

F2F2D and back - How to effectively transfer F2F language courses to online/distance form in a short time

Project Number: 2020-1-DE02-KA204-007590

Methodology and Action Plan IO4 - 1

1 Introduction

The main objective of the Methodology and Action Plan is to ensure the project's intellectual outputs will be delivered in the possibly highest quality. It will be feasible through number of actions foreseen in the Application starting from the development of the Methodology and Action Plan for IO4.

1.1 The objectives of the document

The document provides basic information on IO4, designs the process, assigns roles and responsibilities and finally sets timelines for particular activities. The document consists of four major parts: Introduction, Output Overview, Methodology, Action Plan. Some information included in the document is taken from the project application, and some is developed on its basis. The methodological part expands the topic of assessment and suggests holistic assessment approach.

1.2 Inaccuracies between the description of IO4 and the Gantt Chart

Number of inaccuracies between the description of the IO4 and the content of the Gantt Chart have been noticed. They include:

- ✓ Different titles of actions A2, A3, A4
- ✓ Lack of some actions f.e. Translations

The leader of the IO4 decides to stay with the information included in the description of the project output, not in the Gantt Chart. The reason for this is the quality of the data (more detailed information) and the logic standing behind the order of the activities.

2 Output overview

2.1 Key Information

- ✓ **Title of output:** Self-assessment and assessment tools for students, teachers and facilitators
- ✓ **Output Leader:** FRAME (PL)
- ✓ **Output Team:** All partners
- ✓ **Duration:** 01.12.2020 start date , 31.10.2022 end date (in the application)

2.2 Description (from application)

Distance education has grown exponentially over the last years and the current pandemic crisis additionally enhances its very important role for the European scientist in some specific situation that individuals may find themselves in. As a non-traditional mode, quality has always been and will continue to be a main concern around distance education, How to know the quality of distance

education is assured? This is especially important in case of organizations that were not born to offer purely distance education but so far they have been used to standard way of class-based teaching. The shift requires paying attention to all stakeholders taking part in the education offer being supplied with the use of distance education mode: learners, so the users (they are in the centre of this process), trainers, organisations offering the education and the customers, as not always the users are the customers. For example in case of younger students (users) it's usually the parent (customer) who takes the decision on selecting a certain distance education provider. The same in case of business courses ordered by organizations interested to improve the language skills of their employees. Although they do not participate directly in the educational process, they are very keen to receive the highest quality and be well informed about that, based on the evaluations and quality checks done by the organization.

This output will deal with the issue how to control the quality of the learning process on the side of teachers, students and customers as well as the smooth organization of the online/distance course, so also on the Edu provider's side. Evaluating learning activities is crucial for both self-paced and facilitated online courses. Evaluation allows its users to assess learners' progress, the quality and effectiveness of the course and improve future learning activities and content.

2.2.1 Elements of innovation

The distance and online programmes are complex and depend on several types of aspects: technological, organizational, planning. Despite being different from traditional call-based ways of providing and receiving education, distance learning is subject to the same need of assuring the educational wellbeing for students as any other form of learning but the specific factors taken into consideration will differ. Various factors have to be taken into account in the design of this project, including the psychic state of mind of all participants; and extraordinary situation they have appeared in and that had them to turn towards distance education can have a serious impact on their ability to continue in their study and achieve the same level of effort continuously. However the set of control mechanisms will check regularly the progress and also offer some corrective measures and adjustments if the course organisation is not fulfilling its goals and delivering expected outcomes.

2.2.2 Expected impact

In the distance learning model the learners, educators, educational organizations and customers need smart tools to assure continuous feedback of the educational process in order to be able to offer a learning environment capable of increasing the learning effectiveness of the new mode of learning, as well as the efficient organization of the institutional resources.

2.2.3 Transferability

Developed under international cooperation, the quality measures designed for language courses will be easily transferable to any other types of courses within partner countries and, with some translation effort, also across other European countries.

2.2.4 Target groups

There are 5 groups enlisted in the application: students, teachers, facilitators, education providers, customers (those ordering courses for learners). Since the title of the IO4 includes only three of them: students, teachers and facilitators we will focus on them. It is connected also with the fact that there is no strict demarcation between the terms: facilitator and education provider in the context of language courses. For more details see [methodology section](#).

