Newsletter Vol. 1

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MODE IT

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Curricular modernization by implementing MOOCs model/MODE IT

MODE IT stands for the Erasmus+ project **„Curricular modernization by implementing MOOCs model"**, which started on the 1st of October 2019 and has been carrying out by five higher education institutions from Germany, Lithuania, Turkey, Portugal, and Romania.

Project launching: Kick-off meeting at the FHM Bielefeld, November 11-12, 2019.

Staatlich anerkannte, private **Fachhochschule des Mittelstands (FHM)**

Universitatea Politehnica Timişoara

ktu 1922 — kaunas university of technology

ANADOLU UNIVERSITY

P.PORTO

About MODE IT project

MOOCs, or Massive Open Online Courses, are well-known alternative to benefit from higher education opportunities without being enrolled at any university and leaving home. MOOCs stand for non-formal self-regulated learning that requires from students a solid portion of self-discipline, analytical and research skills, virtual collaboration, and advanced digital competence.

These competences are of a high importance for today's HEI students and need to be trained already during their formal studies. Innovative MODE IT solution is to integrate MOOC-based pedagogies into higher education curricula. Formal students should learn via MOOCs and increase in this manner not only their subject knowledge, but also train the ability to lifelong learning!

MODE IT objectives

To enhance skills and competences of academic staff for the design and delivery of MOOC-based curricula
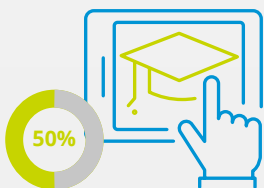
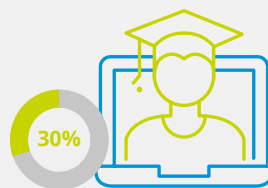To upskill staff support structures at HEIs

To integrate MOOC-based pedagogies into traditional HEI curricula.

MODE IT expected intellectual outputs (IOs):

50%

IO1:
Online self-assessment tool for academic staff (in progress)

30%

IO2:
Open online training program for teachers (in progress)

0%

IO3:
MOOC-based higher education curricula (not started yet)

IO1: Online Self-Assessment Tool

Currently MODE IT team is deeply engaged in the finalisation of the self-assessment tool. This output is expected to support academic staff in identifying their needs for the design and delivery of MOOC-based courses. When completing the tool, the current level of didactical and digital skills will be explored, the areas for skills improvements will be detected, and related suggestions for improvement will be displayed.

The tool is designed as a survey: it includes a number of pedagogical and technological competences that are categorized in five dimensions and are supposed to be assessed by users on the scale from 0 (no experience) to 6 (the highest proficiency level). These competences were first identified by MODE IT experts as most rele-

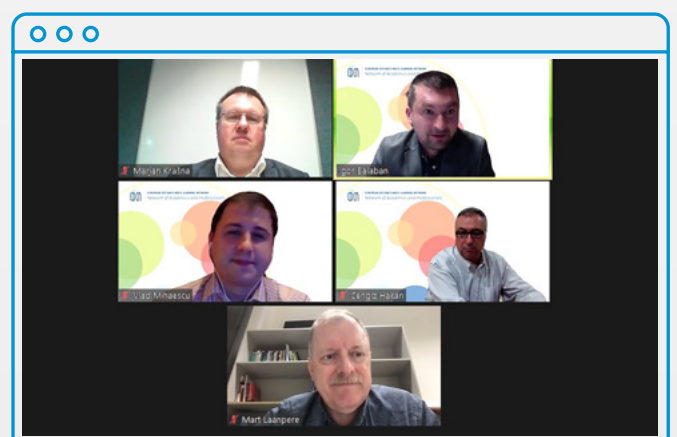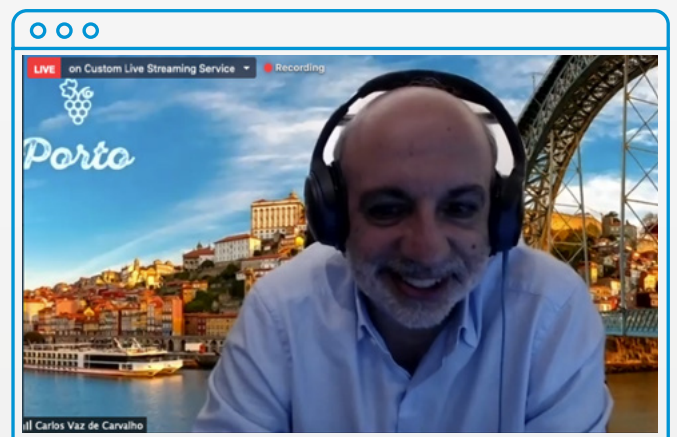vant ones for MOOCs creation and delivery. In the second step, they were verified by participants of focus groups that were conducted by each MODE IT partner institution. The focus groups were composed of academic staff members and instructional designers to guarantee obtaining the opinions and requirements of the target group regarding a final product.

