



Modernization and internationalization of Iranian  
HEIs via collaboration in TEL-based curriculum  
development in engineering and STEM

## UNITEL E-COURSE

### LECTURE NOTES

#### MODULE 1: Orientation to the course and modern concepts of learning

##### M1-1 Orientation to the course

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## Introduction

The purpose of these lecture notes is to provide you in a written form a short overview of UNI-TEL e-course's video lesson 1 of Module 1: M1-1 Orientation to the course. The content of both the video lesson and these lecture notes serve as UNI-TEL course's main instructive materials, which give you information and guide your actions throughout the learning process.

Please use these lecture notes as a base, whenever you have a need to review the UNI-TEL learning process and its practices.



### Themes of the video lesson

During this video lesson M1-1 Orientation to the course, we will go through the following themes:

Theme 1. Welcome to the UNI-TEL e-course!

Theme 2. Course's objectives and target groups

Theme 3. Course's content and learning model

Theme 4. Course's technical operating environment and support

Theme 5. Course's progress and forms of studying

Theme 6. Project work/plan and its role

Theme 7. Tasks and role of the participants

Theme 8. Course's performance criteria

Theme 9. Course's assessment

Theme 10. Guidance and support provided



## Objectives of the video lesson

The objectives of the lesson are:

1. The participant gets basic information about UNI-TEL e-course and studying at it.

This means, that after the lesson the participant knows what studying within UNI-TEL e-course is, and what are its objectives, content and studying practices.

2. The participant gets basic information about the requirements of the UNI-TEL e-course and what is expected of him/her as a participant

This means, that after the lesson the participant understands the time and effort required to commit to the course, and is able to relate it to his or her own daily life and actions.

3. The participant gets knowledge and understanding about his/her role in the learning process as being a responsible subject of his/her own learning and professional development as a member of the collegial community.

This means, that after the lesson the participant understands the idea of the course's learning model, and how it has been built to support professional development in the context of Higher Education institutions.



## **1. Welcome to UNI-TEL e-course**

At first, welcome to join our UNI-TEL e-course as a participant and as a member of the learning community!

UNI-TEL e-course is a training and learning process of developing TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) at your own university.

The training is part of the international UNI-TEL project and the Erasmus + KA2 program.

The project's overall aim is to support modernization, internationalization and accessibility of the Iranian HE system through the development of innovative pedagogical approaches that are based on collaborative TEL methodologies.



## 2. Course's objectives and target groups

UNI-TEL e-course is created to support the following objectives and target groups:

- Empowering engineering and STEM departments in Iranian universities by enhancing skills and competences of professors and instructional designers.
- Modernization and internationalization of engineering and STEM curriculum, and
- Developing flexible and accessible training path based on collaborative and innovative pedagogies and TEL methodologies.

As already mentioned, UNI-TEL e-course's two specific target groups are:

- Professors, and
- Instructional designers

In reference to this, it is important to notice and emphasize the aspect of collegial collaboration and cooperation between these target groups inside institutions.

This is, because at the institutional level, designing and implementing e-learning is at most times teamwork between colleagues who have the best expertise on various aspects included in the process of e-learning design.

The core idea to understand is, that e-learning of your organization is something you are building together with your colleagues.



### 3. Course's content and learning model (1)

The course provides the participants within its contents:

- 1) TEL related knowledge on a variety of topics based on current expertise and research
- 2) Learning process, which activates self-directed, exploratory learning
- 3) Module specific milestones for participant's personal professional developing work related to TEL topics; and
- 4) Support and recommendation to build TEL topic related peer network within one's own institution and other HEIs.

The course should be seen as a framework that provides perspectives and a contact surface for a learning process based on TEL within the themes of the different modules.

Later during this lesson, we will take a look in more detail how each participant is challenged to take their learning process into a practical, more personal and institutional level, by mirroring the course contents to their own professional development work and expertise sharing among colleagues.



