



1st Newsletter

July 2016

www.blearning-project.eu/

Curriculum Design for Blended Learning

Almost a year has passed since the beginning of B-Learning Project and we are happy to share with you the first project results. This Newsletter will inform you about Needs Analysis Report, main outcomes from Riga workshop and outline further project steps/ developments. You can also find information about the project, on the project website and on social media, at <https://www.facebook.com/blearningEU/>



ABOUT THE PROJECT

In September 2015 a consortium of 6 partners started implementation of 2 year Erasmus+ project “B-Learning: Curriculum Design for Blended Learning”.

The consortium represents 4 European countries: National Centre for Education (VISC), Izglitibas Metodiska Laboratorija (IML) and Rigas Anglu Gimnazija (RAG) - Latvia; the SkillsLab - the United Kingdom; Centre for Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology (CARDET) - Cyprus; and BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining (BEST) - Austria.

The B-Learning project aims at developing innovative and creative solutions for implementation of blended learning at schools. To accomplish this goal the project will:

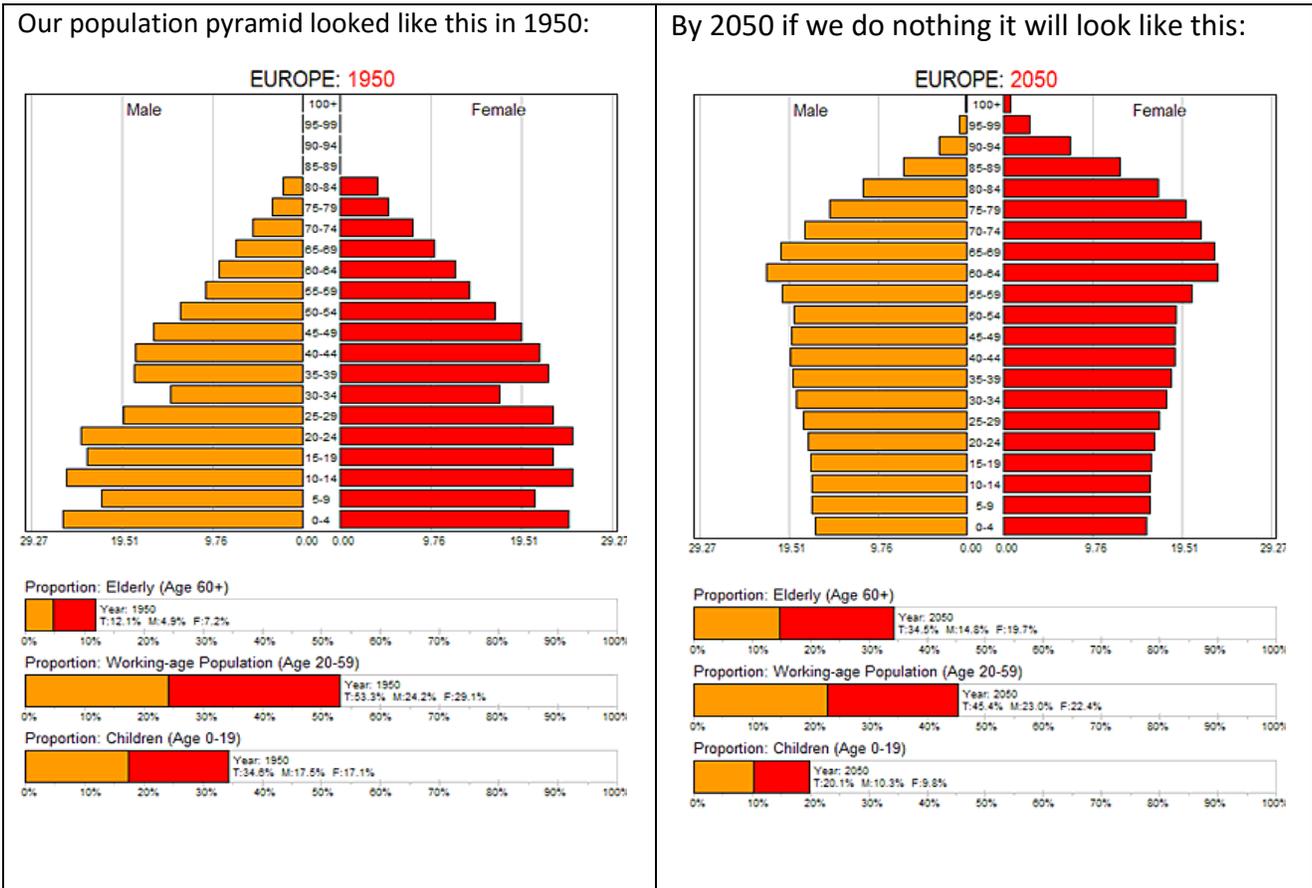
- Provide research based approach for school leadership teams how to support teachers in the transition from traditional teaching to BL approach;
- Provide tools for implementation of student guided learning;
- Raise awareness about the change of teacher’s role and BL implications for teachers in their day-to-day work;
- Impact the way school and education process is organized (including staff models, time management, selection of appropriate hardware and software, use of space and the design of facilities, etc.).

