digital teaching skills?
- Develop transparent career paths for teachers, which recognise the value of teaching.
- Learning labs for skills and competences of innovative and future teaching, including digital transformation of learning and teaching frameworks
- Development of pedagogical skills of new and experienced teaching staff (continued professional development), including possibly through pathways and frameworks to support competence development of educational professionals
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- organisational development for educational institutions, including frameworks for team development for pedagogical professionals (non-monetary) incentives for teaching (such as awards)

III - Organisation and support to innovative learning and teaching (Institutional Perspective)
- Measures to support creation of environment supportive to teaching, including financial support to support teaching and learning projects (e.g. teachers' training, curriculum development, link with private sector/mobility)
- Institutional strategies and frameworks for (future) learning and teaching
- Transformation of higher education organisations in a digital age.
- Process of curriculum design needs to be student centered
- Quality Assurance Frameworks for evolved educational institutions
- Innovative learning and teaching concepts and practices within a collaborative & collegial stakeholder community
- Institutional Strategies for Open Education and Use of Open educational Resources
- Cooperation between institutions
- Educational research and evaluation on learning and teaching practices and strengthen capacity of administration at HEIs to understand and use the educational research results.

Transversal aspects: LLL/continuous professional development, social dimension, academic freedom and institutional autonomy, academic integrity , strengthen link between education and research

Next steps

The group will produce a set of principles addressing these themes, respecting and including the importance of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The principles will be complemented with guidelines of how governments may initiate and/or ensure these principles nationally and across the EHEA. The group will also collect best practice examples relating to these themes.

For the next meeting (April 9-10, Paris), the co-chairs plan to invite experts who have worked on best practices related to the three thematic areas to inspire the group. The meeting will have the form of discussion, hearings and sharing good practices. A document was shared via Google doc, in which all members of AG2 could add best practices. Based on this, the co-chairs will make a proposal on who to invite. A further update on this might be given by one of the co-chairs during the BFUG in Bucharest.

Calender
1st meeting AG2 in Brussels : February 28
2nd meeting AG2 in Paris: April 9-10
3d meeting AG2 in Amsterdam (probably): June 28
More meetings are foreseen in the fall of 2019, dates are tbc.

Summary of the results of the scoping questionnaire

Thematic field and themes	Modus
Thematic field I: Future Skills for Future Graduates – TOWARDS A DIGITAL BOLOGNA AGENDA, beyond 2020	
Innovative pedagogical concepts and practices for the 21st century	3
Digital transformation of teaching and learning in higher education	3
Quality assurance of teaching and learning in a digital age	3
Preparing Students to become independent learners	
Enabling open education, open educational resources, open educational practices in higher education	2
What are the future skills of the future graduates of higher education in Europe?	2
Thematic field II: Making Inclusive & Lifelong Learning Higher Education a Reality	
Opening up higher education and inclusion of a diversifying higher education population	3
Making higher lifelong learning a reality	3
Thematic field III: Skills and competence for teachers of future higher education	
Teacher Training	
Training of teachers	2
Skills/ competencies of teachers in higher education, encompassing also research	3

Strengthen the link between education, research and innovation in higher education	2
Academic career development, including career paths focused on teaching	1
Remaining topics, not listed or selected	
Teaching and learning for becoming European and global citizens and workers	1
Preparation for the grand challenges of today: Climate changes, migrations	1
Microcredentials, badges, and new forms of credentialing and qualification	1

3 = highly relevant; 2 = relevant; 1 = moderately relevant