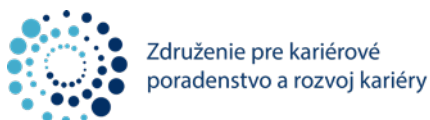


GUIDELINES ON ONLINE COURSE DEVELOPMENT

FROM DEFINING THE COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES TO DESIGNING THE COURSE CONCEPT

E-learning for Career Guidance Practitioners (C-Course)

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1. INTRODUCTION – COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The demand for high quality digital learning opportunities is constantly growing. This is a long-lasting trend that has been intensified during the recent years due to the limitations caused by COVID-19. This paper describes a team-based, collaborative approach to online course development implemented in the Erasmus+ Project N° 2020-1-CZ01-KA204-078378 “E-learning for Career Guidance Practitioners”.

Developing an online course is a highly complex and varied process. The collaborative approach expected within any Erasmus+ project ensures an optimal environment for developing a rich, dynamic, and interactive online education programme. While comparing the online and face-to-face course development process it can be reported that there is no difference between them

1. in defining course goals and learning outcomes based on the learners characteristics,
2. in selecting the course content based on learning outcomes and course goals,
3. in determining the course schedule as a balance between what learners need to learn to achieve the course goals and the time available, and
4. in piloting the newly developed course as part of the development process.

The key challenge while developing e-learning is to create an online learning environment where students do not need to rely on face-to-face contact to learn new knowledge and develop their skills. Therefore there is a need to focus on interactivity more in order to replace live discussions and reflection. What is more, when learning online (especially when it comes to self-learning), the learner has got a different efficiency in learning and a different pace when acquiring new knowledge. Although it requires the integration of technology, it is psychology, pedagogy and andragogy - not technology - that is critical to the success of an online course, so it must be the driver of the production process.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH – DEFINING THE TEAM ROLES AND COMPETENCIES

Four different national teams collaborated on the project. Their members had not known each other before and due to coronavirus limitations they did not have the opportunity to meet face-to-face and get to know each other even at the beginning of the project. This crucial fact has had a significant impact on cooperation and quality management and has been compensated by monthly online meetings from the very beginning of the project.

The course development was based on a team approach involving one instructional designer and four teams of career practitioners. This approach reflects the need for instructional design, web-based course development experience and technological skills on the one hand and career guidance knowledge and experience with education, guidance and counselling on the other hand. The role of the instructional designer requires high-level interpersonal skills since communication and teamwork are very sensitive and require good negotiation skills. Without deep knowledge of career guidance and counselling, the designer must be able to guide the team

members with no experience in online course development to provide high quality content that can be transformed into an e-learning form. The designer did not change the content as such, he rather edited it in a way that involved interaction with students or enabled them to get a better understanding of the study materials. Knowledge of pedagogy as well as explicit responsibilities, shared values, an understanding of expectations, and mutual respect for each other's knowledge were essential for all involved. The career guidance experts were engaged in predominantly curricular roles providing content, selecting textbooks, reviewing content, and assessing available online resources and materials.

2. QUALITY VISION AND COURSE DESIGN STANDARD

Before the online course development can begin, it is essential to have

1. a vision of quality clearly and briefly stated to guide the team.

Our quality vision statement was formulated at the very beginning of the process and states that the online course we plan to develop will

- be well-organized into learning units - chapters,
 - have clear learning goals, objectives and learning outcomes,
 - include activities that directly support the learning goals and objectives,
 - engage the learner through interaction with content, supporting them in exploring, discussing and analyzing abstract concepts in real-world, relevant contexts,
 - offer rich and relevant resources for students,
 - engage the learner in further study and professional development through communication with other students and the tutor after successfully completing the course, by offering them tutor support and peer learning in an online community of career practitioners.
2. a course design standard derived from the vision of quality. In creating the quality standard we were inspired by the [Continuing & Professional Ed Rubric Standards](#) of a non-profit, quality assurance organization called [Quality Matters](#) focused on the field of online education.

3. ONLINE COURSE DEVELOPMENT

As part of the preparatory phase of our online course development, a survey of existing online training programmes for career practitioners in the project partner countries and across Europe was carried out. Furthermore, the [research](#) interviewed career practitioners on their needs in the field of education and professional development. The results of this research and the training modules that were developed under the previous Erasmus+ project 2017-1-SK01-KA202-035411 “Quality implementation in career guidance” ([QUAL-IM-G](#)) were essential for us in the e-learning design and development.

