Seminar Across the Atlantic 2021

Shaping the future of ULLL - Old ways and new roads

Thusday 29 April 2021, 16:00CET

In collaboration with UPCEA AAACE

Future of Non-Formal and Informal Learning and Implications for Higher Education

Prof. Dr. Attila Pausits
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Today, learning already takes place across many different places in different settings. Apart from traditional formal learning like at higher education institutions, we see that non-formal and informal learning is happening in different spaces and contexts nowadays. Such typ es of learning are more and more important and typically taking place voluntarily in real-life situations and often through peer interactions and participatory approaches. In addition, non-formal and informal learning take place in work and leisure. Work and career-oriented learning, upskilling and reskilling on the job, and learning for personal development are frequently associated with informal, flexible and collaborative ways of learning. At the same time, we can also observe that the boundaries between formal, non-formal and informal learning are blurring. Societal needs but recent advances like through digitalization enable this development by allowing online courses to be provided in a more flexible manner and to promote peer-learning among learners with different backgrounds.

At the European level, several initiatives have been launched in the past 15 years to support non-formal and informal learning, and to promote its validation and recognition. The European Qualification Framework, the Europass and the validation process scheme for non-formal and informal learning (identification, documentation, assessment, certification) can be mentioned here as significant milestones.

To develop a vision of the future of non-formal and informal learning, a study called “The Future of Non-Formal and Informal Learning: Towards Lifelong and Life-wide Learning Ecosystems” identified major trends and drivers on different forms of learning. Based on the outcome of their assessment the presentation will discuss future scenarios and their implications for higher education institutions with a strong focus on continuing education.

Find out more about our keynote speaker here.

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Trends for lifelong learning in the modern world

Dr. Tricia BERRY
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Traditionally, higher education has provided academic credit for knowledge and skills that have been established in a classroom setting. Students would gather on campuses and in classrooms for the chance to gain the knowledge their professors could impart to them. Often, this model of delivery was not conducive to learners who had other obligations that did not allow them to spend hours in a classroom.

Online learning has challenged the traditional method of delivering higher education. Students not able to attend courses at specific locations or times have an array of options to allow them to continue to expand their knowledge and skills in ways that will accommodate their life situations. The flexible models of delivery allow for new ways of thinking about education, skill building, and credentialing. They also provide multiple pathways for true lifelong learning.

In today's rapidly changing knowledge-based economy the trends seem to point toward continued growth of lifelong learning. Skills that are important today may be outdated or unnecessary five or ten years from now. Workers must be constantly refining and updating their skill sets, and employers need people who are willing to do so. In the United States, these changing needs are being met through new and evolving methods of delivery. Many employers have begun to focus on micro-credentials: Short, skill-specific credentials that demonstrate a level of competence in a specific area. These are often stackable credentials that can build upon one another to help employees and employers with continual learning and development. Partnerships between academic entities and employers can help to create meaningful learning while also meeting the needs identified for the workforce. This session will explore some of those trends.

Find out more about our keynote speaker here.