



EARLY

Distance Learning Model Reinforced with Robotics for 3-7 Years Old Children



EARLY

We would like to welcome you to the first e-newsletter of EARLY that gives a wide coverage of the objectives, partners, and the ongoing activities of the project practice.

EARLY - Distance Learning Model Reinforced with Robotics for 3-7 Years Old Children is a 2-year Erasmus+ funded project involving approximately 20,000 educational stakeholders throughout Europe.

The project aims to develop a distance learning curriculum enriched with Robotics for pre-service teachers to practice in blended learning settings and assist them to improve their professional profiles.

And this is possible by giving hands-on training supported by digital teaching tools and robotics as one of the very essential ideas of the EARLY Project.

Objectives

See our objectives to improve the strategies that the preservice preschool teachers should develop to include all children in the teaching and learning processes.

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Partners

The EARLY Project consortium is made up of a variety of institutions/organisations enabling us to work in an interdisciplinary way.

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Kocaeli Meeting & Survey

You will find detailed information about the meetings and ongoing activities in the partner countries in this issue also.

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Members of KOU Team

OUR DEDICATION FOR BETTER EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

EARLY is dedicated to ensuring that current and future preschool teachers can develop and update their skills to provide education and training to young children in different situations.

University courses for these professions do not always provide training regarding "online and digital education for early years children". So, preschool teacher undergraduates mainly focus on face-to-face teaching activities.

The lack of knowledge in this regard has already been reflected in the applications of current preschool teachers because of the pandemic.

There may be similar situations where we will need online education, so we need to become prepared for those situations as a lesson learnt after the COVID-19 pandemic.

OBJECTIVES

The overarching aim of EARLY is to address issues of capacity in schools and families regarding how best to utilize digital and online technologies to develop multimodal practices through a Methodology for Online Education. It seeks to do this to enhance social inclusion.

EARLY concentrates on developing strategies for quality online early education that raises special issues:

- Young children who go online always need an adult by their side who can encourage and support them to interact with the educational space
- However, the adults who support the young children do not always possess the skills

to organize the online connection nor the ability to support them on the platforms.

- Therefore, the project is targeted at Science of Education undergraduates in Preschool Teaching Departments, teachers, stakeholders and parents/carers and families to provide them with the basic competencies to be able to assist their young children in remote learning activities.

- In recognizing the potential of ICT in early childhood education, some of the tutorial content will be devoted to coding and educational robotics modules.



The Meeting in Kocaeli



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Computer Lab in Kocaeli University

PARTNERS



KOCAELI UNIVERSITY (KOU) was established in 1992 with 6 faculties, 1 vocational school and 3 institutes. Now KOU is a huge educational institution with 19 faculties, 1 school, 21 vocational schools and a state conservatory.

KOU is one of the leading science and education centres in Turkey. With more than 81,000 students, our university has an important position in the research and development activities of our country with its 15 Research and Application Centres and 28 Research and Application Units.

KOU lecturers provide courses and seminars to the institutions or individuals in required expertise, personal development, law, professional, social, and cultural training. The Centre also provides consultancy services for project writing, R & D personnel training,



**UNIVERSITY
OF LATVIA**

University of Latvia (LU) with 13,000 students, 13 faculties and more than 20 research institutes is one of the largest comprehensive research universities in the Baltic States with educational and research potential in humanities, social and natural sciences.

The only higher education institution from Latvia ranked in the QS Top Universities ranking. UL's degree of internationalization has been recognized as high in several rankings, such as QS Top Universities, Multi-rank, Interfax ranking. UL pays attention to the development of international collaboration and supports mobility.

At present, the UL has signed 148 bilateral agreements with universities around the world, more than 800 Erasmus+ agreements with universities in program countries and 29 agreements with universities in partner countries.



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Scuola di
Robotica

School of Robotics (Scuola di Robotica) is a non-profit Training and Educational Centre Certified by the National Ministry of Education. Its aim is to promote the knowledge, use of ICT educational applications, and of Educational Robotics.

School of Robotics provides for the widest practicable and appropriate dissemination of information concerning the results of the R&D in the field of Robotics and of the complementary disciplines: Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence, Neuroscience, Philosophy, Design. It aims also to overcome the separation between the hard science and humanities.

SdR developed a chain of transmission between research laboratories, education, industry and society at large, to offer teachers, students and population as a whole an up-to-date vision of where and how robotics and ICT are developing.



UNIVERSITY
OF MANNHEIM

For generations, the University of Mannheim has been preparing students to take on leadership roles in business, academia, and society. One of the university's strengths in this task is its profile, which is characterized by the economic and social sciences.

It is in these fields that the University of Mannheim has repeatedly been ranked as one of the top 20 European research institutions. Staff members at six schools and departments teach and carry out research in Business Administration, Economics, the Humanities, Social Sciences, Law, and Business Informatics and Mathematics.

