

Press release

University of Wolverhampton explores digital literacy inside and outside the classroom in Europe-wide conference

Leading experts in education technology discuss the future of teaching and learning

The European Programme Media Literacy in the Digitalised Era (MeLDE): Supporting Teachers through a whole-school approach

Erasmus+KA2 2018-1-UK01-KA201-048041

What should digital literacy in education look like? How can we bridge the digital divide? How will technology shape teaching and learning post-pandemic?

These were just some of the questions discussed by educators and researchers at a conference held by the University of Wolverhampton last month (Monday, July 12th).

The well-attended event, 'More than just algorithms: Exploring digital literacy inside and outside the classroom' was the culmination of a three-year Erasmus+ project, Media Literacy in the Digitised Era (MeLDE), which aims to strengthen Secondary School teachers' competences to support, protect and educate students in digital media literacy.

Since MeLDE's launch in 2018, the project team (including members from Cyprus, Greece, Germany as well as the University of Wolverhampton) has been developing a free to use eLearning platform containing web lectures, lesson plans, assessment for learning tools and classroom resources, aimed at bridging knowledge gaps in digital media literacy identified through research early on in the project.

Its current phase introduces teachers to these materials and supports the development of their digital skills using MeLDE resources in areas including digital teaching and learning skills; online communication and collaboration; digital content creation and e-Safety.

At the conference, guest speaker Nicolette Smallshaw, Head of Education at First News, the UK's only digital and print newspaper for 7-14-year-olds, discussed the growing importance of incorporating news into the curriculum to help develop students' critical thinking skills and to help them identify and report misinformation.

However, she said this could be a difficult and complex task for teachers, with "social media evolving and news coming from lots of different sources."

Nicolette said this was one reason the MeLDE project was "so useful" due to its teaching and learning resources on fake news and 'netiquette'.

"We absolutely need to give young people those skills to navigate the news and online content which is why this MeLDE project is so very important," she added. "Because it links to what news is



doing in our society. Journalism is so important because it is part of the democratic process in holding power to account.”

Fellow guest speaker Professor Diana Bannister MBE, Director of the Institute of Education and Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education, Health and Well-Being at the University of Wolverhampton - discussed digital pedagogies and the ever-changing role of technology in teaching and learning.

She said education was “all about change” but that it was key teachers considered where change was needed and to devise a plan of action for change rather than feeling “overwhelmed and overloaded by technologies themselves.”

Professor Bannister told attendees three pedagogical principles were a useful guide to how technology should be incorporated into the classroom: personalisation, participation and productivity.

Conference participants were also introduced to the MeLDE eLearning platform and given a flavour of its free online resources for both online and face-to-face teaching.

The second half of the event saw attendees grouped in virtual ‘breakout rooms’ where they discussed their own experiences of digital technologies in education and the shift to online and blended teaching.

UK MeLDE contributor and graduate teacher at the University of Wolverhampton, Lynn Butler, said: “This part of the conference gave us the opportunity to form a unique Europe-wide community of practice. Our participants, from the UK and also Greece and Cyprus shared experiences on how technology has changed, how it shaped teaching and learning following the Covid-19 epidemic and how it could and should be used post-lockdown.”

Attendees commented on how technology should be an addition to, and not replacement for, ‘traditional’ face-to-face teaching; the impact of the ‘digital divide’ with many students Europe-wide left without access to reliable internet connections or technology (e.g. laptops); and how the overuse of technology could change the student experience. They also shared excellent tips on the most effective technological tools for the classroom.

The conference was well-received. Participants stated the most useful parts of the event were: the MeLDE eLearning platform tools shown and the use of the various platforms for student engagement. Additional feedback comments included: “Excellent event” and “Very informative - I got an understanding of the digital platform.”



Zoom Meeting | You are viewing Bianca Fox's screen | View Options

Martin Khech... | Stylianos Styli... | Connecting to... | Chrystalla Thr... | Yannis Papag... | Vassia Bravou

MeLDE

What is the MeLDE project about?

- THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELEVANT AND HIGH-QUALITY SKILLS AND COMPETENCES.
- OPEN EDUCATION AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES.
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS.

Unmute | Stop Video | Security | Participants (21) | Chat | Share Screen | Record | Reactions | Leave

Zoom Meeting | You are viewing Bianca Fox's screen | View Options

Diana Bannist... | Star Wilkes | Victoria Kioi | Suzanne Priest | Jennifer Davis | Sara Harris

MeLDE Outputs

- IO1** National and comparative Reports
MeLDE Framework for teacher digital preparation
- IO2** Educational Pack
- IO3** MeLDE e-platform
- IO4** MeLDE Toolkit
- IO5** MeLDE Summer

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The University of Wolverhampton MeLDE team would like to thank everyone who took part at in event, and for their support for the project. To stay up-to-date with our activities, you can visit our project's website: www.meldeproject.eu and follow us on our social media [@MELDEproject](https://www.facebook.com/MELDEproject) (Facebook), [@MELDEproject](https://www.instagram.com/MELDEproject) (Instagram). Stay tuned!