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Lifelong Learning Programme

Development of competence in a web-based laboratory   webLab

Flyer to the project

webLab

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Geschäftsstelle für EU-Projekte und berufliche Qualifizierung der Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf

Vocational stays abroad as a means to foster individual vocational competence development

In societies that are highly influenced by globalization and migration, **intercultural competences** can become a vocational and personal key competence for every young person. **Vocational stays abroad** are suitable to create a valuable learning environment and individual development approaches for learners in this context.

Learners profit from dealing with cultural differences, the use of a foreign language, the immersion into a new cultural and professional environment and the organization of the trip.

Moreover, internships abroad can help learners to explore their own capabilities and competences and then to include them into their learning processes. Therefore it is essential to **regard stays abroad not as an isolated event but as part of each learner's individual development**.

Consequently, there is a necessity for vocational schools to systematically **prepare, implement and evaluate** vocational stays abroad.

The project **webLab** and the here developed manual supports teachers to prepare internships abroad didactically, implement and reflect them. It helps to integrate the stay abroad as an element of individualized learning in the curriculum. In this sense, it provides a framework for the learning process:

For every phase in the learning process along the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the internship abroad a description is offered, which suggests the overall learning objective, proposes individual learning objectives and possible topics, and gives methodical advice. Also, it suggests possibilities of systematic integration of a weblog, i.e. with the beginning of the internship preparation. The weblog can be seen as the main instrument for documentation and reflection.

All information on the webLab-project and related publications can be found on the website **http://www.weblab-erasmus.eu**. Apart from the two main publications it also features good practice examples from the project schools as well as an extensive scientific documentation.

Challenges regarding supervision of internships abroad by schools

Active support for learners during their stay abroad is only possible to a limited extent. The amount of interns that must be supported and the related counselling impose high requirements on teachers in terms of dedicating time and often demonstrate a handicap for an intense support of the learners.

Furthermore, it is a problem that learners often get feedback by their tutors only after the end of the internship, when the regular evaluation of the practical experiences is due. A learner's prompt reaction on teachers' feedback during their internship abroad is normally not possible. Ultimately, this affects the quality of activities performed within the company as well as the reflection of the practical experiences.

Making teachers' work easier by web-based support of learners during their stay abroad

webLab promotes a web-based mentoring approach for schools to support learners' stays abroad, particularly for the times of the actual internship in a foreign company.

Concepts of **web-based support** of internships can help the learners to discover their own capabilities and competences and to implement them into their learning processes. This approach enables them also to acquire competences in the field of digital media, e.g. appropriate designing skills and creativity in a world that is dominated by media.

The **webLab-concept** implies that schools have necessary organizational structures to organize vocational stays abroad, (e.g. foreign partners, structures and means to manage mobilities, experienced and responsible teachers to manage the necessary processes etc.).

The primary objective is to provide teachers with a didactical basis that they can use to develop a concept suitable for the individual school environment, which enables students to achieve individual as well as curricular objectives. This way, the internship becomes an essential and individualized element of competence development.

Training concept for teachers in vocational training about web-based support during learning stays abroad

The partners involved in the webLab-project have developed a training concept called Advanced Teachers Training Concept (ATC) as a guideline to prepare teachers for the didactical and methodical support during stays abroad.

The ATC focusses on a reform process on the organizational level, which is meant to reflect, explore and actively develop one's own working environment. Therefore the present training concept aims at the capabilities of teachers to work in a team, reflect on their teaching and learning processes and to create a competence-oriented learning environment. The ATC consists of five modules:

Module I:	organization of the mobilities
Module II:	technical introduction to weblogs
Module III:	webLab-concept (implementation, reflection, exchange of experiences, collection of best practice examples)
Module IV:	use of an ATC-weblog to accompany the processes in module III (at the same time as module III)
Module V:	reflection