Educational Change in Europe: The Choice We Have to Make

No one knows what the future might look like. But we can have a good guess at the kinds of challenges we in Europe might face over the next thirty years. The first one is our population: it is aging and our

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numbers are reducing. Across Europe the total fertility rate is just 1.51 – far less than replacement levels.



From: Human Development – Demography (www.china-europe-usa.com/level_4_data/hum/011_7b.htm)

Why this matters is because our governments won't have enough money to provide for our old people and keep the services demanded by liberal democracies.

Next is the challenge of climate change: temperatures could be 2 degrees higher by 2050 and possibly more. This will hit our production of food and flooding will make lives difficult for many millions of our people.

Then there is change from technology. The effect of Moore's law (computing power doubles in capacity every two years and halves in price) means that intelligent machines and algorithms will replace many current jobs. A 2013 report noted that 47 per cent of current jobs could be replaced today. Future work forces will need skills of communication and of creativity to survive in a much changed work environment.

And of course beyond our borders we face war and uncertainty. The global economy has its own difficulties which all too often generate economic hardships for European populations. We have to act together to fight the import of deflationary trends and defend our own manufacturing and service capacities.

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And yet despite these challenges our school systems remain mostly unchanged: teacher centred and designed for an industrial age that no longer exists. We need to change and we need to change now. If we do not our children will be poorly equipped to cope with the challenges they face.

This project – Blended Learning – offers one route forward for schools by suggesting manageable pathways for schools to migrate aspects of learning to include an on line environment, more connected to the world as it is and not as it was.

TOOLKIT FOR BLENDED LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

In June trainers from partner institutions attended 5 day training workshop in Riga conducted by experts from the Skills Lab. The main purpose of the workshop was to discuss and develop the structure of B-Learning Toolkit – the main Project output. Partners agreed on five interrelated Toolkit parts: Professional development program (PDP), Guidelines for PDP trainers, Course materials for PDP, Self-diagnostic tool for school teams, Guidelines for school teams.



NEEDS ANALYSIS REPORT

Needs Analysis Report (NAR) is one of the two main project outputs. Development of NAR was led by the project partner CARDET from Cyprus who developed research methodology. All partners followed the same sequence of practices in order to ensure consistency in the overall process of identifying the needs for each partner country. Partners received a template and initially conducted literature reviews on topics around technology integration and policies in their national contexts. For the data collection a survey tool was used. The data analysis was quantitative and included data from all partner countries. Each partner analysed data from the survey and sent to CARDET which then provided an overall picture of the state of the art.

The Needs Analysis Report sets the grounds for developing a functional and effective blended learning toolkit. Specifically, it aims at achieving the following objectives:

- Provide a literature review that describes the core ideas and concepts of blended learning;
- Identify the advantages of blended learning;
- Present existing EU policies related to the use of ICT in education and blended learning;
- Present existing policies on the use of ICT and blended learning in partners' national contexts;
- Present indicators and good practices of blended learning in partners' national contexts;
- Present data collected from partners' national contexts around different topics of blended learning;

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- Present the outcomes and conclusions that derive from the data collection;
- Identify and discuss the needs as derived from the analysis of the collected data and in relation to the EU policies and literature review.

The Needs Analysis Report provides Literature Review, definitions and types of blended learning; describes EU and national policies in the use of ICT and existing practices in blended learning; and highlights main gaps for implementing blended learning in partner countries.

Although education systems are different all partner countries experience similar challenges in implementing blended learning e.g. lack of knowledge, skills and experience how to implement blended learning; lack of support, such as tools, technological solutions and evaluation strategies; insufficient ICT provision within schools, etc.

The full text of Needs Analysis Report is available on the B-Learning Project [website](#).

UPCOMING WORK

Partners will continue Toolkit development till September. The Toolkit draft will be presented in partner's meeting in Vienna – September 27-28.

In September and October the Toolkit will be introduced to pilot schools during introductory seminars in Latvia, Cyprus, Austria and England (UK) followed by piloting of the Toolkit from October 2016 – February 2017.

CONTACT US

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