Researchers at the university collaborate with numerous national and international partners. Facts and Figures: Professors: 194 Academic staff members: approx. 840 Non-academic staff members: approx. 570 Students: approx. 12,000



Politécnico
de Viseu

The creation of the Polytechnic Institute of Viseu (IPV), on 26th December 1979, is clearly framed by the broader philosophy which supported the successful implementation of public polytechnic higher education in Portugal: the cooperation with the surrounding community, on a reciprocal basis, aimed at promoting awareness of regional problems and the implementation of good solutions.

The IPV strives to fulfil that ambition with the technical, humanistic, and personal training of its students, in order to make them capable of contributing to the development of the Portuguese society; the development of research activities, having in mind the needs of the surrounding context; and cultural exchange and cooperation with other state/private institutions, at the national and international levels. The Institute comprises five schools: Education, Technology and Management, Agriculture, Technology and Management (in the city of Lamego), and Health.

The IPV mission is to train professionals with high technical-scientific knowledge and skills and promote innovation made possible by a close contact between the training institutions and the regional scientific and technological community in the context of an increasingly globalised and international society.



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early years
the organisation for young children



Early Years ROI (est. 2019) alongside Early Years NI – the organisation for young children, is the largest organisation working to promote high quality early years care and education for children aged 0-12 and their families. It was established in 1965 in NI, and is a membership-based organisation, a registered charity, a company limited by guarantee and is governed by a Board of Directors.

The mission of the organisation is to lead and innovate to ensure high quality shared early education and care services that support resilience for children, families, and communities.

The vision of the organisation is that: Children are strong, competent, and visible in their local communities; Parents, carers and families live in communities with healthy relationships that nurture good child development outcomes; Children and families are physically and emotionally well and resilient; Children are respectful of difference and grow up in a peaceful and shared region.

Mellis Ed. Tech. is a newly founded enterprise. The area of expertise of the organisation can be described as developing education and training programs and courses according to the needs of companies and target groups, generally focusing on required skills.

Mellis Ed. Tech. develops interactive education courses that include participants in the learning process. Mellis Ed. Tech. carries out analysis studies such as gap, process, equipment, and vocational analysis.

These studies are conducted with several methods with the efforts of members experienced in ICT technologies such as "Interactive Software" and "Web-based software".

Animated videos for educational purposes are one of the many digital teaching materials that the organisation have produced so far.





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ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

At the meeting in Kocaeli, partners decided to apply the survey to teachers and parents by contacting 10 associated partners in each partner country.

In addition, the partners decided to increase the quality of the process by keeping in constant contact with these institutions during the project implementation.

Partners will also further circulate the survey to a wider selection of preschool teachers or parents from different early childhood institutions to augment the sample group.

SURVEY

As part of the EARLY research initiative, the partners have been collecting feedback from schools, teachers, and families on strategies and challenges to support the development of a methodology for online education for children 3-7 years old.

The survey consists of three sections and the results of the study will be used to support decisions of the EARLY project and will be available for dissemination in scientific events and/or publications/journals.

IPV led the survey development process and then all partners translated the survey into their national languages for the application and currently, the data collection is in process.

We will publish the results of the survey in an infographic and provide a link to it in the second issue of this newsletter.

FIRST ONLINE MEETING

The first, kick off, online project meeting started with the partners introducing themselves. The Project's overarching aims and objectives were clearly outlined by the project coordinator, and then the specific roles and responsibilities of each project partner were defined for the successful implementation of the project. Particular attention was paid to the roles of the project partners, who will lead the way in terms of the 3 project results. All partners participated fully in the ensuing discussions and debates and a consensus was reached on responsibilities to be fulfilled by the partners.

KOCAELI MEETING

The meeting commenced with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tuğba Konaklı, the project coordinator's opening speech. Then, all the project partners (Early Years, Instituto Politecnico De Viseu, Kocaeli University, Mellis Ed.Tech., Scuola di Robotica, University of Latvia) delivered their presentations introducing their institutions.

During these introductory presentations, the partners developed new ideas about each other's contributions to the project, and this allowed the division of labor to be made more rational. In addition, the presentations increased the tendency to work collaboratively.

The participants asked each other questions and expressed their opinions on possible additional contributions they could make to the project objectives.



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TO CONCLUDE

How can we ensure effective distance education practices in early childhood education?

There is an abundance of research demonstrating the importance of early childhood education to promote best outcomes for children's learning and development throughout their lives. Parents/carers as well as teachers are key to supporting this early development.

We now know that teaching practices that involve distance education should be put into action in early childhood education using quality teaching strategies which take into consideration the cognitive and social and emotional development of children to ensure that effective distance education occurs for preschool children.

Another way must be to invest in teachers and parents to ensure that they are skilled in using new technologies and strategies in distance education to facilitate children's learning and development in a variety of remote contexts.

The Erasmus+ EARLY Project hopes to achieve this throughout the lifetime of the project and beyond.



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