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THE MEANING AND USE OF DIGITAL LEARNING TERMS IN ESTONIA, HUNGARY, ROMANIA AND AUSTRIA

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It is widely known that in order to communicate, interact and understand each other in different educational context, it is necessary to agree on the terms to be used and their meanings. The need for such agreements was also apparent at the first meetings of the Erasmus+ project “Framework for an Efficient and Engaging Hybrid Education in Lower Secondary Schools”. The project partners used very different terminology when talking about digital teaching and learning in English. Furthermore, even when using the same terminology, we might not understand each other because the meanings of terms could vary from different educational context and from country to country. This prompted us to collect and group the most often and commonly used terms for digital teaching and learning in English, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Romanian and Austrian German and reveal their meanings. The glossary presented here is based on inputs from project partners and explanations found through Google searches. We chose to use Google searches instead of recognised dictionaries as many of the terms listed here are not yet found in dictionaries.

TERM

EXPLANATIONS

EN: **digital learning**
ET: digiõpe
HU: digitális oktatás/tanrend
FI: digitaalinen oppiminen
RO: învățare digitală
DE*: digitales Arbeiten

‘A learning method based on the use of new digital tools to enable learners to learn differently, whether it be face-to-face, distance learning (asynchronous or synchronous) or blended learning. It is therefore not simply a question of digitising educational content but a set of educational methods’ (*What is digital learning? 2021*).

The meaning of this term was quite similar in all participating countries. We can simply say that it is a digitally enhanced way of learning.

EN: **flexible learning**
ET: hajaõpe/paindõpe
HU: rugalmas tanulási utak
FI: joustava oppiminen
RO: învățare flexibilă
DE*: flexibles Lernen

‘Flexible learning is a method of learning where students are given freedom in how, what, when and where they learn’ (*Flexible Learning, s.a.*).

This term was seen to refer to flexible ways of learning in all countries.” The flexibility can come from the usage of digital technologies.

EN: distance learning

ET: kaugõpe/distantsõpe

HU: távoktatás

FI: etäopiskelu

RO: învățare la distanță

DE: distance learning / online Unterricht

‘Distance learning, also called distance education, e-learning, and online learning, is a form of education in which the main elements include the physical separation of teachers and students during instruction and the use of various technologies to facilitate student-teacher and student-student communication’ (*Simonson and Berg, 2016*).

The meaning of this term is almost identical in all participating countries. All agree that it means the spatial (and sometimes temporal) separation of teachers and students.

EN: synchronous learning

ET: kontaktõpe

HU: szinkrón tanulás

FI: samanaikainen oppiminen

RO: învățare sincronă

DE*: synchrones Lernen

‘Synchronous learning refers to all types of learning in which learner(s) and instructor(s) are in the same place, at the same time, in order for learning to take place. This includes in-person classes, live online meetings when the whole class or smaller groups get together. In synchronous learning, students usually go through the learning path together, accompanied by their instructor who is able to provide support while students are completing tasks and activities’ (*Ocando Finol, 2020*).

The meaning of this term is almost identical in all participating countries. It means that learning tasks are done at the same time and place, physical or virtual, in opposition to asynchronous learning. Only Austria pointed out that the teachers and students could also be simultaneously in different places.

EN: face-to-face learning

ET: lähiõpe

HU: jelenléti oktatás

FI: lähiopiskelu/kasvokkain opiskelu

RO: învățare față-în-față

DE*: Präsenzunterricht

‘Face-to-face learning is an instructional method where the course content and learning material are taught in-person to a group of students’ (*Face-to-Face Learning, s.a.*).

In all participating countries, it is agreed upon that this means teaching/learning in the same place at the same time.

EN: blended learning/hybrid learning

ET: põimõpe/hübriidõpe

HU: vegyes rendszerű tanulás

FI: monimuoto-opiskelu (sulautuva oppiminen) / hybridi-opiskelu

RO: învățare de tip blended-learning/hibridă

DE*: integriertes Lernen/ Hybridunterricht

‘The term blended learning is generally applied to the practice of using both online and in-person learning experiences when teaching students’ (*Blended Learning, 2013*).

The meaning of this term was quite similar in all countries. We can simply say that it combines **face-to-face** and **distance learning**. According to a narrower definition, however, hybrid learning can be seen to refer to learners studying simultaneously either in onsite and online environments.

EN: online learning

ET: veebiõpe

HU: online tanulás

FI: verkko-opiskelu

RO: învățare online

DE*: online Lernen

‘Online learning is a method of education whereby students learn in a fully virtual environment’ (*Tamm, 2020*).

There was shared understanding about the definition in all countries. It was only reminded that physical home, school or other environment also influences online learning

EN: form of study

ET: õppevorm

HU: tanulási formák

FI: opiskelumuoto

RO: formă de învățământ

DE*: Lernmethode

It means the way in which learning activities are carried out. This term was seen to focus particularly on the active role of learners in the learning process.

EN: teaching method

ET: õppeviis/õppemeetod

HU: tanítási módszerek

FI: opetusmenetelmä

RO: metodă de predare-învățare

DE*: Unterrichtsmethode

‘Teaching methods refer to a set of practices and principles used by teachers to make the process of teaching and learning highly effective for their students’ (*Teaching Methodologies, s.a.*).

