

# DEVELOPING A MODULAR AD CURRICULUM: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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[www.adlabproject.eu](http://www.adlabproject.eu)

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# Audio-description: a laboratory for a new professional profile

- **36 months** (Sep. 2016 – Aug. 2019)
- Financed by European Union under **Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnerships**
- Coordinator: **University of Trieste (IT)**
  
- EC Project Number: 2016-1-IT02-KA203-024311
- National Project ID: GU10213041978
- <https://www.adlabpro.eu/>



# Partnership

**8 partners** (7 EU countries, 19 people)

## **Academic partners:**

University of Trieste  
Autònoma of Barcelona  
University of Antwerp  
University of Poznan

## **Non-academic partners:**

Utopian Voices Ltd. (UK)  
Soundfocus B.V. (The Netherlands)  
RTV Slovenija (Slovenia)  
Royal National Institute of the Blind (UK)



# Sustainability and goals

Carrying on the work **started with ADLAB (2011-2014)** which resulted in European strategic recommendations for audio describers.

**Creating a curriculum and training** free & open-access, flexible, modular, customisable **materials** to be used to train audio-describers both in academic and in professional (in-house) contexts.

Stabilizing of the audio describer professional figure.



# Intellectual outputs

- Working activities to be accomplished over a precise timeframe leading to tangible results.
- 6 IOs.
  - **O1**: gathering EU best practices (UAM).
  - **O2**: defining audio-describer competences (UNITS).
  - **O3**: **producing curriculum design for trainers (UA)**.
  - **O4**: creating training materials (UAB).
  - **O5**: testing and evaluating training materials (UV).
  - **O6**: attributing ECTS/ECVETS to materials (UNITS).



# IO3 – aims

- design a flexible modular AD curriculum,
- based on competences formulated as Learning Outcomes (LOs),
- take into account European accreditation criteria (ECTS),
- suitable for different contexts: universities & companies,
- suitable for different, student-centred, teaching methods.



# IO3 - challenges

- incorporate the input from ADLAB (guidelines) and specialized literature on AD and curriculum design.
- fill the gaps in existing curricula (IO1) and take into account the recommendations of audio-describers & providers (IO2).



# IO3 - challenges

- cater for a diverse potential audience: students, professionals from different contexts,...
- create a coherent curriculum with modules that can function independently and be activated at different levels of expertise.
- deal with overlapping skills.
- make the curriculum accessible.





# Challenges in keywords

coherence versus diversity  
comprehensiveness versus modularity  
academic versus professional  
basic versus advanced



# I03 - starting points

## entry requirements

- level of the curriculum: post-Bachelor or equivalent (languages, literature, film, theatre, cultural studies, ...).
- required skills: linguistic/textual, computer, basic vocal, information mining, transferrable communicative and interpersonal skills.



# IO3 - starting points

## **didactic perspective**

- knowledge, skills and attitudes,
- learning outcomes:  
cognitive, affective, psycho-motor domain,
- reiterative scaffolded curriculum design,
- meaningful situated student-centred activities,
- envisaging teaching methods, materials & assessment (IO4),
- envisaging accreditation (IO6),  
(Beetham 2013; Kiraly 2000, 2005; Kennedy 2007).



# IO3 – starting points

## core skills

- specific textual and linguistic skills,
- soft skills (transferrable management-related skills),
- theoretical knowledge (research-based background),
- technical skills (vary & recur with type of AD).

## levels

- basic and advanced



# IO3 – starting points

## 5 hypothetical personas

- the first target users of the curriculum are trainers.
- for them 5 hypothetical learners are envisaged.



# I03 – starting points

## 5 hypothetical personas

1. person without previous knowledge of AD wishing to obtain some insight into its basic features.
2. person without previous knowledge of AD wishing to acquire a comprehensive view of what AD can be.



# I03 – starting points

## 5 hypothetical personas

3. person with partial knowledge of AD (e.g. MA student) needing to know more about a specific type of AD, such as screen AD.
4. person with partial knowledge of AD, active in the cultural sector or media (e.g. a theatre staff member).
5. blind persons or persons with (severe) visual impairment.



