Advancing Accessibility and Universal Design in Arts and Humanities Curricula

Insights from the ATHENA Project

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Outline

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The ATHENA project

MISSION

Develop a set of recommendations on how to integrate Accessibility and Design for All into the Higher Education curricula.

VISION

Promote equal opportunities and social inclusion of people with disabilities.

GOALS

Support the higher education sector in becoming more interconnected, innovative and inclusive.

Work transnationally, across countries and sectors.

[ATHENA website](#)

I Congresso Internazionale "Accessibilità audiovisiva e inclusione in ambito universitario" –June 2024–

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The ATHENA project

The project is led by **EDF** working together with the following partners:

Timeline I

Curricula analysis

- To **identify HE domains** of special importance for inclusion and participation
- To **identify a sample of curricula** of these domains and **analyse** if accessibility and universal design are present and how

2023 **2024**

- To **develop a series of recommendations** on how accessibility and universal design could be integrated across HE curricula
- To **illustrate how accessibility and universal design could be integrated into specific courses** across diverse fields of knowledge

Recommendations

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Timeline II

2024

Desk review

Focus group discussions

Draft Recommendations

Co´design of sample courses

Final recommendations with sample courses

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Methodology for the FG I

Focus Groups on shared skills

- **Countries:** Austria, Cyprus, Czechia, Spain
- **Number of participants:** N= 24
- **Involvement in projects/activities related to accessibility:** 18/24
- **Years of experience:** Between 1 and 34
- **Leadership roles:** 15/24

Focus Groups on specific areas of knowledge

- **Countries:** Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czechia, Spain
- **Number of participants:** N= 23
- **Involvement in projects/activities related to accessibility:** 16/24
- **Years of experience:** Between 4 and 40
- **Leadership roles:** 15/24

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Methodology for the FG II

Topics

Integration of accessibility in academic programs

Knowledge, skills, and competences

Student evaluation

Recommendations document

Potential learning outcomes

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Preliminary results I

Arts and Humanities (UAB, Spain)

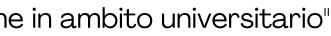### Integration of accessibility in academic programs

- **Design BA:** create a course on social design to explore how to design products that serve end-user needs within social contexts.

- **Fine Arts BA:** some courses theoretically address diversity, although specific attention to accessibility may be lacking.

- **Translation BA:** there is a course titled "Introduction to Technologies," which delves into the application of digital accessibility in text documents.

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Preliminary results II

Arts and Humanities (UAB, Spain)

Knowledge, skills, and competences

- Two approaches could be considered to address shared elements in Arts and Humanities studies while accommodating specific BA requirements: a) integrating a cross-disciplinary learning outcome focused on social awareness and diversity, and b) incorporating specific content within subjects adapted to each BA's needs.

- It is necessary to include at least one subject on accessible communication in communication-related degrees.

Preliminary results III

Arts and Humanities (UAB, Spain)

Student evaluation

- Assessment criteria depend on the learning outcomes being evaluated. This means considering various assessment levels, ranging from a broad understanding of accessibility and universal design to the specific evaluation of learning outcomes within some courses.
- In the context of Translation Studies, evaluating the quality of the service provided is a feasible approach.

Preliminary results IV

Arts and Humanities (UAB, Spain)

Recommendations document

- Recommendations should be specific and practical, supported by real examples and multimedia aids to facilitate comprehension.

- It is important to share both successful and unsuccessful implementation experiences.

- Direct engagement with individuals with disabilities through dedicated sessions can provide valuable insights into their needs and experiences.

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Preliminary results V

Arts and Humanities (**UAB, Spain**)

Potential learning outcomes

- **Translation Studies:** Students will be able to recognize a diverse society's communicative and cultural needs and effectively respond to these needs within various contexts.

- **Translation Studies:** Students will be able to apply basic knowledge about digital accessibility in documents to address the needs of a diverse society.

- **Philology Studies:** Students will be able to identify the diverse needs of students in their classroom and look for the necessary resources to create an inclusive learning environment.

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Next steps

1 To develop **a document with recommendations** on how to integrate accessibility and universal design in higher education curricula

2 To co-create a series of **sample courses** across different areas of knowledge which integrate accessibility and universal design principles

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Thank you!

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