Our plan was that the online course would be designed at a four-day face-to-face meeting and then developed within national teams while being coordinated by the instructional designer at regular two-hour online meetings. Due to the limitations caused by the coronavirus pandemic, a four-day online meeting was held, proving highly challenging for all parties involved. The online facilitation became central to the process and the role was taken jointly by the project coordinator and the instructional designer. Their responsibility was to coordinate all activities relating to the course development, namely providing joint leadership, scheduling the four-day online meeting, ensuring the meeting stayed on schedule, building the course development plan incl. setting a timeline for following phases.

The result was a seven-phase plan of the course design and development, incl. a schedule (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Course Development – Schedule.

Course Development – Phase 1	Curricular decisions / Planning	Four-day meeting (March)
Course Development – Phase 2	Course concept	Two weeks (April)
Course Development – Phase 3	Storyboard (incl. texts, audio and video production, graphic design, proofreading)	Ten weeks (April, May, June)
Course Development – Phase 4	Course development	Eight weeks (July, August)
Course Development – Phase 5	Testing / Revision	Four weeks (September)
Course Development – Phase 6	Final approval	One week (October)
Course Development – Phase 7	Development of language mutations	Eight weeks (November, December)

In this report, we plan to describe the first two phases of the development process.

PHASE 1 CURRICULAR DECISIONS

The meeting's aim was to manage the first phase by making the curricular decisions.

1. To answer the guiding questions (see Figure 3) and
2. To decide the chapters' topics and define their content in keywords

The schedule of this meeting is specified in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Phase 1_Curricular decisions / Planning – Schedule.

Curricular decisions – Phase 1	1 st day	2 nd day	3 rd day	4 th day
Online course development process – introduction	✓			
Guiding questions (answers)	✓	✓		
Chapters' topics (proposals, final decision)		✓	✓	
Design your chapter – content in keywords				✓

Figure 3. Guiding questions.

Why – Educational goals

- Why did the course come about?
- How do we know if the course is successful?
- What behaviour do we want to change?
- What are the current pain points of the target group?

Who – Learners characteristics and abilities

- Who is the target group?
- What's their experience?
- What is its demographic composition?
- What is their technical knowledge/ experience?
- What is their main motive to take the course?
- Who can help them put knowledge into practice?

What – Learning outcomes (objectives), materials and activities

- What are the course learning objectives?
- What should participants learn/learn/ practice?
- What will be the content of the course?
- Will the course include multimedia?
- Will it contain exercises?

When – Educational process

- At what stage of the educational process is the course positioned?
- How much time per day/week can course participants spend by training?
- How much time is the course supposed to take?

Where – Learning environment

- Where will the participants study the course? On their cell phone? PC?
- What is the resolution of the device?
- What are the options for data transfer for participants?
- Will they be able to watch audio? Video? Click links that you might place in the course?


How – Evaluation

- What learning forms will you use?
- How will the course start and end? How do we know that the student has successfully completed the course?
- Will the user navigate the course in the specified chapter order / arbitrarily?
- Are we going to collect any data from the course?

As an example, the answers to the questions “why, who” and “what” are presented in Figure 4. The answer to the question “Why” explains the purpose of the course. The question “Who” specifies the target group – for which career practitioners the online course is intended. The third question “What” helps to define the learning outcomes – which competencies career practitioners will develop after completing the course.

Figure 4. Answers to the guiding questions “why”, “who” and “what”.

