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Methodology Handbook
on ICT-enhanced skills

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This handbook is intended for teachers and teacher trainers who would like to implement practical methods, methodological tools, and software instruments to support their students in building ICT-enhanced skills and competences. The materials included in it were developed in collaboration with all project partners. Special thanks are due to the teachers, and especially to Nikolina Nikolova, having contributed with valuable ideas and feedback during the project, and to Ron Siemelink who provided some materials.

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PART 3

*I*Teach tools
PART 3: I*TEACH TOOLS

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I*Teach tools

In this chapter:

Developed instruments

- I*Teach templates
- Off-line tool
- Repository
- Virtual training centres
- Other tools

How to apply the instruments

The theoretical base for the I*Teach methodology is has been sketched thoroughly in part 1. In this part the practical side of the matter is elucidated.

It aims at helping the tutors in these duties, by offering a set of instruments, tools and collaboration aids.

DEVELOPED INSTRUMENTS

I*Teach templates

When you test in practices one and like it, may be you will like to share your experience with your colleagues, or even for your use later or in different situation with some modifications as well as to generate later new scenarios from already available tasks we propose you to use some of the I*Teach tools.

One type of tools are scenarios and tasks description templates. The scenario description template is presented on CD. The task description template is presented on CD. Working with template you will look carefully which ICT Enhanced skills you could build together with your main goal. Using them you could suggest to your pupils different tasks and scenarios so they to work on different ICT Enhanced skills you would like they to build. In such a way together with them you could prepare for each you pupil the ICT Enhanced skills portfolio.

Off-line tool

Of course the repository has facilities to add tasks and scenarios. Nevertheless the I*Teach team developed an off-line tool to produce tasks and scenarios. It is closely connected to the repository, with exactly the same metadata, and multilingual facilities.

To develop learning material has three big advantages. In the first place, making learning material isn’t an easy job. It requires writing, rewriting, thinking, rethinking, putting it away for a while, picking it up again. To do
this online is too big a demand on the connection to the repository, and to
the repository itself. It’s much more productive to build the scenarios and
tasks off-line, preview them, make corrections and improvements. And
then it can be uploaded to the repository.

The second advantage is even bigger. Only selected users can upload
materials to the repository. But everyone can make learning material off-
line. Any teacher can write scenarios and tasks, and hand it over to a
selected user. Consequently this user can upload it, perhaps after a quality-
check.

The offline tool is also applicable in exploiting the multilingual
facilities. Teachers who are multilingual can translate the texts of scenarios
and tasks from one language to an other language. Thus all material will be
available in all supported languages.

The off-line tool is available on the CD, and in the virtual training
centers.

Repository

When you would like to share your experience with your colleagues
applying I*Teach methodology, then you could go to the I*Teach
repository, which is a third type of tools we would like to propose you.

This repository stores the scenarios and corresponding tasks developed
according to the I*Teach methodology. The I*Teach repository could be
use from the experience users to put their scenarios and tasks as well as
from the beginners to find there suitable, tested and already approved in
practice examples how to start applying I*Teach methodology. Selected
users can create educational scenarios, by building and composing tasks.
Tasks and scenarios are provided with metadata. Among these metadata
are the creator, creation date, (sub)skill(s) aimed at, subject, duration,
milestones, age of learner. In the future EQF-level is an option.

The repository is multilingual. It supports for now English, Romanian,
Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Italian, Polish, and German. This can be extended in
the future.

Any teacher can use the repository. By selecting searching criteria the
teacher can find scenarios and task suitable for the learning activity she or
he had in mind.

Virtual training centers

All participating partners in the I*Teach project are building a Virtual
Training Centre (VTC) in their home country. This VTC is a Moodle-
based environment that will be serving as an online community for
anybody involved with ICT-enhanced skills.

The VTC will be the main contact point on the Web for those who do
not know yet about the I*Teach methodology, it will be linked to the main
national resources for teachers, to University and Ministry websites, to
educational webzines and so on.

Why do we have one repository and many national VTCs?

the VTC is a website to interact in the national language with the local
community, and grows in accordance with local needs and initiatives,
hosting discussion groups and proposed materials in still to be finalized
form: it is the meeting place for a community of practice
the repository contains only finalized materials which have been carefully selected and approved by I*Teach experienced people, and respective metadata; no support for community is assumed.

The VTC provides all a community needs. Materials, links, discussions, FAQ’s, news are part of the VTC. There can be present online courses for learning the I*Teach methodology, and calendars for next courses.

The addresses of the various VTC’s are available from I*Teach web site: http://i-teach.fmi.uni-sofia.bg.

- Bulgaria
- Germany
  http://nats-www.informatik.uni-hamburg.de:8080/iteach/moodle/
- Italy
  https://i-teach.unige.it/
- Lithuania
  http://distance.ktu.lt/iteach/
- Netherlands
  http://www.utwente.nl/elan/iteach/
- Poland
  Http://zdch.amu.edu.pl/moodle
- Romania
  http://i-teach.info.uaic.ro/moodle/

Other tools
On the CD and in the VTC’s one can find templates, guidelines, tips, checklists, etc. Also some sample forms are provided for evaluation and assessment of the various skills

HOW TO APPLY THE INSTRUMENTS

The way a teacher is going to use the I*Teach methodology will of course be a decision of herself or himself. In this paragraph some possible procedures are outlined, that lead to proper use of the methodology, and hopefully to fruitful active learning activities of learners.

Perhaps the teacher has done an I*Teach training and got ideas from that.

Otherwise, a teacher who has never heard about the project nor the methodology may browse the national VTC, which is linked by other popular web resources for teachers, and ask for information. He/she may learn that there will be a I*Teach methodology course in a near city and may decide to attend the course.

What happens then? Here are some example stories:

A teacher, say an Italian geography teacher who wants her pupils to do an information search on recent eruptions of Italian volcanoes, and to report on this search, will enter the Italian Virtual training centre. In this centre she will link to the repository (in Italian language). She will enter the search criteria, and hopefully finds a suitable scenario, consisting of the proper tasks to develop the desired skills. She downloads the scenario. Then she returns to the VTC to find checklist, evaluation forms, tips and hints. In the forum she asks if colleagues have experience with that particular scenario. Then she modifies the scenario into an assignment for
her pupils, including the milestones, foreseen tutoring, and assessment criteria. If there is any indistinctness, she can use the FAQ in the VTC, or consult colleagues through the forum in the VTC. After the assignment she can report her experience on the VTC.

An other teacher enters the repository through the national VTC to find scenarios for specific skills. He finds some interesting scenarios, but these don’t meet his needs fully. He decides to use these as an inspiration and to develop his own tasks and scenario. He uses the appropriate checklists and forms from the VTC. He gets the offline tool from the VTC and fills in the tasks and scenarios. Then he uploads everything to the VTC. The moderator checks the scenario and tasks and, in case of approval, uploads them to the repository. The moderator translates the material also into English and uploads again to the repository. Thus all users all over can benefit from it.

The third tutor wants his pupils to collaborate with pupils in another school, or even in another country. The tutor will ask for partner-teachers in the VTC of his own country or any other VTC. They try to find an appropriate scenario in the repository or develop one themselves. After doing the job they report in the VTC’s, of course.

A teacher who is especially interested in I*Teach methodology and has made some good contributions may later join the group of VTC moderators and become helpful to other teachers wishing to learn the methodology.

It is hard to imagine all possibilities that a community may grow. Only time will tell!