Advanced Training Concept (ATC) at a glance
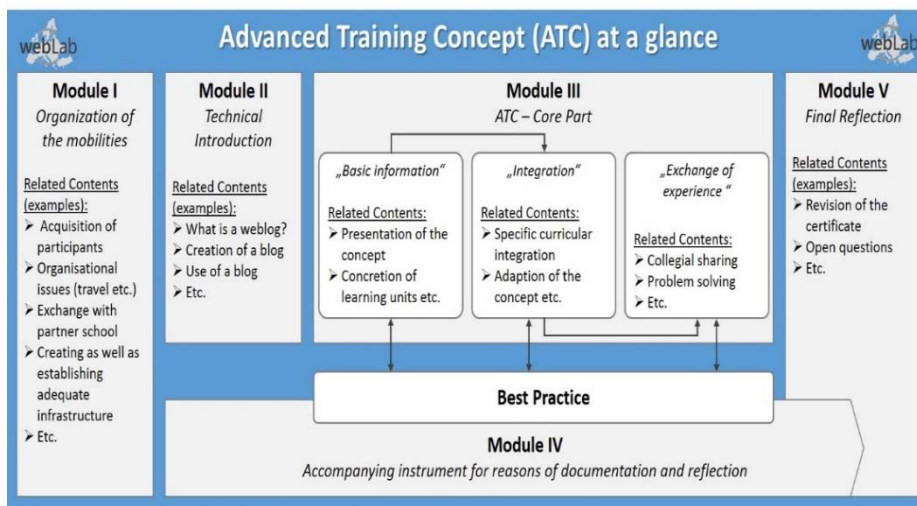
The keyproduct of the project: The webLab-concept

In order to support learners during the preparation, implementation and evaluation, the medium format of a weblog is used, which involves the following advantages:

It helps learners as well as teachers to monitor the progress regarding the learning objectives. Therefore, the weblog is used as early as possible during the learning units preparing the internship abroad.

The weblog enables the users to communicate during their stay abroad and interact in a flexible way. It reasonably complements a summary reflection and evaluation at the end of the internship.

The learners can use the weblog to report and reflect on the progress and the experiences they make during the internship.

The blog offers creative chances, which may be interesting not only for teachers but possibly also for family and friends of the intern.

The learners can use the weblog to report and reflect on the progress and the experiences they make during the internship.

By using the weblog, the role of the teacher alters to one as a counsellor and tutor.

Further stakeholders can become involved in the support, e.g. the companies which train the apprentice or those offering the internships.

The weblog can be reasonably combined with the traditional internship report or can even replace it.
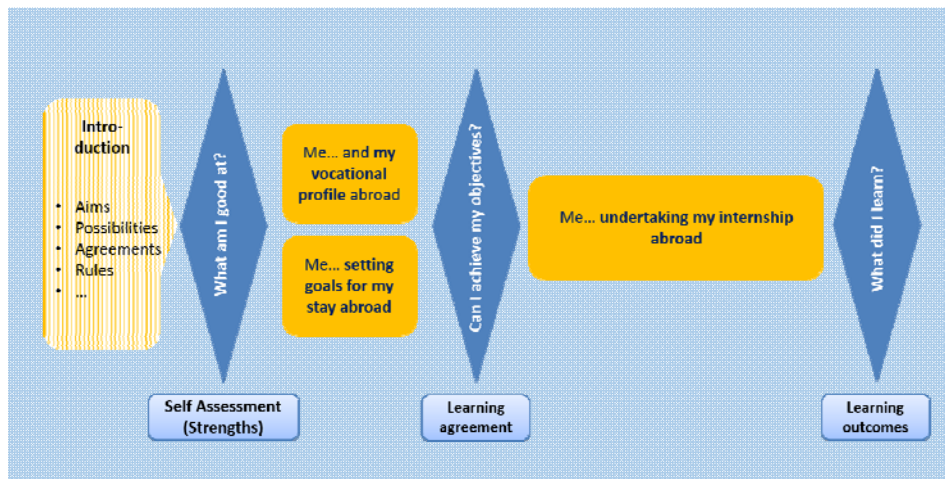
Perspective:
During their internship abroad the learners are confronted with different kind of challenges. In these situations they need prompt help or support and orientation. Against this background currently considerations arise concerning an instrument for the learners them selves – a students' navigator.

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Websites:

http://www.weblab-erasmus.eu
http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/view.htm?prj=10916