Basic questions



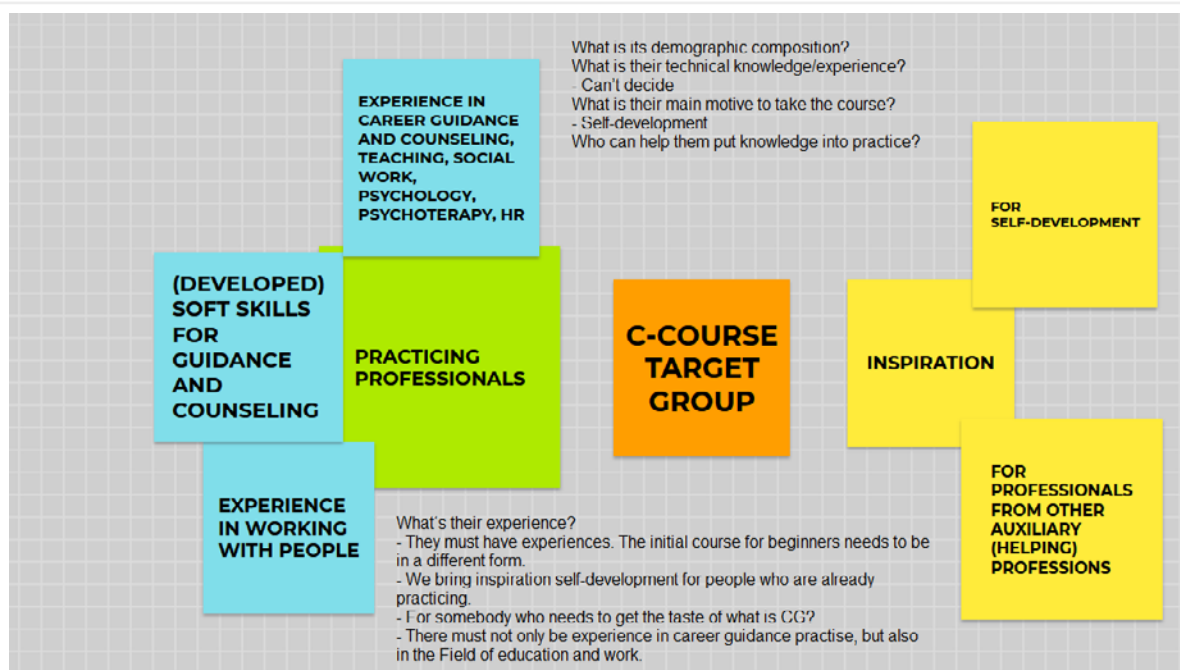
Best on-line experience

WHY?

- **Why did the course come about?**
 - Build a unifying element.
 - Set-up a basic level of knowledge.
 - The professionals want to study on their own pace. They want to choose the chapter they want to go through.
 - They want to have the self-regulated and reflectional development process.
 - We want to have a modern tool for self-development.
 - We want to be inspired from the other nations' experience.
- **How do we know if the course is successful?**
 - A lot of learners completes the course and contact the tutors to get a support.
 - Positive feedback of the participants.
 - The course will become viral:-)
 - We can test knowledge to be sure that people understood the theory.
 - The course should be taken as a good practice in developing the participants skills.
 - The course should be compliant with the national quality and professional standards.
 - The course results in some other articles, research, conferences etc.

WHO?

- **Who's the target group?**
 - What's their experience?
 - They must have experiences. The initial course for beginners needs to be in a different form.
 - We bring inspiration self-development for people who are already practicing.
 - For somebody who needs to get the taste of what is CG?
 - There must not only be experience in career guidance practise, but also in the Field of education and work.
 - What is its demographic composition?
 - Everyone @
 - What is their technical knowledge/experience?
 - General
 - What is their main motive to take the course?
 - Self development
 - Who can help them put knowledge into practice?
 - Rather individuals.
 - We should encourage the participants to contact the tutor.
- **Who will be the course guide?**
 - A live tutor?
 - Actor?
 - Cartoon?
 - Just a voice?
 - Just the lyrics?



<p>At the conclusion of the C-Course, learners should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ understand the different functioning of the labour market in the past and today and its links with career guidance ✓ get acquainted with current trends in the labour market (globalization, digitalization robotisation, new forms of work ...) ✓ independently keep up-to-date with the information about the labour market. ✓ understand the importance of the labour market information (LMI) in career guidance and the use of LMI in working with clients ✓ gain an overview of career guidance stakeholders in the labour market and use the potential of cooperation with them in their own practice 	<p>At the conclusion of the C-Course, learners should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ describe the current trends in career guidance and counselling ✓ recognize the importance and usefulness of the knowledge of theoretical background in their practice ✓ apply their counselling approach and techniques in a way that is useful to individuals in times of constant change and unpredictable events in their lives ✓ critically reflect on their work with individuals not only in relation to the counselling contract, but also within the system such as community, society and nature ✓ recognize how is the recent development in the use of ICT and social media changing the role of careers practitioners ✓ understand how attitudes and skills influence the way how they integrate ICT and social media in their own careers practice 	<p>At the conclusion of the C-Course, learners should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ explain the value of career education as part of the education system; ✓ define the career competencies that learners need to have a positive career; ✓ describe a range of approaches that can be used to deliver career education; and ✓ describe a range of approaches that can be used to assess career competencies 	<p>At the conclusion of the C-Course, learners should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ reflect about themselves in terms of their professionalism and enhance their professionalism in the field of ethics & values, methods of self-reflection and self-diagnosis, peer learning and personal brand
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

