STUDENT TEACHER CHARTER[1]: DIGITALLY CONFIDENT FOR C21ST TEACHING

> *"If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow."*
>
> *John and Eileen Dewey, Schools of Tomorrow, 1915*

We, as future teachers, face one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century: how will we provide our students with skills for jobs which do not exist yet? In recent years, technology has changed the way we work, creating new and different jobs. This shift is expected to continue and, as a result, the demand for digital skills will rise. Yet, according to research, 40% of Europeans have insufficient or no digital skills.[2]

Therefore, digital skills need to be addressed in the classroom. However, as highlighted by the ITELab project[3], the way we student teachers currently receive training on ICT is an obstacle not only to implementing innovative pedagogical practices but also to our own development, as we need to further develop these skills after finishing our initial teacher education training.

This charter, co-written by the Student Teacher Ambassadors[4] of the ITELab project, therefore, calls on policy makers and initial teacher education providers in Europe to innovate our university curricula and adapt them to meet the pressures and expectations of the 21st century.

1. We would like to acquire better knowledge of digital pedagogy.

The difference between digital and digital *pedagogical* skills needs to be recognised and our curricula should reflect that and concentrate more on providing us with digital pedagogy skills – implementing our ICT skills in our teaching.

2. We want to learn how technology can be best implemented as a teaching tool.

Even though the majority of us possess very good ICT skills, this does not mean we all know how to use technology as an educational tool.

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[1] Student teacher charter is part of the ITELab student voice, drafted by the student teachers themselves.

[2] Digital Agenda Scoreboard, 2015

[3] http://itelab.eun.org/research : Monitoring Report, Case Studies, Recommendations and Resources to support Innovation in ITE

[4] http://itelab.eun.org/research : Student Voice Report

3. We would like to acquire our digital pedagogy skills more practically and less theoretically.

Currently, some of our ITE institutions teach us to implement digital tools in our future classrooms. However, we rarely get a chance to use these tools in authentic settings prior to our first teaching appointment. This results in a lack of confidence, technical difficulties and sometimes opting for an easier option – not implementing technology in the classroom at all.

4. We need innovative spaces to develop our digital pedagogical skills.

We would like to practice digital pedagogy during our higher education and, if possible, have spaces dedicated to practising digital pedagogy where we could test the equipment before standing in front of our future students.

5. We would like our voice to be heard more.

Despite the fact that our higher institutions give us a chance to provide feedback, this often happens via targeted surveys and questionnaires, which do not allow us to fully express our opinions. Similarly, the feedback might be asked too early in the course, when we do not yet know much about the course, or the feedback might be asked too late, such as during our exam period, and its importance might not be highlighted enough.

6. We wish to be involved in shaping our own ITE curricula.

We believe we could help our higher institutions to better adapt the ITE curricula to the needs of the 21st century by providing them feedback on our courses. Although we might be considered being too unexperienced, once we have had school placements as part of our curricula, we gain a better overview of where our skills need to be developed better.

7. We want to be part of international peer networks to share challenges and solutions

Cooperating and meeting our peers in ITELab showed us the benefits of being part of international student teacher communities. We can exchange our views and opinions, provide each other with advice on teaching and discuss best practices.

ITELab

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Credits: Petr Vaclavek/Adobe Stock

Student voice report