


Chapter 10

Piloting Competence– Based Digital Open Badges: EduSTA Project – Sweden

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the EduSTA project (Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, 2021) is to build an ‘Academy of Educators for a Sustainable Future’. The countries involved in the project are Finland, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic. The focus of the project has been to co-design a constellation of competence-based digital open badges and to pilot these in each partner country’s Higher Education Institutions during 2024. This chapter will present two Swedish pilots completed in December 2023 and June 2024 focusing on Vocational Education Student Teachers (VET) trialling the competence-based digital open badge “Knowledgeable Problem Articulator”. The study is guided by Gibb’s (1988) Reflective Cycle, allowing for a structured and systematic process of reflection to support learning. A total of 20 out of 81 students applied for the digital open badge. Despite the small number of applications, the feedback received showed both a curiosity and interest in digital open badges.

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INTRODUCTION

The chapter begins by introducing the purpose and goals of the EduSTA project (2022), followed by an overview of micro-credentials, introduction to a Swedish project titled, Competence Passport, and Digital Open Badges. The design and development of the constellation of the competence-based digital badges, leads to the method section where the Swedish University and context is introduced. An outline of Gibb's Reflective Cycle, along with a description of the pilot, the link between the digital open badge and the choice of the university course, and the process is provided. The article concludes with insights from the Swedish pilots, discussion where the importance of both culture and language in international collaboration is discussed, recommendations for future action and concluding comments.

It is recognized that Teachers' capabilities at all levels of education are to act as active change-makers in the ecological transition and to educate students at all levels to meet future challenges in the green transition, (Rieckmann, 2017; UNESCO, 2023). There is an expectation that the changes and dominant features of future teacher education and training globally in addition to formal qualifications will include short courses, micro-credentials, and flexible learning pathways (Van der Hijedn., & Martin 2023).

The purpose of the EduSTA project (Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, 2021) is to meet the needs in the green transition advocated in the Education 2030 Agenda (UNESCO, 2017) by building an Academy of Educators for a sustainable future education. The partner countries involved in the EduSTA project are, Finland, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. The project partners goal has been to develop in collaboration competences-based digital open badges to support and enhance teachers' Key Sustainability Competences (KSC) through what is referred to as badge-driven learning pathways (Bauer, 2019). Badge-driven learning pathways is a compilation of digital open badges linked to each other according to defined goals, intended learning pathway and context in which badges are being used. Each badge can serve a different purpose in the process of learning and recognition of achievements.

Through digital badge-driven learning the EduSTA project introduces innovative and flexible ways to facilitate sustainable and lifelong learning, as well as validating teachers prior learning and sustainability competences. There is an expectation that competence based digital open badges will add to the effectiveness, status, and attractiveness, of the teacher profession in Europe.

A digital open badge is a visual representation, a digital icon of the competences achieved or the completion of a short course that allow to build industry-relevant skills. There are technical standards and strict rules to guide what data is included in a digital open badge and include for example, the name of the issuing organization,

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