Learning outcomes

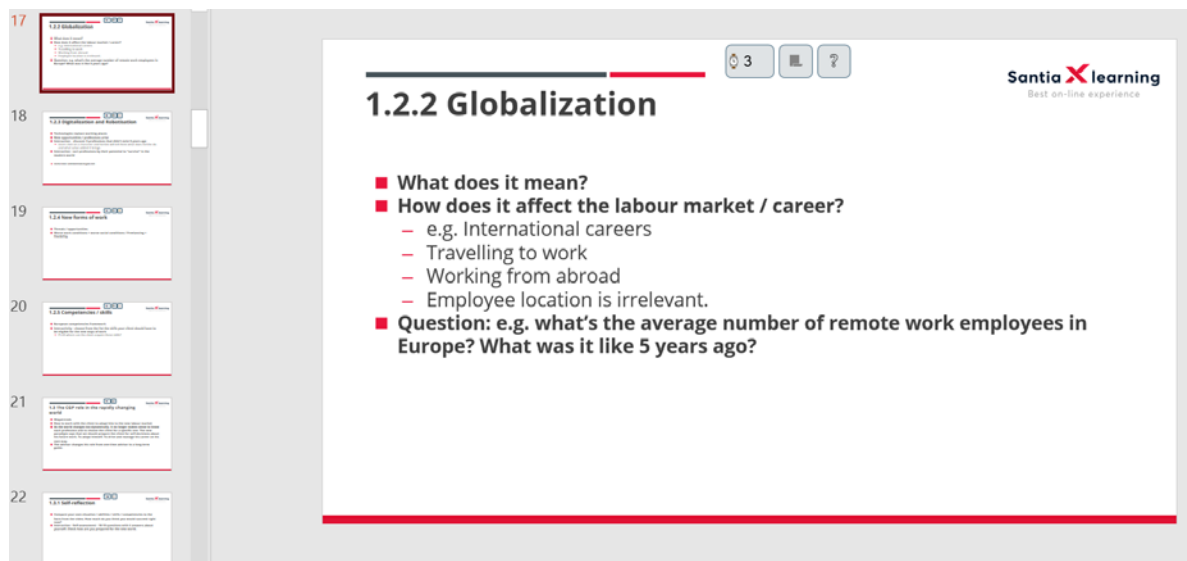
The process of answering the basic questions about e-learning, followed by creating the course concept showed the variety of opinions and different approaches to career guidance in the countries where the partner organisations come from. These needed to be deeply discussed, which required a lot of extra time. Usually when creating an e-learning, you have one subject matter expert (SME) who you discuss the topics with. This project involved four teams of SMEs (four teams of career guidance experts coming from four different countries) who needed to be synchronised first before we started designing the training.

The course content was planned to be created in three steps. The first step (Phase 1 as mentioned above) already took place during the four-day online meeting, where the content of all chapters was proposed in keywords (see Figure 5 – left column). The national teams previously agreed that the course was not intended to teach brand-new career practitioners, but rather inspire those with 6–9 months of experience. The purpose of this first step was, among other things, to carry out the first check and look for possible intersections in the educational content of individual chapters, which is extremely important due to the cooperation of four teams of subject matter experts in the course development. Separate online meetings of some teams are also expected in the next phases, where there is a risk of duplicate elaboration of certain topics, in order to agree on their final placement.

Figure 5. Phase 1 – Chapters' topics and their content in keywords. Phase 2 - Course Concept.