## Course's content and learning model (2)

UNI-TEL e-course is based on a learning model, which was originally created and tested in a large, nationwide Finnish continuing education program for language teachers during 2009-2011.

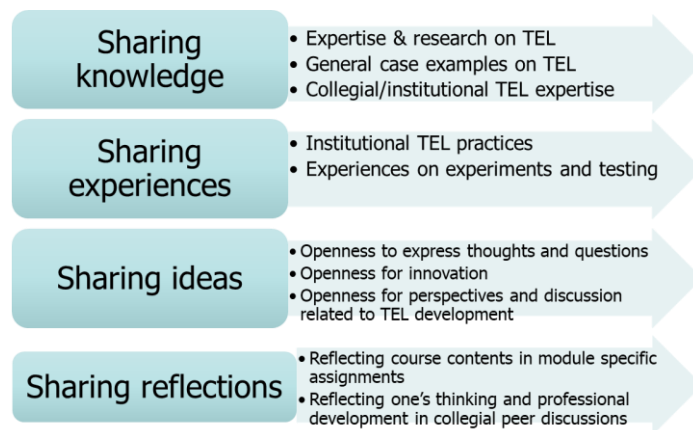


Figure 1 – UNI-TEL e-course's learning model

The model is built to support the participant's professional development from the needs and starting points of the participant's own work and institution. Central to a participant is an enthusiastic, exploratory, experimental, and open attitude that allows new experimentation, development work, and learning by doing.

The underlying ideology of the learning model is "Sharing" -thinking which means multi-directional collaboration based on openness, community building, and sharing expertise and experiences in expert- and collegial networks, to support and activate individual learning and development processes in education institutions.



In the UNI-TEL course's context,

Sharing knowledge means:

- Sharing expertise & research on TEL
- Sharing case examples on TEL, and
- Sharing collegial/institutional TEL expertise as part of course content

Sharing experiences means:

- Sharing institutional TEL practices, and
- Sharing experiences of experiments and testing

Sharing ideas means:

- Openness to express thoughts and questions
- Openness for innovation, and,
- Openness for perspectives and discussion related to TEL development

And finally, sharing reflections means:

- Reflecting course contents in module specific assignments, and
- Reflecting one's thinking and professional development in collegial peer discussions



#### 4. Course's technical operating environment

- UNI-TEL e-course takes place at Moodle Platform.
- The platform has been built to support your learning process by being structurally divided into course modules and topics, which you can access in the time frame of the course according to your own schedule, as far as the previous module has been completed.
- The text elements of the learning environment and the function-specific instructions guide your navigation and operations at the UNI-TEL e-course.
- In any issues regarding the use and navigation throughout the UNITEL platform, you will find the contact information for support by going to: Navigation > UNI-TEL INFO > General.

## 5. Course's progress and forms of studying

Even if UNI-TEL course is an e-course, the methods of studying include some hybrid elements, which are implemented mainly locally, such as face-to-face session in the beginning and at the end of the learning process, at your own university.

Additionally there are three common-for-all webinars. Your own institution may also organize some other kind of group activity or tutoring either face-to-face or online.