This term was seen to refer to a set of didactic activities through which a teacher organises and diversifies teaching.

EN: learning space
ET: õpikeskkond
HU: tanulási környezet
FI: oppimistila
RO: spațiu de învățare
DE*: Lernort

A place (digital or physical) in which teaching and learning occur.

There was shared understanding about this term in different countries. It was mentioned, however, that in Finnish language “tila” refers to both state and space and can thus be used also to refer to “mental state”.

EN: physical learning environment
ET: füüsiline õpikeskkond
HU: fizikai tanulási környezet
FI: fyysinen oppimisympäristö
RO: spațiu de învățare fizic
DE*: physische Lernumgebung

A place of learning with its physical properties and objects.

While there was shared understanding about this term, it was reminded that also online learning takes place in a physical environment.

EN: virtual learning environment
ET: virtuaalne õpikeskkond
HU: virtuális tanulási környezet
FI: virtuaalinen oppimisympäristö
RO: spațiu de învățare virtual
DE*: virtuelle Lernumgebung

‘A virtual learning environment is an online-based platform that offers students and professors digital solutions that enhance the learning experience’ (*Virtual learning environment, s.a.*).

A virtual space, web-based platform designed for learning with its structure, virtual artefacts, processes, resources, activities, and interactions within a course structure and for different stages of assessment.

While there was shared understanding about this term in all countries, it was commented that in Romania, the virtual learning environment is sometimes used to refer more narrowly to 3-dimensional environments.

EN: psychosocial learning environment

ET: psühhosotsiaalne õpikeskkond / vaimne ja sotsiaalne õpikeskkond

HU: pszichoszociális környezet

FI: psykososiaalinen oppimisympäristö

RO: mediul de învățare psihosocial

DE*: psychosoziale Lernumgebung

Psychological and social factors that have consequences for satisfaction, health and ability to perform at the place of study.

This term was used in similar ways in all countries.

EN: technology-enhanced learning environment

ET: tehnoloogiaga rikastatud õpikeskkond

HU: IKT-vel támogatott tanulási környezet

FI: teknologia-avustettu oppimisympäristö

RO: mediu de învățare susținut de tehnologie

DE*: computergestütztes Lernen

‘A technology-enhanced learning environment is the use of information and communication technologies as mediating devices supporting student learning that can include elements of assessment, tutoring, and instruction’ (*Technology-enhanced learning, s.a.*).

This term was seen to refer to a learning environment with digital tools that allows the support and flexible groupings of learners, and may be face-to-face, hybrid, or fully online.

EN: open learning environment

ET: avatud õpikeskkond

HU: nyílt tanulási környezet

FI: avoin oppimisympäristö

RO: mediu de învățare deschis

DE*: schülerzentrierter Unterricht

Learner-centred design principles highlight activities and contexts that support an individual’s learning. Openness also refers to open physical spaces, instead of e.g., closed classrooms. It was stated that for example, an “open” learning environment in the Hungarian literature would refer to learning environments open to everyone - e.g., and open university.

EN: personal learning environment

ET: personaalne õpikeskkond

HU: egyéni tanulási környezet

FI: henkilökohtainen oppimisympäristö

RO: mediu de învățare personal

DE*: individuelle Lernumgebung

‘A personal learning environment is usually described as a structure and process that helps learners organise the influx of information, resources and interactions that they are faced with on a daily basis into a personalised learning space or experience’ (*Castañeda, Dabbagh & Torres-Kompen, 2017*).

Term was seen to refer to the combination of tools, people, and services that make up individualised resources and approaches to learning.

EN: transformative learning

ET: transformatiivne õppimine

HU: transzformatív tanulás

FI: transformatiivinen oppiminen

RO: învățarea transformativă

DE*: transformatives Lernen

‘Transformative learning is the expansion of consciousness through which an individual can question themselves about their own feelings, beliefs, assumptions, and perspective on their purpose. Individuals who are undergoing such a transformative process are believed to completely rewire and transform their beliefs, assumptions, and experiences into brand new expressive perspectives’ (*Transformative Learning, 2020*).

It was agreed that this term refers to an orientation or the way that learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience is central to making meaning and hence, learning.

EN: reflective learning

ET: refleksiivne õppimine

HU: önreflexív tanulás

FI: reflektiivinen oppiminen

RO: învățare eflective

DE *: selbstreflektiertes Lernen

‘Reflective learning typically involves looking back at something, a past experience or idea and critically analysing the event. By looking at successful and unsuccessful aspects of an experience, reflection will help students learn from their past experiences and turn surface learning into deep learning’ (*Reflective Learning, s.a.*).

There was an agreement that this term refers to learning in which learners reflect upon their learning experiences.

* DE - Austrian German

This glossary has not been developed as a result of scientific work - it solely reflects the project partners' common understanding of the most used terms for digital teaching and learning. The compilation of this glossary led us to analyse our own vocabulary and also helped to draw attention to differences in the meaning of seemingly similar terms. We hope that this glossary will be helpful to researchers, lecturers, students, teachers and education officials in different countries, either in communication or understanding the writings in the field of digital teaching and learning or in formulating their own thoughts in the languages listed in the glossary.

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