The 4 chapters - topics, content

The World of Work	Enhancing Professionalism	Careers Education	The transforming role of CPs in the 21. century
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro to the chapter 2. Intro video  3. Journey of CGP 4. Globalization 5. Digitalization and Robotisation 6. The changing nature of work and skills in the digital age (JRC) 7. People, machines, robots and skills (Cedefop) 8. Dsds 9. New forms of work 10. Competencies / skills 11. The CGP role in the rapidly changing world  12. Self-reflection 13. Supporting informed career decisions 14. Self-knowledge (step-by-step process) 15. Career exploration 16. Labour market intelligence 17. Networking 18. Quiz 19. Summary + Next steps 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro to the chapter 2. Intro video  3. CGP = "me as an individual" perspective 4. Values 5. Defining my vision and mission and how to make them happen 6. Self-care 7. How to share my personal experiences with my client 8. CGP = "me as an expert" perspective 9. CGP: Types 10. Values & ethics in my work 11. Self-reflection: dilemmas 12. Self-evaluation 13. Peer learning: how and where to share my experiences with other CGPs 14. My personal brand 15. My personal brand: Elements  16. My personal brand on social media: Tips 17. Self care & preventing burnout 18. Self-care & preventing burnout: Tools 19. Coaching & Supervision 20. Inspirations for self-development 21. Summary + Next steps 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro to the chapter 2. Intro video  3. What is career education? 4. Career competencies 5. Understanding career competencies  6. Me x context 7. Possibilities x Limitations 8. Choices x Coincidences 9. Adaptation x Resistance 10. Change x Stability 11. Teaching career competencies 12. Teaching career competencies  13. Common approaches to career development 14. Common approaches to assessment in career education 15. Assessing career competencies  16. Key distinctions 17. Key principles of effective assessment 18. Final activity 19. Summary + Next steps 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro to the chapter 2. Intro video  3. Trends for the field of career counselling to consider as the 21st century approaches 4. The CP as a guide to life design 5. The CP as a guide in uncertain reality 6. The expanding role of ICT in career services 7. Integrated guidance 8. Digital skills and competences of CPs 9. Ethical issues 10. How to make the most from online counselling 11. Human as a part of an eco-system  12. Widening the possibilities 13. Flourishing - perceptiveness and care 14. Summary + Next steps



PHASE 2 COURSE CONCEPT

The second step, focusing on the course concept development (Phase 2), is a very important and often overlooked phase (see Figure 5 – second picture). It comprises designing a detailed structure of the slides, including their particular role in the whole e-learning, their content type, etc. The goal of the phase is to:

- Keep the flow of the course, to ensure that theoretical and interactive content is equally distributed to keep the pace of the learning and reach the learning outcome.
- Give the framework to each slide so everyone across teams knows what type of content to expect (i.e. video, exercise, infographics, etc.)
- Show how long it will take to study the course and its individual parts.
- Decide how many video, audio and other multimedia materials will be created.
- Check if there is a context for each chapter and ensure that no chapter covers the same topic as a different one.

After designing a high quality course concept, there is no need to think about the context afterwards when writing the storyboard (Phase 3), and the team members can focus entirely on their particular topics.

The essential role of the course concept can be presented in the following case. If there are overlapping topics across the chapters, the concept of one or both chapters has to be rewritten. The long-term experience shows that it might not be enough to rewrite the concept of one chapter. Due to the updates the concept of the modified chapter may lose its leading theme and its unified structure, and become inconsistent. Thus the whole course concept has to be recomposed as well.

PHASE 3 STORYBOARD – THE NEXT STEP

In the near future, the project will move to storyboard development (Phase 3; see an example in Figure 6). The storyboard contains all the text, incl. scenarios for video content, voiceover for audio content, activities, bonus materials and other resources that will be available to the student. The people involved in this phase are the storyboard writer, instructional designer and the subject matter experts (SMEs). Career guidance experts as SMEs work under the facilitation of the instructional designer and the storyboard writer. As a final step before the developer takes over (still Phase 3), all the text is transformed by the storyboard writer into an e-learning form.

Figure 6. Storyboard – example.

