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ROAD2EU SUMMER SCHOOL 2026 — LECTURE 3

# Implementation Lab: Train-the-Trainer Pathways, Staff Incentives and Industry- Connected Learning

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SS LECTURE 13



# WHAT THIS LECTURE COVERS

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**01** Staff competences

**02** Train-the-trainer pathways

**03** Incentives and recognition

**04** Industry-connected learning

**05** Tracking value

# TRANSFORMATION DEPENDS ON STAFF COMPETENCES, INCENTIVES, AND EXTERNAL COOPERATION

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- Universities are expected to support **future-proof skills, innovation, and employability** for all graduates.
- Transformation cannot happen through policy documents alone — it depends on **staff competences, institutional incentives, and external cooperation** with employers.
- This lecture focuses on the practical capacity-building and relevance mechanisms that make transformation real.

## THE CAPACITY IMPERATIVE

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**Institutional transformation is ultimately a human capacity challenge. The most important resource in any university is its staff — and their competences, motivation, and networks.**



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# THE POLICY BACKBONE: DEAP, SKILLS STRATEGY, GRADUATE TRACKING, AND MICRO-CREDENTIALS

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## POLICY 1

### DEAP

Digital Education Action Plan — the primary framework for digital transformation in teaching and learning.

## POLICY 2

### European Strategy for Universities

Expects universities to become agents of change in green and digital transitions.

## POLICY 3

### Pact for Skills / Union of Skills

Multi-stakeholder framework for upskilling and reskilling across sectors and regions.

## POLICY 4

### Graduate Tracking

EU framework for systematic monitoring of graduate outcomes and labour-market transitions.

## POLICY 5

### Micro-Credentials

Short, stackable learning units with EU-standard design, recognition, and portability.



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# DIGCOMPEDU PROVIDES A STRUCTURED MAP OF TEACHING-RELATED DIGITAL COMPETENCES

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- **DigCompEdu** (European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators) is the key EU framework for educator digital competence.
- It provides a **structured, six-area map** of teaching-related digital competences, from professional engagement to learner empowerment.
- DigCompEdu is the recommended basis for staff-development planning in the context of DEAP implementation.

## THE DIGITAL COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

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**DigCompEdu is not just a self-assessment tool; it is a shared language for discussing, planning, and recognising educator digital competence across institutions.**



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# TRAINING SHOULD START FROM DIAGNOSIS, NOT ASSUMPTIONS

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- **Self-reflection tools** such as DigCompEdu CheckIn Higher Education help staff identify their own strengths, gaps, and development priorities.
- Departments need a **baseline assessment** before they design training programmes — assumptions about staff needs are often wrong.
- Diagnosis-first design ensures that training is targeted, efficient, and valued by participants.

## DIAGNOSE BEFORE YOU DESIGN

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**The most common training design error is starting with a solution rather than a problem. A brief diagnostic step saves significant time and resources and dramatically improves training relevance.**



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# TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PATHWAYS CREATE MULTIPLIER EFFECTS FOR INSTITUTIONAL SCALING

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- **Train-the-trainer (TtT)** approaches create multiplier effects by building internal capacity that can spread good practice across the institution.
- TtT helps move from **isolated individual good practice to wider, sustainable adoption** at departmental and institutional level.
- It is a realistic scaling model for institutions with limited external training budgets.

## THE MULTIPLIER LOGIC

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**One trained trainer can reach dozens of colleagues. TtT is not just cost-efficient; it builds institutional ownership, peer trust, and sustainable internal capacity.**



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# A SUGGESTED 6-MONTH TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PATHWAY

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## MONTH 1

### Baseline Diagnosis

DigCompEdu self-assessment to identify staff competence levels and priority development areas.

## MONTH 2

### Short Training Block

Focused, practical training sessions targeting the identified priority competence gaps.

## MONTH 3

### Course Redesign

Applying new competences to redesign at least one course module with digital enhancements.

## MONTH 4

### Peer Support

Peer observation and coaching to consolidate learning and build collegial support networks.

## MONTH 5

### Feedback and Evidence

Collecting student and peer feedback on redesigned modules to build an evidence base.

## MONTH 6

### Internal Showcase

Presenting results to colleagues to initiate diffusion and identify the next cohort of trainers.



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# STAFF BEHAVIOUR FOLLOWS WHAT INSTITUTIONS REWARD

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- Innovation work is **not sustained if institutions do not value it** through recognition, promotion criteria, and workload allocation.
- **Teaching enhancement, mentoring, and partnership work** should be formally recognised in performance review and career development frameworks.
- Aligning incentives with desired behaviours is a governance responsibility, not just an HR matter.

## INCENTIVES DRIVE BEHAVIOUR

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**If institutions want staff to innovate in teaching, they must make innovation in teaching a recognised, rewarded, and career-relevant activity — not an extra burden.**



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# INDUSTRY-CONNECTED LEARNING: FIVE PRACTICAL FORMATS



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- 1 Co-Design With Employers**  
Joint curriculum design with industry partners to ensure relevance and skills alignment.
- 2 Mentored Projects**  
Real-world projects supervised by industry mentors alongside academic staff.
- 3 Living Labs**  
Co-design and testing spaces where students and employers solve real problems together.
- 4 Short Placements**  
Brief, structured industry placements integrated into the curriculum with clear learning outcomes.
- 5 Work-Based Learning**  
Formal recognition of learning that takes place in workplace settings as part of a degree programme.

# GRADUATE TRACKING LINKS CURRICULUM DESIGN WITH LABOUR-MARKET INTELLIGENCE

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- **Graduate tracking** provides systematic evidence on graduate destinations, employment transitions, and skills match with labour market needs.
- Departments should measure not only **activity outputs**, but also outcomes and labour-market signals that indicate curriculum relevance.
- Graduate tracking data is a powerful tool for curriculum review, employer engagement, and institutional accountability.

## CLOSE THE FEEDBACK LOOP

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**Graduate tracking closes the feedback loop between curriculum design and labour-market outcomes. Without it, departments are designing in the dark.**



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# ONE PILOT IS NOT A STRATEGY: INNOVATION DIFFUSION REQUIRES SYSTEMATIC SCALE-UP

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- Successful pilots should spread through **internal trainers, peer models, reusable templates, and active management support**.
- A single successful pilot, however impressive, is **not a strategy** — it is a proof of concept that must be deliberately diffused.
- Innovation diffusion requires a planned scale-up pathway with dedicated resources, champions, and institutional backing.

## FROM PILOT TO STRATEGY

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**The graveyard of higher education innovation is full of brilliant pilots that were never scaled. Diffusion requires as much planning and investment as the original pilot.**



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# SUGGESTED KPIS FOR STAFF CAPACITY AND INDUSTRY-CONNECTED LEARNING

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**KPI 1**

**Number of Staff Trained**

Total number of academic and professional staff completing TtT or digital competence training.

**KPI 2**

**Number of Redesigned Modules**

Number of course modules redesigned with digital enhancements or industry-connected elements.

**KPI 3**

**Number of Employer Partners**

Number of active employer partnerships contributing to curriculum design or student learning.

**KPI 4**

**Participation in Applied Formats**

Number of students participating in placements, living labs, mentored projects, or work-based learning.

**KPI 5**

**Graduate-Tracking Data Points**

Number of graduate cohorts tracked, employment rate at 6/12 months, and skills-match self-assessment scores.



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- **European Commission.** *Pact for Skills / Union of Skills.* 2020 / 2025.
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# Questions & Discussion

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**What is the best starting point for one department: diagnosis, incentives, or employer partnerships?**

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