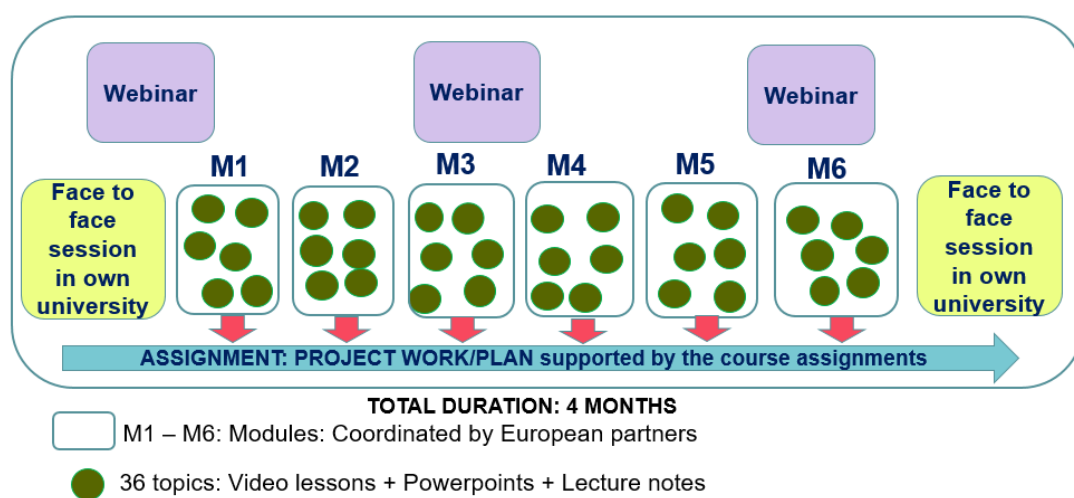


Figure 2 – UNI-TEL e-course's progress and forms of studying

In practice, as the figure shows, the course will include:

- 6 course modules, each of which includes
- 6 video or audio lessons of 20 to 60 minutes, on topics related to different contents on TEL. These lessons are to be attended on the platform in asynchronous modality – and there are also the slides and Lecture notes of the topics provided.
- 3 webinar sessions (at the beginning, at the middle term and at the end of the e-course), which are to be attended synchronously by all participants
- Possible 2 institutional face-to-face sessions at the beginning and at the end of the e-course, organized, moderated and facilitated by tutors, and
- As course's collaborative and collegial activity, recommended, but not obligatory personal project work/plan, which is supported by the personal module specific assignments and peer discussions online.



## 6. Project work/plan and its role (1)

Project work/plan of the UNI-TEL course is a recommended, but NOT obligatory “course tool”, which

- Serves as a method and a mean for participants’ professional development.
- Brings to the course choice, flexibility and individual paths.
- Is a collection of module specific reflections of any idea or issue related to the work of the participant and supporting the development of TEL, and
- Is connected to the collaborative peer activity of the course, including sharing reflections with your colleagues on your personal interests and professional development related to TEL topics.

The core idea is to create thinking and ideas that generate learning, innovation, and new regional and national networks of experts and colleagues in Iranian HEIs around the development of TEL.

## Project work/plan and its role (2)

In practice:

- The course as a whole acts as a “basic framework” within which each participant processes their own professional development on TEL topics by reflecting their thoughts in assignments and sharing ideas and expertise, also in peer networks of colleagues, which promotes the learning process.
- Each course module includes one content related project work/plan assignment, within which you reflect on the TEL related themes and professional interests for developing your own work, and share them in the discussion forum with peers as well as attend in discussion.
- When the e-course ends, the set of six assignments you have completed will form the core of your own project work/plan.

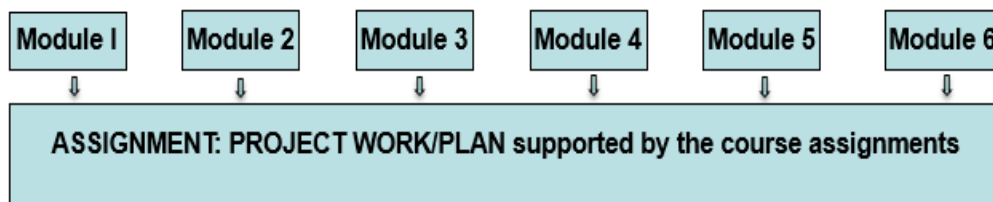


Figure 3 – UNI-TEL e-course’s project work/plan

Notice, that as said, in your project work/plan assignments you can reflect any ideas, issues and TEL topics related to your own interests and your personal work. This also means that the project works / plans of different participants, such as the ones of professors, and the ones of instructional designers, can in fact differ from each other a lot.



