PR3 – Best practices and learning from real-life situation

Template to capture Best Practices at international level

Developed by

Template objective:

To record useful practices, methods, activities, and tips that strengthens how the schools managed the pandemic situation, the shift from learning in the classroom to online learning, but also negative effects of the COVID-19 situation like burn-out and stress.

Scope of activities to capture:

- Activities, practices, methods, in your own country
- Activities, practices, methods, in Europe
- Activities, practices, methods, in other countries

"Best practice" definition:

"A best practice is not only a practice that is good, but a practice that has been proven to work well and produce good results and is therefore recommended as a model. It is a successful

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experience, which has been tested and validated, in the broad sense, which has been repeated and deserves to be shared so that a greater number of people can adopt it".

"Best practice" criteria:

Examples of criteria that will help you determine whether a practice is a "best practice" includes **Effective and successful**; **Environmentally, educationally, and socially sustainable**; **Content clarity**; **Friendly materials**; **Replicable and adaptable**; **Reducing school risks on the wellbeing approach**, if applicable.

"Best practice" benefits:

- Provide guidelines and tips to support school staff, pupils, and their families.
- Explore the experiences of people who are directly involved in the implementation of pupil's well-being programs in schools.
- Understand challenges and opportunities that school leaders face in implementing a whole school approach to student wellbeing.
- Explore how school staff managed the online learning, what works and what didn't work.
- Investigate similarities and differences in the experiences of well-being project implementation in different contexts.

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Best Practice Template *(no more than 3 pages/Best Practice example)*

BEST PRACTICE 1
1. Best Practice Owner/Author/Creator/Publisher iWell Erasmus+ partnership
Institution (if applicable):
Country: **international project**
Website (if applicable): https://iwellproject.eu/
Link: https://iwellproject.eu/pdf/iWell_Newsletter_1_%CE%95%CE%9D_v1.pdf
2. Overview of Best Practice
Title of the activity: *iWell project – Enhancing the Digital and Social Well-being in Schools*
Type: *An Erasmus+ project for Digital and Social Well-being in Schools*
Aim of the activity: *The aim of the project is to support teachers with using effective tools for primary school students, aged 6-12 years old, in order to support them for a healthy online life and boost their social well-being as well as to support them in teaching life skills and digital literacy skills for online safety and social wellbeing. More particularly, the project aims to support and build the*

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capacity of educators in becoming "active health agents" to promote the health literacy and social well-being of their students through a bespoke curriculum and innovative teaching practices. It also enhances the digital and life skills of primary school students, laying emphasis on maintaining a healthy balance of digital media to use through the development of innovative material.
Target audience (beneficiaries): *Teachers, educators, local stakeholders, school psychologists, children caretakers*
Short introduction: *Nowadays, students' well-being in European schools has become a challenge for numerous teachers to confront, partly due to the needs of the new digital world. A gap that directly arises from this is to develop effective tools for students to have a healthy online life (JRC, 2020), since research has shown that young people do not have the appropriate skills that a person needs in the new digital world. With an emphasis on the health and social well-being of students, the project pays attention on the development of their health literacy skills and the creation of supportive environments to enable them to control the determinants of their health and "improve their health".*
Methodological Approach: *The Health Literacy Toolkit with Policy and Practice Recommendations presents a collection of lessons learned, best practices and examples and recommendations targeted at both policy and practitioner level in Europe, that is informed through project partners' collective experience of developing and delivering the iWell project. The report presents the findings and outcomes of the research and evaluation activities that were undertaken in each partner*

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country to capture the lived experiences of educators and education stakeholders who have been engaged throughout the development and delivery of this project.

The Curriculum and Training Material includes the latest, most effective and innovative teaching practices and educational approaches, including ICT tools. It entails the content developed to address the needs of teachers in primary education using a "skills-based health education" approach, providing them with the necessary skills to enhance students' key life skills with regard to making healthy and informed decisions when online. The main themes that emerged were emotional, social and digital well-being as well as their related sub-topics.

Resources needed:

iWell Curriculum and Training Material for Educators

IO5 – Health Literacy Toolkit with Policy & Practice Recommendations

Impact:

The Health Literacy Toolkit with Policy and Practice Recommendations had a positive impact on raising teachers' awareness on social, emotional and digital well-being, by introducing them to innovative, useful and engagement content and tools. Teachers were able to address young students directly and engage them in a conversation about their well-being.

In the iWell Curriculum and Training Material for Educators, the main digital and life skills promoted in each module include self-confidence, decision-making and social skills (e.g., active listening, effective communication, sharing, cooperating, empathy, respect, conflict resolution), as well as other important skills (e.g., creative thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving etc.).

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Lessons learned/Tips & recommendations:

It is very important for teachers to improve the teaching process of health literacy and critical thinking skills and maximise related learning opportunities by new approaches, ICTs methodologies and research-based evidence to integrate new tools into teaching activities.

Conclusion:

The project proposes a participatory learning approach to promote health literacy and digital wellbeing and partners will work with local stakeholders to ensure that the development of all intellectual outputs can be traced back to needs that are time and place-specific. In addition, skills-based health education approach are employed in promoting health behaviour change that will eventually be sustainable. Though this approach is relatively new, it is widely applicable and increasingly employed by a wide audience.

