DIGITAL BALANCE

Newsletter Issue 1 - September 2021

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Digital Balance is a new approach to train VET teachers, leaders and managers in digital well-being.

The project will boost the capacity of VET institutions to manage the digital transition in a way that marries high quality teaching with the well- Being and long-term productivity of those involved.

The final objective will be to improve educators' own digital competences, while also boosting the capacity of VET institutions to manage the digital transition.

CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transition within VET, leading to a steep rise in online/remote teaching. Despite the many positive aspects of this catalytic change towards digitalization, the speed of the transformation has left little time to address the risks involved. Teachers in particular face a higher risk of digital overload or burnout than ever before. Long hours sitting in front of artificially lit screens, improvised home settings, the challenge of communicating effectively online and the constant flow of communications from bosses, colleagues and students present them with a radically new set of challenges.

Project no.

2020-1-DE02-KA226-VET-008184

Duration

01/04/2021 – 31/03/2023

Coordinator

Education Mobility Grid GbR (Germany)

Partners

Akmi Anonimi Ekpaideftik Etairia (Greece)
ACEEU GmbH (Germany)
European E-learning Institute (Denmark)
Momemntum Marketing Services Limited (Ireland)
EfVET (Belgium)

Project website

www.digitalbalanceproject.eu

Facebook

Digitalbalanceproject.eu

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Growing scientific evidence from workers in digital environments has shown that unconstrained use of devices can have strong negative consequences. Multitasking and constant notifications are associated with lower levels of creativity and concentration, the difficulty of effective interpersonal communication causes higher stress, while heavy screen use is linked to eyesight problems and headaches.

Collectively called "technostress" these issues are caused both by the technology AND by organisational expectations, and lead to deterioration in productivity/performance and in employees' mental and physical health. Our Partner organisations report VET schools suffering staff shortages and increasing levels of absence due to digitally induced stress, and it is not surprising that as far back as 2016 the influential JISC framework placed five other digital capabilities within the overarching capability of digital identity and wellbeing.

TARGET GROUPS

VET teachers; VET managers and department heads

OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

Working with these two groups, our objective is clear: design, develop and implement a new approach to train VET teachers, leaders, and managers in digital wellbeing. The final objective will be to improve educators' own digital competences, while also boosting the capacity of VET institutions to manage the digital transition in a way that marries high quality teaching with the wellbeing of those involved. Our specific objective is to produce 3 new resources that enable the integration of policy and practice to support digital wellbeing for teachers and encourage proactive behaviour at personal level.

IOs

- IO1 Digital Balance Analysis Report
- IO2 Digital Wellbeing Resource Park
- IO3 Digital Balance Empowerment Programme

IMPACT

Digital Balance will boost the capacity of VET institutions to manage the digital transition in a way that marries high quality teaching with the wellbeing and long-term productivity of those involved.

The project makes a clear contribution to targeting organisational level change across a wide range of different types of VET organisations and the dissemination strategy will target regional and national stakeholders and policy makers. For this reason, we are sure that Digital Balance can contribute to substantial change in our wider VET systems at regional and national level AND ensure that VET is not left behind by other sectors which are more digitally competent.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Digital Balance will create a series of interrelated results that raises the profile of digital wellbeing in the VET sector, equips VET institutions to adopt policy and practice that supports digital wellbeing of their teaching staff and trains teachers in the competences required to mitigate the negative effects of the transition to digital teaching and learning. This will result in more productive teachers and a more balanced and sustainable transition to digital education overall.

During the project we will work closely as partners and with the target group of managers, department heads and teachers of VET institutions to generate high quality results. Phase 1 results refer to the tangible or physical results produced by the partnership while phase 2 refers to the results generated when these outputs are used with the target groups as part of our testing activities, multiplier events and the wider dissemination and exploitation process.

The KoM of Digital Balance
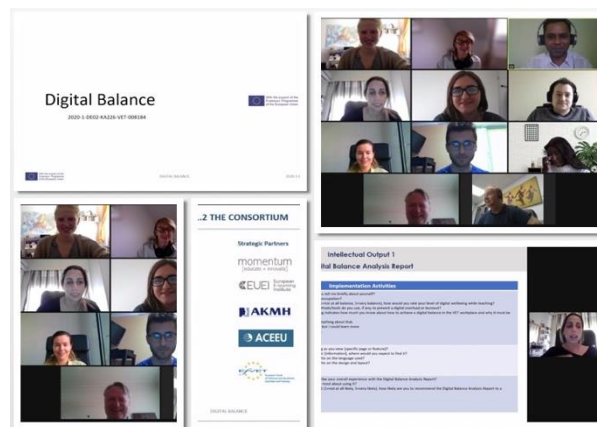
The Balance Digital project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ program (KA2) was launched through a virtual kick-off meeting on 9 June 2021. The meeting was hosted by Vanna Vadivan Gopal (Education Mobility Grid - EMG).

This digital innovative project will have a duration of two years and will be developed by 6 partners from 5 countries: Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, and Belgium.

During this day, partners got the project officially started, discussed, and were informed that the consortium will adhere to the timelines as submitted in the project proposal.

EMG coordinator partner gave an introductory presentation about the project Intellectual Outputs and about the project management roles and responsibilities.

5 ways online teachers can manage stress 🔗

Teaching online can be more challenging than most people would imagine and can lead to high levels of stress.

There is a lot of pressure to get things right on one's own. And, without the support an educator can receive from his or her colleagues in a live classroom, teachers can find navigating the online roadmap to be a bit bumpier.

Teaching online can also feel isolating. Exchanging emails and reading comments in the digital world are not substitutes for direct interaction.