2.2.5 Languages

Bulgarian, Czech, English, German, Italian, Polish

3 Methodology

Unfortunately very often we experience the myth attached to eLearning evaluation which says that it is done typically after the course is completed but this is not right. Evaluation can and should occur in various stages of the program such as:

- ✓ Before the on-line course begins, with the aim to understand learners/customers' needs, leading to the assessment of the program to efficiently plan the e-learning process
- ✓ During the e-learning process, formative evaluation procedures to ensure constant improvements needs to be undertaken
- ✓ After the on-line course is complete, summative evaluation should be done primarily to determine the outcomes and plan improvements for the future

There are number of questions that the output leader has to answer in order to deliver the clear vision of the output. Find the most important below.¹

- Does the project concentrates on language school performance or on the language course delivery?
- Who are the accessors and beneficiaries of the assessment?
- What do we mean by “online platform”? What are the main functionalities?
- Who gets the access to the platform?

1.3 General Assumptions

1.3.1 Multidimensional evaluation in language school

For any educational institution it is important to incorporate multidimensional evaluation of its performance. Institution monitors its performance taking data from different sources, on this basis it takes the managerial decisions concerning its offer. Find below the table with only some indicators and data necessary for the evaluation of language school performance.

Type of data	Type of data	Source	Tool
Financial data (income vs costs)	Quantitative	monthly, quarterly, yearly financial reports	IT system
Organizational structure (efficacy of organizational structure)	Qualitative	Organizational chart vs procedures	-
Employee satisfaction (administrative and teaching staff)	Quantitative	Employee absences, employee, the remuneration system	Online / paper form
Clients satisfaction / user experience (students / customers)	Qualitative	Questionnaires, informal conversations	Online / paper form
Promotion rate (number of students who passed for the next year vs all students)	Quantitative	Lesson journals, class reports	-
Dropout rate (number of students at the beginning of the course vs number of students at end of the course)	Quantitative	Lesson journals, class reports	-
Students' achievements	Quantitative	Class reports, students' marks, portfolios	-
Monitoring of media (f.e. social media)	Quantitative Qualitative	f.e. Brand24 (polish service), FB statistics	

¹ Taken from the Application

Course recruitment	quantitative	Number of signed agreements each year	
Monitoring of graduates (students who passed external exams vs all that took them)	Quantitative Qualitative	Lists of the questionnaire	

The IO4 does not intend to develop tools for entire multidimensional evaluation, it plans to concentrate on pure learning process extracted from institutional background. The intention is to give tools for collecting feedback on those issues (out of the whole list) that have not been measured online before. They are very important from the perspective of the challenges that teachers and students face during distance learning:

- ✓ How to control learning process if you do not have students in the classroom?
- ✓ How to measure student's progress if you know that they may cheat (copy text, check the result, consult with each other, etc.?)
- ✓ How to keep students' attention and good energy level through the whole year of online learning?
- ✓ How to be consistent with the programme switching from traditional to online and backwards?
- ✓ How to deal with the quick change of the course format?
- ✓ How to minimize risks of

Because of enlisted reasons the leader of IO4 suggests to stay with idea that the institutional background will be measured separately and the IO4 will be focused more on the outlined problems connected with the use of online platforms. From the first sight it narrows the expected outcome, however it still sees Education Providers (Facilitators) and Customers as beneficiaries of the data gathered via digital online tools.

1.3.2 Platform users

The first question that needs to be answered is what or who will be assessed and who will make the assessment. In other words who or what will be the object of assessment and who will express their feedback. It is clear that there are two aspects that need to be assessed in the context of language courses:

- ✓ **Course** (teacher, platform, didactical materials, time, atmosphere, etc.) – by **Students** (assessment)
- ✓ **Progress** – by **Students** (self-assessment / peer-assessment), by **Teachers** (assessment)

Each of them determines the Assesses and Assessors. We excluded from the assessment process the Facilitators (Education Providers) and Customers, who, in our opinion, are more beneficiaries of the assessment results, than Assessors themselves. The customers do not have a in-depth view on the learning process, they do not also have access to the learning platform. That is why they cannot assess the education process itself. They can only draw conclusions concerning the effectiveness of the course on the basis of learners' results. Taking into account these results they decide on further cooperation with the service provider. In the scope of the project Education Providers (Facilitators) shouldn't be active part of the assessment process as well. We see them, similarly to Customers, as the users of assessment results. Education Provider (facilitator) uses the results to take the decisions on various elements of the learning process in order to enhance its quality. It may concern the time, the platform, teaching methods, teaching materials, the learning pace, teachers' competences, etc.

