

**Recommendations for policy
development in the field of**
learning analytics

Recommendation 1: HEIs should involve institutional leaders in the definition of strategies and policies for learning analytics to develop a strategic institutional capability

A strategic vision that responds to the needs of an organisation is critical for long-term impact and the development of strategic institutional capability is a key prerequisite for the growth of implementation capability for learning analytics.

Challenge 1:
There is a shortage of leadership capabilities to ensure that implementation of learning analytics is strategically planned and monitored.

Recommendation 2: HEIs should involve stakeholders such as students and teachers in the interpretation of learning analytics and ensure the availability of communication channels and support resources among them

It is crucial to involve stakeholders, such as students and teachers, strategically, in particular in the interpretation of data so as to contextualise and increase the validity of analytics. A sound communication between stakeholders will also help to establish a common understanding of learning analytics and institutional readiness and ensure a cohesive and collaborative implementation of learning analytics.

Challenge 2:
There are infrequent institutional examples of equal engagement with different stakeholders at various levels.

Recommendation 3: HEIs should adopt a pedagogy-based approach to learning analytics and thus consider pedagogical requirements and solutions in their design

Learning analytics tools still need to move from spotting students at risk to providing pedagogically informed suggestions and thus, connect learning analytics with education in ways that can truly support the everyday learning, teaching and assessment work.

Challenge 3:

There is a shortage of pedagogy-based approaches to removing learning barriers that have been identified by analytics.

Recommendation 4: HEIs should offer relevant training opportunities to stakeholders to improve understanding of learning analytics and equip them with skills to operate the tools and interpret data

Shortage of skilled people has been identified as one of the elements in gaps between needs and solutions in the adoption of learning analytics. Further discussion with input from learning analytics experts and system designers is required to increase institutional capacity for learning analytics.

Learning analytics also need to be in forms accessible to students.

Challenge 4:
There are insufficient training opportunities to equip end users with the ability to employ learning analytics.

Recommendation 5: The community should be encouraged to create a common space to share policies and case studies to validate the impact of and raise awareness on learning analytics

It is a challenging task to evaluate the success of learning analytics or demonstrate advanced employment of learning analytics. Thus, establishing successful cases is a requirement to persuade senior staff to allocate budgets to support learning analytics. Indeed, case studies that demonstrate benefits of learning analytics provide credible evidence for raising awareness and understanding among all stakeholders.

Challenge 5:
There is a limited number of studies empirically validating the impact of analytics-triggered interventions.

Recommendation 6: Clear formalised guidelines should be established to monitor the soundness, effectiveness, and legitimacy of learning analytics

In order to be relevant, learning analytics policies need to be implemented with considerations of multiple dimensions that include institutional contexts, stakeholders at various levels, pedagogical applications, institutional capacities, success evaluation, legal and ethical considerations, and a strategy that aligns with the institutional missions.

Challenge 6:
There is limited availability of policies that are tailored for learning analytics-specific practice to address issues of privacy and ethics.



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To assist European universities to become more mature users and custodians of digital data about their students as they learn online, the SHEILA project built a policy development framework that promotes formative assessment and personalized learning, by taking advantage of direct engagement of stakeholders in the development process.

The field of learning analytics with its associated methods of online student data analysis, holds great potential to address the challenges confronting European higher education institutions. While the use of learning analytics has gained much attention and has been/is being adopted by many higher education institutions in Europe and the world, the maturity levels of higher education institutions in terms of being 'student data informed' are only in the early stages. Composed of a team of research and institutional leaders in learning analytics, the SHEILA project aimed to address this gap.

The project used participatory action research and the Rapid Outcome Mapping Approach (ROMA), specifically designed for policy making derived from scientific evidence. The outputs were validated through case studies, using the policy framework to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of learning analytics policy and strategy in four higher education institutions in different regions of Europe. The project used innovative strategies to disseminate and translate the outputs, and to set up a long term learning analytics policy agenda and community among higher education institutions across Europe.



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