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PR3 – Best practices and learning from real-life situation

BEST PRACTICE 2
1. Best Practice Owner/Author/Creator/Publisher -Digital Educational Platforms (eclass, e-me etc) – Training programs / PanHellenic School Network (Greece) / ITYE "Diophantus" Directorate of Educational Technologies, Training and Certification (DETEP), private sector digital educational platforms (Google class. G-Suite, Teams etc)
Institution (if applicable): Ministry of Education **(Greece)**
Country: Greece
Website (if applicable): https:// sch.gr
Link: https://eclass.sch.gr, https://e-me.edu.gr , https://4all.e-me.edu.gr, https://e-me4all.eu (multilingual european edition),
2. Overview of Best Practice
Title of the activity: *Blended Learning in Greek School Education*
Type:

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Certified digital learning platforms are an educational tool developed over the past years and evolved during the pandemic. They have been used successfully both in synchronous distance learning and in asynchronous learning procedure. Moreover, during Covid-19 period and later, training teachers in digital distance learning tools was extremely important for the implementation of these in classroom.

Aim of the activity:[1]

Digital education platforms were developed several years ago. But the necessity of their use was highlighted by the outbreak of the pandemic. They came to fill the gap created by the interruption of face-to-face teaching so that, in combination with modern distance learning platforms, the learning process could continue as seamlessly as possible. At the same time, however, their importance as repositories of activities, creative student engagement, self-assessment tools, repetition, digital skills development and achievement of learning objectives was also highlighted. To make this happen, teacher training was necessary in order to familiarize teachers with these platforms so that they could effectively integrate them into the learning process, whether it be at a distance or face-to-face.

Target audience (beneficiaries):

This practice is aimed at teachers and students.

Short introduction:

Digital education platforms have been around for years, but their necessity emerged during the pandemic and their potential has unfolded even further since then. They have enabled teachers to organize their teaching materials in online repositories, classify their teaching content by class and subject, also develop digital material and grant students access to all these resources at any time. Furthermore, teachers were able to create on-line exercises and tests where students could participate

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and check their performance directly. At the same time, however, these platforms support group and individual assignments and communication in a safe environment, with feedback and suggestions for improvement in the context of differentiated teaching. The possibility to collaborate, communicate and share materials between teachers and students was also very important especially during the pandemic period when face-to-face meetings were impossible. All these possibilities in order to be used effectively required the training of teachers in a short period of time.

Methodological Approach:

With the outbreak of the pandemic, the need to use distance learning tools for synchronous and asynchronous teaching arose, so as not to interrupt the educational process. Technology has been an ally in this effort as this would have been technically impossible 10 or 20 years ago. However, while the tools have been available for several years, they have not been used to the extent that they should have been. Also, the level of familiarity with technology in general was not the same for all and the resources needed to implement those applications were not always available for both teachers and students.

Thus, initially, the schools provided all the available laptops and tablets to teachers and students. Additionally, diligent teachers studied, organized the process, gave instructions to students to create their accounts and through the method of peer teaching, helped to ensure that all colleagues were able to meet the needs of distance learning at an initial level by using the modern and asynchronous education applications. Subsequently this required, by all teachers, an investment of personal time and effort to master the required technical knowledge and capabilities that could be exploited by these platforms.

Furthermore, it was necessary to train students as users of these new platforms. The implementation of these stages was not without difficulties, but it had its positive aspects.

The Ministry of Education, seeing the need for a uniform and systematic training of teachers on these platforms, organized seminars in collaboration with universities so that specially trained trainers could train teachers on these tools. The training was carried out by discipline in order to be more effective.

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Although the school community has returned to face-to-face teaching, this knowledge is essential and can still be used today in various ways.

Resources needed:

The application of digital learning platforms, both modern and asynchronous, usually involves a variety of resources. These requirements may vary depending on the scale and complexity of the work to be done, but, in general, some common resources for both teachers and students are:

1.Technological Infrastructure such as computers, tablets or mobile phones, servers and network equipment and the applications and tools needed to use the platforms.

2. Internet connectivity: High-speed internet access is essential

3. Experts (trainers and specialists) on digital educational platforms for the development of course content and the training of teachers.

4.Teachers as innovators and facilitators, willing to learn and adopt new educational tools in the learning procedure.

Impact:

The integration of the digital tools of synchronous and asynchronous education in the teaching process was important in our school and almost all teachers utilized digital platforms to effectively continue the learning process during the pandemic. The knowledge gained was used to a significant extent even after the pandemic, for working meetings between teachers, meetings between students and teachers, for attending webinars, for assignments and assignments submission, as a repository of material and as a tool for creating material. Both teachers and many students acquired digital skills necessary for later life. However, there were also those who failed to make use of these tools either due to inability to familiarize themselves with technology or due to indifference, losing the ability to utilize the acquired technical knowledge in the future.

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Lessons learned/Tips & recommendations:

Digital education has become an integral part of the teaching process and we need to prepare ourselves to respond to the constantly changing environment. It is necessary to train teachers and students and to use these tools along with face-to-face teaching to ensure that they are familiar for future use and that they complement the normal educational process.

However, the use of such a blended model of synchronous and asynchronous learning often yields mixed criticism from society, especially when implemented by teachers who have not received adequate teacher training and their teaching has not been immersed into systematic academic planning so as to promote critical literacy in an inclusive digital classroom.

Moreover, recent surveys suggest that this model is associated with psychological underpinnings for both teachers and students. Although students seem to significantly value the technology aspect in their school classes and appreciate the self-regulation and flexibility it has to offer, they prefer the face-to-face communication and active collaboration of a real classroom. On the other hand, teachers sometimes find blended learning to be too time consuming in terms of preparation of materials and class management.

Conclusion:

The evolving symbiosis of technology with traditional pedagogies has come to fill to a significant extent the gap of face-to-face teaching during the pandemic period, providing the required flexibility. At the same time, they significantly modified the teaching process even after the pandemic, functioning in a complementary way in an environment where technology is an integral part of the educational process and constant adaptation is an important life skill. However, adapting them to include tools, applications and elements that contribute to the mental well-being, empowerment and resilience of all those involved in the teaching process would complement their role not only as learning tools but also as tools for mental health and well-being.

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