## **7. Tasks and role of the participants**

As the UNI-TEL e-course is built specifically to support the professional development of the participants, its learning model emphasizes both the freedom and responsibility of adult learning.

Key assumptions about the role and expectations of the participants are as follows:

### **1. Participant is an active and responsible subject**

This means, that participants are expected to want to be active in developing their own work, and responsible for completing their duties and assignments in the time given.

### **2. Participant is both the developer of his/her work and builder of collegial networks**

Regarding this, not only independent and silent work, but also collaborative collaboration inside institutions is needed in curricula modernization and internationalization, as well as TEL development. It is a fact that a genuine learning and development community is built together by favouring the sharing of expertise, experiences and practices between colleagues.

### **3. Participant is process-oriented and uses their basic learning skills within the framework of the course and support provided**

The tasks of the training are not particularly demanding, but staying involved in the process requires a certain amount of attention. You can make your studying easier by following the learning process: using a calendar to mark down schedules and deadlines, having passwords and instructions easily accessible, and creating your own routines and practices to follow.

These simple methods will also help you to enjoy your learning path, as you know everything is under control!



## 8. Course's performance criteria

To complete the UNI-TEL course, the participant, in due time:

Completes all of the six course modules, and their obligatory assignments, including:

- Watching of the video lessons on module topics, and
- Completing a module specific multiple-choice quiz (in English).

Also recommended but not obligatory tasks are:

- Producing module specific personal project work/plan assignments (in Farsi) and returning them into the course discussion forum, and
- Participating in the peer discussion on personal project work/plan assignments' contents thus enabling in practice the course's principles of community learning and sharing of expertise (in Farsi).





## 9. Course's assessment

The UNI-TEL e-courses assessment includes:

- Compulsory assignments of the course, the module specific Quizzes, which are based on automatic assessment.
- Recommended module-specific project work/plan assignments, which support learning through *peer interaction/feedback without actual assessment*.
- Module-specific Badges, after receiving of which the participants can move on to the next module once each module is completed, and finally
- A course certificate, which the participant will receive at the end of the whole completed course, and which can be printed out from Moodle.



## 10. Guidance and support provided

During the progress of the UNI-TEL e-course, you will be supported by a support system, which includes the following support elements:

1) PROCESS SUPPORT, meaning all elements that guide and support you step-by-step throughout the progress of the whole e-course, and thus covering:

- Instructive material which includes any operating instructions, informative text or media elements of the Moodle learning environment, as well as the lecture notes of this orientation video lesson, which serve as a reminder of the course's idea and practices as a whole.
- Schedules such as course milestones and deadlines of course assignments and tasks, and
- Possible National tutoring practices, which are provided by your institution in your own language, and agreed and built locally.

2) CONTENT RELATED SUPPORT, referring to support related to TEL content, which *has NOT been arranged separately* within the UNI-TEL e-course. However, this aspect is seen to be included in each topic's lectures through the experience of experts, as well as it is seen to be included in the interaction of any institutional and national collegial expertise networks.

3) COLLEGIAL ONLINE AND PEER SUPPORT, which is, as already mentioned, one thing that UNI-TEL e-course's learning model relies on. Even if it is not obligatory to participate in collaborative peer activity online, we see collegial interaction and networking among peers as a crucial part of supporting the learning process. During the UNI-TEL e-course we strongly recommend you to use any forums that enable and promote the sharing of substantive and experiential TEL expertise among the participants.



## Conclusions

This orientation lesson provided you:

- Basic information about UNI-TEL e-course and its objectives, contents and studying practices,
- Basic information about the requirements and expectations of participating in the UNI-TEL e-course, and
- Knowledge and understanding about your role in the learning process.

You can return to this lesson and its lecture notes to review things and course practices later on, as you feel you need them. We wish you a nice course – and above all enthusiasm and joy for your TEL development work in the future!

Thank you for your attention!