4.2. Intro video

Slide template	Texts and on-slide interactions
Multimedia	<p>What is career</p> <p>How careers develop</p> <p>How the internet is changing people</p> <p>Video lesson: Moving from a focus on career decision making to career learning</p> <p>The goal of the chapter</p>
Background interactions	<p>Career education supports people to find out about themselves, their world, and to make decisions about their lives and their place in the world. It is a continuous process that involves learning, reflection, and decision-making. Career education is a process that involves learning, reflection, and decision-making. Career education is a process that involves learning, reflection, and decision-making.</p> <p>In the past, career development was often focused on transition and making career choices. Young people were encouraged to decide what they wanted to be when they grew up and then supported to make an application. Career development and transition support is still important, but increasingly we focus on development as a lifelong process.</p> <p>We begin to think about career when we are born, as we make choices to develop our thinking and follow our interests. Along the way we make decisions, but we are still careering even when we are not making decisions. Career education should support young people to adopt a curious and questioning way of thinking about their life and work. It is about supporting people to think about what they are doing, to think about what they are not doing, and to think about what they are considering.</p>

4. COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

The whole team should also make decisions about their communication processes, expectations and technologies. We have chosen different ad-hoc forms for communication according to the goal we wanted to reach.

1. The first six months we used a combination of email communication and regular online meetings.
2. The basic course questions (curricular decisions) were discussed in a four-day on-line meeting with the whole team.
3. The concept of the specific chapters is discussed in separate on-line meetings of the national teams under the facilitation of the instructional designer.
4. During the peer review of each chapter's concept, the communication was asynchronous. The national teams made their comments on each concept and took advantage of the possibility to comment on Google Docs. Issues arising from the peer review that were complex and required one-to-one discussion were solved during online calls.
5. At the beginning of the third phase (storyboard development) a chat platform (Google Chat) will be introduced for mutual communication between the storyboard writer and the subject matter experts (career guidance experts).

The Google Drive has been used for collaboration and joint work since the beginning of the project.

CONCLUSION

Online education has forever transformed further education, and we are learning that quality is really about flexibility and the ability to adapt the education content and the ways of its delivery to the changing demands of learners and the new promises of technology.

The aim of this report is to present the first two phases of any e-learning development – Making curricular decisions and Designing the course concept – within the Erasmus+ framework. We consider these phases to be essential for the successful completion of any development process, incl. the quality management.

We asked the members of the project team how they experienced the first steps undertaken in our e-learning development. Here are some of their reactions.

What did you learn within the first two phases of the e-learning development?

“To think differently while creating the chapters, to look at it from a different perspective.”

“It has been interesting, but extremely complex and hard to follow up all the details as well as it ideally should have been followed up.”

“I came into the work process when it was established. It was very interesting and I gained insight into the project. But then there were some meetings that collided with tuition and other tasks. In this summer and autumn, I have read shared documents, and have had discussions with the members of my team. Both this work and the meetings have been instructive for me. Both about subject matters, but particularly with the view of cooperation from other countries. I have learned a lot of it, even though it has been frustrating that our team was a bit behind the schedule.”

”Organising and carrying out a quality focus group research; info about career guidance in all the partner countries; I developed teamwork and negotiation skills, as well as non-violent communication principles in a professional context.”

What do you consider as the most challenging part of the first two phases of the development process?

“Coordinating the chapters and content with other teams to make a unified course.”

“We have not been able to meet and get to know each other in a physical room. This has made the process more difficult than it could have been.”

“For me it has been challenging to understand how people from other countries think about the matter of this course, and I feel my team’s approach is a bit different from the others’. It has also been a challenge that I came late into the project, and the fact that I have not been available for all the meetings.”

”Getting to a compromise and understanding of all the national visions of the course content. From my perspective, we hadn’t had it clear what our goal (both concerning the form and the content) was supposed to be created when discussing the modules at the very beginning :)”

After the experience we went through, it can be reported:

1. Unless you define the e-learning's goals and the learning outcomes or unless you design its concept you can be sure that you will return to it sooner or later. If you don't, you will have challenging moments in the development of the e-learning's storyboard.
2. In order to pay enough attention to the topics listed in point 1, it is essential to explain the reason why they are important. We think in particular of the course concept. Since in our case the people who develop the course are not experienced in e-learning development, it is also very important that they understand the whole development process and its every detail in advance.
3. Everything we mention in this paper applies twice as much in any international project, where different teams work together joining the project with different ideas, knowledge and experience. In this case, we perceive it as essential to see and meet in person at the outset. A well-mastered human factor might help overcome initial problems.

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