The online self-assessment tool is expected to be released by the end of 2020. Follow our developments via the MODE IT website and/or Social Media!
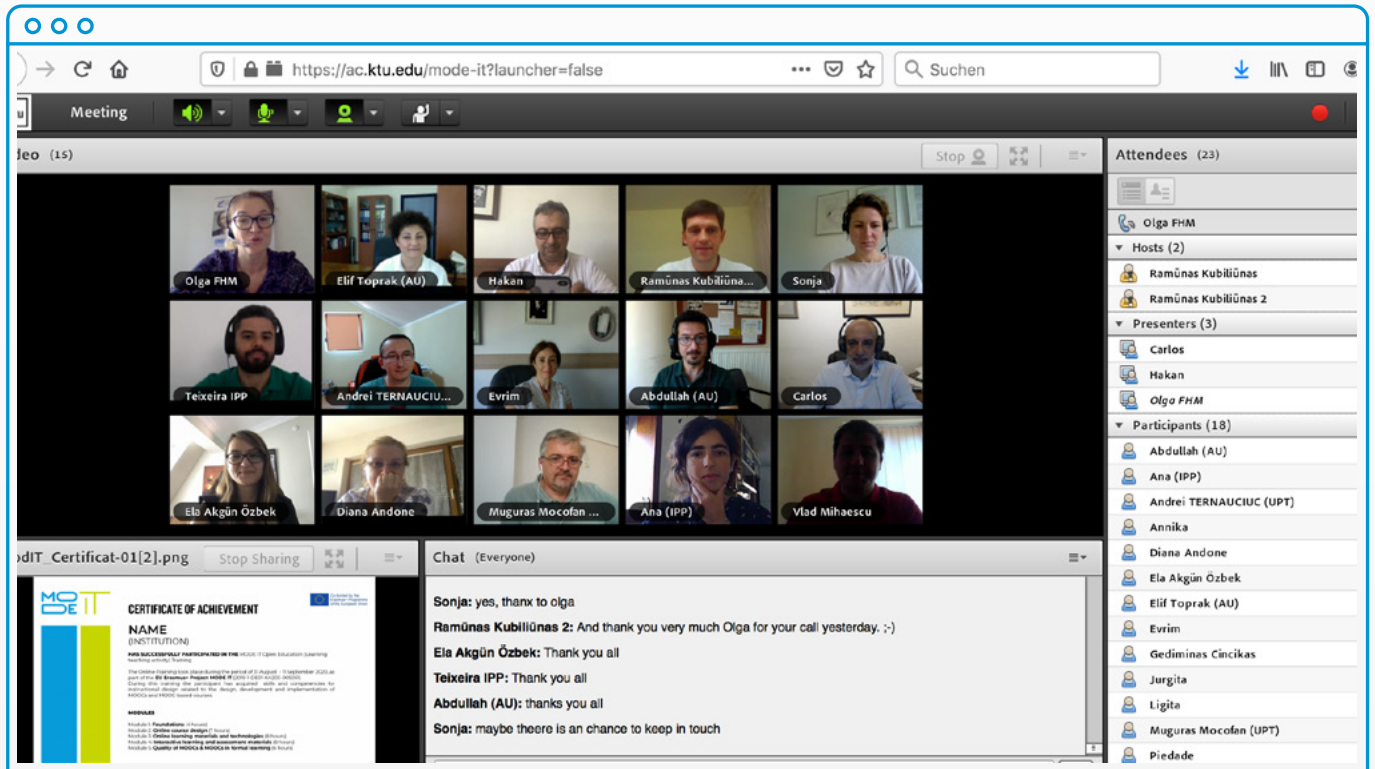
MODE IT goes outside

The focus group results from five MODE IT countries were presented by Carlos Vaz de Carvalho (IPP) in two prominent virtual conferences: IEEE EDUCON conference on the 30th of April 2020, and the LWMOOCS, the leading international conference about Learning with Massive Open Online Courses (September 29 – October 2, 2020). The related MODE IT papers can be found in the 2020 IEEE Global Engineering Education conference proceedings (pp. 1844 - 1847), and in the 2020 IEEE Learning With MOOCS (LWMOOCS) proceedings (pp. 8 – 13).

Moreover, Vlad Mihaescu (UPT) and Cengiz Hakan Aydin (AU) jointly promoted MODE IT project during the webinar „Designing online courses: a practical approach" organized by EDEN NAP – European distance and E-Learning Network (7th of October 2020). This event was followed by approx. 200 participants from Europe and beyond.

Training event for native instructional designers

Following the project objective towards upskilling staff support structures, MODE IT team implemented a training for teachers and instructional designers from partner institutions (August 31 - September 11, 2020).

Due to COVID-19 risks, the training of 35 hours was conducted completely online as a mix of synchronous live-sessions via Adobe Connect and asynchronous learning activities at LMS Moodle.

Training sessions were delivered by internal MODE IT experts from Anadolu University (Cengiz Hakan Aydin) and Kaunas University of Technology (Mr Ramunas Kubiliunas) as well as by invited external experts with wider experience in MOOCs (Mrs Irina Otmanine, instructional designer at the University of Cote d'Azur, France,

and Mrs Carmen Holotescu, Director of Center for Open Education and Blockchain at the University Ioan Slavici of Timisoara, Romania).

The strategy of the training was not to provide ready-made recipes but rather encourage attendees to reflect upon their previous experience with online/open learning, to interact with peers and trainers, and to jointly design innovative solutions for enriching their instructional practices with open learning formats. Based on attendees' feedback, this strategy has worked!

MODE IT in times of COVID-19

Like many of us, MODE IT team learned to work under new circumstances. As MODE IT key staff are the main drivers of digital transformation at their home universities, they had to combine this unpredictably increased workload with the project activities.

At the same time, we are very optimistic: MODE IT approach towards integrating MOOC-based pedagogies into higher education curricula is exactly the solution, which universities can greatly benefit from and grant the desired course flexibility and openness to their students in times of Corona!

This gives an additional motivation to actively pursue the project goals.

What is coming next?

Upskilled participants of the training event will work together with the MODE IT key staff on the development of the IO2 (Open Online Training Program). They have just started designing a MOOC for academic staff on how to create and deliver MOOCs and MOOC-based courses. The contents of the training program will be closely linked to the self-assessment tool (IO1). Based on the results obtained from the self-assessment tool, users will be recommended to either take separate modules of the training programme, or to complete the entire program.

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