

## **Exploring the future of education: insights from the 1st Online Meeting of the Community of Practice (CoP) in Education**

The first online meeting of the DestinE Platform Community of Practice took place on 27 June 2024. With a focus on education, the event brought together professionals from different disciplines and educational institutions, all eager to explore the potential of the platform.

Most participants were post-secondary educators, predominantly in the field of Earth Sciences, and were mainly from Greece, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. This information was important to spark discussion, especially as participants considered how DestinE could be useful in their classrooms.

Following the survey, a 15-minute video presentation provided an overview of the DestinE platform, highlighting its services and capabilities. Using a collaborative Padlet board, participants shared their thoughts on several critical questions based on the level of education they teach - primary, secondary or higher education. Here are some of their conclusions.

### **Current challenges in education**

- **Primary Education:** educators highlighted the lack of content in local languages, insufficient knowledge among educators and inadequate equipment. They also noted a lack of time in the curriculum and emphasised the need for integrated links with existing programmes.
- **Secondary Education:** teachers identified several challenges, including the need for improvements in teacher training, student engagement and the integration of space disciplines into the curriculum. They highlighted difficulties in accessing appropriate data related to national education plans, limited time allocated to sciences and the need for interesting user stories linked to calls to action. Other issues included digital efficiency, reliable internet access, and collaboration between schools and universities.
- **Higher Education:** lecturers pointed out the challenges of managing multiple platforms, ensuring interactivity with students, adopting results-driven approaches and addressing the lack of infrastructure for learning, such as instruments and laboratories. They also emphasised the need both to keep pace with rapid advancements and to clarify who has access to which services.

### **Understanding and relevance of DestinE**

- **Primary Education:** educators saw the scope and elements of DestinE as potentially understandable and relevant for primary education if certain adjustments were made. The participants emphasised the importance of preparing students for internet and data use from an early age.

- Secondary Education: teachers were hopeful but uncertain about the relevance of the platform at this stage. They cited the lack of computers and adequate internet access in schools and the need for the platform to be available in multiple languages. They also expressed the need to test the platform in the classroom and highlighted the potential of some of the tools, if the challenges can be overcome.
- Higher Education: the platform was generally viewed as understandable and relevant, particularly for Earth Science students. However, the large number of services available could be confusing for some users.

### **Benefits of DestinE for education**

- Primary Education: educators mentioned that DestinE could provide a playful environment filled with educational and relevant content, thereby offering a first step for young children to interact with the Internet and educational digital content.
- Secondary Education: according to teachers, the platform could be a way of engaging students with environmental issues, linking these issues more closely to everyday classroom activities and giving students access to data. It could also facilitate students' training in data analysis and interpretation, helping them to deal with real-world problems. However, teachers noted the need for training to use the platform effectively when preparing lessons.
- Higher Education: lecturers mentioned that DestinE could help students better understand Earth systems and processes through data visualisation and modelling. As the platform provides up-to-date data, it could also help raise awareness of current Earth issues, while providing access to cutting-edge algorithms, enhancing research and fostering collaboration. In addition, this cohort mentioned that Social Sciences could also benefit from this platform, as students within this discipline could consider and research how to implement the platform in socially desirable ways.

### **Priorities for integration**

- Primary Education: for primary teachers, developing age-appropriate content, ensuring correct use of media for young children and providing materials in various languages were the main priorities for making DestinE useful for educational purposes.
- Secondary Education: priorities included better organisation and simplified access to resources, providing suitable parts of the platform for school lessons in more languages, engaging students with real data examples and adapting the UI/UX design to student needs. Educators also emphasised the need for educational scenarios tailored to specific subjects and tools, a friendly interface, GDPR compliance and reduced functionality versions that are easier to use.
- Higher Education: focus areas included integrating sustainability questions across diverse disciplines, providing up-to-date high-quality data, offering detailed tutorials on educational topics, and capacity building.

## Potential obstacles

- Primary Education: a key concern for teachers working with young children was the complexity of the DestinE platform, which could be overwhelming for some teachers and present too much information for young children to grasp.
- Secondary Education: teachers identified a number of challenges, including insufficient time to cover all the necessary material, uncertainties about the software required, and potential technical issues such as slow loading times. They also mentioned the need for adequate resources, the limitations of using tablets instead of desktop computers, and concerns about navigating a cluttered interface. Other issues included the need for statistical literacy in the curriculum, student engagement in asynchronous learning and the need for extensive training seminars for educators.
- Higher Education: lecturers noted the lack of time to prepare updated resources, the challenge of managing multiple platforms and skill gaps among both students and educators.

The 1st Online Meeting of the Community of Practice in Education was a significant step towards harnessing the power of the DestinE platform for educational purposes. The rich discussions and shared insights laid a strong foundation for future collaboration and innovation in the education sector.

The organising team extend their heartfelt thanks to all participants for their valuable contributions and look forward to continuing this journey. Further updates on upcoming events and initiatives within the Community of Practice series will be announced in due course on [destination-earth.eu](https://destination-earth.eu).

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