

Part II

Curricular Transformations

In Part II of the collection expands on the university-wide experiment described in Chap. 4, in which a mid-sized European university ventured into using a unique bottom up project structure to innovate across the curriculum and across the disciplines. This three year ‘Learning and Working’ project’s central goal and purpose was to design new (and transform existing) teaching content using the problem-based learning philosophy of the institution, and using blended learning as the foundation to make it possible for (part) time students and professionals to study in a flexible educational environment. With this project, the university was reacting to the constantly changing target groups of higher education, as well as to the availability of new tools for learning. Thus, the project reflects the need for strategic change to maintain and further improve the teaching and learning quality at the institution and to remain a relevant contributor to society. Furthermore, the unorthodox and innovative strategies for implementing such university-wide change demonstrate the entrepreneurial spirit discussed in Part I. Therefore, in Part II of this collection we focus on innovation at the course level and will hear from pilot leaders involved in the three year project. We will share research-based examples, strategies and lessons learned from these instructors (across the disciplines of Business, Psychology, Medicine, Governance, and Social Science) that work with lifelong learners, utilizing a problem-based learning philosophy.

Part II opens with a chapter by Herco Fonteijn, who experiments with radical ideas of the tutorless classroom, student empowerment, and the impact on learning. He offers innovative suggestions by which student tutorial groups take advantage of information technology, accept responsibility for their learning, and thereby enhance their group work. In Chap. 7, Karen Könings and Wim Gijsselaers describe a fascinating project in which a Smartphone™ application was adapted for use by medical residents, who captured significant clinical learning moments for subsequent discussion in moderated group meetings. They unearth concepts on the ways in which mobile devices can be harnessed as reflection tools to promote learning between the classroom and workplace. Extending the discussion of curricular transformation in Chap. 8, Natalia Timuş considers the role of collaborative learning within a blended

learning framework. She illustrates how innovative courses in a cross-institutional exchange contributed to curricular reforms and inter-university cooperation. Her work highlights the value of hosting a class in which learners from Turkey and Europe collaborate to better understand European Union (EU) Studies. In Chap. 9, Martin Rehm and Mindel van de Laar report empirical evidence in support of Communities of Learning as a new and more flexible way of facilitating PhD research – with an approach that takes into account the characteristics of the new type of PhD fellow. And to conclude this section, Maïke Gerken and Therese Grohnert summarize the most common challenges and accompanying smart practices to consider when teaching online. They share instructor perspectives to guide those at the start of a path toward online learning integration.