# I03 - core competences in topics (1)

- history, developments in AD practice & research.
- general knowledge of the concept of AD and main target audience(s).
- understanding of the functioning of AV texts.
- software solutions production, reception, distribution of ADs.
- knowledge of work flows & production processes (teams).





# I03 - core competences in topics (2)

- skills for the production of AD scripts for different contexts.
- skills for the delivery of different ADs.
- knowledge of the parameters for qualitative AD, assessing & editing.
- knowledge of use of AIs and AST in different contexts.
- willingness to remain informed of new developments.



# 103 | Course structure

MODULE 1  
Introduction &  
transferrable skills

MODULE 2  
Screen AD

MODULE 3  
Dynamic  
performances &  
events

MODULE 4  
Static arts &  
environments

MODULE 5  
Additional services  
& specific contexts

MODULE 6  
Technological  
Issues, New  
developments

Different suggested trajectories can be defined for the different personas.  
Combinations can be tailor-made.



# Learning Outcomes (Kennedy 2007)

**cognitive domain:** knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis/creation, evaluation.

**affective domain:** receiving, responding, valuing, organization, characterization.

**psycho-motor domain:** imitation, manipulation, precision, articulation, naturalization.



# I03 | LOs & scaffolded learning

Module 1					
students can explain the importance of a well-timed AD script	cognitive domain: comprehension	basic	lecture-viewing-analysis-discussion	Ppt & clip	hours/ECTS + one or more other LOs = scaffolding



# I03 | LOs & scaffolded learning

<b>Module 3</b>					
students can write an AD script for a live perf., defend their choices	Cognitive domain: synthesis/ application	basic	watch recorded scene performance, script AD, class discussion	clip & script template	hours/ ECTS + one or more other LOs = scaffolding



# IO3 – Los & scaffolded learning

Module 6					
students can explain how research supports additional AD applications	cognitive domain: comprehension	advanced	inquiry & discussion	reading (literature review)	hours/ ECTS + one or more other LOs = scaffolding



# Scaffolded learning: example

## **Module 4: static arts and environments**

LO5: students can recognize linguistic and textual features of existing ADs for static arts and environment

LO6: students can analyse and criticize existing ADs for static arts and environment

LO7: students can collaborate with peers and VIPS in criticising and, where necessary, amending existing ADs



# I03 – Accessibility protocol

The first target users of the curriculum are teachers wishing to implement AD specialisation in different learning contexts.

The teachers should be made aware of the options for teaching the curriculum or parts thereof to blind and partially sighted people.

The accessibility protocol aims to make teachers aware of the issues that they need to take into account.





# I03 – Accessibility protocol

Anyone wishing to train people with a visual impairment must assess, with the learner:

- what visual impairment they have,
- what tools they customarily use,
- what their aptitude is for learning new skills,

as they would in any intake conversation with new learners.



# I03 – Accessibility protocol

## **Sample questions the teacher must ask:**

- Which type of AD is the learner interested in?
- Does (s)he wish to become involved in AD quality control?
- Does (s)he wish to become involved in producing or voicing?  
What function in the AD work flow would (s)he be interested in taking on?
- Does (s)he only wish to acquire some general knowledge about AD in one or different contexts without for that matter wanting to become an audio-describer?



# I03 – Accessibility protocol

## **Sample questions the teacher must ask (2):**

- Will the learner be part of a small or large group?
- Will there be room for individual trajectories and guidance within the group?
- Will the curriculum be taught mostly face-to-face or through blended learning?
- ...



# I03 – Accessibility protocol

All the modules of the ADLAB PRO curriculum can be made accessible for blind, severely or partially sighted people.

The curriculum is flexible enough to cater for different options but the above and related questions must be answered.

The teacher and learner jointly determine which units are of interest and how they can be made accessible with the help of the tools the learner is using or willing to expand into.



# TO CONCLUDE

This has been a simplified bird's eye view of IO3

The ADLAB PRO team is now working on IO4 led by UAB

Thank you for sitting out the flight.

Questions?



# Bibliography

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More on:  
[www.adlabpro.eu/](http://www.adlabpro.eu/)

**Thank you!** The ADLAB PRO team