1.3.3 Types of Assessment

The above mentioned choice also defines clearly what main perspectives of assessment will be used:

- ✓ Self-assessment (Progress)
- ✓ Peer – assessment (Progress)
- ✓ Assessment (Progress / Course)

The object of assessment influences the time frame of the assessment done in the language courses:

- ✓ Before (needs & expectations, diagnosis)
- ✓ Ongoing (formative / interim)
- ✓ After (summative)

1.3.4 How the assessment is done?

The assessment of Progress may be performed in many ways:

- ✓ Informal way (conversations during the classes) – not covered in the IO4
- ✓ **As one of the class activities (f.e. quizzes, polls, tasks) – covered in the IO4**
- ✓ **Formal way (internal tests, exams) – covered in the IO4**
- ✓ Formal way (external certification bodies) – not covered in the IO4

While designing the learning platform we have to assume that it is only the tool accompanying the regular teaching process performed by educators. Thus parts of the assessment is being done through the regular communication, in an informal way and that is why it will not be covered by the digital tools. Although formal exams run by external certification bodies are an important part of summative assessment of the learning process, they will be also excluded from the platform.

The assessment of the Course may also be done in two ways:

- ✓ Informal way (conversations with students and customers) – not covered in the IO4
- ✓ **Formal way (questionnaires/ polls incorporated in the platform) – covered in the IO4**

1.3.5 How the assessment results are delivered to the users?

It is also crucial to decide on the way the assessment results will be delivered to users. The platform users will get the access to the results via their accounts, but will the results be collected and viewed historically or only in the given slot of time.

If we agree upon the fact that Customers are not the platform users, we will have to arrange the way to export the assessment results in the pdf format, so that they can be forwarded to them f.e. via e-mail. This will also influence the set of functionalities of final product.

1.4 Assessment tools and their functionalities

The first and the most important thing is to clarify the vision of the teachers' guide to available tools and methods of transfer delivered in IO3. Since it is so closely linked to the assessment approach adopted in the project it needs to be well understood and approved by the project consortium. At the same time the assessment tools will be chosen from IO1, IO2 and action IO4-A3. After that the short list of crucial tools will be delivered. Then the partnership will choose the most adequate solutions suited to the vision of the platform and to the available technical and financial resources, the final say will come from the leader of IO5 – FAU. The short list will set the basis for further detailed descriptions. They will serve platform developers to design and implement the digital solutions for the assessment.

The description will be done in the special template including: the name of the tool, users access and different views depending on the account status/type of the course/course progress, the place of appearance, its functionalities (with the ranking of importance for end users).

4 Action Plan

	Title of the action	Responsible Partner	DEADLINES		
			Material from responsible partner	Feedback from partners	Final version (after feedback)
O4-A1	Designing of IO Methodology and Action plan	FRAME	09.08.2021	16.08.2021	25.08.2021

O4-A2	Identification of available assessment methods and tools	led by FRAME	-	-	30.09.2021
	<i>Development of the template</i>	<i>FRAME</i>	<i>16.08.2021</i>	<i>20.08.2021</i>	<i>25.08.2021</i>
	<i>Distributing the template</i>	<i>FRAME</i>	-	-	<i>25.08.2021</i>
	<i>Investigate available assessment methods and tools</i>	<i>All partners</i>	-	-	<i>30.09.2021</i>
O4-A3	Input from IO1 analysis of courses and IO2 analysis of learning tools and methods	led by FRAME			30.09.2021
	<i>Marking the essential assessment functionalities or whole tools.</i>	<i>PRISM, ICQ</i>	<i>30.08.2021</i>	-	
O4-A4	Design of the self-assessment and assessment tools for students/clients, teachers and facilitators				31.12.2021
	<i>Discussion on priorities and technicalities (online meeting)</i>	<i>All partners</i>	-	-	<i>09.2021</i>
	<i>Delivering short list of assessment tools</i>	<i>FRAME</i>	<i>30.09.2021</i>	<i>10.10.2021</i>	<i>12.10.2021</i>
	<i>Presentation of list of functionalities to implement by the platform developers</i>	<i>FRAME</i>	<i>05.11.2021-</i>	<i>10.11.2021</i>	<i>15.11.2021</i>
	<i>Piloting the tools internally within their organisations</i>	<i>All partners</i>	-		<i>15.11.2021-15.12.2021</i>
O4-A5	Piloting on end users (together with other IO3, IO4, IO5, IO6) – once all IOs are ready	All partners	-	-	01.01.2022-30.06.2022
O4-A6	Adjustment of format and design according to piloting results	FRAME	-	-	31.10.2022
O4-A7	Translation	All partners	-	-	30.11.2022
O4-A8	Uploading of the final version	Friedrich-Alexander Universität	-	-	31.12.2022